

# Good neighbor Drexel

**W**hen you find a plan that works, it's best to stick with it.

That's exactly what **Drexel University's** new president, John A. Fry, proposed this week in an attempt to enhance the neighborhood surrounding the West Philadelphia campus. This is a good move that will benefit the university, its neighbors, and the city.

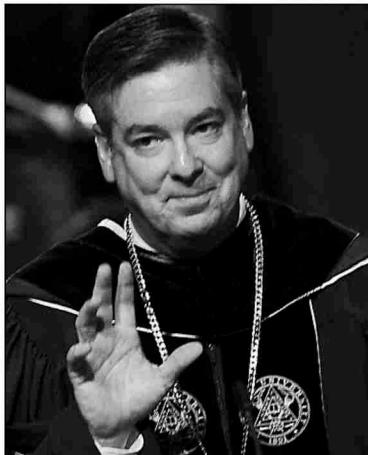
Fry's five-point plan to improve safety and offer incentives to employees who buy homes in the neighborhood resembles the plan he largely designed and implemented as an executive at the University of Pennsylvania in the late 1990s. Those efforts greatly improved the area surrounding Penn's campus and helped spark private investment in restaurants, a movie theater, and a grocery store.

Given that Drexel is located next to Penn, it makes sense to implement a similar strategy for the Powelton and Mantua neighborhoods.

Indeed, Fry plans to expand security patrols in the neighborhoods surrounding Drexel. Plans also call for better lighting, tree trimming, and landscaping to help spruce up the city streets.

Drexel also plans to boost financial incentives for employees who buy homes near campus, as well as expand the area that qualifies for the incentives. Employees can receive a \$15,000 loan that will be forgiven if they stay in the home for five years, along with a \$5,000 home-improvement grant.

Fry also wants to add more



LAURENCE KESTERSON / Staff Photographer  
**Drexel President** John A. Fry has announced an ambitious plan.

housing for Drexel students, many of whom are forced to live off campus in often unsafe and poor-quality private apartments and houses. He also wants to partner with the elementary school in the neighborhood, which will help attract young families.

At the same time, Drexel plans to sell the mansion in Montgomery County that has served as the home of the university president. The 2.8-acre estate was donated to Drexel years ago by an alumna, but was disconnected from the campus. The property is listed for \$2.7 million. (Fry plans to continue to live in Haverford, where he lived when he worked at Penn.)

Fry came to Drexel following the death of president Constantine Papadakis, a charismatic leader who resurrected the university. Fry is off to a fine start in building on Drexel's success.