



OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION CENTER conducts classes in salesmanship on Friday evenings. Salesmanship is one of many classes offered by OIC. (Staff photo by Rich Derk)

Local Projects Aid North End

By MARGE FERROLI
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Champaign-Urbana has finally taken the initiative to improve the poverty-stricken conditions in its North End. And this initiative comes from the residents of the North End themselves.

Last week work began on a project to build a co-operative grocery store centrally located in the area. This co-op would be the only major grocery store directly available to North End residents. Shares in the proposed co-op can be purchased from the Legal Services Agency,

Since the Council has recently reassessed the value of the land at \$45,000, the organization would not be able to afford the land for quite a while.

James Talley, a resident of the North End and one of the project's coordinators, there are several available alternatives to outright full-price purchase of the land. Last Tuesday, Talley appeared before the Champaign City Council and presented a plan he had earlier discussed with Urban Renewal Director David Gensemer. Talley's plan would allow the city to sell the land for \$1 to Co-op, but Gensemer indicated that preliminary talks with officials of the Housing and Urban Development Department indicated that the city must sell the land at its appraised value, no matter how desirable the land use involved might be.

Another alternative would be to ask the council to lease the land to the organization at an extremely low price until 1970, when the urban renewal project will be completed, then sell the land for the

present assessed price of \$45,000. This agreement would only be made if the council gave its assurance that the land would be sold to the O.U.R. Co-op at that time. However, Talley doubts whether the Council would give his group the needed assurance of sale.

Because plans for purchasing a permanent site are so unpromising, Talley and the other coordinators are seeking a temporary site to begin the co-op's business. No definite places have been selected as possible sites for the store, but it is hoped that the chosen location will be as near the center of the North End as can be arranged. Talley estimates that a total of \$20,000 (1000 shares) is necessary to "open the doors" of the store.

This would include expenses for leasing the building, stocking the store, and insuring the grounds. The organizers of the store are hopeful that within a few years it will earn enough money to purchase a lot and begin construction of the permanent facility.

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the collecting agency for the organizers of the store.

According to Stuart Nagel, professor of political science and director of the agency, the O.U.R. (Opportunity, Unity, and Reward) Co-Op store has several functions: to provide North End residents with higher quality food for lower prices than is presently available; to serve as a training center in preparing neighborhood residents for retail jobs; to provide other employment opportunities; and to instill a sense of racial pride and self-help in the area residents since it would be owned and operated primarily by them.

The project, which received its corporation charter from the state only a week ago, has already sold between \$1000 and \$1500 worth of stock to various local and University people. The Weston Union, the 2E house of Weston Hall in MRH, purchased five \$20 shares of the stock, the maximum amount one person or group can buy. Residents of the Union agreed that a local financial commitment was appropriate since students live in the Champaign area for nine months of the year.

It is hoped that the co-op will become a part of the Certified Grocers chain, also a co-operative enterprise. As a member of this chain, O.U.R. Co-Op would receive yearly rebates from profits collected. This rebate money would in turn be used for financing various community service activities, such as building health and recreation facilities, a credit union, or low-cost housing. O.U.R. Co-Op would be a strict, non-profit organization, thus any extra funds received would be spent in other areas for development.



At present, the organization is having difficulty finding a permanent place for construction of the co-op. The area desired is located on the west side of Fourth Street between Beardsley Avenue and Eureka Street. However, this land is part of the urban renewal Project I area controlled by the Champaign City Council.

COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRIBUTES used clothing to those who need it. A Community Services worker, looks over clothes donated by city residents. (Staff photo by Dan Grunloh)