

**January 2016**

**North Fairmount Community Center**

**Unsung Hero: Helen Bock**

In 1997 we opened a Food Co-Op in a first floor classroom of the vacant St. Leo Elementary School building. When a new Day Care Center needed that space, we moved it to the Undercroft of St. Leo's Church. Soon after that we purchased a mixed use commercial building at 1882 Baltimore.

That allowed a lot of growth for the Food Co-Op - the addition of a Thrift Shop, and rental income from the second floor apartment.

All of this happened very quickly and was led by Helen Bock. She and her husband, Emery, lived on Linden Street and had been active volunteers in North Fairmount for many years. Helen served as President of the newly formed Community Center Board of Directors and managed all of the Thrifty Co-Op operations.

Thanks to the many years of her service and that of so many other volunteers, this neighborhood could purchase, fresh from the wholesale distributions, fruits and vegetables at greatly reduced prices. Meat and dairy products were also available. Spices were an exceptional value.

The Thrift Shop also served the community well under Eloise Lewis' leadership. Clothing and household items found new homes.

Little did we know that it would become a gathering place as well. People came to buy, but also to meet and talk with old friends. That "drawn shade syndrome" after the 60's" was being torn down. People were reconnecting with their friends and neighbors.

*- Lois Broerman, Co-Director*