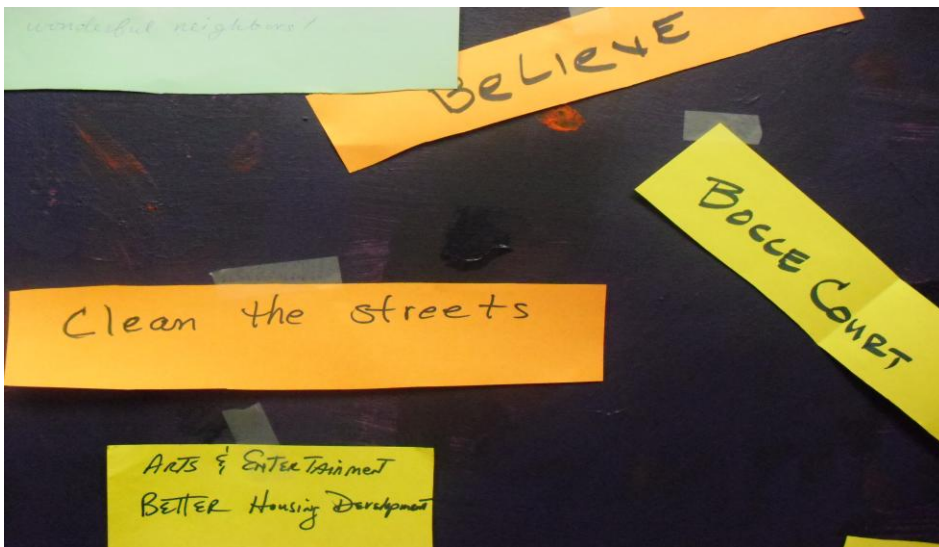


**Valley Neighborhood Community Meeting  
Wednesday December 1, 2010  
7 pm – 9 pm  
Ironworks, 406 Tompkins Street**

**Opening Art Project**

We held the meeting on the evening of Wednesday December 1 at Ironworks Gallery. As neighbors arrived they participated in our collaborative art project. Everyone wrote on strips of colorful paper something that they love about the Valley and something that would like to see in the Valley in the future. Some examples are “I have good neighbors” and “I love the food” and one person said they would like to see a “bocce court.” Members of ORNG Ink, our youth art program, will take the strips of paper and transform them into a paper mache sculpture, which will be displayed in the Valley.



**Welcome/Introductions**

Everyone helped themselves to delicious food that was donated by Golden Krust, Dunkin’ Donuts and Whole Foods. Afterwards everyone went around and said their name and what they wrote on their strip of paper about their love and hopes for the neighborhood. Patrick Morrissy, the executive director of HANDS, welcomed everyone and told about the history the Valley neighborhood plan that began when Orange residents came together in 2001 and declared that Orange would be a model city by 2010.

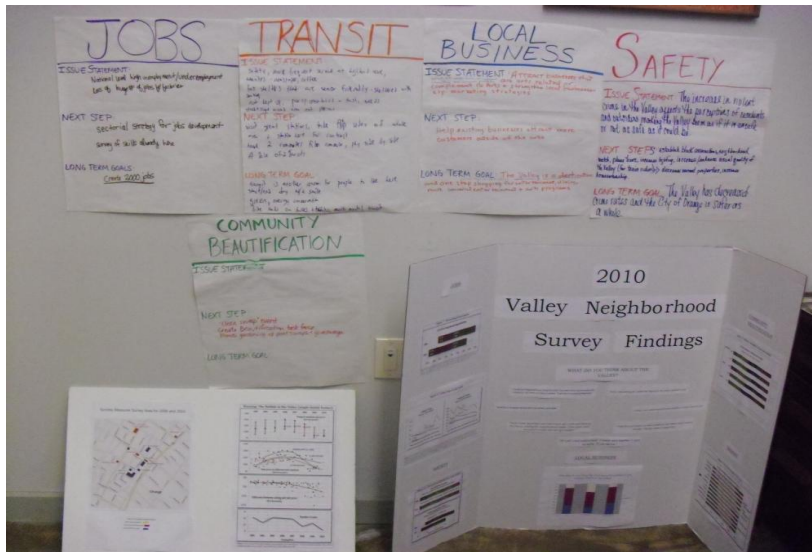
## Success Measures Presentation

Michele Racciopi, HANDS Americorps VISTA, presented key findings from the Success Measures survey. Some highlights:

- The real estate market crashed resulting in a 62% decrease in sale prices in the Valley
- Despite an increase in vacant or abandoned residential properties throughout the city as a whole, in the Valley this number decreased from 14 to 10.
- Violent and property crime spiked between 2006 and 2008
- In 2006 only 49% of people said they would buy a home in the Valley, in 2010 69% said they would.
- In 2006 18% said they feel “very safe” in the Valley, in 2010 only 5% did
- 39% said access to employment centers was poor
- 88% of residents surveyed said they experience “medium to high” levels of cooperation with neighbors
- People are hopeful: 64% said they think there will be “some or great improvement” in the next 3 years.

## Breakout Groups

Everyone selected a breakout group. Breakout groups were asked to come up with an Issue Statement, a Next Step, and Longterm Goal based on their topic.



### Jobs

#### *Issue statement*

National level of high unemployment/underemployment and the loss of a huge number of jobs when the factories closed

#### *Next step*

Sectorial strategy for jobs development, take a survey of skills already here

#### *Longterm Goal*

Create 2,000 jobs

### Transit

#### *Issue Statement*

Mass transit is inconvenient and unattractive.

#### *Next Step*

A Tale of Two Train Stations: film a commute from Highland Avenue train station and a commute at and a commute from an exemplary nearby train stations. Scree side by side to compare and contrast

#### *Longterm goal*

Energy efficient multi-modal transit is another reason people live here, commuters start and end their day with a smile. Transit is senior friendly

And there are bike racks too

## **Community Beautification**

*Issue Statement* (Community Beautification Statement):

The community and its stakeholders coming together individually to improve our immediate environment, holding neighbors accountable and discussing ways to improve the environment, ultimately resulting in a rise in the spirit of the Valley, block by block.

*Next Step*

Create a Community Improvement Task Force to address the following items:

- 1) Give plant give-aways to residents to plant in front of their homes
- 2) Create Block Associations – give awards for “Best Block of the Month.”
- 3) Provide painted garbage receptacles to be spread throughout the Valley
- 4) Each year do a Street cleaning campaign called “The Valley Sweeps the Streets” where residents would be responsible for cleaning their own block.
- 5) Talk with NJ Transit to improve the decaying train arches. Even see if we can get a local artist to train them with different Valley themes

*Longterm Goal* (What we would tell someone who wanted to know about the “Valley”):

The Valley is an artistic, diverse, and cultural destination for growth, inspiration and family

## **Local Business**

*Issue statement*

Attract businesses that are arts related or complement to the arts and strengthen local businesses esp marketing strategies

*Next Step*

Help existing businesses attract more customers outside of the area

*Longterm goal*

The Valley is a destination and one-stop shopping for entertainment, dining, more universal entertainment and arts programs.

## **Safety**

### *Issue Statement*

The increase in violent crime in the Valley affects perceptions of residents and outsiders making the Valley seem as if it is unsafe or not as safe as it could be

### *Next Steps*

Establish block associations, neighborhood watch, phone trees, increase lighting (porch lights), increase/enhance visual quality of the Valley (for train riders), decrease vacant properties, increase homeownership

### *Longterm goal*

The Valley has decreased crime rates and the City of orange is safer as a whole.

## **Closing**

All of the breakout groups shared their Issue Statements, Next Steps and Longterm Goals. People announced upcoming events. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for Wednesday February 16, 2011.

## **Thank you**

We would like to thank Loiett Gore and Golden Krust, Dunkin' Donuts, Rock-It Pizza, Wachovia Regional Foundation, University of Orange, Success Measures, ValleyArts, ORNG Ink, Valley Settlement House, Elizabeth Jackson and the Orange Police Department, Eileen Flannagan, Family Success Center, Farlem Valencia, Rachel Bland, Iana Dikijdieva, Rachel Bland and all who attended and took part.