



designing, planning, building
better neighborhoods



THE NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN CENTER: A GREAT COMMUNITY PARTNER

Written by the Port Towns Community Development Corporation

Jessica Boualavong dug her shovel into the ground. The temperature was nice, but the soil was hard as nails.

It was Saturday, October 13th, the annual Gorgeous Prince George's Day, a day spent beautifying our neighborhoods. In the Port Towns dozens of volunteers come together in this annual spring tree planting and community clean-up. This year's accomplishments in the Port Towns were made possible by the staff and volunteers from one of our sister organizations, the Neighborhood Design Center. The Neighborhood Design Center also assists many organizations throughout the county with their services.



"I was really excited to participate in Gorgeous Prince George's Day. Planting is something I love to do, but I know that it's a lot of work. Creating the landscape plan and organizing the delivery of plants is hard, tedious, but necessary work," says Jessica, "which is why I really appreciate the efforts of the Neighborhood Design Center."

This is just one of the many Port Towns projects that The Neighborhood Design Center has been involved in through the years. Created in 1968, the Neighborhood Design Center provides pro-bono facade, landscaping, and concept design and planning services. They mobilize a diverse array of professional volunteers to work

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with under-served communities. In the Port Towns, the Neighborhood Design Center has been among our most reliable and valuable community partners.

According to Jan Townshend, NDC's Prince George's County Program Manager "The Neighborhood Design Center regards the Port Towns CDC and the four municipalities [of the Port Towns] among our strongest community partners. We are delighted to organize volunteers from the design professions to produce the concept plans that enable the Port Towns to implement important community revitalization projects.

In addition to supplying the Port Towns with landscaping plans every year for Gorgeous Prince George's Day, the NDC has worked on a variety of projects. In Bladensburg they participated in the conversations about the new Bladensburg Town Center by producing concept plans for a Visitor Center and 'Market Square.' In Colmar Manor they developed landscaping plans for the Port Towns Shopping Center in 2006 and 2007. In Cottage City their concept plans for the redevelopment of the historic bungalows have provided much to learn about renovations of historic buildings. In Edmonston they provided landscape plans for Veteran's Park.

Across the Port Towns and with the PTCDC they help with façade improvements, business development, and site recommendations. Most recently NDC cooperated with the Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Maryland to study Port Towns in detail. The students produced concept plans for many interesting projects-two of which were for a planned environmental education center and a hospitality and entertainment district. NDC volunteer architects produced the early plans for our People's Harbor development.

According to PTCDC Executive Director, Sadara Barrow, small communities have many constraints, 'NDC brings services to our community development work that we would find impossible to fund. The NDC staff provides these services efficiently and professionally...the value they provide cannot be overstated. We are so pleased with their expertise and collaboration and we look forward to a long and fruitful partnership."

If you wish to obtain more information on this story, or to contact the writer, you may contact the Port Towns CDC at www.porttowns.org tel 301.864.1093 fax 301.960.4835