

Annual Report 2010

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative



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Childrens Services of Roxbury
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Madison Park DC
Project HOPE
The City School
The Food Project
WAITT House
YouthBuild

Businesses

Ideal Sub Shop
Suffolk Construction

Religious Institutions

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June 2010

Dear neighbors, partners, friends, and supporters,

This year DSNI entered our 26th year, resolved as ever to fulfill the community's vision, first articulated in our 1987 Comprehensive Revitalization Plan. In spite of a collapsed economy and a housing crisis, we have significant and even landmark accomplishments to celebrate! We finished the new homes planned for the Dudley Triangle and now welcome 18 new families on the community land trust. Through our door-to-door canvassing efforts, we raised the response rate for the US Census by as much as 9%. Our collaborative efforts made historic strides in meeting the Roxbury Master Plan hiring standards for residents, minorities, and women in the construction of the new Kroc Salvation Army Community Center.

We are building on the progress we've made together to create a community in which all our children thrive. The theme of this year's Annual Meeting is *Fulfilling Our Promise: Strengthening Youth, Families and Community*. This year, as part of Thrive in 5, we started to engage parents and the community in developing ways to make sure that all our young children, are healthy and can start school ready to learn. As the Boston Public Schools identified "Turnaround" schools in our neighborhood, we partnered with two of them to mobilize the community for the success of our children. As part of a major campaign for youth jobs funding, we've had partial success. Over this next year, we will systematically assess programs, systems, and supports for young people from 0 to 24. We have been encouraged by the US Department of Education's Promise Neighborhoods Initiative and have applied for a planning grant. The impact will reach young people, parents and families, and caring adults from the community--in short, all the generations.

The strong encouragement of funding partners has put us on this path. And we've been joined by a growing number of local stakeholders and collaborators. As always, DSNI looks to residents and empowered community leaders to play key roles. We invite you now to join us, to get on board with us as never before, so that the next stage of our neighborhood's transformation will be the best it can be. In so doing, we will truly achieve the vibrant *urban village* that is our enduring community vision.

Together, we know that "anything is possible!" Thank You.



Carlos Henriquez,
President, Board of Directors



John F. Barros,
Executive Director

Organizational History

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative is a nonprofit community-based planning and organizing entity birthed out of the passion, ingenuity and determination of Dudley residents seeking to reclaim a neighborhood that had been ravaged by disinvestment, arson fires and dumping. DSNI's mission is *to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create and control a vibrant, diverse and high quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners*.

In the 1980's, when many had given up, DSNI dared to gather neighbors to create a comprehensive plan and a shared vision for a new, vibrant *urban village*. Our Board structure enabled residents to lead the effort and include all neighborhood stakeholders in a democratically-elected, community accountable process.

DSNI attracted development without displacement by gaining control over vacant land with eminent domain authority and retaining it through a community land trust. The once garbage-strewn vacant lots were rebuilt with quality affordable houses, parks and playgrounds, gardens, community facilities, and new businesses.

In this, our 26th year, our neighborhood's new mega-community center, owned and financed by the Salvation Army and planned by all of us, will be fully built and ready to open. Our step-by-step process, focused this year on (1) Sustainable and Economic Development, (2) Community Empowerment, and (3) Youth Opportunities / Development, is again opening to a new horizon. With our partners, we now envision impact on the educational outcomes and life decisions of *all* our young residents, from birth to 24 years. And this will bring benefit to everyone in the community.

DSNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS JULY 2009-JUNE 2010

Community Empowerment

DSNI's focus on community empowerment expresses our fundamental belief in the wisdom and collective power of the community, led by residents, to realize our shared vision.

♦ **Civic Engagement:** The community's voice was strengthened this year as we encouraged neighborhood residents to register and vote, to be counted in the US Census, and to be active in issues, campaigns, events, and planning. We worked with RoxVote and MassVote on candidates forums and putting out non-partisan literature. We improved voter turnout in the November 2009 final election by 10% above 2005. We raised the response rate for the US Census by as much as 9%.

We joined organizing campaigns for funding youth jobs, CORI reform, and affordable housing / foreclosure protection.

♦ **Resident Development Institute:** Our Leadership Competency series continued to prepare community leaders. Our Speakers Bureau and Community Tours program shared our story and lessons with groups and classes from more than 10 colleges, foundations, and governments. Visitors came from as far away as the UK, Israel and Singapore.

♦ **Dudley Children Thrive:** DSNI is a hub agency, part of Thrive in 5, engaging families, communities, parents and caregivers to be leaders in children's learning and healthy development. We held 11 Community Dialogues to hear the vision and experiences of families, providers, and other community members and to inform the development of strategies.

Youth Opportunities / Youth Development

In preparation for our new focus on youth educational outcomes, we have created a ladder of opportunity for youth who are connected to DSNI, for them to become leaders and inspire others. This program includes job experience and leadership development activities, providing opportunities to grow, develop confidence, and build skills that prepare the way to college, professions and satisfying futures.

♦ DSNI is the lead agency in **GOTCHA**, a youth jobs collaborative in the Dudley St., Uphams Corner and Bowdoin/Geneva neighborhoods that hires teens in the summer and during the school year and provides trainings. Advocacy this year by the 5 planning partners – Bird St Community Center, Bowdoin St Health Center, Dorchester Bay EDC, DSNI and The City School helped to avert threatened cuts in job funding. For 2009 GOTCHA held a job fair for 350 and then hired 225 youth for the summer and 50 for the school year, to work at sites in 25 different organizations.

♦ The youth-led **Dudley Youth Council (DYC)** addressed youth and neighborhood issues, as its members found their voices and developed leadership skills. This year the DYC continued its monthly live local radio talk show on topics like the The American Dream, Influence of the Media, Government Conspiracies & Corruption, Youth Jobs, and Movie Reviews. DYC also organized theme nights, a cookout, and college trips. They wrote grants and presented their work to funders and mentors.



Sustainable and Economic Development

We are guided by the community's mandate for *Development without Displacement* and for the creation of *Family and Community Wealth*.

Affordable Housing:

- ♦ **Brookford-Dalin-Dean Homes** : New families are in all 17 of these homes on the community land trust.
- ♦ **Protecting Neighborhood in Foreclosure Crisis:** We participated with the Dudley Foreclosure Roundtable, to gather resources that helped home-owners and renters stay in their homes. We also purchased a foreclosed home, to resell it with its affordability preserved.

Community Spaces

- ♦ The **Kroc / Salvation Army Community Center** will be fully built by the end of 2010, to open in January 2011.
- ♦ DSNI's **Dudley Workforce Initiative** has worked and continues to work with the Salvation Army and Suffolk Construction to achieve the Kroc Center project's hiring guidelines for local residents, minorities, and women. This project has had one of the highest records in Boston of compliance with hiring standards.
- ♦ DSNI participated on the steering committee of the **Boston Green Justice Coalition**, and we participated in a collaboration of non-profit agencies in Roxbury, Dorchester and Hyde Park to plan for green open spaces in the **Fairmount Commuter Rail Corridor**.

Community Planning

- ♦ DSNI worked with the **St. Kevin's Area Planning Collaborative** in a community process that produced a short list of recommended future uses of the property. The Collaborative presented its final plan, which included arts and community uses along with housing, to the property owner, the Archdiocese of Boston.
- ♦ DSNI continued to participate in the **Roxbury Master Plan Oversight Committee**.

Economic Development

- ♦ DSNI worked closely with The Food Project to develop a shared vision for growing in the neighborhood and the operation of the **DSNI Community Greenhouse**. These conversations led to our leasing the Greenhouse to The Food Project, to have it operating in the fall.

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Major Funders and Sponsors

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 Bank of America Charitable Foundation
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 the Ida S. Barter Trust
 Best Buy
 Boston After School & Beyond
 Boston Compassion Capacity Tank
 Boston Connects
 Boston Foundation StreetSafe
 Boston Private Bank & Trust Company
 Citizens Bank Foundation
 Civic Engagement Initiative [a funding
 collaboration that includes
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 The Hyams Foundation, and the
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 Ludcke Foundation
 Mass. Census Equity Fund
 Nellie Mae Education Foundation
 Roxbury Trust Fund
 Richard & Susan Smith Family Foundation
 Sovereign Bank
 Suffolk Construction
 Target
 Thrive in 5



Partnerships and Collaborations

La Alianza Hispana
 Blue Hill Avenue Task Force
 Boston Children Thrive in 5
 Boston Collaboration for Food & Fitness
 Boston College Graduate School of
 Social Work
 Boston Parent Organizing Network
 Boston Youth Fund
 Casa Esperanza
 City of Boston
 The City School
 Civic Engagement Initiative
 Children's Services of Roxbury
 Crosstown Church
 Dearborn Middle School
 Discover Roxbury
 Dorchester Bay EDC
 Dudley Children Thrive
 Dudley Neighbors, Inc.
 Emerson Elementary School
 Foreclosure Roundtable
 The Food Project
 Gordon College
 GOTCHA Youth Jobs Collaborative
 Interaction Institute for Social Change
 Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
 Madison Park Development Corporation
 Mason Elementary School
 MassVote
 Nuestra Comunidad Development Corp.
 Orchard Gardens Pilot School
 Project Hope
 Quincy Street Missional Church
 Roxbury Cultural Network
 Roxbury Master Plan Strategic Oversight
 Committee
 Roxbury Neighborhood Council
 RoxVote
 St. Kevin's Area Planning Collaborative
 St. Patrick's Church
 The Salvation Army
 Tufts University - UEP
 Vine Street Community Center
 WAITT House
 YouthBuild Boston