**Building a Community within a Community**by Kara Pelicano

What if you knew everyone in your neighborhood, no matter their financial status, gender, or color? What if because you got to know your neighbors your community grew stronger, more vibrant, and extremely essential? These are the hopes and goals for a new community campaign project, On The Map l Over-the-Rhine (OTM l OTR), happening in Over-the-Rhine. Mary Clare Rietz, a graduate student in the University of Cincinnati’s DAAP program, is working with a diverse group of collaborators, people who live and/or work in the neighborhood who are forming community among themselves with a goal of bringing different perspectives of Over-the-Rhine to light.

The collaborators range from young professionals new to the neighborhood to established residents to Streetvibes vendors—all people who offer their own stories of Over-the-Rhine. Rietz has invited each collaborator to create their own guided walks within Over-the-Rhine, highlighting places that hold significance to them. Collaborators will share their guided walks first with each other. In this process they will become better acquainted with what’s valuable to their neighbors, and with their neighbors’ perspectives.

After this initial phase is completed, Rietz, in collaboration with Miami University and Northern Kentucky University students, plans to design and construct a mobile kiosk that will move around Over-the-Rhine. The students are creating a big map of OTM l OTR collaborators’ important spots and will have their stories compiled into a foldout map for other residents and visitors of Over-the-Rhine. The mobile kiosk will also invite Over-the-Rhine people to respond to two prompt questions: *What 1-3 places in the neighborhood are important to you that you’d like to share with other OTR people?* And, *What is 1 place in OTR that you’re curious about and would like to learn more about from another OTR person?*

Rietz’s goal with this campaign project is to inspire social change in Over-the-Rhine, hoping that by providing a space for neighbors to get to know each other, each resident may take a little more stake in their community as a whole and the things going on in the neighborhood, big and small. The campaign project is starting a basic conversation about how each resident of Over-the-Rhine, no matter their class, gender, or race, deserves to be in the neighborhood. It brings to light the social injustice happening through gentrification and the lack of affordable housing in Over-the-Rhine. Rietz says that “the thought is that with people getting to know each other, it may be harder to watch neighbors get pushed out and priced out of their homes.”

The mobile map kiosk will allow more people in Over-the-Rhine to connect, interact, and share their own stories and places of importance. It will be an educational tool for all residents and visitors to get familiar with the people in the neighborhood. Through this, the community will become stronger and tighter knit. Rietz hopes to unveil the mobile map kiosk in Spring 2015 on the streets of Over-the-Rhine.

The Over-the-Rhine community has the opportunity to show people that each individual is of importance, just as each spot in the neighborhood holds different meaning and significance. They have the opportunity to try and stop gentrification and bring justice to all.