

# The Beacon

Building  
HOMES  
Fulfilling  
DREAMS  
Enhancing  
COMMUNITIES



## Eye on the future

A longtime interest in helping the people and economy of Omaha motivates Yana Morgan as she takes over as NeighborWorks Omaha Board of Directors Chairwoman.

Morgan knows something about investing time and money. She is a certified financial planner with Weitz Funds, where she has worked since September 2000. She is the former director of donor services at Omaha Community Foundation, and has been directly involved with helping Omaha youth, including mentoring four brothers – now ages 23, 22, 21 and 17 – during the past 15 years.

She strongly believes in the various low- to middle-income housing-related programs and the business training classes/loan program for budding entrepreneurs championed by NeighborWorks.

“Nice, affordable housing and business training are both important factors in building and benefiting the community for the long term,” Morgan said. “Joining, and now leading, NeighborWorks seemed like a good way to expand on what I was already trying to do on a more one-on-one basis. It seemed like a wonderful opportunity to further my work in that area.”

She is looking for ways to lengthen the outreach of

NeighborWorks, including expansion into Council Bluffs. She is encouraged by the success of Salem Village and is excited about the current construction of Salem Village II for seniors.

NeighborWorks’ efforts to promote lead abatement in the community “might be the most important work we’ve done during the last few years,” she said. “We hope to continue to increase the number of lead-safe homes in north Omaha.”

“We’re always looking for ways to benefit the community,” said Morgan, who replaces outgoing Chairman Robert E. Lewis, professor at Eppley Institute for Cancer Research at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. “I think our staff, headed by Ken Lyons, is top notch, and we are working well together as a board. Hopefully, that bodes well for our organization and ultimately the greater community.”



*As NeighborWorks Omaha Board of Directors Chairwoman, Yana Morgan looks forward to promoting development in the diverse and growing city of Omaha.*

# Renewing a heritage

From 1975-2004, the Great Plains Black History Museum preserved and celebrated the history and culture of an entire race. It told the story of how black people helped settle the Plains and outlined their contributions up to the present day.

The building has been closed since 2004, but the museum itself is open again thanks to a rejuvenated board of directors led by Jim Beatty, Chairman and President, Frank Hayes, Vice President and Director



*Jim Beatty, Chairman of the Great Plains Black History Museum, explores options for the renovation of the historic museum building at 2213 Lake Street in Omaha.*

- Resource Development, and Ken Lyons, Director - Building Committee.

During the first quarter of 2011, the museum launched community initiatives and started recruiting members. As of April 15, more than 60 people had signed up as dues-paying members, including the museum's first life member, 1972 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Rodgers. It also has established its own website at [www.iloveblackhistory.com](http://www.iloveblackhistory.com).

"Our goal is to sign up 350 members by the end of 2011," Beatty said.

## Promoting community involvement

In February, the museum sponsored a pair of community forums. The first, held Feb. 11 at the offices of Family Housing Advisory Services, 2401 Lake St., was a discussion of the museum's development plans. The second forum, held Feb. 18, included a panel discussion of Nebraska's role in the Underground Railroad, which featured 11 students from the Junior Honors Class members from Arlington High School and their teacher, Barry Jurgensen. Another community discussion of the museum's future is scheduled during May, and the museum will participate in Native Omaha Days July 27-Aug. 1.

"We have focused on delivering programs and activities that are not based at the building," said Beatty, a native of Chicago who came to Doane College on an academic and athletic scholarship, and has lived in Omaha ever since. He currently is president of NCS International.

But there are plans for the museum building, donated by Bertha W. Calloway and her late husband, James T. Calloway, located at 2213 Lake St. In 1977, it was added to the National Registry of Historic Places. Short-term options include using a different location while the museum site is renovated.

"We're also reviewing plans to possibly move into the Blue Lion Center at 24th and Lake streets by the end of the year," Beatty said.

## Possibilities for development

The board is reviewing plans for alternative but compatible uses for a building of historical and cultural nature. To that end, the museum has opened preliminary discussions with the City of Omaha. One option being considered by the board involves nationally known artist and urban planner Theaster Gates, who specializes in transforming urban buildings for maximum cultural impact.

"We want to use it to take advantage of the cultural and high level of interest in the redevelopment of north Omaha," Gates said. "The museum will be a part of that."

Beatty encourages Omahans to learn more by going to the website or calling the museum at 402-572-9292 or email at [gblackmuseum@aol.com](mailto:gblackmuseum@aol.com).

"This is an exciting time," he said. "The board is very excited. We plan to continue to provide venues and opportunities for members and non-members."

Please join NeighborWorks®Omaha in rekindling pride in our neighborhoods by participating in the

## First Annual Spring Planting Day

At the Great Plains Black History Museum

Bring your gloves, shovels, watering cans, and garden supplies.  
Plants provided by Lauritzen Gardens and Omaha Botanical Society.

Saturday, June 4  
9:30AM – 12:00PM  
2213 Lake Street

Refreshments will be provided  
Please call Ellen Tisher at 402-451-2939, FAX 402-451-2595 or  
e-mail: [gblackmuseum@aol.com](mailto:gblackmuseum@aol.com)

or  
[etisher@nwomaha.org](mailto:etisher@nwomaha.org)



# TISHER JOINS TEAM

Ellen Tisher, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant, joined the NeighborWorks Omaha staff Feb. 1.

An Omaha native, Tisher was an administrative assistant at Omaha United Healthcare and Physicians Neck & Back Clinics in Maple Grove, Minn., before coming to NeighborWorks. She also was financial director at Camp Foster YMCA Association in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

She anticipates working her way into an executive assistant role, specializing in policy and procedures and multitasking on various jobs to help the organization move ahead.

"I'm excited to be here," Tisher said.

A finance major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska-Omaha, she lives in Omaha with her husband, Tom, and two children.

"Helping people is what I get pleasure out of," Tisher said. "I feel I have a purpose here in helping families in the community."



*Ellen Tisher, Special Assistant, looks forward to helping with a variety of NeighborWorks projects.*

## A letter from Chairwoman Morgan

As I move into the role of Board Chairwoman for NeighborWorks Omaha, I find myself humbled by the service of my predecessors, Rod Conser, Clarence Nichols and Robert E. Lewis, PhD. All three gentlemen brought vision to this organization that moved it – and therefore the community – forward. Additionally, the small but professional staff believes in this program and the importance of the work they do. Most of all, I respect the dedication, competence and unparalleled leadership of NeighborWorks President and CEO Ken Lyons.

Outside of my career serving clients at Weitz Funds, I have long been involved in helping youth in Omaha. For more than a decade, I sought to do what I could to provide four boys (now young men) with hope and a chance to break the unproductive cycle that captures their lives. Knowing of that involvement, Wally Weitz suggested I add to it by joining a group that focuses on the larger community. He introduced me to what was then New Community Development Corporation. While my mentoring efforts

with the guys continue, I am inspired by the reach of NeighborWorks and by Ken's leadership. I enter this position with humility and the sense of wanting to do all I can to further NeighborWorks' mission.

And just what is that mission? Our mission statement provides insight into that quest: NeighborWorks Omaha rekindles pride in neighborhoods and ignites investments in the community. But these are not just words to be engraved on stationery; these are words with meaning backed by action. Just a few of our housing developments include the award-winning Salem Village senior community, Fullwood Square single-family homes and Miami Heights market-rate housing. Additionally, NeighborWorks Omaha has provided more than 80 micro-business loans and trained more than 900 entrepreneurs through its Business Development Program. Lastly, and of great importance, NeighborWorks has eliminated lead poisoning in more than 90 Omaha homes through its HUD-sponsored Lead Elimination Action Program. Indeed, according to a 2010 study from Creighton

University's College of Business Administration, NeighborWorks Omaha has added more than \$100 million to the local economy when taking direct and secondary spending into consideration.

Now is the time to build on these successes by expanding our efforts. With your help, we are ready and capable to grow our circle of service. Please call Ken if you are interested in seeing for yourself the positive difference NeighborWorks Omaha has made. He will be most pleased to talk with you, your charitable group or your place of worship about how you can get involved.

Rekindling pride in neighborhoods and igniting investment in the community helps people develop a sense of dignity, self worth and hope based on open doors and self reliance. Continuing and expanding our efforts is my hope and charter. I pledge to do all I can to help NeighborWorks Omaha change lives and build a better community.

Yana Morgan, CFP®  
Weitz Funds  
Chairwoman, NeighborWorks Omaha

## *Mission Statement:*

**NeighborWorks Omaha rekindles pride in neighborhoods and ignites investments in the community.**

# MOVING *ahead*

## Loan enables Robinson to expand mowing business

After spending 40 years as an employee at several of Omaha's automotive body businesses, T.J. Robinson decided retirement sounded like a nice option. Four years later, however, things had changed.

Successful prostate cancer surgery in 2006 allowed him to keep his health, but left him with some financial needs.

"The bills started coming in and the savings started draining down, and I decided I needed to do something," he said.

Meanwhile, neighbors were asking Robinson about his well-kept lawn and whether he could help them keep theirs mowed. Finally, in the summer of 2007, Robinson decided to start his own small business, Just T's Lawn Service, out of his home at 5726 Fort Street. Within a couple of years, his client base grew and he had to hire help. He currently has one full-time and one part-time employee.

Then his equipment started to wear out. He could afford to replace two walk-behind mowers, but wasn't able to expand his operation with a much-needed commercial riding mower that cost approximately \$9,000.

Due to some credit problems, his options appeared limited. Then Centris Federal Credit Union referred Robinson to NeighborWorks Omaha.

Thanks to the NeighborWorks Micro-Business Loan Program, Robinson purchased a 52-inch Scag Tiger Cat and is ready to go full speed into the summer of 2011. It is enabling him to expand his operation with larger jobs in south and west Omaha.

He has landed a contract with the State of Nebraska to care for lawns of handicapped people's private homes, and now is planning to hire another full-time employee.

"I'm trying to get it up to three employees so I can sit down," he said.

Terrence Coleman, Chief Operating Officer at NeighborWorks, said Centris contacted him about Robinson's situation.

"Since he qualified and followed our criteria, we said yes, send him over," Coleman said. "He was successful at getting the equipment he needed, and he's able to expand his business. He's very excited, and I was able to follow up with the people at Centris and tell them we were able to help him."

After a good experience working with Coleman and Office Manager Jacqueline Hankins, Robinson is prepared for a busy summer season.

"It'll help me cover ground better," he said. "I've got a retirement complex that's about a block and a half. Usually when we would walk it with two of us, it would take us about eight hours. Now with two of us, we can do it in about six hours. If I bring another person in, we can do it in four hours."



1



2



3



4

*1. A loan arranged through the Micro-Business Loan Program at NeighborWorks Omaha has T.J. Robinson's lawn service moving in the right direction. 2. NOCA board member Fred Hiner assisting with the community cleanup project with NeighborWorks Omaha, the North Omaha Contractor Alliance and the Great Plains Black History Museum on May 21, 2011. 3. National Credit Union Administration Chairman Debbie Matz discusses credit union outreach initiatives with Terrence Coleman, Chief Operating Officer, at the CUNA Volunteer Institute. 4. Terrence Coleman, Chief Operating Officer, presents a NeighborWorks microbusiness loan check to Juanita Wilson, who represents the North Omaha Contractor Alliance. The funds will help with the association's operating budget. Wilson is also the current Treasurer for the NOCA Board of Directors.*

# MAKING CONNECTIONS

## Coleman brings valuable experience to NeighborWorks

Terrence Coleman brings experience in both for-profit and non-profit organizations as he joins the NeighborWorks Omaha team.

As Chief Operations Officer, Coleman provides day-by-day oversight to the NeighborWorks operation, where he uses his background in organizational effectiveness, policies and procedures. The goal is to enable Ken Lyons, President and CEO, to spend the majority of his time focusing on fundraising and building support for the organization.

"It's a good balance as far as our personalities are concerned," Coleman said.

Hired in October, Coleman brings his daily management skills to the office, but often attends meetings where he builds relationships with community leaders and keeps abreast of revitalization efforts throughout Omaha. He is also involved on the North Omaha Contractors Alliance Board of Directors as the Finance Chair and on the Centris Federal Credit Union Board of Directors' Supervisory Committee.

"My background shows I've been very active in the community, organizational events, functions and such," he said. "I can continue to act in that capacity with NeighborWorks."

Networking is his specialty, both with people and computer systems. Coleman's involvement with NeighborWorks came four years ago when he started doing some computer training.

A native of Cincinnati, he graduated from Xavier University of Louisiana and was hired by Procter & Gamble Co. in New Orleans, working his way up to organizational effectiveness coordinator.



*As Chief Operating Officer, Terrence Coleman brings a background in management and networking to NeighborWorks. Keeping in touch with community organizations at a variety of events is part of his responsibility.*



After 10 years at P & G, Coleman came to Omaha in 1994 to head up an employee incentive and safety program for a rival company, the Dial Corporation, maker of Dial Soap. When the Dial plant shut down in 1997, he opened his own consulting firm, Friends-R-Us Network. He still runs that company.

He got his start in the nonprofit sector in 1999 when he became a human resources manager for the Douglas County Head Start program.

"It was a big eye-opener for me," said Coleman, who learned about applying for government grants.

He also helped people in the nonprofit world think outside the box, learning to seek funds from non-governmental sources.

"It helped going in there with a for-profit mindset," he said.

Coleman started working at PayPal in 2004, where he helped administer the eBay Foundation Community Engagement Fund. He continues to work at PayPal.

"I'm a very busy person," he said.

## Microbusiness Loan Program available

NeighborWorks Omaha continues to play a role in strengthening the small business climate through its Business Development and Microbusiness Loan Program.

The program is available to Omaha-area small businesses and would-be entrepreneurs who qualify and complete the loan process. It can be an effective way to help business owners who need cash flow assistance but are stymied by traditional loan programs.

Terrence Coleman, Chief Operating Officer, has served on the Centris Federal

Credit Union Board of Directors' Supervisory Committee since 2000, and has successfully developed collaborations between Centris and a number of community organizations.

"We've been able to establish a partnership whereby they will refer people in similar situations to us, and we will be able to deal with those on a case-by-case basis and see if we can help them," Coleman said. "This partnership is sure to provide abundant benefits to credit union members and the low-income community the credit union serves."

*“OPPORTUNITY:  
You will always  
miss 100 percent  
of the shots you  
never take.”*

## Community Partners

American National Bank  
 Centris Federal Credit Union  
 Charles Drew Medical Center  
 Community Housing Investment Corporation  
 Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Nebraska, Inc  
 Family Housing Advisory Services  
 Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City: Omaha Branch  
 Foundations, LLC  
 Horizon Bank  
 Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
 Nebraska Investment Finance Authority  
 NeighborWorksAmerica  
 NP Dodge  
 Omaha 100  
 Omaha City Planning Department  
 Omaha Economic Development Corporation  
 Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance  
 Salem Baptist Church  
 Security National Bank  
 Sherwood Foundation  
 The University of Nebraska at Omaha  
 The Weitz Funds

## Board Members

Yana Morgan, Chairwoman, Larry Marinovic, Fe  
 James, Pastor Jeremiah McGee, Councilman Ben Gray,  
 Lawrence Pete, Dr. Rob Lewis, Nate Dodge, Special  
 Advisor to the CEO

## Legal Counsel

Sen. Brenda Council, Charles Fike

The Beacon appears under the direction of Ken Lyons, President and CEO of NeighborWorks Omaha. For news coverage, contact Tad at the newsletter office by telephone 402-475-6397; fax 402-475-6398; mail 1845 S. 11th St., Lincoln, NE 68502-2211; or email tad@newslink.com.

NeighborWorks Omaha  
 1701 North 24th St., Suite 102  
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 Fulfilling Dreams...  
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Contact information:  
 NeighborWorks Omaha  
 1701 North 24th St., Suite 102  
 Omaha, NE 68110  
 Telephone: 402-451-2939  
 Fax: 402-451-2595

# Salem Village II slated for completion

Construction is well under way on Salem Village II. The project will result in 27 fully equipped apartments with underground parking facilities near the site of the original Salem Village project at 35th and Lake streets in Omaha.

Salem Village II will be smaller than its 50-unit predecessor and will be available to tenants age 55 and older. They are designed for independent living. In addition, a community room are available for events, and there will be access to health services through the nearby Charles Drew Health Center.

Construction began in November. Expected completion date is August with full occupancy expected by the end of 2011, said Terrance Coleman, Chief Operating Officer of NeighborWorks Omaha.

Salem Village, designated for those age 62 and older, has been popular, and NeighborWorks saw a demand for another such project for a slightly younger demographic.

"We saw that there was a group of people who had missed out on the opportunity," Coleman said.

**Top:** The project is under way and expected to be fully occupied by the end of 2011. **Bottom:** This conceptual drawing previews the Salem Village II project. Courtesy of Holland Basham Architects.

