

The Nehemiah Project  
Community Building Brick by Brick

Chloe Coney was inspired by God in writing her master's thesis "Building a Biblical Counseling Center in the Inner City of Tampa." Her thesis research at Florida Beacon Bible College included many conversations with clergymen and theologians like the late Dr. A. Leon Lowry, then pastor of one of Tampa's oldest churches, Beulah Baptist Institutional Church, Reverend Herman Moten, founder of the Christian Resource Center in Tampa, John Perkins of Christian Community Development and Lucious Davis with Hillsborough County. Also include in the research was the late Malinda Scantling, center manger at the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center. Coney was able to garner the statistics to support her thesis...statistics that accurately portrayed the inner city areas to be blighted, disenfranchised and distressed.

From her research and an inherent passion for giving back to the community, "The Nehemiah Project...Community Building Brick by Brick" was birthed. Malinda Scantling's tragic and untimely death propelled Coney into what would become the journey of a lifetime. Leaving her successful corporate career with Florida Power & Light, Coney took the helm of the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center as its next center manger on October 23, 1989. In her heart, she knew that she was coming back, not so much to lead, but to serve by helping residents uncover *their* capacity to lead and to live optimally.

During that time, the late Audrey Spotford was chairperson of the Lee Davis Neighborhood Serve Center Advisory Board. Chloe Coney began to share dream with Mrs. Spotford about a biblically based community center that could restore the lifeblood of the inner city. This center, she described, would include mentoring programs for boys, programs to strengthen ties among the neighbors and the schools, job training and employment programs and programs to help revitalize the community... just like Nehemiah in the Bible.

*"Two divine appointments led me to start a community development corporation."*

*Chloe J. Coney*

Coney's first encounter along this journey began with two willing vessels. Gus Dominguez, Greater Miami Neighborhood, Inc. and Al Townsel, Coney's brother-in-law, who introduced her to John Little, attorney with the Greater Miami Legal Services. Dominguez and Townsel conducted a two-day training with the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) Advisory Board. The training was all about community development corporations (CDC). Through that training the group learned that CDC's were the economic engine to build wealth and break the cycle of poverty, dependency, and helplessness. CDC's comprised a growing industry across the country

with programs in creating jobs, job training, youth leadership, promoting entrepreneurship, affordable housing and revitalizing neighborhoods... everything in the vision that Coney had shared with Spotford.

In the second encounter, Coney attended the Neighborhood Development Institute with the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (NCNE) with Robert L. Woodson, its founder and president. Woodson is often called the “godfather” of the movement to empower neighborhood-based organizations. At that training, Coney met Bob Moore, president and chief executive officer of the Columbia Heights CDC in Washington, D.C. The CDC there had built a strip plaza called Nehemiah Shopping Center with a laundromat as the anchor. It was there that Coney saw the works of a CDC.

Armed with the vision, the passion and a recognized structure, the Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation, Inc. was founded.

<b>Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation, Inc.</b>	
Date of Incorporation:	May 5, 1992
Registered Agent:	Chloe Coney
Address:	3402 North 22 <sup>nd</sup> Street Tampa, Florida 33605
Incorporator:	Audrey Spotford
Address:	2817 20 <sup>th</sup> Street Tampa, Florida 33605
<b>Board of Directors</b>	
Audrey Spotford	Roy Robinson
Lorenzo Johnson	Emma Hendrix
Miriam Thomas	Joann Thomas
Alberta Blake	Chloe Coney
Robert Miller	

Robert Miller, TECO Energy, was named the first chairman of the board. Chloe Coney was named its first executive director. And so the “history” began.

# 1993

- ◆ Toni Watts was hired as administrative assistant and Marilyn Kiershner of Bay Area Legal Services, came onboard as legal counsel
- ◆ Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation was the lead agency with the Hillsborough County School District in convening the Fifth Annual Parent Enhancement Conference was held on October 13, 1993 at the Tampa Convention Center featuring Reverend Lee Earl, Sr., pastor of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan and project director of the National Congress for Community Economic Development in Washington, D.C.
- ◆ Men II Boys Conference
- ◆ Sandman Giving Tree at East Lake Square Mall with Broderick Thomas of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- ◆ Back to School Conference featuring Tanya Hammond of the Tampa Police Department and Chloe Coney as chairpersons

# 1994

- ◆ Charlie Guy elected as board chair
- ◆ Foundation for Strategic Processing including 1994, tactical objectives for Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation (LDNDC) with Michael Liding, Jr. & Associates Inc., July 20, 1994
- ◆ Staff increased with the hiring of Artie Fryer, economic development manager, Al White, manager and Theo Bell, coordinator of the Men II Boys Program, Wanda Mays as youth coordinator, Jamie Jackson as Secretary; Toni Watts was promoted to grants administration
- ◆ Lee Davis Development Corporation was located at 3402 North 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Tampa Florida in the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center
- ◆ LLDNC was awarded the lead coordinating agency (seed) for the City of Tampa's Weed & Seed Grant
- ◆ Charlie Guy named

# 1995

- ◆ Ed Johnson of NationsBank elected board chairperson
- ◆ Hillsborough County Children's Board funded the parent needs assessment and planning grant fiscal year 95-96 (community tool box)
- ◆ Lee Davis NDC relocated to 2705 East Dr. Martin Luther King, Boulevard march 1, 1995. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was held with Mayor Sandy Freedman, Police Chief Benny Holder, County Commissioner Sandra Wilson, State Representative Les Miller, Joe Voschercian and many residents. Audrey Spotford, chair of the Lee Davis Neighborhood Service Center, Ed Johnson, chair and Chloe Coney, executive director of the Lee Davis Neighborhood Development cut the ribbon and named the project...the "Nehemiah Project...Community Building Brick by Brick."
- ◆ In fundraising, the Saunders Foundation offered \$25,000 in matching funds
- ◆ Back-to-School Kickoff on July 24 & 25 served over 1,000 students with 30 schools participating and over \$10,000 in cash and in-kind contributions received
- ◆ Community partnership with East Tampa School Community Partnership, Hillsborough County School District, Weed & seed and other partners. Event chair was Evangeline Best, board member and school social worker.

# 1996

- ◆ "Up with Hope...Down with Dope" became the *theme chant* for street marches in east Tampa to drive drugs out of the community. Herman Rice and Andy Garr trained residents during law enforcement day on Friday, July 19, 1996
- ◆ Men II Boys program at Central City YMCA
- ◆ Job Fair held at East Lake Square Mall
- ◆ Reception hosted at TECO Plaza by Sam Cannon, chairperson

# 1997

- ◆ Harold Dull, general manager East Lake Mall, was elected chairperson of the board
- ◆ Organization name changed from Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation to Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa (CDC of Tampa, Inc.) March 19, 1997

# Leadership

Lee Davis Neighborhood Development Corporation, Inc.  
renamed  
Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc.

## Chairpersons, Board of Directors

1992-1993 – Robert Miller

1994-1995 – Charlie Guy

1995- 1996 – Ed Johnson

1997 - Harold Dull

## Executive Staff

### **Dr. Chloe J. Coney**

1992-95 - Founder & Executive Director

1995-2006 – Founder & President & Chief Executive Officer

### **Toni Watts**

2006-2010 – President & Chief Executive Officer

### **Ernest M. Coney, Jr.**

2010- present – Interim Chief Executive Officer



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Heddie Sumpter  
Past Chairperson, CDC of Tampa  
Board of Directors  
813/486-2082**

**May 7, 2012**

**TAMPA - The Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Inc., announces its new President/CEO, Ernest M. Coney, Jr., as we move into our 20<sup>th</sup> year of service.**

**Mr. Coney's selection follows a deliberate process as the Board of Directors conducted an exhaustive national search. Each application was carefully reviewed prior to conducting the interview process of qualified candidates. The announcement of Ernest Coney, Jr. as the CEO coincidentally falls on the 20th year that the CDC was incorporated, May 5, 1992.**

**Ernest Coney, Jr., is a native of Tampa and honor graduate of Jefferson High School where he played football and graduated from the class of 1990. With an undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H., a Master Degree from the University of South Florida in Public Health Administration and a recent graduate of University of Tampa with a Management Certificate for Non-Profits, he has developed a strong business acumen in the areas of management, finance, and performance improvement. Ernest brings over 15 years of management-level experience in providing health and social programs to benefit low to moderate income persons and the elderly.**

**Mr. Coney was hired as the Chief Operating Officer at CDC in 2006. Prior to being hired by the CDC, his prior positions were a Sr. Actuarial Analyst, Director of Operations, and Finance Administrator for several national healthcare companies.**

**During his tenure as Interim CEO and COO of the CDC of Tampa, Inc., Mr. Coney led the CDC in leveraging over \$19 million dollars in joint venture projects, to include real estate and program service projects. Currently, the CDC of Tampa is assembling the financing to create an additional 100 affordable housing units, and to develop a neighborhood shopping plaza. In addition, under his leadership the organization has also created Tampa Vocational Institute (TVI), a state approved educational institution.**



Coney and his wife, Anika, have one daughter, Shelby Ana Coney. Ernest is also a Minister at the Spirit of Truth Ministries, where his father serves as Senior Pastor.

Mr. Coney said "I am excited and honored to continue the legacy of the CDC of Tampa, Inc. I look forward to working with the community and other stakeholders to strengthen the fabric of our neighborhoods."

The community is invited to join us on Saturday, May 19, 2012 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Chloe Coney Urban Enterprise Center (1907 E. Hillsborough Avenue, Tampa, Fl. 33610). You will have the opportunity to meet our new CEO and the staff of the CDC of Tampa as we celebrate the *Grand Opening of the Tampa Vocational Institute (TVI)*.

The Mission of the CDC of Tampa, Inc. is to *foster economic development through partnerships and programs that serve Tampa Bay Communities*. Ms. Heddie Sumpter, Immediate Past Board Chairperson stated that "The Board of Directors is confident that Mr. Ernest Coney, Jr., will provide the visionary leadership, service and business acumen that will propel this organization forward as it strives to carry out its mission and goals in Tampa and beyond."

#####

Denese Meteye-James  
Board Secretary  
CDC of Tampa, Inc.  
813/231-4362