



## ***Swampoodle/Allegheny West Action Plan***

The PhillyRising collaborative has been instrumental in the improvement of safety and quality of life in several communities throughout Philadelphia. Due to the success that PhillyRising has achieved by working in collaboration with residents and city agencies, PhillyRising is seeking to replicate the success of its community engagement model in other neighborhoods. In the Northwest Police Division, Swampoodle/Allegheny West was chosen to be a PhillyRising neighborhood.

Allegheny West is a [neighborhood](#) in the [Northwest](#) section of [Philadelphia](#). This area is named after an association formed by [Pep Boys](#), The [Tasty Baking Company](#), and the community bordering [East Falls](#), [Strawberry Mansion](#) and [Germantown](#). Its location is in the vicinity of Allegheny Avenue on the western side of Broad Street.

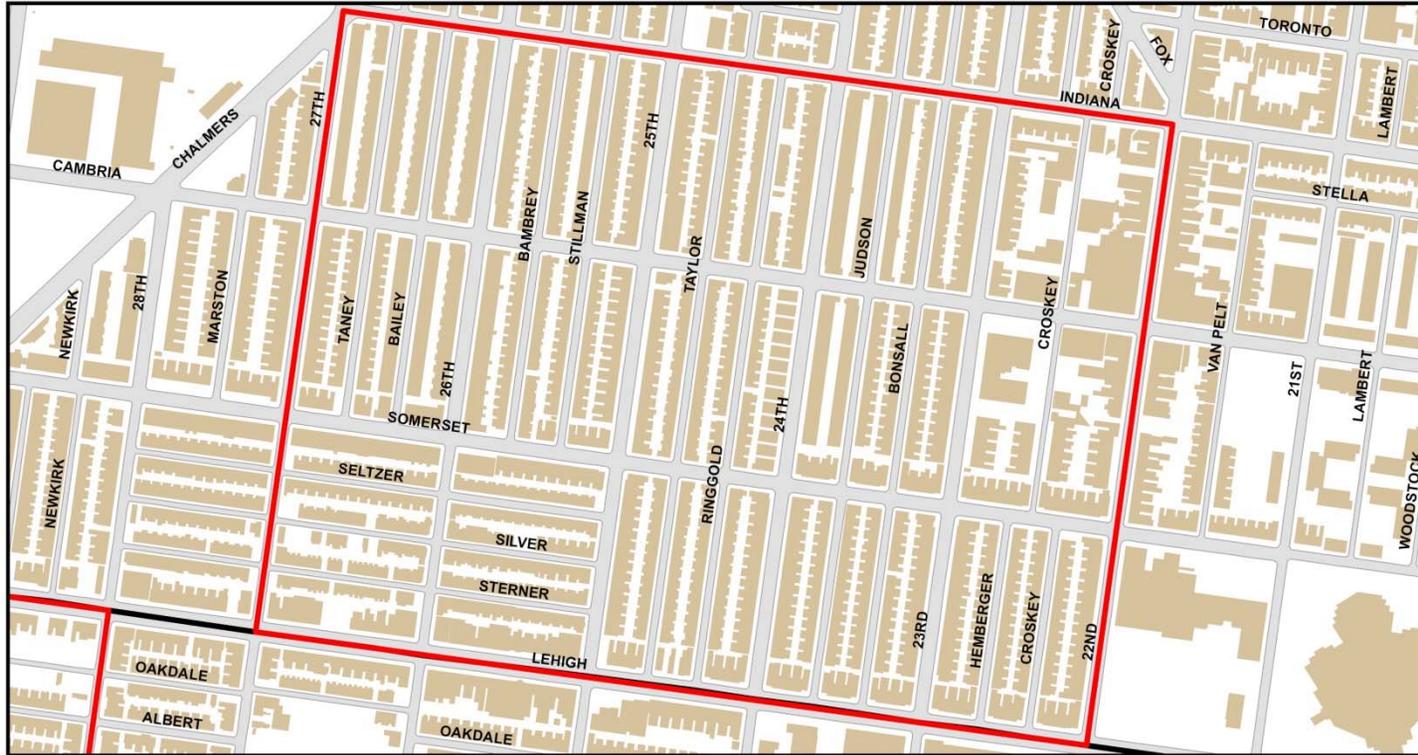
Swampoodle is the name given to a smaller area within the Allegheny West vicinity, which included the junction of three railroad lines between Lehigh Avenue and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets. The residents that live in this community are a part of an underserved population that is stressed by low quality of life and high crime. What was once a thriving industrial, labor-driven community has become an area plagued by multiple urban ills: unemployment, poverty, lack of youth activities, home abandonment, drug/substance abuse and crime. There are several groups working in the redevelopment of the area, but stronger city-wide collaborations are needed in order for this community to reclaim its once great past. As PhillyRising begins to coordinate efforts to retake the community with the residents and stakeholders, a certain amount of hope is being created in anticipation of a brighter future.

The remainder of this action plan outlines in greater detail how PhillyRising will function in Swampoodle. The plan begins with an analysis of the focus area, outlines issues identified by residents, describes a vision for the community, lists action items to achieve this vision, and lists the criteria that will measure the project's success.

### ***Description of the focus area***

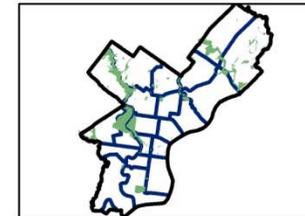
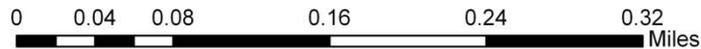
- 39<sup>th</sup> Police District; Northwest Police Division.
- Street Boundaries: 22<sup>nd</sup> Street/27<sup>th</sup> Street/Indiana/Lehigh Ave
- The total population in Swampoodle according to the 2010 census is 4942.
- About 93% of the population is African American.
- Roughly 2% of the population identify themselves as Hispanic.
- Around 60% are adults between the ages of 18-65, 26% are under the age of 18, and 14% are over the age of 65. This is higher than the city's average of senior citizens over the age of 65 as a whole.
- 57% of Swampoodle's residents own their home; while 43% rent their home.

## PhillyRising Collaborative Swampoodle Neighborhood, 39th Police District



### Legend

- Parks
- PHA Developments
- Police Districts





**Local Groups Involved in Targeted Area**

<b>Murrell Dobbins CTE</b>	<b>Widener Branch Library</b>	<b>Beyond Infinity Group Born Leaders Orchestrating Change</b>
<b>The Harmonious Volunteer Center</b>	<b>Berean Baptist Church</b>	<b>Philadelphia Anti Youth Anti Violence Network</b>
<b>Community Action Group</b>	<b>Deliverance CDC</b>	<b>Educational Advocates Reaching Today's Hardworking Students, Inc.</b>
<b>T.M. Peirce Middle School</b>	<b>27<sup>th</sup> and Silver Residents Coalition</b>	<b>Allegheny West Foundation</b>
<b>"Parent Power"</b>	<b>Hope Plaza Thriftway Groceries</b>	<b>The Friends of the Free Library Widener Branch</b>
<b>One Day At A Time</b>	<b>39<sup>th</sup> Police District</b>	<b>St. Martin de Porres Catholic School</b>
<b>Geiger Memorial Brethren Church</b>	<b>North EPIC Stakeholders</b>	

**Issues**

On October 3, 2011 PhillyRising was introduced to the Swampoodle/Allegheny West community. This first meeting was a kick-off that was well attended. Close to 100 concerned residents along with city officials and other stakeholders came together and presented the issues in the community, the vision for the community, and the obstacles that hinder the community from achieving their vision. PhillyRising is working in coordination with local residents and city agencies to overcome the challenges that hinder the progression of this area. Some of these challenges are:

**Infrastructure**

Residents and community stakeholders noted that the area suffers from a number of abandoned lots, vacant houses, poor lighting and illegal dumping. Residents are concerned that lots are being used as dumping grounds and as locations for criminal behavior.



### **Neighborhood Safety**

An additional obstacle presented by the community is overall crime, which mainly consists of robberies and vandalism. Although this goal is listed in a separate category it is weaved in with every action that PhillyRising performs in the community. Through our engagement with city departments, the police department and residents, we will be able to reduce/eliminate this obstacle and improve quality of life.

### **Child and Young Adult Programming**

Residents noticed what appears to be a consistent problem of youth loitering through the community. Neighbors described the need for more activities for the area's youth, as well as an active campaign to bring them into programs. They cite employment and the promotion of education as the biggest needs. Residents feel employment and education opportunities for young adults can contribute to reducing crime in the community. The community would also like to foster a closer relationship with surrounding schools. The community expressed that schools should be recognized as the hub of the community, offering parents and students a resource for services and activities. (i.e. enrichment programs for parents and children). Tied into this are concerns about youth safety in the neighborhood, including safe routes to schools.

### **Personal Economic Development**

Several residents cited a large number of individuals in the community who are either unemployed or underemployed. To complicate this matter further, there is also a significant ex-offender population in the area that is looking for work. Neighbors described the need for both job training, as well as knowledge about the services available to ex-offenders as they reintegrate to society.

### **Community Health**

Residents have expressed a growing concern over healthy living habits amongst teen/young adults and the elderly as a result of access to health care information being limited. Community residents expressed concerns over the increase of sexually transmitted diseases amongst the elderly and the rise of teen age pregnancies. Residents would like to be better informed about preventative health options in the forms of flu shots and health screenings. Residents would like for both age groups to be better informed about life choices and healthy living.



### Vision

- Physical improvements, such as the demolition of vacant properties and the cleaning of vacant lots and alleyways, will make a noticeable difference to the community's landscape;
- The vacant lots scattered in the target area will be used as positive, green community spaces;
- Senior citizens and youth in targeted area will have more access to education about proper health screenings and programs within the community resulting in healthier lifestyles;
- Local organizations and businesses will work to improve residents' job skills through enhanced resources such as mentorships/apprenticeships/internships/Rise Program/Career Boot Camp/Entrepreneurial learning; to enable residents to become more competitive in today's workforce;
- Involve schools in the community by staying open later to serve as a resource center offering enrichment programs and resources to students and adults;
- Develop a coalition of health care organizations to work together on health issues in the community;
- Launch Citizens' Engagement Academy into the community, enabling residents to gain a better understanding of City services;
- Launch Philly 311 Neighborhood Liaison Program into the community, empowering residents with the opportunity to actively improve their quality of life;
- Better lighting in neighborhoods and along bus stops, creating a safer neighborhood;
- To increase property value and neighborhood stability by having cleaner, safer areas as a result of clearing vacant lots/sealing vacant properties; increasing property value and develops a sense of civic pride in the community;
- Town Watch Integrated Services will have a unifying presence in the area; this would promote safety through community policing, and will leave the community better able to identify and prioritize their own action plan to address their challenges.

Cumulatively, these items will deter the presence of chronic crime and disorder issues in the neighborhood. They will help revitalize the community to become a thriving neighborhood where residents can engage in a high quality of Philadelphia City life.



### Action Items

#### Physical/Infrastructure

- **2767 Judson St. Demolition**
  - Demolition by The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) demolished this imminently dangerous property along the east side of the 2700 block of N. Judson Street and will cite other sites as needed.
  - **Status-Completed as of 11/11/11**
  
- **2928 Judson St. Residential Maintenance**
  - On 07/03/12 this property was reported to The Department of Licenses and Inspections for structural damage and deterioration. After several failed inspections and attempts to contact the owner, the property was referred to Municipal Court for further action on 9/14/12.
  - **Status- Completed**
  
- **2601 W. Silver St. Illegal Boarding Room**
  - This address sits next to a vacant lot and is identified by community residents to be operating as either an illegal boarding room house or halfway house. Community members stated that the property receives a large amount of pedestrian traffic by members from outside of the community. As a result, residents began to notice an increase in trash, loitering, and other nuisances. In addition, community members found themselves constantly making efforts to keep their block clean from the illegal dumping of trash and furniture into a nearby vacant lot and on sidewalks.
  - On 05/01/12 this property was reported to The Department of Licenses and Inspections for inspection. After several failed inspections and attempts to contact the owner, the property was referred to Municipal Court for further action on 7/23/12.
  - **Status- Completed**
  
- **2640 W. Seltzer St. Abandoned House**
  - On 07/03/12 this property was reported to The Department of Licenses and Inspections for structural damage and deterioration. After several failed inspections and attempts to contact the owner, on 9/5/12 The Department of Licenses and Inspections referred this property for demolition.



- **Status-Completed**
- **2709 Silver St. Demolition**
  - Demolition of The Department of Licenses and Inspections (L&I) demolished this imminently dangerous property along the west side of the 2700 block of W. Silver St. and will cite other sites as needed.
  - **Status-Completed as of 07/15/12**
- **Demolition of an abandoned newsstand at 22<sup>nd</sup> and Cambria.**
  - This newsstand is currently being monitored and once Licenses and Inspections (L&I) has determined that there isn't an owner of record, then it will be declared abandoned and it will be sent onto the Streets Dept. for removal.
  - **Status-Completed. Removed as of 1/18/12**
- **Instance of Graffiti at 2708 Seltzer St.**
  - Graffiti instance alongside residential property.
  - **Status- Completed. Removed as of 5/9/12 by Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services**
- **Community Clean Up Day Nov. 19, 2012- 27<sup>th</sup> and Sterner**
  - On November 19, 2012 the blocks of 27<sup>th</sup> and Sterner streets were cleaned. This intersection is formed by side streets and has heavy pedestrian traffic. Also at this location is a vacant lot that has significance to residents. Local residents took part in cleaning this trash strewn area and 20 bags of trash and debris were collected; including one sofa. This cleanup was performed with the participation of 15 local residents and the Community Partnership Program through the Neighborhood services Division and has led to residents scheduling their own community led cleanups so that this area does not fall back into an unmanageable state.
  - **Status-Ongoing**
- **Community Clean Up Dedication Dec. 3, 2012- 27<sup>th</sup> and Sterner/ 2800 N. Taylor (Intersection of Taylor and Somerset)**
  - On December 3, 2012 as a result of the 1st community cleanup held the previous month, residents hosted their 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive cleanup consisting of two separate locations simultaneously. The two sites were the intersection of 27<sup>th</sup> and Sterner and 2800 N. Taylor including the intersection of Taylor and Somerset. The cleanup consisted of an even larger turnout by residents, City departments and agencies. This event was well attended with



## 39<sup>th</sup> Police District-Swampoodle/Allegheny West - Action Plan

over 100 participants. During this cleanup over 100 bags of trash were collected; including tires and construction debris. The City of Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program dedicated a mural to the community. The day concluded with closing remarks by Mayor Michael Nutter and the donation of lawn equipment to the community. The partners for this clean up were Berean Baptist Church, The Police Department, The City of Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program, the Neighborhood Services Division/Community Partnership Program and the Department of Corrections.

- **Status- Completed**
  
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Community Service Project Jan. 16, 2012- Chalmers Park/Playground**
  - On January 16, 2012 PhillyRising in collaboration with local community group Harmonious Volunteer Center, participated in the MLK Jr. Day of Service which included a day of community led cleanup/restoration projects and activities for children. PhillyRising supported this event with the contribution of the tools and supplies for the clean up the North Philadelphia Neighborhood between 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 22<sup>nd</sup> Street between Lehigh Avenue to Cambria St. PhillyRising along with residents also cleaned and groomed the entire Chalmers Park and did work inside the community center. This event was well attended with over 100 participants. During this cleanup over 100 bags of trash were collected; including tires, construction debris and old furniture. This day provided community residents with a sense of self and community renewal as the history of Chalmers Park was shared by a tour of the site and a march for a vision of what is to come. Certificates of Appreciation were also issued to all participants. The partners who participated in this clean up were PhillyStat, Police Department, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, the Streets Department and various Civic groups and organizations.
  - **Status-Completed**
  
- **The Philadelphia 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Cleanup**
  - On 04/14/2012 PhillyRising brought together 2 churches, 30 residents and 2 local community groups to clean streets between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> from Indiana to Lehigh. 2.5 tons of trash removed.
  - **Status- Completed**
  
- **Sterner St. Block Cleanup May 1, 2012 -2700 Block of Sterner St.**
  - On 5/1/12 Manny Ramos of the Neighborhood Services Division along with 8 community members cleaned 8 vacant lots on the 2700 block of Sterner Street. This was a cleanup that neighbors organized and asked that PhillyRising help to support with tools and trash removal. Two severely blighted vacant lots were cleared and it was a highly successful event and partnership.
  - **Status- Completed**



- **National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)**

- In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Services, PhillyRising was approved to get citywide assistance from AmeriCorps NCCC service members to tackle some of the larger projects throughout PhillyRising neighborhoods. PhillyRising also located funding to support the purchasing of equipment for community improvements. In Swampoodle we had AmeriCorps in collaboration with the CSP/CPP programs and community members to complete the following projects:
- On 5/8/2012 on the 2700 block of Seltzer St. a vacant lot was cleared of trash and overgrown weeds. .5 tons of trash removed.
- On 5/9/2012 the 2600 block of Sterner St. a vacant lot was cleared of trash and overgrown weeds. .5 tons of trash removed.
- **Status- Completed**

- **27<sup>th</sup> and Silver Community Garden Revitalization Project**

- The vision for the 27<sup>th</sup> and Silver Community Garden Project was to turn a portion of vacant land at 27<sup>th</sup> and Silver back into a once thriving community garden. Community gardens provide fresh produce and plants as well as satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, sense of community and connection to the environment. Community gardens also encourage an urban community's food security, allowing residents to grow their own food or for others to donate what they have grown. In addition, community gardens improve the community's health through increased fresh vegetable consumption and providing a venue for exercise. Establishing a community garden provided meaningful activity for the area's senior citizens and young people, as well as an outlet for neighbors to donate unused garden supplies and their own services towards this project. The benefits of this community garden and the surplus produce are shared with people who are having difficulty getting enough to eat in these challenging economic times. Fresh produce such as corn, tomatoes, peppers, onions, and lettuce have grown in the garden and continue to provide community residents with healthy dietary options and alternatives. The community garden also combated two forms of alienation that plague urban life, by bringing urban gardeners closer in touch with the source of their food, and by breaking down isolation by creating a social community. The Community garden also provided other social benefits, such as the sharing of food production knowledge with the wider community and safer living spaces. It is by creating an active community that leads to less crime and vandalism in the area. Gardening is environmentally friendly and with people raising more crops and plants, it helps balance out the negative effects of population and pollution. This PhillyRising project successfully aimed to reinvigorate the region's sense of community and is to be a model for other neighborhoods, schools and churches with vacant lots and unused lawn areas to become hubs for vibrant, meaningful community involvement and a source for healthy, local food.
- **Status-Completed as of 5/7/12**



### Neighborhood Safety

#### ○ **PhillyRising Citizens' Engagement Academy**

- This is the second year the City of Philadelphia has offered an extended series of workshops and speakers aimed at promoting citizen participation in our city's neighborhoods. The Citizens' Engagement Academy is a **free**-8 week course designed to help those who serve in a leadership role in their neighborhoods, or have an interest in becoming active, learn more about local government and gain ideas to make their neighborhoods stronger. The class is comprised of many different community activists i.e. block captains, community outreach directors, pastors, concerned residents, community organizers, etc. Session topics will include an overview various City departments and local agencies and will cover subjects such as, neighborhood safety, code enforcement, neighborhood sanitation, and ways to strengthen communities. The content of the series will be helpful to those with years of experience as well as those just getting started in neighborhood efforts. The goal for the Citizens' Engagement Academy is for participants to leave the course with more knowledge on how to connect with City departments and to feel energized about working on issues important to their neighborhood. On February 9, 2012 the Citizens' Engagement Academy was held in North Philly. This was the largest class to date consisting of 17 residents from the 39<sup>th</sup> Police District and 13 residents from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Police District for a combined total of 30 residents from the North Philadelphia community. At the end of the course graduates participated in a closing Graduation Ceremony that included a course completion certificate, recognition by the Mayor and other City officials.
- **Status-Completed as of 4/17/12**

#### ○ **PhillyRising Action to Reduce Crime Male Forum**

In response to the reoccurrence of senseless shootings and violent acts of crime happening in the Northwest neighborhoods, in November 2011 the Harmonious Volunteer Center a community resource center and the Olney Strip Youth, Women and North Philadelphia Organization brought men of various ages together monthly for an open forum discussion to address the senseless violent crime occurring in Northwest neighborhoods. Approximately 20 men ranging from the ages of 24 to 70+ from all walks of life and having different experiences voiced their opinions, made meaningful statements and offered suggestive remarks. Ongoing topics of discussion and workshops have included and will include crime prevention/safety, Prison Reentry into society, negative images of Law Enforcement and future workshops consisting of topics such as networking, job registration/placement and life planning sessions. PhillyRising in partnership with Town Watch Integrated Services and the Police Department are supporting the ongoing efforts of the Harmonious Volunteer Center by coordinating City department services and existing community resources. Additional forums and workshops will be scheduled for the future.



- **Status-Completed**
  
- **Philly 311 Neighborhood Liaison Program**
  - 311 liaison program promotion and training is being provided to give residents an opportunity to interact more directly with the city to address quality of life crime issues throughout the community. As of April 18, 2012, 12 community members have become neighborhood liaisons. Additional classes will be scheduled for the future.
  - **Status-Ongoing**
  
- **Citizen Public Safety Engagement**
  - PSA and block representative meetings are occurring monthly in the division to allow neighbors the opportunity to interact with police officers and have their concerns addressed by the district Captain.
  - Increased presence of Town Watch through recruitment and engagement.
  - Monthly town watch trainings and meetings are occurring. As of 5/2/12 two new Town Watch members joined Town Watch in this high gun violence area.
  - **Status-Ongoing**

### Child and Young Adult Programming/Personal Economic Development

- **Peirce Parent Resource Center**
  - The “Peirce Parent Resource Center” is a project dedicated to meeting the needs of the parents, children, and the surrounding community by establishing a parent resource center at Peirce Elementary. Peirce Elementary has a large parental body that is supportive of the school’s faculty, staff, and is active in furthering the development of their children’s education by assisting in daily school activities and functions such as tutoring and the monitoring of classes. In addition to their volunteer efforts, parents are meeting with Principal Parris on a regular basis to discuss ways to further increase their efforts within the school as well as in the surrounding community. The parents of the community have expressed that schools should be recognized as the “hub” of the community, offering parents and students a resource for services and activities (i.e. enrichment programs for parents and children). With the establishment of a “Parent Resource Center”, parents will have the resources to serve the school and community in a larger capacity by offering additional services to the students and adults in the form of enhanced education, development, and personal enrichment. PhillyRising is collaborating with various City Departments and external partners such as Peirce College, Parent Power, and E.A.R.T.H.S to become community partners. In doing so, this partnership would assist Peirce Elementary with putting in place the “Parent Resource Center”, offering enrichment programs and



computer based learning activities for school children, faculty and community members. In addition to identifying resources, this is also a great opportunity for Peirce College and Peirce Elementary to establish an even closer relationship with each other, by allowing for students to see the importance of school, continuing education, and giving back to their community. **Status- Pending with completion in early 2013**

- **Dream Drive 2012**

- There is a tremendous need for affordable, quality youth programming in Philadelphia. High concentrations of poverty and single parent households, low high school graduation rates, lack of physical activity, and few opportunities to learn positive life skills are some of the challenges facing youth in our communities. Although there is high demand for after school programming, parents often cite cost as being a barrier to enrolling their children. To address the need for parents being able to provide their children with healthy educational and recreational activities for the summer, PhillyRising in conjunction with the Office of Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. and Community Action Group, partnered together to offer families of North Philadelphia an opportunity to enhance their children's summer experience through travel. Dream Drive 2012 embodies a belief in the importance of education, learning, personal growth and discovery. Dream Drive 2012 aims to engage our youth in these principles by hosting a one-day tour of the museums, exhibits and landmarks in Washington, D.C. On August 4<sup>th</sup> 2012, PhillyRising led 70 young children accompanied by their parents, on such trip. This unique opportunity aimed to increase our youth's interest and engagement in school by providing an authentic learning experience consisting of real-world applications placed in an environment alternate to what is routinely offered and often limited for summer recreation. The youth spent a day exploring museums and exhibits that are key to/and supplement their existing classroom lessons such as Natural and Exploratory Sciences, Art, History, Social Studies, and more. In addition, our youth were part of an experience that broadened their horizons, enriched their lives, and opened their minds to new opportunities and experiences.
- **Status-Completed with plans for Dream Drive expansion**

- **Friends of the Free Library Community Day and Open House**

- The Friends of Widener Library Open House and Community Festival was held on May 5, 2012 from 11-4pm. The event program was developed to give community members a unique Library experience that would highlight the resources/services/programs offered at The Widener Library Branch and organizations located in North Philadelphia. The day offered:



### **Community Youth Art Show:**

- The community was welcomed into the Library through the “Open” front doors and vestibule that was transformed into a Community Youth Art Show gallery. The art pieces were donated by Blaine Elementary School’s art program.

### **Health Expo**

- Quality Community Health Care, Inc., the local health center, offered on site health screenings for patrons. The medical assistants also provided the community with important health related resource material. They highlighted specifically where QCHC Inc. is located in the community and identified the quality primary comprehensive care services they provide to all residents. QCHC Inc. services include: Internal Medicine, Family Health, Men’s Health, Women’s Health, Pediatrics, Children’s Health Services, Nutrition, Special Programs, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Childbirth/Parenting Classes, Family Planning, Social Services, Behavioral Health, HIV/AIDS Care, Dental Services, WIC Program Certifications.

### **Verizon Thinkfinity Activity Room**

- The meeting room at the Widener Library is also labeled as a Smart Technology Center. This branch is equipped with a Verizon Smart Board. This special feature was added to the library recently through a grant partnership with Verizon and FLP. Smart Technology Centers provide organizational change in how libraries interact with youth, will change teens’ attitudes about libraries, and will result in increased use of the Library. The Center also provides staff training in new technologies, which will result in the sustainability of the new Smart Technology Centers.

The Verizon Thinkfinity outreach team transformed the meeting room during the event into an exciting hands-on Smart Technology Center/Thinkfinity Activity Room. Using Thinkfinity activities as part of this program engaged youth in creative activities, which included animating a story and creating a group poem. All the young people’s work was saved using the new whiteboard technology. In addition to the SMART board technology, the youth had the opportunity to “openly” use one of the five iPads that were available on site also provided by the Verizon Thinkfinity team. iPad explorers were able to access one on one tech support all day from the Thinkfinity outreach team.

### **Leap Youth Activity Craft Zone**

- The Community room located in the front of the Library was used as the location for the LEAP Youth Activity Craft Zone. The children engaged in creative craft activity supported by the Library’s LEAP team.



### Community Festival

- The Community Festival was held in the parking lot area located behind the Widener Library. The festival component of the program engaged over 100 residents in community building activities while enjoying an afternoon of fun at their neighborhood library. The Festival program included: music, open-microphone entertainment, children's games, face painting, children garden planting, story time tree dedication, food, community resource tables and a unique library experience.
- **Status-Completed**

### Measures of Success

The basic goal of PhillyRising is to lower crime, in both a real and perceived sense, and to increase residents' self-sufficiency and involvement in their community. Aside from a reduction in crime, success will also be measured by the differences in numbers of dangerous vacant properties, number of residents involved in job training programs, and the increase in the capacity of community organizations to sustain positive change. These measures will be monitored and given quarterly progress reports at PhillyStat sessions after the majority of the action items have been completed.