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## PhillyRising program brings information to residents near Northwest Philly

February 21, 2012

By Yasmein James, for NewsWorks

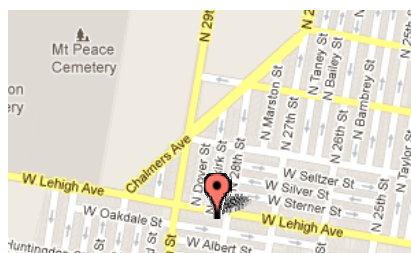
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On Thursday, more than 20 concerned community members attended the second installment of PhillyRising's Citizen Engagement Academy at the Widener Branch Library in Allegheny West.

The engagement academy is a free eight-week course designed to improve citizens' understanding of various city department and agencies. It aims to facilitate discussions led by city officials about the functions, success and challenges of the city departments.



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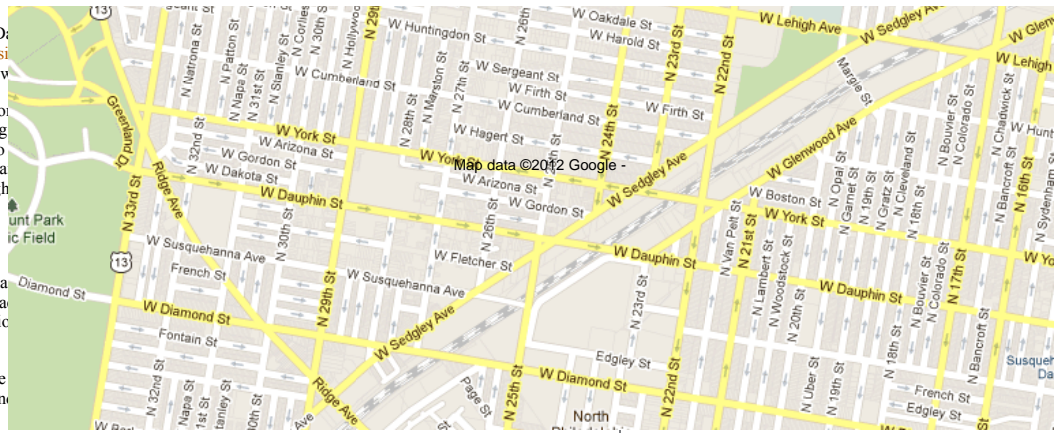
At the second of eight meetings, Dan Williams, managing director of the PhillyRising program, hopes to increase communication within the neighborhood.

"You may have one organization or another trying to do the same thing but not only are they not talking to competing against one another," said Williams, "they are sharing information and the neighborhood is benefiting from it."

**Spreading information**

While the weekly discussions are a key part of the program, Williams says the key is when the residents go back to their neighborhoods and talk to other organizations with more information.

"We are getting direct contact here rather than getting on the phone and talking to the Community Action Group."



Williams attended the meeting with his wife Sewell; they live near 30th Street and Allegheny Avenue. Both said they would like to see more programs addressing crime watch, drugs and violence in the community.

"It is a good way to identify what is going on in your neighborhood because sometimes we see things, but we don't always know what the nuisances are," said Sewell. "We need to know about those things and what we can do so that we can bring those things back to the community."

**Program expansion possible**

The academy currently includes leaders from the Swampoodle and Strawberry Mansion sections of Philadelphia, but Williams would like to have academies in each neighborhood, possibly three times a year, before long.

The academy members will meet every Thursday through March 29.

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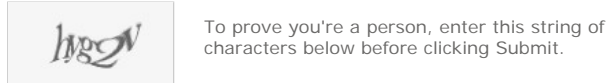
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Hope to see you there! [Learn more about Megan >](#)

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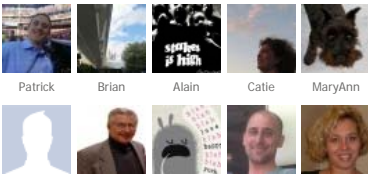
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