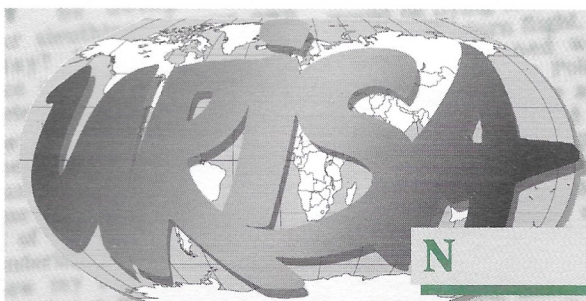




"Helping you find IT Solutions to your
Urban and Regional Challenges since 1963"

Urban and Regional Information Systems Association

Issue 174

November/December 1999

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Important URISA Dates to Remember

December 31, 1999

Abstract submissions due for
URISA 2000

December 31, 1999

Membership dues renewal
payments due for 2000

April 16-19, 2000

Integrating GIS & CAMA
2000 Conference
Miami Beach, FL



August 19-23, 2000

URISA's 37th
Annual Conference
Orlando, Florida

Community IT/GIS: Helping the Kids

By Daniel F. Bassill, President & CEO, Tutor/Mentor Connection

Seven years ago, in the weeks following the senseless shooting of a 6-year old boy in Cabrini-Green, one of Chicago's housing projects, a representative from a small non-profit agency said, "Enough! If we're going to help kids stay out of gangs and head toward careers, we're going to need to fill the leadership void left by the City and the public school system. We're going to have to find a way to help after-school tutor/mentor programs grow in these neighborhoods, recruit volunteers to be mentors, and build structures where mentoring can last long enough to make a difference." That organization was Cabrini Connections, and the Tutor/Mentor Connection (T/MC) has grown from that commitment to become a leading force in Chicago's mentoring movement.

While the T/MC does many unique things, its use of GIS to draw attention to all of the neighborhoods where kids need help, and to existing programs in these areas, is something that URISA members should be interested in. The T/MC started using GIS computerized maps in

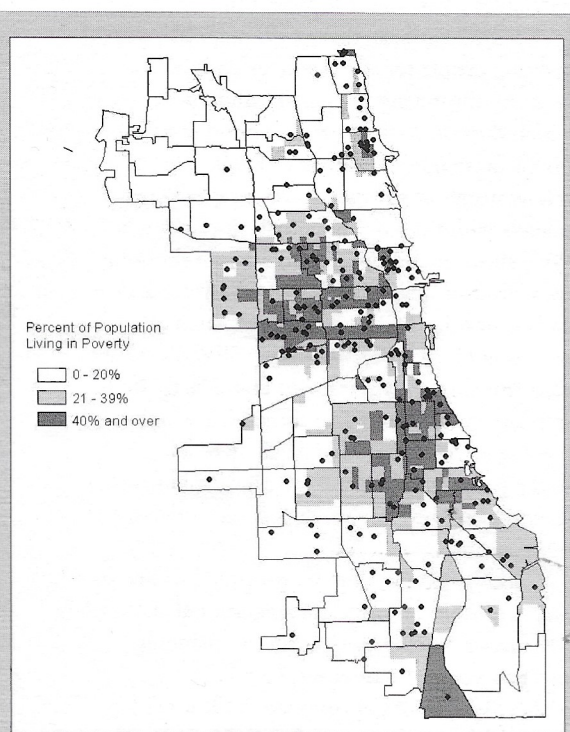
1995. With donated software from Environmental Systems Research, Inc. (ESRI), T/MC has been able to use these maps to focus attention on the neighborhoods of Chicago with the highest poverty, the most schools on probation, or places with youth-on-youth violence.

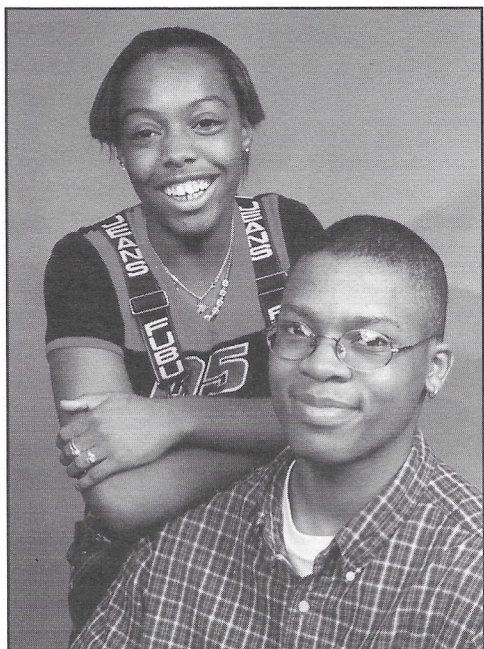
Each year, T/MC updates its database of organizations that provide various forms of tutoring or mentoring in the non-school hours. T/MC publishes this list in an Annual Directory that is mailed to 2,500 businesses, schools, libraries, etc. And T/MC uses this database to provide referrals to volunteers, parents, DCFS workers and/

continued on page 2

Tutor/Mentor Program Sites in Chicago

What each of these sites has in common is a goal of connecting kids with adults who are committed to their future. Learn more of the Tutor/Mentor Connection and the potential of GIS maps to connect at-risk kids with business volunteers.





or potential donors looking for programs in specific areas.

Since 1998, T/MC has been working to get this same information on its Internet web site enabling anyone, from any place, at any time, to see the map, and point to a dot, and be able to get contact information about that particular tutor/mentor program.

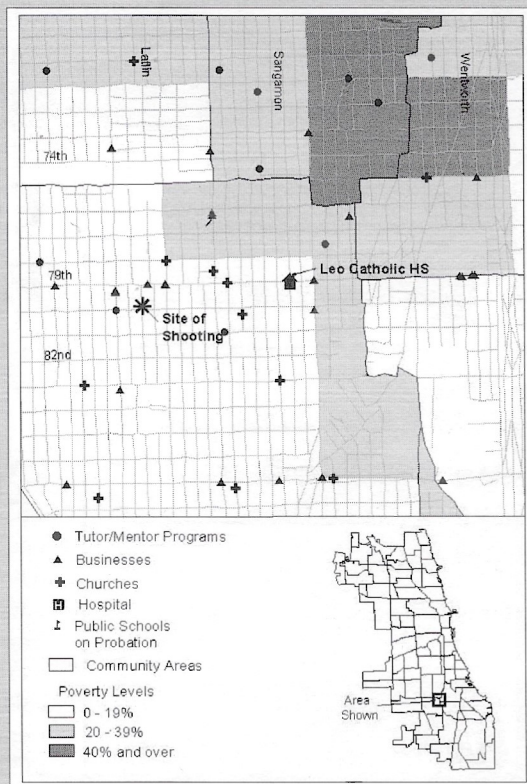
T/MC has been using GIS maps like this to bring people together, to help businesses focus on improving the neighborhoods in which they do business, and to build growing public awareness. With maps, T/MC can follow stories of violence and underprivileged schools with the story the media does not tell. We'll show the neighborhood where a shooting took place, if it is or is not a high poverty area and show other indicators of need, such as poor schools. And T/MC maps will show what tutor/mentor programs are in that area (if any), so people who want to do something when the newspaper headlines blast negative news, can find a program where they can be a volunteer, a donor, a business or church partner, and can make a difference.

The T/MC is a small non-profit. It needs help in making these maps operational. T/MC invites you to be a partner in bringing this process to the Internet. Call 312-573-8851 to get connected. Or e-mail the T/MC at tutormentor2@earthlink.net

On April 18, 1999 the Chicago Tribune devoted more than two full columns of space to a story about students from Leo High School whose lives had been tragically ended by street violence. While this story generated emotion, it did little to give hope to other kids in this area. It did not use a map, and did not point to youth groups working in that area, nor to businesses, churches, and hospitals near Leo High School, or the number of people who travel through this area each day as they go to and from the Loop to work.

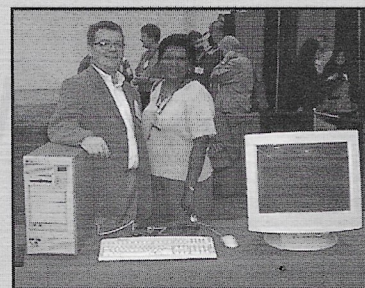
This map tells the rest of the story. It shows one youth organization with two sites in the neighborhood. It also shows four churches and several businesses that could be sites for kids to meet.

The T/MC Directory and on-line version enable readers to find contact information for these groups, and encourages those who can help to make a connection, and a commitment, that such tragedies do not get repeated. Getting this information on line and interactive is the goal of the Tutor/Mentor Connection. If you can help make this happen, call 312-573-8851, or email, tutormentor2@earthlink.net



Winner!!

Joyce Brown, from Mecklenburg County, NC, was the very happy winner of a state-of-the-art computer system from Hewlett Packard. The system was the Grand Prize in the raffle during URISA'99 in Chicago. Congratulations Joyce!



Dan Parr, URISA'99 Conference Chair, awards Joyce Brown her new HP computer.