

The PHA Experience



Vol. II No. 2 (Issue 6)

A Community Newspaper for and about Residents

Spring 2005

New Senior Center is a Dream Come True

Fannie Williams and Helen Tilley can't believe how lucky they are. They live at PHA's newest residential development, the Conswiller B. Pratt Apartment Building.

The new senior building at 3001 Moore Street is part of Greater Grays Ferry Estates. It was officially dedicated in March, but residents began moving in late last year. St. Agnes Continuing Care Center has opened a state-of-the-art senior care center on the first floor where residents can take advantage of the LIFE (Liv-

ing Independently For Elders) program.

Williams, 58, was a resident of the old Tasker Homes that occupied the site where the new senior building now stands. She's very happy to come back to the neighborhood after a temporary relocation. And Williams knows some of the families who live in the new homes that PHA built nearby.

Fannie cannot say enough about her new apartment's features, especially the kitchen area.

"I did something that I wasn't able to do at the other house I was

in. I actually used my oven and made a cake. The cake turned out wonderful in this stove," she says. "I called my sister. I called my mother. I called my son."

She says living at the Pratt Apartment Building is like living in Center City. Williams moved in to her new residence in time to see the New Year's Eve fireworks from her bedroom window. She feels like a millionaire.

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Helen Tilley, a 79-year-old widow, believes her good fortune



CONSWILLER B. PRATT is center of attention after cutting ribbon on new Senior Building named in her honor.

Friend Rescues Blind Neighbor in Fire



Katie B. Jackson's daughters Gwen and Ingrid giving Thomas Friend a Community Service Award

His heroic acts during an April fire at the Katie B. Jackson Apartments in West Phila. have earned resident Thomas Friend a special community service award. Friend risked his life when he rushed into his blind neighbor's 3rd floor apartment after the fire broke out. George Parks was resting when he smelled smoke. Although Parks couldn't see the fire he felt the heat, and struggled unsuccessfully to get out.

Next door, Thomas Friend was watching the news and faintly heard his neighbor yelling for

help. He smelled the smoke, heard the alarm and rushed next door. When Thomas opened the door a whoosh of fire swept through. Despite the flames, Thomas was able to pull George out safely. George's arms and legs were burned but he was alive. Another neighbor helped George down the steps as Thomas banged on doors telling everyone to evacuate. The fire was quickly put out once the firefighters arrived. When the smoke cleared, one resident had suffered smoke inhalation and George was treated for

his burns.

There is a special reason why PHA seniors selected Katie B. Jackson as the name of their building at 400 North 50th Street. Ms. Jackson dedicated her life to helping seniors. Each year in her honor, a community service award is given out on her birthday. Residents felt there was no more fitting recipient this year than Thomas Friend. He was honored for helping his neighbor George and for alerting other neighbors in his building with his quick actions during the fire.

Crowds Flock to PHA's Homeownership Fair

Hundreds of people interested in becoming homeowners visited the PHA table during the Philadelphia Tribune's annual Homeownership Fair on April 10th. An overflow crowd filled the conference room at PECO's headquarters building (23rd & Market) to hear PHA Exec. Dir. Carl Greene's presentation.

Now is the time to start buying property in neighborhoods that are poised for redevelopment, according to Greene. He said homes that once sold for very little in North Phila., for example, have jumped dramatically in value. In other words, becoming a homeowner is a way to increase your personal wealth.

Greene made an on-screen presentation about PHA's two major homeownership programs: PHA-built new homes and existing homes purchased with Housing Choice Vouchers. The audience learned about the requirements for each program, and about the counseling and

Cont. on Page 12



Business was brisk at the PHA table during the Philadelphia Tribune's annual homeownership fair at PECO, 23rd & Market. Crystal Baldwin and Sheila Arrington (on left) of PHA's Homeownership Division help out on of the couples who attended.

CHOOSE GOOD HEALTH



Quality Health Care is not just for some people. It shouldn't be limited by neighborhood, color or age. Quality health care is for everyone.

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Medicaid (HMO)

Johnson Homes Computer Lab Graduates Sixteen

It was graduation day for residents who put their fear aside and worked hard to learn how to operate a computer. When these residents began computer class they had major misconceptions about computer language. They thought that "surfing the web" had something to do with wet spiders, that burning a disc meant setting something on fire, and they were certain that checking e-mail involved a trip to the Post Office.

Now these computer graduates can produce colorful brochures and booklets. Students burn their own CD's (transfer information from the computer

to a compact disc) and some have advanced to taking seminars on photography. These students put in months of study to learn basic computer skills and much more.

The computer class graduation took place on March 1. Sixteen students in all graduated including PHA Commissioner Nellie Reynolds. The graduates from the beginners class are: Deeja Barksdale, Beatrice Evans-Valedictorian, Rosa Gooden, Mildred Hosendorf and Alice Walker.

The graduates from the advance class are: Elma Anderson, Joseph Berry, Jean Bullard,

Charles Crisden, Janet Davis, Gertrude Dyer, Greta Fleming-Valedictorian, Corliss Gray, Jacqueline Harris, Mary James and Commissioner Nellie Reynolds.

If you are interested in learning more about computers, the beginners class is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the advance class meets on Mondays and Wednesdays. Both classes are from 9:30 to noon or in the evening from 6:00 to 8:00pm. The Johnson Homes Computer Center is located at 2500 W. Norris Street. For information call 215.684.4715.



Those pictured from left to right are graduates: Charles Crisden, Janet Davis, Mildred Hosendorf, Deeja Barksdale, William Brown-intern, Beatrice Evans, Commissioner Nellie Reynolds, Mary James (with TSSI Director Asia Coney), PHA Assistant Executive Director Carolyn Carter

Campers Wanted for Fun in the Sun

By Mia Graves

The end of the school year doesn't mean an end to summer fun and educational activities in a safe and structured environment.

The City of Philadelphia has developed a directory of summer camps, programs and activities for

children of all ages. The pamphlet has been created to encourage parents to involve their children in educational activities as well as fun this summer.

This directory is great for working parents who want the assurance of great, safe and affordable

(even free in some cases) camps for their children. This pamphlet provides lists of camps, programs and activities that parents and kids can agree on, which makes finding the right camp easier and less stressful for parents and kids. The camps, programs and activities are

offered in all Philadelphia neighborhoods. They range from overnight camps in the Pocono Mountains to softball camps in the Northeast.

Ted Qualli, Communications Director at the Department of Human Services says, "The directory of summer camps provides parents with a list of possibilities for summer activities." The directo-

ry is divided by zip code and section of the city, making the directory easy to use by everyone.

Read through the pages and engage your family in some Philadelphia fun this summer. If you are interested in receiving the directory by mail, please call 215.683.4347 and copies will be mailed.

Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Summer Food Is Here!!!
Summer Food Program

Operating Hours
Monday thru Friday
8:00AM - 2:00PM
(see site personnel for exact serving times)

Start Date: Monday June 27, 2005
Program End: Friday August 19, 2005

All children ages 18 and under are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch.

For more info call 215.684.1164 / 4150 / 4116

Carl R. Greene, Executive Director
www.pha.phila.gov

Community Partners Program
Free Course Offerings

CORA Offers PHA Tenants GED and Homeownership Counseling

CORA Services is very proud to be providing a wide range of programs for PHA tenants under the Community Partner Program. At the agency's Neumann Center and The Beacon Center at Grover Washington, Jr. Middle School, CORA is offering GED, Career Counseling and other youth related services. In addition, Homeownership Counseling is available to qualified tenants. All services are free of charge.

CORA's Neumann Center is located at 1000 Orthodox St in Frankford and is easily accessible by the Frankford El. The Beacon program operates from the Grover Washington Middle School on Olney Avenue & B Street. For Information on either program please contact Terry Devlin at CORA, 215-701-2538.

A Success Story: Born and Raised in the Projects

"I'm proud of where I came from. I think that where I came from made me the person I am today," says PHA Police Officer Jerri Hemphill. "If I can do it, so can everybody else."

Jerri (It's really GERALYN but don't tell anybody.) grew up at Liddonfield Homes in the Northeast and lived there until 1998 when she bought her own home. She has made a success out of her life and if she can influence just one child to be "something more," that's the real payoff for her.

Hemphill has a special attachment to Liddonfield. It began when she first moved there with her father, mother and three siblings. She was 5 years old. Before that, Jerri's family had lived at Northeast Village, a former PHA site along Roosevelt Boulevard built during World War II for defense workers and their families. Her dad was a steel worker and her mother worked in the seniors' nutrition program at Liddonfield.

Jerri says her father thought he might eventually buy his home at Liddonfield. He had heard that several times from someone else. The opportunity never came, but the family stayed because Liddonfield was a very strong community and a beautiful place to live. They also stayed because her father became disabled after he was injured on the job.

Eventually, Jerri Hemphill started her own family and all three of her kids were born while she lived at Liddonfield. She never felt the need to leave. There was a sense of security and community. "That's where you come from and you don't want to leave," she says.

During those years, Hemphill served as the tenant council president at Liddonfield; and she ran the lunch program one summer. In her first career Jerri worked for 14 years as a caseworker for the state welfare department. One day a flyer came across her desk

announcing that the PHA Police Department was hiring. Jerri decided to "give it a shot."

Hemphill is still enjoying her second career, 11 years later. She spent the first five years as a patrol officer, in the North Division that covers all PHA property north of Market Street. Today, Jerri supervises all security functions for PHA (her official title is "Agent").

In 1998, Hemphill took the plunge and became a homeowner. She says she decided that she could own for what she was paying in rent to PHA.

"I outgrew Liddonfield. It was time to let go," Hemphill says. "People don't have to be afraid. They can survive out there."

Jerri makes it plain that she's proud to be "from the projects." She was just ready to be an owner and only wishes some of the programs available now to PHA residents were available back then. Homeownership was a big step from PHA's structured way of life,



PHA POLICE OFFICER Jerri Hemphill was born and raised in the projects. Not only is she proud of that fact, she has made a career of serving the people who live in those same places she came from.

but Jerri says the pride of being a homeowner and the financial incentives have made it all worthwhile. She refers people to PHA's Homeownership program all the time.

"Anyone that has a fairly decent job that can afford to pay high rent, can afford to pay a mortgage," Hemphill says. "They get all the benefits of

that, including a big break on your taxes. You get the accomplishment of owning it."

And with rents rising, homeownership in her view looks better than ever.

Trike-A-Thon Teaches Safety & Charity

On a brisk, spring day as many raced to finish their tax returns, the kids at Bartram Village Head Start held a bike race to help kids battling cancer. Round and round they went in front of the community center where the street was blocked off and pylons set up and for the racetrack. While some kids showed off their racing skills,

other children and parents cheered them on from the sidelines.

The Trike-A-Thon for St. Jude Kids teaches parents and children about safety and caring for others while raising money for a worthy cause. The event helps to create a sense of community and teach kids some of life's basic values.

Carol Simons, Director of the Head Start/Day Care Center at Bartram Village organized the event. She says parents and children raised money by asking members of the community to sign a pledge sheet, promising a certain amount of money for each lap completed.

Simons says St. Jude *Cont. on Page 12*



THE TRIKE-A-THON for St. Jude Kids teaches parents and children about safety and caring for others. The event at Bartram Village also creates a sense of community and teaches kids some of life's basic values.

Dare To Be Great Corner

Is Anyone Really Listening?

By Corporal Daniel J. Richmond

Some of us are hard of hearing and some of us have a hard time listening. Listening is a skill most of us need to work on, because we are often distracted and don't really hear what is being said during a conversation. This is particularly challenging for parents who are trying to juggle many priorities simultaneously.

Effective communication between parents and children is not always easy to achieve. What an understatement! But listening to what our children have to say is so important. Parents should make the time to listen to their kids in a quiet, unhurried manner. Create a special time of day to give your children undivided attention - on the way to school, during meals, or right before bedtime. Listen in such a way that you not only hear the message but also reinforce the child giving the message. Most children are looking for an ear, not an answer; it's so simple - just really listen!

In the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program we focus on effective listening techniques. Students learn that it is important to face the speaker and make eye contact as they listen for the

main points. Leaning forward slightly or nodding your head will indicate that you are interested in the conversation. This body language also demonstrates that you understand the message and agree.

If you do not agree or fully understand the speaker, restate in your own words what you are hearing for clarification. Reflective listening or mirroring is a helpful way to ensure the information is clearly understood. Use open-ended questions or questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes or no". These questions require the speaker to provide more information that include answering: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

Becoming a good listener includes avoiding the temptation to interrupt the speaker to state your point of view. Wait for the speaker to finish their thought or story and ask for your opinion. Use facial expressions particularly a smile to show that you are interested and enjoying the conversation.

When you use these techniques the speaker will feel good knowing that he or she has your attention. Using these skills with your children will build their self-image and give them confidence when speaking with others. These are skills they will use the rest of their lives. So today, try an experiment; find time to really listen. You'll be so glad you did.



by Cynthia Lofton, Resident Writer

Cooking together can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for parents and their children. It also gives adults the opportunity to spend some quality time with the kids. And after all, you do have to feed them and eat yourself.

Cooking is a practical skill and can help your children develop self-confidence and self esteem. Novice cooks learn quickly and can help prepping dinner before adults get home from work. Wouldn't that be nice? In each issue of the PHA Experience, we will explore recipes that are simple enough to be done safely alone. So let's get started, and enjoy this time with your kids.

Quick and Easy Pizza

- 4 English Muffins
- 4 Tablespoons Spaghetti or Pizza Sauce
- 1 cup Shredded Mozzarella Cheese
- 2 Tablespoons Parmesan Cheese
- Dash oregano or basil, to taste

Optional toppings:

Sliced Pepperoni, Chopped Onion, Ground Chicken, Sliced Mushrooms, Diced Green Pepper or Pineapples. Choose a topping of your choice and feel free to explore.

Preheat oven to 350°

Slice English muffins in half. Place on a baking sheet. Top each muffin half with 2 tablespoons of tomato sauce. Sprinkle each with mozzarella and parmesan cheese. Add optional toppings to taste. Sprinkle with oregano or basil. Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until cheese bubbles and muffins look crusty around the edges. Using a potholder, remove the baking sheet from the oven. Use a spatula to transfer pizzas to serving plates. Serve warm.

Yield: 4 Servings

If you want more kid's recipes, look for Chef Cindy's column in future issues of the PHA Experience.

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Resident Writers
Valerie Manlove, Antoinette Martin,
Cynthia Lofton

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People You Should Know



Charmaine Morton

For 12 years now Charmaine Morton has worked hard for PHA residents. As Asset Manger for the Senior Program, she helps coordinate, facilitate and implement programs and services for senior residents. For example, the health & fitness program informs seniors about eating, exercise and other health issues. The Café program gives a nutritious beginning to a senior's day by preparing a healthy breakfast with good stuff like fruit, yogurt, bagels and fruit juices. Then to get the arthritis loosened up, they begin their morning stretch.

The Congregate Housing program provides assistance in the form of supportive services for the frail or temporally disabled. In this program independence and un-necessary institutionalism is promoted. In addition, homemaking services and meals are provided.

If you combine all these services and programs, more than 35,000 seniors are helped each year. Do you want more information about any of the senior programs? Charmaine Morton is the person that can help you. Call her at 215.684.1183.



Wesley Miles

Wesley Miles, General Manager of Conventional Sites Maintenance, is a career employee of PHA. He will mark his 19th anniversary with the agency this July.

Miles began working at PHA as a laborer at the old Richard Allen. He'd clean the grounds, cut the grass, mop the floors and handle other basic jobs. Along the way, Wes began filling in for some of the site superintendents, learning management from them.

Miles eventually became a superintendent, first at Spring Garden, then branching out to Cambridge, Blumberg and Richard Allen. From there, he was promoted to chief of the Structural Maintenance and Repair Team (SMART). The renovation of Harrison Plaza was among the projects handled by his team. Miles says he loves the challenge of his job, taking a community and transforming it into something that improves the environment. And pay is secondary to job and resident satisfaction.

His advice to residents: be proud of your communities, be proud of your homes and try to reach out and serve as role models for people that look up to you. You can reach Wesley Miles at 215-684-8841.

Phyllis Gibson, the Administrator of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, loves giving residents the customer service they want as well as the spirit they need in their struggles.

Before coming to PHA in January, Gibson spent 10 years helping families of murder victims get counseling and compensation. She worked as the Executive Director of West/Southwest Victims Services, a division of the Philadelphia District Attorney's office.

Phyllis says her biggest challenge is trying to motivate residents and make them feel that they can become successful, if they take the proper steps. She says some are still learning that PHA has programs and services to help them reach their dreams.

Gibson also believes that PHA residents are getting better service under the new Customer Relationship Management system, which helps them track their progress and take steps toward success. And she says customer service is more than just telling residents what's available to them.

"You have to be able to give customer service with a good spirit, so they know you care, you're interested, and that you're going to give them the boost they need," she says.

Gibson says there's lots of job satisfaction for her at PHA knowing that she and her staff have reached out to someone and helped them. You can reach Phyllis Gibson at 215-684-3098.



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WORC Helps You Help Yourself

By Antoinette Martin
Resident Writer

Does saving money seem impossible? Many people find themselves struggling to meet every day financial responsibilities, let alone planning for the future.

This was the situation for three women: Jacqueline Brown, Wallace Battle and Sandra Mova-Valentin. Their circumstances were similar. They all wanted to figure out how to reach their long-term goals including: financing a college education, purchasing a home, and expanding a business. These three women were smart. They used the services of Women's Opportunities Resource Center (WORC) and the Family Savings Account Program (FSA), to help them achieve the success they wanted. WORC is a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance, knowledge and skills needed for self-sufficiency for women. WORC's mission is to promote social and economic self-sufficiency for low-income women and their families.

Jacqueline Brown lives in West Phila. with her husband, son and her daughter, who is now attending Virginia State University. Jacqueline is using the matching funds from the FAS program to finance her daughter's college education. "Before attending WORC," said Brown, "we had no idea how we could help our

The FSA savings program is one of WORC's valuable programs focused on savings and financial skills. Individuals, who qualify, take part in a one to two year training and savings program. The participants open a savings account with one of the participating banks and agree to save at least \$10 per week (or \$40 per month) for a two-year period. Participants receive up to \$1,000 per year to match their savings. That means you contribute \$2,000 and the bank contributes \$2,000 to your account so you end up with \$4,000 in savings to help you achieve your goals. The program also provides individuals with financial skills through financial management classes.

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daughter attend college." Their daughter is studying psychology and has future plans to join the FBI. Jacqueline offers this advice, "It's not how much you save, but that you save. Just save something."

Wallace Battle a resident of Philadelphia Housing Authority opened her FSA account in August of 2004. She is saving to purchase a home. Battle has been through the PHA homebuyer's program and is looking to purchase her house next summer or next fall.

Sandra Mova-Valentin, lives in the Allegheny section of Philadelphia. Her goal was to remodel her home so she could expand her daycare business. With the matching funds from the FAS program she achieved her goal. Valentin said, "My income went from \$18,000 a year to \$26,000 a year. I learned how to set priorities about saving, to use a budget, and how to expand my business."

The WORC center is also recognized for its leadership, dedication and hard work in provid-

Stay Cool and Save Cold Cash

Staying cool this summer while avoiding big electric bills is easy. Try the following suggestions:

- Keep shades closed during the day to block direct sun.
- Open windows at night to bring in the cool air.
- Use window fans to push the hot air out during the day, and at nightfall, to pull in the cool air.
- Only use air conditioners when absolutely necessary.

ing its services, and has received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Micro Enterprise Development, for "Excellence in Poverty Alleviation" from the US Department of the Treasury.

Marcia Leithauser, WORC's PAS program manager stated, "With our matching funds and support from the program WORC has helped (more than) 472 low-income families purchase their asset goals whether a home, a business, higher education or a car. We've achieved a

total impact of over \$11 million in our region."

WORC is a statewide program that serves a diverse group of people, including refugees, offering them an FAS program that meets their special needs. WORC is located at 2010 Chestnut Street, in Center City Philadelphia. To make an appointment call them at 215-564-5500, or visit their web site at www.worc-pa.com.

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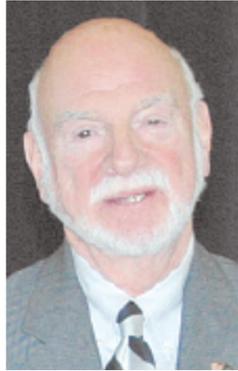
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Community Partners Help PHA Make Success Stories A Reality

What is PHI?



Harvey Portner

The Professional Healthcare Institute (PHI) was established in October 1996 to train people for jobs in the health care industry. The program was introduced in response to market research. The studies showed an increasing demand for caregivers, due to the aging population in the Philadelphia area.

Initially, PHI trained students as Nursing Assistants, Pharmacy Technicians, and in Medical Billing. More recently, the Institute has expanded training with courses in the hospitality industry. The newest programs, Certified Food Handler and Culinary, were started in partnership with PHA.

Harvey Portner, PHI's Admissions Representative, says students in the Certified Food Handler program can gain national certification for work in restaurants, nursing homes and other settings where food is served. In fact, all members of the first graduating class passed their certification test. He says students who want to become chefs (via the Culinary Program) must become Certified Food Handlers, too.

No matter what program PHA residents choose to enter, PHI will help them find a job upon graduation. Portner says the response to the newest programs has been very good.

"There is plenty of work out there," Portner says. "We're talking about jobs with a starting salary between \$9.50 and \$13 an hour. For most of our clients, it's more money than they've ever made, and we're only too happy to endorse them."

What is EDSI?



EDSI Staff: Kathleen Walsh, Melanie DiBlasi and Debra Peterkin

Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI) is a firm that helps people find jobs. The company works with PHA and other public agencies whose clients want to get back into the workforce or want to find a better job.

Melanie DiBlasi, Program Manager for EDSI, says many people need help on how to look for a job. They also need to learn how to write an effective resume

and how to have a positive interview, as well as increasing their job skills, and building a career track that leads to better paying jobs. EDSI spends four weeks with each client, helping them get prepared to get a job and keep it.

"We have a job development staff; each member works with a different industry," DiBlasi says. "They meet with clients from PHA and identify what types of jobs they're looking for and the current skill level. If we don't have something right off the bat, the job developer will find employers interested in the client."

Melanie says the staff at EDSI wants to see people move up the ladder, so they make enough money to buy their own homes. She says every day is a different experience, and seeing clients land jobs that make them happy is her big payoff.

If you are interested in making a leap forward with your career call Melanie DiBlasi at EDSI (215) 564-0015 or speak to your Family Self-Sufficiency representative.

Tyrone Sharid

Tyrone Shairst was looking for something better. At age 39, he had been getting by working odd jobs and in his own words, "not making enough money." It was difficult for him to take care of his family; and the future looked bleak.



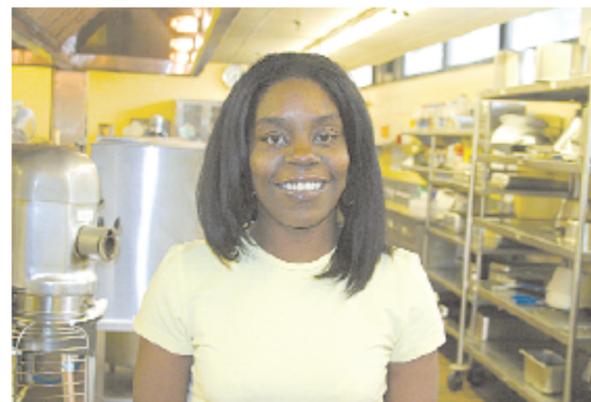
Tyrone Sharid

The picture began to change when Shairst heard about the culinary training offered by the Professional Healthcare Institute (PHI) through Dorothy (Dot) Jones, a Human Development Specialist with PHA.

Tyrone had worked as a cook at several brand name restaurants, but he had no certification as either a chef or a food

Celestine Pinckney

Celestine Pinckney is a Housing Choice Voucher resident who lives in West Philadelphia. Several years ago she stopped work-



Celestine Pinckney

ing after she became pregnant with her now 4-year-old son Shaun. She waited to return to work so she could spend time with the newest member of the family. But as Shaun became old enough for daycare, Celestine wanted, or rather, needed to find a job.

Speaking with friends, neighbors and PHA representatives, she found out about a job placement service for PHA residents called Educational Data Systems Inc. or EDSI. Through work-

handler. Upon Jones' advice, he enrolled in PHI's first culinary class held at PHA's Abbottsford Community Center. He graduated with flying colors and is the proud holder of a National Food Handler and Managers Certificate. The certificate is recognized across the country and greatly improves graduates job prospects.

Chef/Instructor Rosemary Bock says Tyrone was an outstanding student who excelled in bookwork as well as practical culinary skills. She thinks he'll make a great chef or manager.

Tyrone gives Rosemary high marks, too. "She really put her heart into teaching. She's very helpful and had a lot of patience."

Shairst now works for a major restaurant chain in Philadelphia. He is a line coordinator, making sure the food is at the proper temperature and looks appealing before it gets to your plate. He says having the food handler's certificate made a big difference in his pay - an increase of \$3 an hour starting out.

"For some reason, I like cooking. I like to see people smile when they're eating their food," he says. "I would like to move on and become a chef."

Tyrone says as a chef he would have the chance to learn and develop more recipes, and teach his skills to others. For him, cooking is a form of artistry. His job is also challenging, especially during peak periods at the restaurant. But Tyrone is happy and focused on the road ahead.

"I've come a long way from nothing trying to get something. I can see my success building," he says. "I'm not sitting at home doing nothing and worrying about bills. I do have a job now, making a little bit of money, it makes me

force strategies, EDSI takes clients who aren't working and helps them find jobs. And for those who are working they help them find better employment. In addition, they help clients resolve issues at work so they can keep their jobs.

For Celestine, EDSI taught her basic computer skills that she later used to search the web to find employment. After just a few weeks she found a position working in the kitchen at an elderly care center for the Little Sisters of the Poor. Celestine says EDSI helped in both preparing her for work and then helping her find work. "The people at EDSI showed me how to put my resume together." This is most important because the resume is what an employer sees first. Then EDSI took the next step, and showed me how to search the web for job opportunities."

After almost four months at the new job Celestine says she enjoys helping the elderly and will work full-time once Shaun starts daycare in the fall. As for the future, Celestine plans to return to school and become a dietary technician at a hospital. And while pursuing that goal she wants to clean up her credit and eventually buy a house.

Joan Ruff

Get a job, go to school or be eliminated from the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). That was the strong message Joan Ruff received in a letter from the Philadelphia Housing Authority. All residents in the HCV program (except elderly and disabled) must follow these guidelines. So to meet this mandate Joan needed to take action toward her goal to find a job.

PHI Success Stories

happy. There's nothing like that certification hanging up on the wall and saying 'I did this.'"

Shairst says his job, like any new job, was stressful at first but you have to "keep on going." Once you get over the hump, he says, it seems like everything just opens up. You feel like a bird taking off.

Joyce Ruff

After three successful years working for Rite-Aid as a pharmacy technician, Joyce was ready to take on more responsibility and move up the pay chain. She entered the Pharmacy Technician program at PHI in December 2001.

During her graduation ceremony two years later, Joyce received special recognition from PHA for achieving state certification as a pharmacy technician. This state certification gives Ruff a new credential that positions her for better paying jobs with hospitals and H-M-O's.

Trying to move up to that better job has tested Ruff's patience however. Consolidation and cost cutting in the health care industry has provided fewer opportunities and stiffer competition. Still, Joyce is optimistic as she interviews for a new position.

"I like customer service, working with the pharmacists, learning the difference between generic and brand name medications. There's always something new to learn," Ruff says.

Joyce currently helps process prescription requests and removes outdated medicine from the pharmacy's inventory. She also knows how to use a new software system installed by Rite-Aid and keeps up with changing health benefit plans for seniors.

Ruff's goal is to move up to a management or supervisory

EDSI Success Stories

The letter from PHA included names and phone numbers of several free employment services. Joan found the listing for EDSI, a service that helped her set-up interviews and network with local employers. "After the orientation, EDSI showed me how to prepare a resume, how to use computer programs to find career openings, and then how to present myself during an interview. They will find you a job."

Joan has been working in a security position at Kensington Hospital since March. She says she loves working in the hospital. Already thinking about the future she realizes that this job is a stepping-stone. "I want more than a job; I want a career in the medical field." She plans to continue working with EDSI to find better positions as she moves forward in life. Ruff also hopes to eventually buy the house she has rented for more than a year.

Stephanie Griggs

Stephanie Griggs is flying high as a ticket agent for US Air. And with this new job comes the privilege of flying anywhere in the world for free. But getting to this place in life took perseverance. Two years ago she was working in customer service for a delivery company, when she left the job to give birth to her baby girl Syayiana.

Staying home with Syayiana was fun but was not paying the bills. She realized as a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) resident, she had to find a job. She talked to a friend who works at PHA and they told her about an employment service called Educational Data Systems Inc. or EDSI. Although Stephanie applied



Joyce Ruff

position in the next three years. She lists the special recognition award on her resume. The plaque for that award along with a certificate for excellence hangs in her living room, a reminder of her hard work and achievement.

Becoming a homeowner through the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) homeownership program is Joyce's other big goal. She's saving money for a down payment, will begin house hunting in August, and hopes to complete her purchase early next year.

"Take advantage of the things PHA offers," Ruff advises. "Live out your dream because you can do it."



Stephanie Griggs

for the USAir position before contacting EDSI, she says they do work hard for you. "EDSI is a nice program and they really do help. There are lots of people who look carefully over your resume and find something that fits. They also give you car fare if you need to get to a job or interview."

Stephanie enjoys working at the Philadelphia International Airport and says you quickly learn patience and interpersonal skills trying to please the customers. It will take a couple of months before Stephanie is eligible to become a full-time employee. Meanwhile she looks forward to taking advantage of free airfare.

Johnson Homes Garden: Growing Vegetables & Friendships

Residents of Johnson Homes and surrounding neighborhoods celebrated Pennsylvania Clean Up Day (April 23) by clearing, cleaning and tilling the dormant community garden at the corner of Ridge and Glenwood.

Staffers from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Philadelphia Green program were on hand to teach residents about planting and raising fresh vegetables.

Bob Grossman with Philadelphia Green says the garden takes up about three-fourths of an acre and has about 40 garden plots. He says all kinds of vegetables will grow at the site. Lettuce and similar plants will be harvested all summer long while other things, such as squash and pumpkins, will come out of the ground in the fall.

"When people see friends and neighbors cleaning up and maintaining public spaces, the community at large is more likely to take care of their properties. Because they see people from the community maintaining the

garden, they have greater ownership in its appearance," Grossman said.

"We're going to work with the Johnson Homes after-school program and summer program. The children will have a lot that they'll garden themselves and assist the senior members of the garden."

PHA Commissioner Nellie Reynolds, who lives at Johnson Homes, said the Horticultural Society had contacted her about reviving the community garden. She said the garden is important because it will bring people in the community together and help them save money, too.

"With fresh fruits and vegetables so expensive, it's just going to help everybody out," she said.

Reynolds urged residents and nonresidents to sign up for a plot at the site. Residents pay only \$5 for a plot, and nonresidents pay just \$10. Children who attend the same school can work together on a garden plot for only \$5. The commissioner said people who rent a plot can sell

their veggies and get their money back easily.

Delphine Hamilton, a resident of Johnson Homes, never had a garden before, but she's ready to get going on one. She planted some lettuce and plans on raising some eggplants and tomatoes, too. "I like growing things. I like getting my hands dirty. I'm very excited!" she said.

PHA Executive Director Carl Greene said the garden will improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and make it feel more natural and enjoyable. He also promised Nellie Reynolds that the site would remain a garden plot as long as she's commissioner, rather than building new housing on it.

City Councilman Darrell Clarke, who attended the event, agreed with Greene. He said too often "people see a vacant lot and see it as a negative, but we view it as an opportunity."

Debbie Hall, who began her career as an instructor with Philadelphia Green at Johnson Homes 18 years ago, said Nellie



DEBBIE HALL (in green), an instructor with Philadelphia Green, gives a lesson at the Johnson Homes community garden as resident Delphine Hamilton (in blue) plants some lettuce

Reynolds had a vision and it came true. And Hall looked to the future.

"A lot of vegetables were grown here," she said. "Special friendships were grown here, too. I'll always be a part of this garden because it was grown with sweat equity and love."

Philadelphia Green is the nation's most comprehensive

urban greening program. Since 1974, the program has supported the development and ongoing care of community gardens, neighborhood parks and high-profile public green spaces in Philadelphia.

PHA's Call Center - Answering the Call

"They're helpful, motivated, professional and they get right back to you. They're great." That's what PHA resident Antoinette Brown had to say about the PHA Call Center staff after calling to find out about public housing for an elderly friend. Antoinette speaks for many people who are pleasantly surprised at the excellent customer service they receive when they phone the PHA Call Center.

It hasn't always been that way. The PHA Call Center was overhauled about six months ago. The operators have become call specialists. They have more information at their fingertips to share with callers, and are better equipped to transfer your call to the appropriate department if necessary. Do you have a question about housing, rent or homeownership? Call Center operators greet you with a friendly hello - let you know their name and answer your questions accurately and efficiently.

A customer recently commended Beulah Wilder on the

excellent service she provided. According to resident, Eugenia Spearman, "Ms. Wilder was very polite and has a wealth of knowledge. It gives me joy to speak to someone of this caliber." Wilder says, "We act like a customer advocate; we go the extra step to find out what the customer really needs. If we need to forward the call we send follow-up e-mails to the person they're trying to reach."

To be sure you receive the correct information, the specialists are now held accountable. A monitoring system allows supervisors to play back actual calls that are reviewed for accuracy and professionalism.

So please contact the PHA Call Center if you have a question. Most calls are handled within a few minutes. During peak times the wait may be a bit longer but an automated system will tell you the estimated wait time. The call center number is 215-684-4000.



LOIS ADAMS, Beulah Wilder and Zeta Miles, busy at work making sure all of your important calls to the Philadelphia Housing Authority are handled properly.

Seniors' Dream Comes True

Cont from Page 1

Helen Tilley, a 79-year-old widow, believes her good fortune is an act of God. She was born in South Philly and lived there all her life, raising a family and owning a home for 40 years. Tilley had lived in a private development in Yeadon for 13 years and was very dissatisfied

because her apartment was so small.

Tilley applied in November and was approved for an apartment the next month. She moved in on New Year's Day with the help of her family members.

"This is a beautiful, beautiful place. It's well put together and spacious. I don't know why they

never did this before for senior citizens," Tilley says. "We have all the conveniences right here!"

Helen says she knew she wanted to move back to South Philly, but most of the places she visited were so small. "Why do they make 'em so tiny for older people? They don't think we need closet space?," she says.

There's no question that Tilley would like to see PHA build

more places just like the Pratt Apartment Building. An added bonus for her was connecting with residents who are old friends from South Philadelphia High School.

Charmaine Morton, Senior Programs Asset Manager for PHA, says the staff is thrilled about the opening of the new building, too. She says residents are receiving a full range of serv-

ices that were previously unavailable.

"We're very excited because the LIFE center has a team of professionals on site. When we go into a seniors' apartment and notice that things are not right for them, we can say Why don't you try the LIFE Program? It's right downstairs."

Senior Programs Events...

June (Music Appreciation Month)

June 10	Annual Senior Prom Cannstatter's Banquet Hall 11:00AM - 3:00PM
June 15	Senior Town Meeting Wilson Park Senior Center 1:00AM - 3:00PM
June 24	Sounds of Summer - Jazz Fest Wilson Park 1:00AM - 3:00PM
June 28	The Psalms of David Sight & Sound Ministries 8:45AM - 3:30PM

July

July 15 - July 17	Senior Summit Wilson Park 10:00AM - 3:00PM
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August

August 12	Mid Summer Day Dream Parkview 1:00PM - 3:00PM
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September (Grandparents Month)

September 15	Senior Town Meeting TBD 10:00AM - 12:00PM
September 21	Senior Craft Show & Sale TBD 11:00AM - 2:00PM
September 23	Harvest Health Fair Emlen Arms 11:00AM - 3:00PM
September 28	Trip - West Side Story Three Little Bakers - Delaware 9:00AM - 4:00PM

October

October 13	Senior Town Meeting TBD 10:00AM - 12:00PM
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November

November 5	Black & White Ball Wilson Park 7:00PM - 10:00PM
November 18	Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon TBD 11:00AM - 3:00PM

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Trike-A-Thon

Cont. from Page 5

Children's Research Hospital supplies a book and a video featuring Bikewell Bear that teaches kids about bicycle safety. It emphasizes the need to wear a helmet, to avoid riding in the street, and to look out for cars. Parents learn how to become more safety conscious when supervising their children.

The event teaches values, too. It teaches people a sense of community," Simons says. "It also gives our children a sense of concern and nurturing for those children who are less fortunate than they are."

Nina Pratt, who lives nearby and works for the Philadelphia Parking Authority, took a vacation day so she could take part in the Trike-A-Thon with her three-year-old son, Jihad. He is one of the "Sunshine Kids" in

the Bartram Village Day Care program. His mom raised \$100 in pledges from her co-workers. Pratt believes that events like this bring her closer to her son while teaching some valuable lessons.

"It teaches you how to help someone else. It teaches you how to participate, teamwork, getting together," she says. "I like to do stuff together, so we both feel good in the end."

The race let Jihad Pridgen, age 5, prove that he can take life's bumps and bruises. He says he took part "cause it's fun riding bikes", although he's still learning how to use the brakes. Jihad, who likes to race really fast, pulls up his pant legs to show off some scraped knees.

For Carol Simons, who has spent her career in early childhood education, events such as the Trike-a-Thon are a highlight. They help create lifelong friendships between Head Start staff, parents and their children.

Homeownership Fair

Cont. from Page 1

financing that's available. Malvin Reyes of PHA's Homeownership Division estimated that attendance at the fair increased by 30 percent from last year. He said that people have seen PHA's new homes going up across the city and that has peaked their interest.

PHA had a steady stream of visitors at its table in the lobby of the PECO building. A total of over 200 applications were handed out for new homes at Blackwell Park and Greater Grays Ferry Estates.

Reyes said single people with families can take part in the program. People who have been discharged from bankruptcy can apply and take part, as long as a financial institution gives its approval. The program takes residents through all steps necessary to help them understand the process and reach their goal.

Carousel House, Haven for Disabled

By Valerie Manlove
Resident Writer

If you or someone in your family is disabled, there is a place you must really get to know. Carousel House is a special facility designed, equipped and staffed to serve the physically and mentally disabled population of all ages from all over the city.

The primary purpose of Carousel House is to provide programs that contribute in a positive way to the mental, physical, social, cultural and emotional growth and development of people with disabilities through recreational programs.

Carl George, the center's director, describes Carousel House as a haven for the disabled, a place to feel safe, be accepted, and receive encouragement no matter one's limitations. "Participants can exercise, join an activity, play games, or just hang out," he says. This program is open to all ages of the physically or mentally disabled.

Programs at the center include swimming, ceramics, physical fitness, and an exercise room, with free-weights, rowing machines, exercise bikes, stair climbers and more. Music lessons, wheelchair basketball leagues, wheelchair racing teams and special population basketball are also offered. Activities for the visually impaired include: bingo, cards, music, luncheons, trips, and ceramics.

Day camp programs, including lunch and transportation, are spread out through the summer and early fall.

The facilities are available to organizations for meetings, workshops, recreational programs, and holiday parties. The facility also includes a specially designed swimming pool, and a basketball court can convert into a ballroom for special occasions. A fully equipped computer room with computer instruction is also available.

Private, corporate and organizational donations keep all costs to consumers extremely low. For example "Thursday Night at the Movies" features recent box office hits every Thursday for only \$1. The show time is 7pm, and the admission fee includes a hot dog, popcorn and soda.

Carousel House is located in Fairmount Park at Belmont Avenue and North Concourse Drive.

The facility is open: Mon. through Thurs. from 9:30am to 9:30pm and Fri. and Sat. from 9:30am to 4:30pm. Transportation is provided free of charge for many activities, and there is plenty of handicapped parking on site. Contact the center to learn more and get involved if you're disabled or know someone who is. Volunteers are also most welcome. The center's number is 215-685-0160.

Summer Food Program Set

PHA will help needy young people with free food and nutrition information once again with the Summer Food Program. The program will run from June 27th thru August 19th at 28 PHA sites across the city.

Under the Summer Food Program, all eligible children ages 18 and under are able to receive free breakfast and lunch. The program will operate Monday through Friday from 8am to 2pm.

The program also provides part-time summer employment for about 42 people. PHA and the U.S. Agriculture Department pay for the program. The Pennsylvania Department of Education also helps coordinate the service. PHA Executive Director Carl Greene says the program provides young PHA residents with more than just food; he says it also gives them a solid understanding of nutrition.

Participants do not have to be PHA residents to take part in the program, but children who are members of households receiving food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits are automatically eligible.

"This is PHA's way of serving the

community by serving residents of surrounding neighborhoods," said Troy Robinson, manager of the Summer Food Program. "We know that many children who take part in the program do not receive a quality, healthy meal at home. We're taking care of people's basic needs."

Last year, PHA's Summer Food Service Program provided an average weekly total of 14,000 breakfasts and 22,000 lunches at all of its sites.

If you'd like more information about participating in the program please contact PHA's summer food program at 215-684-1164, 215-684-4150 or 215-684-4116.

Are Single Parents Alone or Does it Just Feel That Way?

By Cynthia Lofton
Resident Writer

Have you ever wondered as a single parent, am I in this alone? The answer is no. There is an organization called Parents Without Partners (PWP) that provides single parents and their children the opportunity for personal and social growth and development.

Parents Without Partners, Inc. is an international, non-profit membership organization devoted to the welfare and interests of single parents

and their children. Parents may join any chapter in their area. The groups are open to all single parents: male or female, custodial or non-custodial, separated, divorced, or widowed or never married.

Mission Statement:

Parents Without Partners provides single parents and their children with an opportunity for enhancing personal growth, self-confidence and sensitivity towards others by offering an environment for support, friendship and the exchange of par-

enting techniques.

All of PWP's chapters have balanced programs concentrating in three areas, Education, Family and Adult/Social/Recreation.

1. Education activities include group discussions, lectures by psychologists, attorneys or other professionals, and workshops.
2. Picnics, hikes, camping and bowling are examples of family activities where children can interact with other kids also being raised by a single parent.
3. Adult social and recreational

activities help single parents learn how to relate to other adults as single persons again.

Many chapters also conduct community involvement programs. These include community outreach (providing speakers for seminars and workshops), fundraising for national or local charities, or cooperative exchanges (such as baby-sitting, clothing, or toy exchanges).

PWP is a great place for single parents and their kids to meet other people who are in the same boat as

them. Just the idea that they are not alone in their situation can be comforting. Programs provide a valuable resource for information and assistance. The group also provides a great opportunity for single parents and their kids to meet like-minded individuals and develop new relationships.

For more info on Parents Without Partners, Inc, check the phone book for a chapter listing nearby, contact the Parents Without Partners International Office at 561-391-8833.

PHA Pre-Apprenticeship Program Open Houses

WHEN: Wednesday, June 1, 2005 & Thursday, June 2, 2005
12:00pm to 6:00pm

WHERE: Workforce Development Center
1905 Vare Avenue (right off of the expressway)

Here is your chance to become a skilled union member. Don't miss this opportunity!

Students are instructed in electrical, carpentry, roofing and painting trades. Union entrance exams available to participants.

Program is **math intensive**. Students learn Algebra, Geometry and Basic Math for union exams.

Qualified applicants must take aptitude & drug tests prior to admission.

For info call:
215.684.8049 or 215.684.8053



MTW/Family Services Program Homebuyers Club Workshops

Tuesday June 14-21-28, 2005

Blumberg Development
2311 Jefferson Street, Community Room
6:00PM to 8:00PM

Wednesday June 8-15-22, 2005

Blumberg Development
2311 Jefferson Street, Community Room
10:00AM to 12:00PM

Thursday June 2-23-30, 2005

Strawbridge's Building
8th & Market Street
10:00AM to 12:00PM

Please plan to attend all sessions for each workshop when registering for seating.

Call to register: Mr. Gilbert Vega, **215.684.2057**
or Ms. Camille Johnson, **215.684.8114**

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Letters to the Editor

Do you have a success story of your own to share? Is there an issue of concern to you? Do you have a comment on an article you read in the PHA Experience?

We want to hear from you, write to us at:

Editor
PHA Experience
12 S. 23rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Girl Scout Program Going Strong, More Leaders Needed

page 14
 Girl scouting is growing at PHA sites and elsewhere across the city, but more moms are needed to show these young ladies the way. So on a Saturday morning in April, women from across the city gathered for a Girl Scout Leadership seminar.

Many PHA residents attended to learn how to volunteer their time to help these girls learn and grow as people - and have fun in the process! The Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania presented the "Looking Good, Feeling Good, Doing Good" event at Central High School to attract new adult volunteers as Girl Scout Leaders. About 500 women attended including Co-chairs Councilwoman (and PHA Commissioner) Jannie Blackwell, State Senator Shirley Kitchen, and Philadelphia Deputy Health Commissioner Carmen Paris.

The Girl Scouts programs are for girls ages 6 to 17. PHA joined the program two years

ago and has launched programs at 13 developments so far. The program has been very popular with residents; already more than 500 girls have enrolled, and 200 women volunteer as Girl Scout Leaders. Many of these women involved have daughters or granddaughters in the program.

Sandra and Wanda Butler are good examples. They are a mother daughter team on a mission. Sandra is a troop leader at the Liddenfield Homes in Northeast Philadelphia who joined not only to help her 14-year-old daughter, Shawnite, but 15 other girls as well. Sandra says, "these girls can benefit from my leadership and knowledge. Girl Scouting helps cultivate values, while teaching youths skills to help them succeed."

Sandra's older daughter, Wanda, volunteers eight hours a month to guide her 13 year-old daughter, Charlene and other young ladies. Wanda teaches them about life and

helps them feel good about themselves and says, "we are making a difference." Sandra and Wanda say volunteering is also a very rewarding experience for them.

The Saturday seminar activities included workshops that promoted the idea that scouting is also a way to make women feel good about themselves while enhancing beauty both inside and out. PHA Program Coordinator Sharon Curry says volunteering just several hours a month can make a world of difference "If you want to be a Girl Scout leader, we want you." Sharon says there are many programs and opportunities available through the Girl Scouts.

The presenting sponsor of the event, the Charming Shoppes (Fashion Bug, Lane Bryant and Catherines Plus Sizes), also hosted a fashion show where Girl Scout leaders and volunteers took part. Other activities included talking to experts who presented tips on



Mother and daughter, Sandra and Wanda Butler may have found a new career after modeling in the fashion show.

fashion, fitness, body care and cooking.

Does this sound interesting? You can join the Girl Scouts or volunteer as a leader at any of the 13 PHA sites. The sites are: Arch Homes, Arlene Homes, Bartram Village, Blumberg Apartments, Fairhill Apartments, Haddington Homes, Queen

Lane Apartments, Morton Homes, Hill Creek Apartments, Raymond Rosen, Westpark Apartments and the Wilson Park Apartments. For more information call the PHA Girl Scouts Program Coordinator, Sharon Curry at 215 564-2030 ext 278.



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Domestic Violence Hurts



Domestic violence occurs in a relationship when one person wants to control another. Most victims are women, although men can be battered, too. It's physical abuse, like using objects such as knives and guns to cause injury. It's also harming someone emotionally by threats, name-calling and put-downs.

Domestic violence spares no one, especially children who hear and witness it. Living in a home of domestic violence can make kids feel blame, confusion, wet the bed, be unable to sleep, and have trouble in school.

If a relationship scares you or you are worried about your children and you need to talk, get help by **calling** the National Domestic Violence hotline. It starts with YOU and a call.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (SAFE)

1-800-787-3224

(TTY for the Deaf)

www.ndvh.org

Help is free and confidential and available in English, Spanish and other languages.



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Community Partners Training Programs

Job Placement/Job Coaching

Contact: Melanie DiBlasi - 215-564-0015
Educational Data Systems Inc.
100 South Broad Street Suite 1210
Philadelphia, PA 19110

GED (ages 16-21) & Housing Counseling

Contact: Debra Williams - 215-535-2957
CORA Services Inc/ Neumann Program
1000 Orthodox Street
Philadelphia, PA 19124

Job Retention for Employed Individuals

Contact: Al Williams - 215- 684-8052
American Community Partners
1905 Vare Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19145

GED (adults 22 & older) & Housing Counseling

Contact: Anne Marie Schulz - 215-455-8033
CORA Services Inc/Beacon Center
Grover Washington Jr.Middle School

Family Self-Sufficiency

Contact: Sherrie Davis - 215-717-2727
MET
5008 Baltimore Avenue, Suite B
Philadelphia 19143

Home Maintenance Repair Program

Contact: Bonnie Kaye 215-728-4712 or
Dennis Zimmer 215-728-4725
Orleans Technical Institute
1330 Rhawn Street
Philadelphia, PA 19111

Certified Food Handler

Contact: Russ Cole - 215-684-3125
Professional Healthcare Institute
2311 W. Jefferson Street
Philadelphia, PA 19121

Hospitality Training Programs

(Front Desk, Culinary, Housekeeping, Travel & Tourism)
Contact: Aaron Jones - 215-236-7700 x324
Opportunities Industrialization Corp. Inc.
1231 N. Broad Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19132

Child Care Provider & Child Care Assistant Training

Contact: Bernadette Brown - 215-640-0880
ABO Haven
42 South 15th Street, Suite 500
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Pharmacy Technician, Medical Billing Assistant, Certified Nursing Assistant

Contact: Dorothy Jones - 215-684-8250
Professional Healthcare Institute
1333 West Cheltenham Avenue
Melrose Park, PA 19027



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