Planting seeds of renewal in struggling Lowell neighborhood

By Jennifer Myers, jmyers@lowellsun.com

LOWELL—The lime green and yellow car parked on the street was painted in Portuguese flag colors and had a Portuguese flag decal on the side. It was the car of David Koch, president of the Back Central Neighborhood Association.

"This is home for me," he said. "I grew up right across the street." Koch is one of the many residents of the Back Central neighborhood who have been involved in efforts to improve the area. "The Back Central is the heart of the city," he said. "It's where the history is." Koch and his wife have been active in the neighborhood for many years, and they have helped to organize events and clean-up efforts. "We want to make sure that people feel safe and welcome here," Koch said.

The neighborhood has a long history of struggle, with poverty, crime, and drug use being common issues. "It's been a tough neighborhood," Koch said. "But we're making progress."

Koch and other residents of the Back Central neighborhood have worked to improve the area in a number of ways. They have organized clean-up efforts, worked to improve community centers, and helped to organize events like the Back Central Block Party, which attracts hundreds of people each year.

"We want to make sure that people feel safe and welcome here," Koch said. "We want to make sure that everyone can enjoy the Back Central neighborhood."