



wants to open in the Central District. He's won a \$90,000 pledge for partial funding from the Eisenhower Foundation and is working on securing additional commitments to bring the vision to life.

Dixon sees his work since returning to Seattle as part of a clear continuum going back "to the heyday of the Black Panthers here. For instance, on a contract job with the city of Seattle surveying teens from the Delridge and South Park neighborhoods on social service needs, Dixon found that "kids said they wanted places they can go and be comfortable, where they can feel the place is theirs. The Panthers were able to provide that in the '60s. There were a lot of kids- 14, 15, 16 years old, some runaways-who worked in the programs we had set up then, and who came to the community center in party headquarters. as a kind of refuge.

"The idea now for Central House is born of the same concerns," he says, with the focus specifically on at-risk gang youths. "Working with gang-involved kids for so long, it became really clear to me that they were suffering from lack of family. Home was not a stable place. These kids need a sanctuary, a place where they can rest, get something to eat, be with caring individuals and counselors." Another envisioned piece of the same project is transitional housing. Last year, Dixon also served on a Justice Department task force looking at transitional housing, job training and other services for ex-convicts.

If Dixon succeeds in getting Central House off the ground, it wouldn't be the first time since his return to Seattle that he has helped pull off an impressive effort to create a new social service facility. Dixon serves on the board of the African-American Community Health Network (AACHN) and played a key role in the AACHN effort to develop Cannon House, a \$14 million assisted-living facility for seniors. Located near 23rd and Yesler, it opened in January. Cannon House, which can house 120 to 130, is expected to serve primarily Central Area and southeast Seattle seniors. Expected profits are to be reinvested in development of affordable housing.

AACHN founder and Cannon House administrator Lynn French says, "Aaron was instrumental in helping us win funding of \$1.25 million and project approval from the City Council for Cannon House. With Aaron's assistance, we also found the right person to do marketing for the facility. He's got a long-standing commitment to advocating services for populations in need. When we needed to make contacts in the