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## Arts/Ideas/Culture

### If you build it, they will come



Joseph Cool and Lillie Wimberley are working to unite the many cultures in Detroit

**By Kelley Dickens**  
The Michigan Citizen

President and founder of Friends of Detroit & Tri County, a community driven public assistance program, Lillie Wimberley has another endeavor that will improve her people and neighborhood.

Wimberley is dedicated to enhancing Detroit one life at a time, and uses money from her own pocket to see it through.

Founded in 1994, Friends' mission statement is to improve the mindset of the poor. Without it, "Each generation will slip into a never-ending cycle of hopelessness and welfare dependency."

The foundation offers training programs—construction courses, a sewing club and culinary arts.

Wimberley and her family moved to Detroit 67 years ago, shortly before the U.S. declared its involvement in WWII.

She has lived in this neighborhood nearly 20 years and has raised six children in the area.

Wimberley's latest venture is the Multicultural Community Partnership program.

"We want to provide hope to the community and be able to partner with other

cultures and address unmet needs to provide jobs and affordable housing.

Joe Cool, president and CEO of Cool & Associates, Inc. is on board.

His motto: "Going global by helping the community."

Cool says that the answer to many of society's ills is as simple as understanding cultures. He's visited 54 countries and works as a consultant.

Wimberley wants to push the message of hope to those in her community but she says if people are unemployed and if everyone they know is out of a job, that mantra falls on deaf ears.

She wants to fill the void and build ethics, cultural education and trade skills for Detroiters.

"We are addressing all issues and concerns that will make the quality of life better for the community."

Wimberley says that a lack of funds have hindered her programs from becoming non-profit, funded organizations.

The Multicultural program receives a limited amount of funds from FEMA.

Economic hardships and rises in energy costs are hitting Wimberley and her organizations hard.

The heat in the building is cut off many days during the week. Wimberley hoped it would cut costs.

The DTE energy bill is \$1100 per month.

Despite the hardships that she as a president is facing, she's determined to keep her word.

"We'll reach out, over and under until we make it work."

The area within a six mile radius is becoming wireless.

"We know it's a tall bill to fill, but we want to offer something that appeals to everyone."

May 9 is the second Multicultural Community meeting. May 6, Wimberley and her crew will be participating in the 'Greening of Detroit.' Crews will meet at 9 a.m. The Kettering High School Marching Band will be providing music.