

## A PLEA FROM THE STREETS

### Why ARISE Detroit ! Matters

Walking around downtown Detroit streets these days, it is not unusual to see people who look like they are vagrants or homeless wandering about.

That was the case for me recently as I exited a downtown building from a meeting with John X. Miller, chairman of ARISE Detroit ! and CEO of THAW Fund.

As I peered straight ahead focused my next meeting or task, I heard a voice cry out, "*Luther Keith, how is ARISE Detroit ! doing?*" Looking up, I was startled to see a grizzled, middle aged gentleman who looked like he might have been homeless or a vagrant - which admittedly could have been an absolutely wrong assumption on my part.

Nevertheless, the man was bedraggled with dirty clothes and truly looked like he might have needed a bath, a meal and a place to stay. After I recovered from that observation, I shouted back, "*We are going straight up, brother.*" The man threw me a wave and sauntered on down the block.

I was left to wonder--here was a man who truly seemed like a "down and outer" with a thousand other things to worry about than the fate of some fledgling community organization with the audacious goal of transforming Detroit . Yet, somehow, he was tuned into ARISE Detroit !, perhaps from television or newspaper articles or possibly from a community event. He obviously knew that ARISE Detroit ! is trying to do something to lift the spirits and hopes of our people and move Detroit forward.

If this man can care, this man who appeared to have so little, how can the rest of us who have so much not do the same? How can we not afford to be involved with a child, an organization or community program that will make things better for that man, so many others like him and our children.

Implicit in the man's question was a hope and a plea - a hope for change, a plea for better times - and maybe even a cry for help.

We can't afford to disappoint him.

*Luther Keith  
Executive Director*