

Asset Based Community Development Institute
School of Education and Social Policy
Northwestern University
Walter Annenberg Hall, Room 148
2120 Campus Drive
Evanston, Illinois 60208-4100

John P. Kretzmann
John L. McKnight
Co-Directors, ABCD Institute

abcd@northwestern.edu
Phone 847-491-3518
Fax 847-467-4140
www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY

May 16, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Rev. Mike Mather and other leaders from Broadway United Methodist Church about their unique approach to ministry and their innovative plans to build capacity for community development in partnership with the individuals, families, associations and institutions in their neighborhood. I learned about a campaign called *The Miracle on 29th Street*, and I enthusiastically support both the goals and the methods of this creative undertaking.

As the co-director of the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) Institute, I have traveled around the world to visit with and learn from hundreds of communities working to confront and resolve contemporary urban and rural challenges. My research has led me to an understanding that, rather than service providers and funding agencies focused on the needs and deficiencies of neighborhoods, community assets are the key building blocks of effective and lasting community revitalization efforts. Successful and sustainable efforts embrace the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, the resources of local institutions and the physical and economic resources of local places – and the people of Broadway understand this in a way unlike other congregations I have witnessed.

In partnerships with other congregations, businesses and other neighborhood institutions, the people of Broadway Church have enthusiastically embraced these ABCD principles. Because of the positive community impact that has already resulted, I am a big fan of what's happening within and around Broadway. In the work they do, in the way they worship, and as they care for each other and their neighbors, it is clear that the people of Broadway parish understand that everyone has a gift. But even more than that, they realize that vital communities are those in which all members have the opportunity to discover their own gifts and share their gifts with others. Through increased capacity for neighborhood ministry and enhanced offerings for children and youth, *The Miracle on 29th Street* will support Broadway's already effective efforts and strengthen them even further.

As the work of the clergy, staff and lay people of Broadway parish unfolds, a logical next step would be to expose their strategies to other communities in the United States and around the world. Broadway's leaders have developed their approach in a way that takes into account the unique identity of the Mapleton-Fall Creek area, but the principles and techniques on which this effort is based are applicable the world over. It would be a pleasure to work with Broadway Church on a plan for expanding this model outside of inner-city Indianapolis, and I do hope such an opportunity arises.

In more than 30 years of community development work, research and teaching, I have seen that some communities "get it" and other communities don't. The people of Broadway get it – they're using the principles of Asset-Based Community Development as tools for Christian discipleship, service and fellowship. *The Miracle on 29th Street* will further support and empower both the people of Broadway Church and their neighborhood partners as they work together to realize effective and lasting community impact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Kretzmann".

John (Jody) Kretzmann
Co-Director, Asset-Based Community Development