

## Editorial

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### And That's A Good Thing!

The rebirth of the Allied community is well on its way of becoming a model community that the entire Madison community can be proud of. It all started with the "Move Forward, Not Out! Campaign" and the City of Madison working collectively to change the character and image of the neighborhood. The idea was to eradicate crime and make the quality of life better for the residents. This effort was accomplished by a genuine trust in the leadership of city hall and the business community. Today more families are feeling safe in allowing their children to play outside and walking around the neighborhood without hearing sound of gunshots or gangs lining the side walks.

While allied is grossly under occupied, landlords are slower to make occupancy decisions until background checks are completed and character references are received. The excavation process of phase 1 of this multi-facet project is in full swing with giant bulldozers and earth movers in place. Residents are feeling very excited and don't view this project as a disruption but rather progress that is long over due. The city of Madison, under the leadership of Mayor Dave and Alder Brain Solomon, has kept their promise to ensure that residents being affected by this project will be given high priority and financial assistance to transition into their temporary digs.

The Allied family and Neighborhood Association leadership under Alice Howard, deserves to be commended on the role they played in the process of change. A tour of the initial phase of the project will show that the commitment to diversity on the work site is evident by the number of minorities represented on the site. It was right for the allied neighborhood association to demand community representation on this project. Allied is the most diverse neighborhoods in the city. Chief Noble Wray once quipped, "Only until little girls can go outside and Double Dutch will Allied be viewed as a safe neighborhood."

**We feel that Allied Drive will never be the same, and that's a good thing!**



### "A Journey of a Thousand Miles Starts With a Single Step" by Alder Brian Solomon



It is hard to walk down Allied and not notice that something exciting is happening. Most of you know that the redevelopment project is now underway, with demolition of buildings and site preparation having begun two weeks ago.

I was elected alder 16 months ago and there has been no bigger joy in this time than working with and getting to know the residents of Allied. It is the passion, dedication, and unwavering commitment to this community by Allied residents that have made this project move forward. This project belongs to the residents of Allied and I am just thrilled to be a part of it.

I was in Allied three days in the last week talking to residents and asking people what they thought of the changes and the demolition. I chatted with residents of the city owned properties and heard positive statements about the moves and progress thus far. MAP, START, and the Allied Employment Partnership worked to train residents for the three apprenticeship positions that we built into the public works contracts and all three have been hired. We'll have even more job opportunities during the construction phase.

The revitalization of a neighborhood is based on many parts, coming together over time. It is based on compassion, hard work, and dedication. This redevelopment project is but one small piece of this bigger thing. It is not the beginning and it won't be the end - because every resident of this community - black or white, rich or poor, young or old, deserves to live in the same Madison as the rest of us - the one that educates its children, employs its citizens, and takes care of its people. Every person in this neighborhood deserves to feel safe and secure. Every family in this neighborhood deserves the quality of life the rest of us take for granted. And every resident of Allied deserves to live in affordable, quality housing.

Lao Tzu said "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step" The neighborhood association is a step. So is the Allied Task Force, the mobile pantry, the Allied festival, and the community meal, the JFF office and the coffee clutch, VOICES newspaper, the Early Childhood Initiative, the START program, and the MAP program. But make no mistake - the steps we are taking with this redevelopment are as essential as any.

Thanks to everyone in the Allied community who has worked so hard to get us to this point. I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to keep **Moving Allied Forward, Not Out.**

As always, I welcome your comments or questions. Please contact me anytime at 446.1362 or [briansolomon@charter.net](mailto:briansolomon@charter.net).

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