

John Niederman Graduates from NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government

Huntington, IN — On March 18 John Niederman, President, Pathfinder Services, Inc. in Huntington announced his graduation from the **NeighborWorks® Achieving Excellence in Community Development program at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government**. Niederman is one of 47 leaders to graduate with this Achieving Excellence class – a prestigious and highly selective training program offered by NeighborWorks® America through the Kennedy School of Government.



“The Achieving Excellence experience enabled our organization to become more performance driven by positive service outcomes that will improve the quality of our services and our sustainability. This knowledge will also be critical as our organization seeks to collaborate with other community organizations to improve the community,” Niederman said.

Achieving Excellence is an 18-month educational program for seasoned executive directors and senior level staff in community organizations that have a focus on affordable housing, community revitalization or community economic development. Through this program, Niederman specifically addressed one of the most critical challenges facing his organization, identifying and implementing solutions that not only dramatically changed how the organization does business, but also fostered lasting community change.

Independent evaluations have shown that in just the first two classes alone, Achieving Excellence graduates have collectively achieved the following:

- Generated \$5,566,076 in new income from fees for their services, which include loan servicing fees, property development fees, etc.;
- Raised an additional \$6.7 million in new income from grants and loans to the organization for property development and other services the organization provides;
- Developed, managed or acquired more than 2,400 new affordable rental units;
- Created 89,100 square feet in new commercial space;
- Prepared 887 clients for homeownership; and,
- Provided community development services to more than 5,500 additional clients.

According to NeighborWorks® America CEO Ken Wade, only the most experienced and sophisticated executive directors and senior level staff participate in this program. “John Niederman’s successful completion of the Achieving Excellence program is a testament to his exceptional skills and long-term commitment to improving our nation’s lower-income communities and the lives of their residents,” said Wade.

Achieving Excellence included three formal sessions at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, as well as executive coaching, intensive peer learning and guidance from Douglas K. Smith, principal designer of the program and renowned expert on performance, learning, innovation and change. The graduation was held in Atlanta, Ga., at the NeighborWorks® Training Institute on February 26, 2008.

“The strategic planning and performance management skills I learned through the Achieving Excellence program have enabled me to contribute those insights as part of my involvement with various community groups and to strengthen the positive outcomes of the organization. I am also excited about the newest challenge for Pathfinder Services to rebrand the organization in coordination with the effective marketing of the diverse services of the organization, creating a new image of our agency for the future,” Niederman said.

The only comprehensive, intensive training of its kind, Achieving Excellence is implemented and subsidized by NeighborWorks America and the first three Achieving Excellence classes were sponsored by the Fannie Mae Foundation.

For more information about the NeighborWorks Achieving Excellence program, please contact Erin Angell, 202-220-6317. For more information about Niederman and Pathfinder Services, Inc., please contact the organization at (260) 356-0500. If you would like to learn more about Community Connections, the Housing Division of Pathfinder Services, Inc. please call them at (260) 356-0521.

About NeighborWorks® America

NeighborWorks® America creates opportunities for people to improve their lives and strengthen their communities by providing access to homeownership and to safe and affordable rental housing. To date, we have assisted nearly 850,000 low- to moderate-income families with their housing needs. Much of our success is achieved through our support of the NeighborWorks network more than 230 community development organizations working in 4,400 urban, suburban and rural communities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. In the last five years, NeighborWorks organizations have generated more than \$12.4 billion in reinvestment in these communities. NeighborWorks America is the nation's leading trainer of community development and affordable housing professionals. www.nw.org.

Community Connections is the Housing Division of Pathfinder Services Inc., a not for profit Human Services organization with offices in Huntington, Wabash, and Plymouth. Community Connections began in 1997 and has helped over 1,000 families fulfill the dream of homeownership and has provided over \$6.5 million in Down Payment Assistance to those families. Please visit www.cchomes.org for more information on Community Connections.