

This Week at Second Chance ...



"A public safety program of the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission"

www.kc-crime.org

Second Chance Mission: "To provide a crime prevention strategy for Metropolitan Kansas City through research, advocacy and the funding of programs that improves opportunities for ex-offenders to lead productive lives."

July 31, 2009

Volume 1, Issue 16

The Second Chance Program focuses on metro-wide reentry efforts through Research and special projects, Advocacy through our Reentry Coalition, and Fundraising to support local organizations providing direct services to the offender population.

In an effort to keep you more informed on what's happening in the Second Chance community, we will send out this e-newsletter periodically with the latest and greatest news and information!

Thanks for your support of the Second

Seeds of Change: A Closer Look at 27th and Prospect

"27th and Prospect was once considered the **worst** neighborhood in Kansas City," reports **Rev. John Modest Miles** of Morningstar Missionary Baptist Church; the church sits just one block West of that intersection. "We could have moved out back then but we decided to stay and do something about it," Rev. Miles adds. They created a display near that intersection on church owned property with dozens of white crosses in the mid 1990s, which represented the number of homicides in Kansas City.



27th & Prospect-Project Abraham 2009 Community Garden

Chance Program!

Coming Soon

Board Meeting –
August 18, 3:00pm,
Liberty Memorial
(Board members &
invitees)

- Kansas City
Metropolitan
Reentry
Coalition,
Tuesday, August
25th, 3-4PM
(open networking
2-3PM) Pioneer
Campus of MCC,
2700 E. 18th St,
K.C. Mo.,
Auditorium

Second Chance Offices

3100 Broadway, Suite
226

Kansas City, Mo
64111

816-960-6800

Pioneer Campus Office

2700 E. 18th St,
Room 207

Kansas City, Mo.
64127

816-285-8668

Fast forward more than a decade and, Rev. Miles, a member of the Crime Commission's Second Chance Advisory Board, continues to partner with the broader community to create lasting change.

On May 3rd, Morningstar worked with Al Inshirah Islamic Center, Community Christian Church, Congregation Beth-Torah, and the Crime Commission on Project Abraham. Special thanks to another Second Chance Board Member, **Rev. Bob Hill**, Community Christian Church. The faith communities cleared trash and debris from neighboring blocks, cleaned out a vacant church-owned home, and created a major expansion of their existing community garden.

More than 200 volunteers descended upon the area that day and Morningstar took it from there--- the garden is flourishing. Community activist **Ron McMillan** referred to the "seeds of change" on Prospect recently in a community meeting.

Now, Block by Block, an initiative started by **Pastor Terrence** of Friendship Baptist Church will partner with Key Coalition (the neighborhood association in the area), Green Acres (another urban garden expansion headed by **Carol Coe**), the Crime Commission, Morningstar and other community groups to do a massive clean-up, brush and tire removal around 27th and Olive on August 22nd.

The Crime Commission, under the leadership of Vice President **Barry Mayer**, has had an on-going interest in change along the Prospect Corridor. These projects respond to "the broken window theory," that crime and blight are co-occurring and to reduce crime, the community must respond to blight.

Both the Second Chance Program and Metropolitan Community Service Program (MCSP) have worked to impact the Prospect area to realize a reduction in crime. MCSP has adopted the full length of Prospect Avenue (9 miles) and workers supervised by **Mark Porter** of 100 Men of Blue Hills are on the avenue five days a week removing tons of litter. (Over 20,000 lbs in 2009)

[Hope lives at 27th and Prospect-](#) by **Mike Hendricks, KC Star for Prime Buzz**

We were talking, the **Rev. John Modest Miles** and I, about what passed for everyday occurrences at **27th Street and Prospect Avenue** when he first visited the corner 20 years ago.

"We're talking about prostitution," he said.

Contact Us

Lora McDonald,
Program
Coordinator,
816-285-8668,
lmcDonald@kc-
crime.org

Barry Mayer,
Vice-President,
KCMCC, 816-
960-6814,
bmayer@kc-
crime.org

Richard Easley,
President,
KCMCC, 816-960-
6800, reasley@kc-
crime.org

SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM Board of Directors

CHAIRMAN OF THE
BOARD

William H. Dunn, Sr.

VICE CHAIRMAN

Carl DiCapo

SECRETARY

Albert Riederer

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

Sheriff Dick Anderson
Charles Battey
Alvin Brooks
Terry Calaway

“We’re talking about drugs. We’re talking about murder.”

Fresh from Arkansas, Miles, now 63, was then the new pastor of a church one block to the west at 2411 E. 27th St., **Morning Star Missionary Baptist** And what he soon learned was the immense challenge facing anyone hoping to turn around that neighborhood at the height of the crack epidemic.

Better be wearing thick-soled shoes, he told me, when walking into one of the drug houses next door to his church.

“The drug needles were just stacked up on the floor.”

In another ramshackle apartment building, empty liquor bottles were quantified not by the case but by how many bushel baskets it would take to cart them out.

Yet last week, as Miles and I walked across the vacant lot where those crime-ridden buildings once stood, and where later Miles erected a mock cemetery as a witness to homicide victims, he smiled and proclaimed that a new day is coming to 27th and Prospect.

“We bought 28 buildings in this neighborhood and tore them down,” he said. “Twenty-four of them were on the site where we’re going to build our youth and family life center.

“We wanted to create a sense of ‘I can make it’ for the children in this neighborhood.”

No Kansas City intersection more symbolizes the decay and desperation, as well as hope, for Kansas City’s inner city. **Mayor Mark Funkhouser** often says that our goal ought to be to ensure that 27th and Prospect is someday as safe and prosperous as **63rd Street and Brookside Boulevard**.

Wonderful idea, though it almost seems impossible as you tour streets lined with battered houses, abandoned storefronts and gang bangers in their rides looking for trouble.

Still, some see the beginnings of a rebirth in the project that Morning Star Missionary Baptist has been working toward for much of two decades.

“This is one of the most important things happening in this city in the toughest neighborhood in town,” says **Bill Nelson, chairman of George K. Baum Asset Management** and one-time head of a downtown bank, the former Boatmen’s National.

Nelson and Miles became friends in the late 1980s, when Nelson was also new to his job and was looking for ways Boatmen’s could invest in the poverty-stricken inner city.

One way, he learned, was for Boatmen’s to foreclose on two abandoned buildings at 28th Street and Wabash Avenue and donate them to Miles’ youth and family life center project.

And the two men have been working on the project ever since. First, by clearing the block of blight, then having plans drawn up for a community center, complete

Bill Dana, Jr.
Peter Dunn
Elena Franco
Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr.
Kenneth Gibson
Chief Ellen Hanson
Wallace Hartsfield
Robert Lee Hill
Ernie Johnson
Cathy Jolly
James Kanatzar
Chi King
John Modest Miles
C. Eugene Morgan
Julie Porter
Cliff Sargeon
Marilyn Scafe
Willard Snyder
Kent Sunderland
Bailus Tate
Marlene Weatherford

with gym, whose programs would include counseling, job training and recreation for young people, as well as activities for seniors.

According to the plan, the center would also include some kind of branch office of the Police Department.

“We think this will be a beacon of hope for the neighborhood,” Nelson told me.

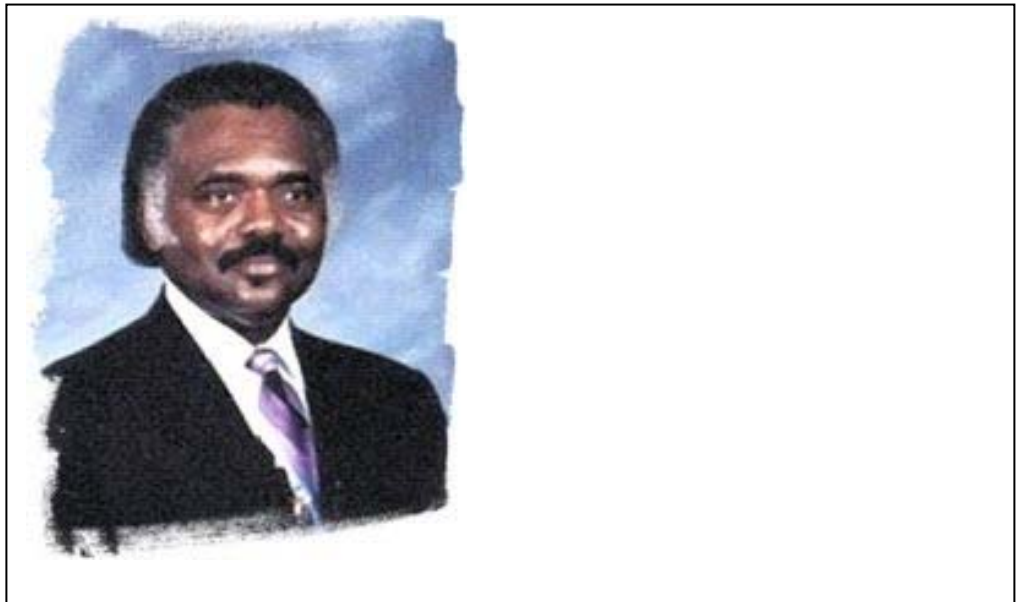
“I think it is sorely needed,” agreed **3rd District Councilwoman Sharon Sanders Brooks**.

As usual, money is the holdup. So far, City Hall has contributed more than \$600,000 to the project, of which \$373,000 was spent on land clearance and \$250,000 is set aside for sidewalk repairs.

Sen. Kit Bond secured a \$753,000 commitment from the federal government. A couple of more requests for city funds are in the pipeline for public works improvements. Plus, the project has the backing of the City Council, **City Manager Wayne Cauthen** and the mayor.

Calling Miles “a solid guy,” Funkhouser said, “We need community anchors like the one he has in mind. “I’m committed to making it happen.”

Meet the Second Chance Board:



Rev. John Modest Miles was born May 15, 1945 in Magnolia Arkansas. He is one of eleven children born to Darden and Pearl Miles, who instilled in him Christian principles. At the age of ten, he was converted and became a member of Mount Sinai Baptist Church in El Dorado, Arkansas under the pastoral guidance of Rev. S. A. Tunnage.

Rev. Miles received his education from the following schools: New Hope High School, Mt. Holly, AR; Los Angeles Trade School, Los Angeles, CA; Highland Park College, Detroit, MI; Philander Smith College, Little Rock, AR; Arkansas Baptist College (B.S. Degree) Little Rock, AR; Ouachita Baptist College (M. ED. Degree), Arkadelphia, AR; Central Mississippi College (D.D. Degree), Kosciusko, MS and Midwestern Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO.

Rev. Miles was licensed as a minister in 1963 at Paradise Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California at the age of 18. He was the Pastor of True Faith Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan, Liberty Hill Baptist Church and Mount Sinai Baptist Church – both in Little Rock, Arkansas before coming to Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church on April 5, 1987. He was also a teacher in the Little Rock Public School System and an instructor at Arkansas Baptist College.

He is married to Mrs. Jeanette Richard Miles and they have three children: Gerald (Janet), Derrick (Renee) and Janet (Rev. Mark) Weaver. They are also the proud grandparents of six granddaughters and three grandsons.

Miss a newsletter?

All Second Chance Foundation newsletters are retrievable on our webpage at the Crime Commission's website: www.kc-crime.org

If you would like to unsubscribe from this email newsletter, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line. Thank you again for your support to Public Safety.