

West Side woman seeks to improve Lawndale

by Ryan Strong
Defender Contributing Writer
June 1, 2007

One Chicago woman is making an honest effort to improve her West Side neighborhood. Kim Jackson, the executive director of the Lawndale Christian Development Corp., moved to Chicago's North Lawndale community in 1994. She soon noticed the neighborhood's lack of resources.

"After seeing the living situations of many of my neighbors, I knew it was time for a change," Jackson said.

With that, Jackson said she was inspired to become involved in community development.

For 12 years, Jackson has been working to improve her community by adding affordable housing to Lawndale, offering courses on home ownership and helping displaced families find homes.

Her efforts recently yielded big dividends as Jackson was named executive director of Lawndale Christian Development Corp., an organization that attempts to revitalize that West Side community.

Jackson said one of her major goals is to improve the area along Ogden Ave.

"I'd like to attract more commercial business to the community," She said.

Moreover, another goal of Jackson's is to strengthen the neighborhood's schools and to ensure that the children of Lawndale are receiving an equal education.

"I would like to see our schools be strong and compete with the world," She said.

Some of Jackson's accomplishments include managing more than 300 housing units and reconstructing worn out buildings into safe apartment complexes for families.

Jackson's dedication to her community has caught the attention of others in the Chicago area.

"Kim's experience and knowledge is exemplary of why the Urban Developers Program was created," said Kevin Jackson, Executive Director of Chicago Rehab Network in a press release.

Others have also noted Jackson's work ethic and achievements.

"We are looking forward to working with her on future projects and we believe that her technical skills, knowledge and passion will have a long-term impact on the North

Lawndale community," said Jack Markowski, the City of Chicago's Housing Commissioner.

Although Jackson has made many improvements to the community, she says her work is far from being complete. Jackson's first step, she said, is to bring the neighborhood together.

"I want to get to know every neighbor so that we can get together and make this community the best it can be," Jackson said.