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WALKER'S COMMUNITY GROCERY MAKE OVER TO BECOME GOOD NEIGHBOR STORE September 2016



An award of appreciation was presented to Mr. Walker for his commitment to health empowerment and being a community health leader and true "Good Neighbor Store." He is shown holding the award alongside partners and volunteers.



An artist from On-Call Leadership created the design for the mural while volunteers from OIC of South Florida's Youthbuild program assisted with painting and other projects. The design will highlight a colorful attention grabbing visual that can't be missed while driving down Sistrunk Blvd.

SUCCESS SNAPSHOT

The **Walker's Grocery**, located at 1217 NW 6th Street, has long been a local landmark in the **Sistrunk Northwest Community** and the family has served as historical pillars of the community for their generosity and commitment since **1939**. Mr. Walker's father built the business at the early founding of the **Sistrunk** community and over the years his family has been known to help their fellow neighbors, offering words of encouragement for those in need along with donating food and other necessities from his business. He does not sell alcohol or tobacco products, he provides free condoms in partnership with the **Florida Department of Health HIV** prevention campaign, and he is committed to promoting all health related events and programs at his business. Several partners came together to invest in this local small family business to preserve and highlight its legacy and build on his commitment to good health with an event, **Walker's Community Grocery Make Over Event**, on September 24th. Over **50** community volunteers from partner organizations came out and created a mural painting, cleaned and beautified the inside and outside of this small, but powerful business as the new *Walker's Community Grocery* becomes a "Good Neighbor Store." Mr. Walker was also rewarded with a "cash mob," an idea from one of our **YMCA Community Health Workers**, which is where at a specific time during the event, a large group of people gathered to go into the store and make a purchase – this was all in an effort to give Mr. Walker a boost of some income that could be helpful for his stability. The community wants to see **Walker's Grocery** continue on

and providing both beautification and promotion are avenues to help improve his economic stability and help keep this small business running for years to come.

The event kicked off with various improvements being made and a **Ribbon Cutting** planned for the following month when all improvements are completed. The **Ribbon Cutting** will showcase the new look and investment partners and the community have made to uplift this community leader. Key partners include **Broward Regional Health Planning Council’s TOUCH initiative**, the **YMCA of South Florida**, the **Housing Authority of the City of Ft. Lauderdale**, **Step-Up Apprenticeship**, **On-Call Leadership**, **Men of Action**, **OIC of South Florida’s YouthBuild team**, **Atlantic Pacific Communities** and **Rebuilding Together Broward**. The **Ribbon Cutting** will be held on Saturday, November 12th in celebration of the final makeover and this business becoming an official **“Good Neighbor Store.”**

The **“Good Neighbor Store”** project is a youth-led collaborative effort that seeks to build healthier communities. This program is designed as an after-school club facilitated by the YMCA team where students learn about and encourage healthy eating choices and habits, tobacco prevention and cessation and more active lifestyles. The students then visit local community stores and make recommendations on how the store could become a healthier asset to the community. When the store makes key adjustments, then they can become a **“Good Neighbor Store”** and enjoy the marketing and benefits of this recognition while at the same time, fostering improved community health for all who patronize the store. Mr. Walker opened his doors and embraced **Sistrunk** youth in their evaluation and recommendations and has been very positive and receptive around the goals of this project and process. Once **Walker’s “Community” Grocery** has all recommendations in place, at the **Ribbon Cutting**, he will be showcased as a **“Good Neighbor Store”**.



Left Top: Jeff Owens of Men of Action with his young volunteers ready to work.



Above Left: The front of Walker’s Grocery has no sign to mark his business; this will be part of the completed mural. Right: Step Up Apprenticeship volunteers painted the building and provided key support for the event projects.

Left Bottom: Youthbuild volunteers worked on landscaping and outdoor beautification.

Below: Volunteers of all ages came out to support the beginning of the process to become an example to others and eventually a “Good Neighbor Store.”

