

# Urban Edge's 35<sup>th</sup> Year Annual Meeting Celebration "Extending the Reach of Community Development"

Wednesday, October 14, 2009 (6:00 – 9:00 pm)

## Speech of Keynote Speaker, Dr. Rudy Crew

Like so many cities in America right now, it is trying to figure out its relationship of building communities to school/ education. And how that relationship has to be in effect redrawn and redesigned. Our architecture right now does not serve our mission. We are trying desperately to create cities in which the next generation of young people and their children will have wholesome effective, high quality living and regardless of where they are and where they come from- we want them to have housing , art, and a place where children feel safe.

Lack of leadership, risks, and tension lead us to the wrong path that prevent us from achieving our goal to provide access to effective education to all children.

If the old architecture and system did not work, then what would a new architecture look like –what would a new mosaic look like. A mosaic ---of effective schooling – safe and affordable home -- arts and culture---availability of resources –what would that look like in a city.

What we are celebrating tonight is the potential artist group that each one of you brings to thinking about and drawing that picture. You are at this point the leaders of a new art work / a new architectural group. You would have to draw what does not yet exist. It does not necessarily suggest that we cannot imagine it; it does not suggest its too costly; it does not suggest that it does not have some image and likeness to some of the things we have done already; but it just means that we haven't put all the parts together yet.

Two words that has tremendous power URBAN EDGE. Urban Edge is about painting from the Edge. There is no picture here ..there is no space here. This is about living in a high risk zone. Maybe for the next 10 years where there is not the money; there is not even picture. But there is in your heart an image of what it looks like for a child that to be safe, to be good hearted, and capable enough to stay live and enjoy life in a community that they can call theirs.

To Dr. Crew, there are two important words that he would like to leave to us with. Risk – because you are not painting by the numbers, there is a good possibility that you will have to go outside the lines. You will not have all the definitional angles of what might work. Leadership at this point means actually creating and summoning the human risk and joy of extending your own mind beyond your own capabilities; beyond what you think might actually work or what you think might actually be appropriate.

RISK means you do it—and ask later. Doing something that when we look back we can look back without regrets.