

## ***Vision and Approach...***

New Community prominently displays its mission statement throughout its buildings and offices. The words aptly capture the organization's approach to community development:

***To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual God-given dignity and personal achievement.***

These words govern New Community's vision and approach to development and resident empowerment. By keeping their guidelines straightforward, NCC has achieved remarkable comprehensiveness in programming and served people from all faiths and backgrounds.



*Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center, 2004*  
**St. Joseph's Plaza**

***There are five identifiable elements of New Community's approach to community development:***

***Providing comprehensive and cohesive services***—New Community supports the “whole person” and the “whole family” through integrated services. Its comprehensive approach calls for communication and coordination among and across programs to facilitate the services it offers. Comprehensiveness and cohesiveness also build strength across programs and for the organization—New Community maintains its operations by distributing the revenue gained from profitable projects to the projects that cannot raise enough funding.

***Empowering community residents***—New Community's major goal is greater community empowerment. The organization engages the community in decision-making and makes responding to their concerns a fundamental part of existing and new services provision.

***Adapting to change***—New Community has grown and responded to the changing needs of the community.

***Turning obstacles into opportunities***—Community development is challenging and involves taking risks. The ability to think creatively about turning obstacles into new opportunities has enabled New Community to succeed where others have failed.

***Perseverance***—New Community began with a long-term vision and has maintained its commitment to this vision for more than 35 years.

Residents and leaders in Newark's Central Ward created New Community Corporation in 1967. That July had been witness to five days of race riots which caused damage to businesses and the community and was followed by decades of disinvestment. New Community's founders were inspired to create a "new community" amid the destruction based on the empowering ideas of the Civil Rights Movement and the idea of planned communities taking root in places like Columbia, Maryland and Reston, Virginia.

The comprehensive community building traditions of the Catholic Church were also integrated into the organization by Father William Linder who had recently joined the community as Associate Pastor of Queen of Angels Parish. These ideas inspired the group to be *comprehensive in its vision and focus*. Faith is an important ingredient in New Community's work. However, the organization has always been committed to providing service and guidance to those in need, independent of religion or creed. These inspirations have remained vital to New Community's strength and cohesion. Today, the organization is one of the oldest,

largest, most successful and comprehensive community development corporations in the country.

*Dynamism* and *perseverance* are two important keys to New Community's success. The organization reacts to adversity by turning challenges into opportunities. It has remained steadfast in attaining its most important goals, even if projects took years to complete. As a dynamic organization addressing the needs of the residents of the Central Ward, New Community began with the most pressing concern of providing housing for residents.

However, from the beginning, it had a vision of growth and wide-ranging service provision (see *New Community Timeline* on page 7). Today, New Community programs address the manifold needs of community members. Even though each program area employs a unique service model, all are rooted in New Community's mission and approach to community development. In order to provide the best possible services, New Community programs are highly integrated across sectors and staff maintain a rigorous level of communication with each other.



NCC Program Areas

Rutgers Community Development Studio, 2004

New Community's future relies on this continued commitment to mission. Fulfilling the commitment calls for forward thinking, creative, and passionate leaders who are dedicated to the community and to New Community. While New Community has gained stability due to its relationship with Newark residents, partnerships, expertise, and experience, it frequently evaluates the services offered, reframes them to meet the changing needs of the community, and abandons programs if need no longer exists.

## ***Why does New Community provide its services?***

New Community originated in response to political and economic disenfranchisement that had reached crisis level by the late 1960s. Deindustrialization, suburbanization, disinvestment, and federal policy drew resources outside of the city producing population and housing flight and prolonged disinvestment resulting in concentrated poverty.

New Community began by addressing the concerns of people living in dilapidated high-rise public housing. From this beginning, it expanded to address community needs for childcare, senior housing, education, job skills training, financial services, and health care (see ***Health Care: Comprehensive Service Provision, Jobs, and Skills Training***). As the organization grew, it developed for-profit businesses to serve inner city Newark (see ***Pathmark: Perseverance in For-Profit Business Development***).

New Community touches the lives of many individuals and families living in the Central Ward and surrounding areas. However, the conditions for households living in Newark remain dire. The city still faces high poverty, unemployment, segregation, and high crime.

## ***How does New Community accomplish its goals?***

New Community serves community needs and addresses problems. As a result, New Community tries to provide the most comprehensive services possible and to provide services that will help people maintain and regain dignity. Its long-term approach and persistence over decades has enabled the community to trust and support the organization. However, this approach might yield minimal results without several very determined and knowledgeable leaders, creative approaches to funding, key partnerships, and a willingness to take risks.

### ***Health Care: Comprehensive Service Provision, Jobs, and Skills Training***

Starting in 1986 with an Extended Care facility, New Community health care has expanded to include mental health, health screenings, medical day care, at-home chore services, home nursing, and multiple medical industry job training programs. Together this comprehensive health care network serves the population of the Central Ward and other urban neighborhoods in and around Newark.

To read more about New Community Health Care, see *New Community Health Care...*

### ***Pathmark: Perseverance in For-Profit Business Development***

In 1991, New Community opened a Pathmark supermarket, the first supermarket opened in Newark since the 1967 riots. Negotiations with the City of Newark and Supermarkets General (the parent company of Pathmark) lasted more than 10 years. Once opened, Pathmark quickly became financially successful and remains one of the top grossing Pathmark stores per square foot in New Jersey.

To read more about New Community development projects, see *New Community Doing Development...*

## ***Key Elements in the Founding and Operation of New Community***

### ***1. Leadership***

New Community has nearly 2,000 employees, but success has come through the guidance of a relatively few ambitious, dedicated, caring, and passionate leaders. This group, led by Monsignor William Linder, consisted mainly of public housing residents. The shared vision of this small group was and continues to be an integral force driving the organization's agenda and maintaining a strong level of commitment among staff.



<http://www.newcommunity.org>, 2004

**New Community Founders**

# Newark Today: Poverty Amidst the Renaissance

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>New Community Responses</i>
<b>Population</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The population of the city is slightly more than 270,000, only 10 percent of the metro area</li> <li>Close to 30 percent of the population lives in poverty, almost 37 percent of children live in poverty</li> <li>Eighty-five percent of the city's population is African American, Hispanic, or another non-White racial group</li> <li>Foreign-born residents comprise almost 25 percent of the population; more than half of these immigrants entered the country during the 1990s</li> </ul>	<p>New Community concentrates on economic development projects and programs. For-profit businesses, such as NCC Technology, bring jobs and services to the city and metro area. Job creation increases income for individuals and families and addresses poverty. As the population of the city diversified, New Community added the Hispanic Development Corporation and expanded program areas to meet the needs of an emerging West African community.</p>
<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many households are comprised of single parents or extended families</li> <li>Twenty-three percent of the population own their own home</li> <li>40 percent of housing stock in the city is multi-family units—most of which are rental</li> <li>Almost 42 percent of renters pay in excess of 30 percent of their income for housing</li> </ul>	<p>New Community operates 3,000 units of affordable housing units. The organization has recently begun to encourage homeownership by building duplex units in which a new homeowner lives and rents the second unit to a low-income resident as a source of income.</p>
<b>Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nine percent of adults hold a college degree (national average is 24.4 percent)</li> <li>Less than 60 percent of the population has high school diplomas (national average is 80.4 percent)</li> </ul>	<p>New Community's educational opportunities span all ages, from early care and education programs to three elementary schools. New Community offers several adult education programs through its Workforce Development Center, including its unique School of Practical Nursing.</p>
<b>Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 50 percent of Newark's residents are in the labor force</li> <li>The city's unemployment rate is almost 12 percent</li> <li>25 percent of Newark's children live in households with no parents in the labor force</li> </ul>	<p>Residents increase their potential for employment by participating in New Community's workforce development efforts such as the Youth Automotive Training Center. In addition, New Community itself employs almost 2000 people.</p>

*Newark in Focus: A Profile from Census 2000.* (2003). Living Cities: The National Community Development Initiative. The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. <http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/es/urban/livingcities/newark.pdf>



As New Community grew from a grassroots organization with a small staff to a multi-faceted, large organization, it adapted to the challenges and rewards of becoming more professional. The current staff bring skill and program sophistication. New Community maintains accountability measures within its leadership structure. These procedures take several forms. For example, Monsignor Linder continues to participate in monthly tenant group meetings in New Community housing and at least one Board member serves as community liaison or “trouble-shooter” to address community members grievances.

## 2. Board of Directors

At NCC’s founding, residents believed it was imperative that New Community’s leaders also be members of the community. They felt these individuals had the highest stakes in realizing New Community’s long-term vision and were more likely to take the risks necessary to do so. The original board members committed to serving 20-year terms. This leadership consistency provided organizational stability and tenaciousness toward achieving its goals.

Today, even though New Community does not require Board members to make this same time commitment, the Board continues to play a role in guiding the direction of the organization. Community residents dominate the Board, but there are now a few non-community members with corporate and educational backgrounds who

demonstrated their commitment to New Community through their participation as long-term members of the organization. The Board remains a dedicated group that advises New Community’s professional staff.

## 3. External Relationships

While strong leadership from within the community was necessary, other partnerships also played a significant role in the organization’s formation. When New Community began, parishioners of Queen of Angels collaborated with many suburban church communities through “Operation Understanding” and “Operation Housewives.” These suburban counterparts helped by providing donations of food, clothing, and money.



*The Clarion, December 2003*

J.P. Morgan Chase and Company’s Mark Willis, New Community Founder Msgr. William J. Linder and NCC Resource Development Director, Dale Robinson - Anglin at Columbia University

### *Youth Automotive Training Center: Using Opportunity to Create New Programs*

One external partnership with the Hillside Auto Mall and Ford Motor Company spawned the Youth Automotive Training Center. This center trains and helps place students in lucrative auto mechanic jobs and has been one of the most successful partnerships New Community has facilitated.

For more information on YATC see the NCC Workforce Development website at <http://www.newcommunity.org/whatwedoframe.htm>.

Some of these external partnerships have evolved into the New Community Foundation (NCF). Comprised of prominent members of the business and academic worlds, NCF members provide guidance, funding, and advice on new ventures and funding sources and provide expertise in finance, management, development, education, health care, and technology.

Local political actors influence NCC’s daily operations. Issue-based community organizations are often in opposition to local government, while community development corporations usually view this relationship

more pragmatically. New Community takes both approaches.

Throughout its history, New Community has not been shy in opposing local policy, which may impede its ability to attain goals through this channel. Building relationships with higher-level policy-makers can help create a structure for making things happen. New Community makes an effort to become involved with policy-making at the state and federal levels so that they are aware of upcoming legislation and can help formulate it. (To learn more about New Community's political activities, see separately *New Community Navigating the Political Landscape...*)

#### **4. Funding**

The organization seeks a variety of funding sources to support its services. Initially, New Community opted for loans instead of grants to establish credit and to build its legitimacy as a partner. They create business relationships that benefit both parties and can be tapped in the future. New Community continues to use loans to finance programs; however, grants are also valuable. Diversifying funding sources helps it balance risks and adapt to changing funding environments. New Community centralizes its finances so that one program that is making money can subsidize another that is not. In this way, New Community reinvests money made and re-circulates it in the local economy.

#### **5. Risk Taking**

When New Community becomes aware of a community need, it strives to fulfill that need, even if it is a service with which it is unfamiliar. To begin the process of entering an unknown field, researching and learning from professionals in the field is vital. For example, when New Community needed to build housing and did not have previous experience with mortgage underwriting, it engaged professionals and asked for help. The result was a home finance course that prepared NCC to take the next development steps. However, New Community takes risks based on as much information about the potential market and need as it can gather. The organization uses one venture that is doing well to leverage other ideas that may not be a sure thing.

New Community has not limited itself to a single

area of service provision, but has defined itself as an organization working for community empowerment. To meet this broad definition, the organization constantly redefines itself and the community that it serves. If there is a need that NCC can meet, it will try to do so. For example, New Community operates housing in several locations outside of the Central Ward; it also created the Hispanic Development Corporation to serve the growing Hispanic community. Additionally, New Community has fostered partnerships with community development groups internationally, including those in Ireland and Africa.

New Community staff incorporate failure into their knowledge base, and learn from it. The organization views failure as an opportunity not an obstacle. If a project does not work initially, New Community reexamines it and tries again after reworking it. New Community strives to turn obstacles into opportunities for the organization and for the community and individuals it serves.

## **Timeline**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>New Community</b>
<b>1967</b>	<i>Housing</i>	Group met at Queen of Angels Church to discuss issues in the Central Ward of Newark. They decided that housing was the most important issue facing residents.
<b>1968</b>	<i>Founding the Organization</i>	After a list of names submitted by the group for membership on a board for a housing organization to the Newark Archdiocese is rejected, the residents form their own group and name it NCC.
<b>1969</b>	<i>Childcare</i>	Babyland Nursery opened. Childcare was connected with NCC from the beginning. NCC saw a need for day care if mothers were going to be able to work. Before Babyland, there was no day care facility in Newark that accepted children under the age of two and a half.
<b>1973</b>	<i>Property Management</i>	Ground Breaking for New Community Homes. In keeping with the organization's philosophy of independence, NCC does all of its own property management.
<b>1977</b>	<i>Senior Housing</i>	Ground breaking for New Community Associates, senior citizen housing.
<b>1984</b>	<i>Economic Development</i>	NCC Federal Credit Union created.
<b>1985</b>	<i>Administrative</i>	St. Joseph Plaza renovated and used by NCC. Attempted to address the need for jobs among Central Ward residents.
<b>1986</b>	<i>Health Care</i>	New Community Extended Care Facility opens. Residents living in NCC senior housing requested a health care facility. There was also the potential for creating new jobs in the area by providing this service.
<b>1989</b>	<i>Social Service</i>	Harmony House opens. Harmony House provides 102 units of transitional housing for homeless families. This is the largest facility of its type in the state.
<b>1991</b>	<i>Expansion and Growth</i>	Pathmark Supermarket opened. This represented another significant step in economic development for NCC. The project also provided a lot of exposure for NCC. Policy-makers, politicians, private firms, and other non-profit groups started to notice the organization. The project is still considered a major achievement. NCC grew very fast after this project was developed.
<b>1995</b>	<i>Workforce Development</i>	Workforce Development Department created at NCC. Group was created to assist job seekers and provide employment training for Central Ward residents.
<b>1997</b>	<i>Workforce Development</i>	Gateway-to-Work program created in response to the change in federal welfare laws in 1996.
<b>1999</b>	<i>Education</i>	New Horizons charter school opens.
<b>2000</b>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	NCC Technologies opened. Provides jobs, job training, and components for NCC housing and school developments.
<b>2000</b>	<i>Health Care</i>	Essex Valley Visiting Nurses Association and Care at Home join NCC.
<b>2001</b>	<i>Education</i>	Lady Liberty charter school opens.
<b>2001</b>	<i>Childcare/Education</i>	Community Hills Early Learning Center opens.
<b>2002</b>	<i>Health Care</i>	School of Practical Nursing opens.
<b>2003</b>	<i>Senior Housing</i>	Orange Senior Housing opens.
<b>2004</b>	<i>Health Care</i>	RN Bridge Program scheduled to open.
<b>2004</b>	<i>Health Care</i>	Health Care facility that will centralize services and administration of New Community health services under construction.

*(Adapted from: Community Development Studio. 2002. Building Community: The Work of the New Community Corporation. Rutgers University Program in Planning and Policy Community Development Studio Report.)*



## Top Lessons

New Community has accumulated a wealth of knowledge about community development that can help other organizations. Below are top lessons from their experience:

- **MAINTAIN A LONG-TERM VISION.** Create and adhere to a long-term vision with a comprehensive scope.
- **TRAIN LEADERS.** Build staff capacity through training and encouragement. Train leaders from within the community and build job ladders so that they use their talents within the organization.
- **COMMUNICATE.** Develop efficient communication channels among various stakeholders.
- **BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.** Cultivate corporate and government alliances. Partnerships can help create win-win situations for all involved.
- **UNDERSTAND YOUR MARKET.** Innovate and use geographical and competitive advantages unique to your organization—know your market.
- **TURN OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITY.** Use failures to cultivate your understanding of a project and try again!
- **BE ADAPTIVE.** Plan strategically for future services and projects, but take advantage of opportunities.
- **COMMIT TO YOUR MISSION.** Maintain an integrity-filled organization so that people know what you stand for and believe that you will get things done.
- **LEVERAGE PROGRAM FUNDING.** Redistribute money from profitable enterprises within the organization to those that are struggling to meet community needs.
- **DIVERSIFY FUNDING.** Use varied funding sources to balance the risk associated with loans, grants, and reimbursements.





# Resources

All information except where noted within was gathered from interviews with the following New Community staff:

Monsignor William Linder, *Founder*  
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**Spring 2004**

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**Many thanks to everyone at NCC - without their help this project would not be possible: Mary Rigby Abernathy, Dale Anglin, William Baez, Ellen Boddie, Richard Cammarieri, Gloria Chambers, Ray Codey, Michael Davie, Lisa Fedder, Bob Guskind, Hillary Jury, Lesley Leslie, Monsignor William Linder, Sister Eileen McNally, and Madge**

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