



in the market for a new look

Our newest design service, *rStore*, helps businesses reinvest and refresh...and ultimately revitalize commercial corridors.

rStore
refresh

By Linda Dottor

“Establishing a business takes time,” says Kevin “Butter” Bell, owner of Butter’s Soul Food To Go on West Girard Avenue, remembering one day in his first year of business when his restaurant brought in a mere twenty-six dollars. “But since last December, things have been going like this!” says Bell, with an upward sweep of his hand. A first-time business owner, Bell

draws on twelve years of experience in the restaurant business. “I know what road to go down, what really works.”

Fixing the walk-in freezer and developing a client base came first. Now Bell is ready to implement the next steps in his business plan: launching a website to support a growing catering business – and façade improvements. Bell recently met with architect Amy

Owen-Jones for advice on how to spruce up his façade. The design consultation was provided courtesy of the Community

Design Collaborative’s newest design service, *rStore*.

rStore brings several architects into a community for a full day of one-on-one design consultations with business owners. Community-based organizations leading commercial corridor revitalization efforts recruit merchants for the Collaborative consultations and host the event. The architects offer advice on how to approach and prioritize façade

Working together, architects and small business owners see ways to make changes for the better...

improvements ranging from painting and repairs, display windows, lighting, awnings, or signage. They follow up their consultations with sketches that illustrate their recommendations.

The goal of *rStore* is to promote reinvestment by several business owners simultaneously. “Individual businesses play an important role in turning commercial corridors around. Collectively, their reinvestment can have a big impact.” explains Beth Miller, Executive Director of the Collaborative.

rStore is modeled after Mt. Airy USA’s Design Days, which brought Germantown Avenue business owners and Collaborative volunteers together in 2005. Since then, the Collaborative has provided *rStore* design consultations to four additional commercial corridors.

One of the things that Kevin Bell has learned is that, while you want to offer a

product that’s one-of-a-kind, “consistency is a big thing with customers.” Amy Owen-Jones immediately saw the parallel between this basic business principle and the Butter’s Soul Food façade. “Your sign is really unique – and will be recognizable in this neighborhood for years to come. You should focus on lighting and awnings to reinforce your sign,” she advised. Owen-Jones sketched some options on the spot, promising to follow up with a more finished sketch to guide Bell’s façade improvement project.

The following groups and commercial corridors have already received rStore design services:

Fairmount Community Development Corporation
West Girard Avenue

Hispanic Association of Contractors and Enterprises
El Centro de Oro

Inter-Community Development Corporation
Wadsworth Avenue

Mt. Airy USA
Germantown Avenue

The Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation
Walnut Hill

• COLLABORATIVE •

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BUILDING NEIGHBORHOOD VISIONS AS COMMUNITIES
 AND DESIGN PROFESSIONALS WORK TOGETHER

The Community Design Collaborative is volunteer-based community design center that provides pro bono preliminary design services to nonprofit organizations in greater Philadelphia, promotes best practices in community design and development, and offers design professionals a unique way to volunteer their skills in service to neighborhoods. Founded in 1991 as a program of AIA Philadelphia, the Collaborative is an independent 501 (c) (3) nonprofit with a network of more than 600 volunteers.

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LEARN MORE!

Visit us at www.cdesignc.org

news+updates

We're moving! In May, the Collaborative will join AIA Philadelphia and the AIA Bookstore at its new home in the Center for Architecture. The Center will host meetings, events, and exhibitions to engage design professionals and the public in the design and building achievements and issues of the Philadelphia region. Please note our new mailing address: Community Design Collaborative, 1216 Arch Street, First Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

Executive Director Beth Miller will travel to Indianapolis in April to moderate a panel discussion at **LISC Urban Forum 2008**, a national conference on economic and commercial development. The panel discussion will bring the partners, designers, and client from Infill Philadelphia: Commercial Corridors together to present a case study on Lancaster Avenue's New Angle. The project was also highlighted in a panel discussion at the **National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Streets Conference** in Philadelphia this spring.

The Collaborative convened over forty local leaders in community and housing development in February for a presentation by Deane Evans, creator of the **Affordable Housing Design Advisor**. This online resource at www.designadvisor.org brings together the experience and ideas from successful affordable housing projects all over the country. Design and planning standards outlined by the Design Advisor are referenced as a decision factor in the RFP for the **2008 Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency's Homeownership Choice Programs** released in February 2008. Submissions are due July 16, 2008.

In December 2007, the AIA Philadelphia Communications Committee presented the **Lewis Mumford Award for Architectural Journalism** to the Community Design Collaborative for its work on *Infill Philadelphia: Commercial Corridors*. The design initiative received coverage in local and regional media and raised awareness about the role of design in commercial corridor revitalization.

Irreplaceable you! We offer our heartfelt thanks to outgoing board members Lisa Armstrong, AIA; Patrice Carroll; Dan Garofalo, AIA; and Alan Urek, AICP.

FUNDERS
The Community Design Collaborative thanks the following grant makers for their generous support.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| AIA Philadelphia | National Endowment for the Arts |
| Citizens Charitable Foundation | PNC Bank |
| City of Philadelphia, Office of Housing and Community Development | The Quaker Chemical Foundation |
| Claneil Foundation | Union Benevolent Association |
| Connelly Foundation | The William Penn Foundation |
| | Wachovia Foundation |

FOOD ACCESS

The Community Design Collaborative will launch its second phase of Infill Philadelphia in May 2008. Infill Philadelphia is a five-year initiative created by the Community Design Collaborative to promote workable, innovative design solutions to revitalizing older, urban neighborhoods. This unique initiative brings together design practitioners, community development experts, policymakers, funders, and the media to address urban infill development – a significant revitalization strategy for Philadelphia and other older American cities.

INFILL PHILADELPHIA'S NEXT FOCUS

The second phase of *Infill Philadelphia* will focus on food access – how to bring affordable, healthy food to older, urban neighborhoods. While the national lack of urban grocery stores is well documented, the local shortage is particularly acute. Studies suggest that Philadelphia's inner-city neighborhoods can support new food retailers and that these markets, in turn, can anchor broader community revitalization goals.

Infill Philadelphia: Food Access will strengthen local efforts to include a food outlet within neighborhood revitalization plans, providing enticing visual concepts to spur investment and improve the food landscape in underserved communities. Fresh, healthy food can get to neighborhoods in many ways, including the corner store, the farmer's market, the food co-op, and the supermarket. The Reinvestment Fund and The Food Trust will partner with the Collaborative to demonstrate how design can help improve food access.

Employing context-sensitive planning and design, *Infill Philadelphia: Food Access* will demonstrate that infill strategies involve more than the piecemeal development of individual parcels. The resulting designs will display how to best incorporate new retail options for fresh food into neighborhoods in a way that honors their existing physical, historical and social fabric.

Infill Philadelphia: Food Access will provide a unique opportunity to add the design and development community's voice to the growing discussion on the link between food access, public health, and neighborhood revitalization.

The renewed focus on the region's urban food landscape has been fueled in part by the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFI), an innovative public/private venture that serves the financing needs of supermarket operators that plan to operate in underserved communities where infrastructure costs and credit needs cannot be filled solely by conventional financial institutions. FFI is supported by a partnership of The Reinvestment Fund, The Food Trust and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition.

Guiding the *Infill Philadelphia* approach is a highly-interactive "design challenge" in which volunteer design firms develop conceptual designs for three real-life sites selected by community-based organizations. Participating firms present their work at a juried mid-review and public presentation. The Collaborative previously partnered with Philadelphia Local Initiatives Support Corporation to explore infill development within neighborhood commercial corridors in 2007.

Join us to kick off *Infill Philadelphia: Food Access* on Thursday, May 29, 2008.

Volunteer Eric Larsen, PE

Eric Larsen, a structural engineer and Principal of Larsen & Landis, has contributed steadily to the Collaborative since 1996. He has lent his hearty laugh and helpful hand to over twenty projects.



WHY VOLUNTEER?

I believe it is essential that we share our skills to improve our communities – Community developer John Perkins says we need "Redistribution,

Reconciliation, and Relocation" to change communities for the better. Redistribution means not just sharing our money, but our time and our skills.

MEMORABLE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT:

I can't nail down a specific project – The daycare center in North Philadelphia where too many kids were being cared for in too small of a space; the gospel mission on Girard Avenue serving homeless men; the cultural alliance serving the African community in West Philadelphia – all of these projects exemplify "Loving your neighbor."

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING:

It's been an encouragement to me to see those who are transforming their neighborhoods.

FIRST BRUSH WITH DESIGN:

I remember watching a carpenter remodel our house when I was a kid. That was cool – I thought so anyway! Being good at math and enjoying buildings... according to those jumbo career guides, civil engineering seemed to fit the bill.

FAVORITE PART OF WORK:

I like working as a team to serve clients, designing churches, and working on 18th century historic structures.

FOR FUN:

I run with my wife, hang out with our kids at church youth group, and travel overseas.

POINT OF PRIDE:

Watching others grow in their ability as structural engineers.

– by Kristin LaBuz

FIRST MLK DESIGN DAY OF SERVICE A SUCCESS

By Linda Dottor

“It all began with an email from one of our volunteers watching her staff at work as usual on Martin Luther King Day,” says Beth Miller, Executive Director of the Community Design Collaborative. “She asked, ‘Wouldn’t be great if the Collaborative could harness some of this talent in the future?’ When NeighborhoodsNow approached us to provide intensive design services in one neighborhood, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to test out the idea.”

The Collaborative partnered with NeighborhoodsNow and Fairmount CDC to organize rDream – Philadelphia’s first MLK Design Day of Service. NeighborhoodsNow identified a community engaged in its Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative that was ready for some design attention. Fairmount CDC recruited residents and business owners to participate. And the Collaborative enlisted the design professionals to volunteer.

Over eighty people including residents, business owners, and community leaders of the Poplar-Girard neighborhood – fifteen close-knit blocks clustered below Girard Avenue just west of Girard College – came out for rDream.

At the outset, D-L Wormley, Deputy Director of NeighborhoodsNow, reminded everyone that the resulting designs would improve the neighborhood and keep its authenticity, “Healthy Neighborhoods is about trying to preserve these fantastic neighborhoods, not to make them something they’re not.”

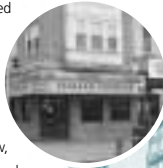
Five homeowners and seven businesses sat down for one-on-one design consultations, while two block groups took part in a design workshop.



FIXING FAÇADES

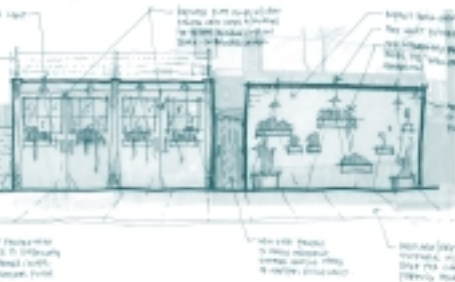
Maurizio and Mario Presta, owners of Italian Express, met with volunteer Keith Simon and Patrick Hauck of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia.

“We’re interested in a ‘retro-restoration,’” the brothers said. The team sketched up two options – new, larger windows and a “green screen” of lush climbing plants – that would celebrate the classic pizza shop and make the storefront more conducive to sidewalk dining.



rDream enew

Meanwhile, homeowners Bill and Amanda Sickler wanted to know what to do about their crumbling brownstone façade. Volunteer architect Josh Toth sympathized, “This is a very soft, porous stone. But resurfacing it with stucco will only solve the problem for five years at most, so it’s better to invest in a longer term solution.” Toth suggested the Sicklers replace the most deteriorated sections with cast stone. “Be careful to get a good color and texture match,” he cautioned.



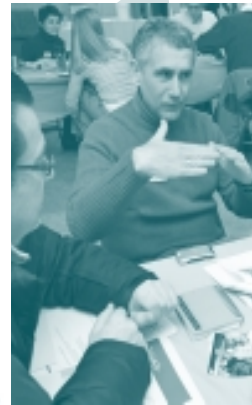
COLLABORATING ACROSS BLOCKS

Residents of the 2900 blocks of Harper and Cambridge Streets began the day with a visit to the string of garages, fencing, back gates, and yards that face homes on Harper Street, but are owned by Cambridge Street residents. “Part of our job was to help residents on Cambridge Street reconsider the backs of their houses.

The fronts of their houses look really great, but people tend to overlook the back,” says architect Andrea Marzolf, lead volunteer for the design workshop.

“We walked out to the site with the neighbors. A longtime resident knocked on people’s doors, and more neighbors joined us. One person out for a run even stopped to give us an opinion,” recalls Andrea, “On the walk back, everyone began warming up to each other...it was great to see people from the different blocks talking to each other.”

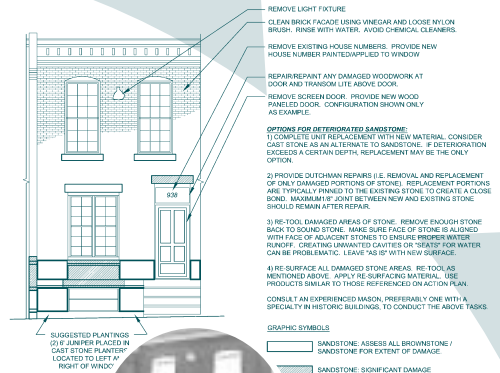
The conversation continued around the table as residents brainstormed on basic repairs and creative ways to add color and



cohesion to the block face. The design team then sketched alternatives for combinations of paint, plantings, lighting, and paving. The community development corporation will use the ideas from the day of service to help residents choose an initial project to tackle together.

“The day gelled what we have been doing over the past year and set the tone for going forward.”

– Tim Clair,
Executive Director of Fairmount CDC



“rDream will have a bigger impact because it supports individual and community goals and focuses on three kinds of projects – improvements to homes, stores, and an entire block – in one day.”

– Beth Miller,
Community Design Collaborative

VOLUNTEERS

- Nissa Grant
- Katie James
- Richard King, AIA
- Drew Lavine
- Jill Lavine
- Andrea Marzolf
- Dan DiMucci
- Amy Owen-Jones
- Doug Perry
- Lynn Przywara
- Laura Raymond
- Michelle Robinson, AIA
- Keith Simon
- Josh Toth

The Community Design Collaborative awards over 30 grants of preliminary design services to nonprofits in the Philadelphia region each year. Collaborative grants offer \$15,000 in *pro bono* preliminary design services on average and are performed by volunteers from the design professions.

Each grant provides a unique scope of services, developed to meet an organization's needs. The scope may include building surveys, building systems assessments, opinions of probable cost, programming and space planning, conceptual design, or renderings. There is no application fee, but nonprofits pay an administrative fee at the start of a grant to offset direct costs.

To qualify for a grant, an organization must be classified as a nonprofit corporation, qualified as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and located in Philadelphia, Bucks, Delaware, Chester, Montgomery or Camden Counties.

Want to apply or refer a nonprofit to us? Contact the Collaborative at 215.587.9290 or visit the Nonprofit page of our website, www.cdsignc.org, for a downloadable grant application.

AWARDED DECEMBER 2007

Greenfield Home & School Association, Center City

Conceptual design for an elementary school auditorium renovation

Chinatown Building & Education Fund, Center City

Limited Consultation: Structural assessment for a cultural and community center building

Pennypack Farm Education Center for Sustainable Food Systems, Horsham, PA

Conceptual design for a sustainable master plan for the site

Hispanic Association of Contractors and Enterprises (HACE), Upper North Philadelphia

Individual façade improvement consultations with business owners on El Centro de Oro

The Enterprise Center Community Development Center, West Philadelphia

Individual façade improvement consultations with business owners in Walnut Hill

NeighborhoodsNow and Fairmount Community Development Corporation, Lower North Philadelphia

rDream, an MLK Design Day of Service: Individual design consultations with business owners and homeowners and a neighborhood design workshop

AWARDED MARCH 2008

The Reinvestment Fund and The Food Trust Infill Philadelphia: Food Access: Conceptual designs for community-based organizations to increase access to fresh, healthy food within three neighborhoods

Beth Shalom Synagogue, Elkins Park, PA
Limited consultation: RFP assistance/advisory services

Cambodian American Senior Association, Inc., South Philadelphia

Limited consultation: Programming study

Congregation of Vilna, Center City

Limited consultation: Feasibility study for a community mikveh

Frankford Friends School, Near Northeast Philadelphia

Limited consultation: Feasibility study for expansion

Mt. Airy Presbyterian Church, Northwest Philadelphia

Conceptual design for a community gathering space

People's Community Center, West Philadelphia

Feasibility study for a neighborhood community center

The Miquon School, Conshohocken, PA

Conceptual design for creek stabilization

next steps

News from past recipients of the Collaborative's *pro bono* preliminary design services

Through Philadelphia's Senior Collaborative, the Community Design Collaborative developed a conceptual design for an accessible entrance to the **Southwest Community Enrichment Center**. The project will be built in April as part of Rebuilding Together Philadelphia's 20th Anniversary Celebration.

Hundreds of local volunteers and members of the American Association of Retired Persons, in Philadelphia for their national convention, will build the entrance and fix homes in the West Shore neighborhood as part of the celebration.

Last summer, the Collaborative completed the conceptual design for **Lemon Ridge Garden**, a community garden to be created on a former metal scrap yard and parking lot. Lemon Ridge has received a service grant from EPA for a Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessment of the site, an essential step before making further improvements. In the meantime, Lemon Ridge is keeping the momentum with related community greening projects – replacing broken sidewalks, planting street trees, and hosting a block party.

Friends of Dickinson Square Park unveiled its conceptual master plan for revitalizing **Dickinson Square Park** to the community on March 20, 2008. A team of Collaborative volunteers completed the conceptual plan in December 2007 and presented the plan at the event.

The Greenfield Home & School Association held a silent auction in early April 2008 to raise funds for **Greening Greenfield**, a project to make sustainable improvements to the school's grounds to beautify the neighborhood and teach Greenfield students about conservation and environmental science. The Collaborative provided the conceptual master plan for the project.

HomeWorks hosted an open house in February 2007 for a home that has been adapted to give several adults with disabilities the opportunity to live independently in their community. The Collaborative evaluated the house before renovation to recommend how to make it accessible and welcoming for its future residents and to prepare the nonprofit to purchase and adapt additional homes in the future.

Graduate! Philadelphia opened its doors for business in February 2008, making the Philadelphia Education Fund's college access center at The Gallery its new home. In 2007, the Collaborative prepared a conceptual design for renovating the space for the **Philadelphia Education Fund**. Graduate! Philadelphia will help students who have left college return to college and complete their degrees as part of a citywide campaign to double the number of college graduates in the city.

An Earth Day groundbreaking and green grass roofs are in the works for the **Asociacion de Puertorriqueños en Marcha's** Sheridan Street Housing. The project got its start through the Affordable Infill Housing Design Challenge, a joint initiative of the Community Design Collaborative and the Philadelphia Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NeighborhoodsNow). The project received AIA Philadelphia's Silver Medal in 2006.

Share your success stories! Send updates to Linda@cdsignc.org.

"OUTSTANDING!"

Thanks to the corporate and individual donors who donated to the Community Design Collaborative through our 2007 Annual Appeal. We appreciate your generosity!

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What are you waiting for, a sign?

Join us for the
**Community Design Collaborative's
12th annual Bowling Ball!**

**Bowl by Day 4:30 to 7:30 PM
Mixer 7:30 to 8:00 PM
Bowl by Night 8:00 to 11:00 PM**

Contact carryn@cdesignnc.org
or register online at www.cdesignnc.org



*We've
moved!*

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS.

upcoming events

Spring 2008 D-TOUR

*Narberth Community Library
Wednesday, April 16, 2008
6:30 to 9:00 p.m.*

*80 Windsor Avenue
Narberth, PA*

*The little library that could! Learn about
the Narberth Community Library's
resourceful redesign. Stay afterwards for
drinks at McShea's.*

RSVP to linda@cdesignc.org

*Easy to reach by SEPTA. Philly CarShare
rides available.*

Kick Off

Infill Philadelphia: Food Access

*Thursday, May 29, 2008
8:30 to 10:30 a.m.*

*How can innovative design bring afford-
able, healthy food to urban neighbor-
hoods?*

*Featuring Hon. Dwight Evans, PA State
Representative, and Dr. Kimberly Morland,
Community and Preventive Health, Mount
Sinai School of Medicine.*

RSVP to

www.infillphiladelphia.org

12th Annual Bowling Ball

*June 21, 2008
AMF Boulevard Lanes*

*Bowl by Day 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Mixer 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Bowl by Night 8:00 to 11:00 p.m.*

*Register online at
www.cdesignc.org*