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CityLinks Conference Aims to Bring Good Ideas to Miami Valley Neighborhood Organizations

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NEWS RELEASE

CITYLINKS CONFERENCE AIMS TO BRING GOOD IDEAS TO MIAMI VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

DAYTON, Ohio — From the local adoption of individual development accounts to a community focus on alternatives to predatory lending, the annual CityLinks neighborhood conference has put a spotlight on good ideas and eased their acceptance in the Miami Valley.

“CityLinks 2002 — Building Communities: Fresh Starts,” will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, May 10, in the University of Dayton’s Kennedy Union Ballroom. The conference will feature six workshop sessions and keynote speaker Olgen Williams, director of Christamore House, a neighborhood community center in Indianapolis.

Registration deadline is May 6. Call (937) 229-4641 to register.

“The plan is to increase awareness of how folks are doing things in other communities and see how that could work locally,” said Dean Lovelace, community leadership consultant with UD’s Center for Leadership in Community and chief organizer of the conference. “In 1996 or ‘97, we focused on individual development accounts, and the Oikos neighborhood development association said they’d take that on. Now we have 106 people saving to become homeowners. In 1996, the Community Reinvestment Institute was established in Dayton as a result of previous CityLinks conferences and it trains 18 to 25 people a year in understanding the Community Reinvestment Act and the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and how predatory lending practices are devastating our communities.”

Workshop choices this year will focus on the Dayton style of community policing, unmaintained housing in Dayton, assisting released prisoners, increased housing starts in Dayton, preparing a successful liquor objection and the Genesis Project that is rebuilding a Dayton neighborhood.

Keynote speaker Williams, author of *Healing the Heart, Healing the Hood*, will kick off the conference. A community activist with a focus on social action in the urban community, he is affectionately known as the “Mayor of Haughville,” a community once plagued with escalating crime and homicide rates that now has one of the lowest rates of crime in the Indianapolis area.

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Williams is vice chair of Westside Cooperation Organization and is president of Haughville Community Council. He is the citywide director and the remaining original member of the Weed & Seed initiative, a program to weed out violent crime and seed in community rehabilitation.

In conjunction with the conference, the 2002 Mattie Davis Community Builders Award will be presented to Diana Watkins, an active servant-leader in the Twin Towers community in East Dayton. Davis played a major role in organizing the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition in 1978 and invited UD to join an effort that lead to the award-winning Edgemont Solar Garden and other ventures.

CityLinks 2002 is sponsored by the University of Dayton Center for Leadership in Community, DP&L Foundation, the City of Dayton, Family Services Association, Family Founders Center and Dayton Priority Boards.

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