

## My Ministry at All Saints Neighborhood Center

By Dennis Nordmoe, November 2005

The retiree across the street spends hours a day in front of his window facing mine. He sees me come in and then sit hour after hour at my desk. He has got to wonder what on earth I'm doing.

Then again, he sees dozens of people come in and out of the Center every day from morning until night. (Our hours are 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.). He sees workers come and work on the Center. We've had as many as seven contractor trucks at a time this summer. He's seen the building go through an incredible metamorphosis. He's got to be thinking, "I know there's some connection between Dennis sitting at that desk every day and these things happening, but what in the world is it?"

Well here is what I do. I think about the community and its needs. I talk to people. I pick up a glimmer of their aspirations, their goals and their frustrations. I drive around the neighborhood and look at the potholes, the vacant lots, dead end streets, muddy alleys, renovated as well as neglected homes, and thriving businesses. I look at data on the Internet. I think about our resources - volunteers, a building, some land, the connections we have with other agencies and people, and money that might be able to help us.

Then I muse about what connections could be made between needs, visions, and resources. I keep plugging away at grants and programs and staffing until I find combinations that work for this community. Between writing, and phoning and organizing, people come in to see me - to volunteer, to discuss a personal crisis, to get a referral, to seek help on a community problem.

This is the most satisfying job I've had. We're getting things done. Lives are changing. Great facilities are becoming available. We're coming up with a plan to trigger new investment in the community. Most of all, the people I meet are positive, happy and respectful. Thanks to all who provide me with this, the best job I've ever had.