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Answers for homeless families

On a rainy, Tuesday morning in late June, 16 recently homeless people came to PHA's Admissions Office with the hope of finding something many of us take for granted: a place to call home. These were not homeless people exactly. They were graduates of the "transitional housing program," meaning they had spent at least six months in temporary apartments operated by one of several non-profit organizations.

The group was an interesting mix of younger and older adults, men and women, some with children, and others just by themselves. None of them matched the image of a homeless person that so many of us have. By their dress, appearance, and speech, these were people

who could easily be mistaken for members of our own families.

62 year old Shirley Clark became homeless last January, a victim of depression caused by the untimely death of her 32 year old son and the loss of another family member. She was working part time, but eventually lost her job and two grandchildren living with her. The Department of Human Services took them away because of problems with a heater in her home in North Philadelphia.

Shirley, who is disabled by by arthritis, stayed with family members for a while. She then lived in two shelters before ending up in *(Continued Page 13)*



Sonia Garrett (third from left), Manager at Harrison Homes, points out locations in the skyline to graduates of the Blueprint Program during their visit to a 13th floor apartment.



Germantown House resident Edith Cunningham holds the ribbon shortly after ribbon-cutting ceremony.

LIFE comes to Germantown House

PHA has reaffirmed its commitment to Philadelphia's low-income seniors with the opening of the beautiful new Germantown House. The building has 133 apartments, and it also features a LIFE Center on the first floor. LIFE stands for Living Independently for Elders, a special program for seniors who could be living in a nursing home but who would rather enjoy the independence of their own apartment.

Most residents of Germantown House don't need the services of the LIFE center now, but as they age many will become eligible to get the assistance with daily activities that they may need.

Dozens of PHA seniors gathered on the front lawn of the building for grand opening ceremonies on June 15. Edith Cunningham was among them. Like others in the audience, she was overflowing with appreciation for the efforts that led to the opening of the building. "The convenience of having help come right into our apartments instead of going to a nursing home like back in the day, this is just wonderful," she said. Ms. Cunningham wanted so much to remember the opening that she asked for the purple and gold ribbon that was cut during the ceremonies as a keepsake.

PHA Executive Director *(Continued Page 13)*

Pre-Apprenticeship grads flying high at Boeing

Last year, Shericka Burrow was filing papers in an office, bored to tears. Juan R. Gaines was working for a caterer. And 20-year old Antonio Owens was struggling at Community College of Philadelphia, trying to figure out what he wanted to do with his life.

They all realized they preferred

working with their hands, instead of shuffling papers or serving egg salad, and decided to enroll in PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The trio had just completed the 10-week training program for Boeing Aircraft Company through Delaware County Community College. Now they're hoping to be offered jobs building

Osprey military aircraft at Boeing's Delaware County plant.

PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship program gives housing residents the chance to study with union craftsmen and prepares them to take the test to join the unions. Graduates can choose to become electricians, carpenters or sheet metal workers, for example.

But PHA staff members are not content to merely pass students through the program—they actively look for career opportunities to boost them to success. Al Williams, a job development consultant who works with Pre-Apprenticeship, learned about the Boeing program through an agency called the Collegiate Consortium and pursued *(Continued Page 14)*



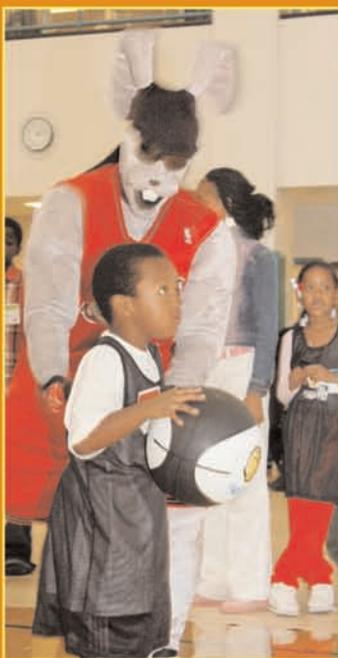
Lawrence Boyle, roofing instructor shows Antonio Owens II and Shericka Burrow how to perfectly cut a piece of sheet metal. They are part of a training program at Boeing Aircraft that will enable them to get jobs working on Osprey military aircraft.

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Using Basketball to Help Manage Asthma



Keystone Mercy Health Plan is committed to improving the health of our communities. Through its innovative Healthy Hoops program, Keystone Mercy educates asthmatic children, their parents and families about how to manage their asthma through the appropriate use of medication, proper nutrition, monitored exercise and recreational activities.



Results from the Healthy Hoops program:

- 26% decrease in emergency room visits
- 13% decrease in the use of Albuterol (rescue medication)
- 10% increase in children using preventative medication therapies



KEYSTONE MERCY
HEALTH PLAN

www.keystonemercy.com

Residents go to DC to ask for housing funding



Residents listen to speakers on the Capitol lawn.



Resident Advisory Board President Asia Coney addresses the crowd on Capitol lawn.

Capturing the flavor of an old-time civil rights rally, several hundred residents of public housing converged on the nation's capital on June 20 with a unified message: restore funding for affordable housing.

The residents traveled from Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Baltimore and even New Orleans. Philadelphia's Resident Advisory Board leader Asia Coney organized the demonstration, which began on the west lawn of the Capitol and then moved to the front of the HUD building. She

said residents have to take their case to the people in Washington who make the decisions.

Federal budget cuts have led to fewer resident services, delayed repairs, and less security. Coney said the lack of funding may also lead to less housing for the seniors and disabled who are waiting to get in.

Residents in front of the HUD building marked their stay there by holding hands, singing "We Shall Overcome," and chanting, "If you can't find the money, get out of the house."



Residents rallying at HUD headquarters.

Inspiration and Hope VI lead to advanced degrees

Sharon Farmer is putting her hope in God and Hope VI.

A Hope VI scholarship helped the Blackwell Homes resident and mother of two rebound after being laid off by Strawbridge's, where she worked for 14 years as a sales manager. Using the scholarship, she enrolled in a master's program at Palmer Theological Seminary. By the end of the year, she will hold a Master's of Divinity degree and will be waiting to see what God has planned for the next step of her journey.

Sharon's dynamic personality and belief that education is the key to success has affected both of her children. "All you can do for your children is pray and teach them what is important. You have to be a role model," she says. Although she is not Catholic, she is a firm believer in Catholic education. "That's why I sent my son to West Catholic



"I give God the credit and the glory," says divinity student Sharon Farmer, seated between her daughter Christina, her son Christopher and granddaughter Daeje.

High School and why he's now at Villanova."

Sharon's son Christopher has a four-year NCAA football scholarship to Villanova, where he is expected to start next sea-

son as an offensive lineman - a change for the boy who entered the program as a defensive tackle. "His dream is to be drafted by the NFL," says Sharon, who adds at Villanova

the sports program is for "student athletes, not just athletes. All the boys have tutors and from eight to 10 every night it is a lockdown for studying."

Following in the footsteps of his hardworking Mom, Chris is spending the summer working in a football camp, taking one class at Villanova and holding down a part time job.

Sharon's daughter Christiana is also benefiting from a Hope VI scholarship. After completing a bachelor's degree in business at Penn State, Christiana tried studying for an MBA at LaSalle University, but didn't feel it was the right course for her.

"I'm a people person," says Christiana, 24, who is now enrolled in a nursing program at Jefferson Medical College and receiving a Hope VI scholarship.

"I like working with the elderly. Right now, I'm work-

ing in a psych unit, and you get to meet a lot of interesting personalities."

Christina plans to complete her nursing degree by spring 2008, but she doesn't intend to stop her education. "There is a bridge program at Jefferson, so at that point, I can begin working on my masters," explains the ambitious young woman.

Sharon is grateful for all of the programs PHA makes available for housing residents and tries to persuade her neighbors to participate. "I got into a computer program, and now we've got three computers, and I'm taking a training course. I enrolled in Credit Boot Camp, and I'm cleaning up my credit for the day when I want to buy my own house.

Whenever I see something that is available, I don't hesitate to try it. One thing leads to another."

PHA breaks ground for Nellie Reynold Gardens

page 4



Commissioner Nellie Reynolds, Councilman Darrell Clarke and Executive Director, Carl Greene mark beginning of construction.

May 2, 2007 was a wonderful day to celebrate the groundbreaking of a new PHA development. And Nellie Reynolds was the ideal person to name the development after. Commissioner Reynolds was overjoyed to have

five generations of her family along with fellow residents and political friends watch a planned 64-unit senior development dedicated in her honor.

Nellie Reynolds Gardens will be located next door to Johnson Homes and will include a full-service senior center on the first floor. The building was named after Reynolds as a tribute to her 40 years of work trying to empower public housing residents, a fact echoed by Mayor John Street in his remarks. "Nellie and I were on the front lines back in the 70's," he told the crowd.

Resident Advisory Board (RAB) President Asia Coney said residents enjoy achievements today because of the battles Nellie fought. "There is no individual who is more deserving of this honor. The building, while it may be a huge honor, is a small token when you measure her contribution," said Coney.

In 1969 Reynolds helped organize a diverse group of tenant leaders to establish the Resident Advisory Board. The RAB is a national model for tenants and is now established in housing authorities across the country. She

served as RAB president for 25 years before retiring.

Reynolds has received awards for her exceptional work in the community from Mayors Wilson Goode, Ed Rendell and Street in addition to an outstanding service award from the National Tenants Organization.

In 2000 she received the Medallion Award for community service from the Philadelphia chapter of Operation PUSH (People United to Serve Humanity). And in 2006 she received the Women Making A Difference Award.

The groundbreaking was attended by a number of dignitaries including members of Philadelphia's City Council. PHA Executive Director Carl Greene said the times demand that we take the lead in providing for elders, adding "low-income seniors deserve the same level of quality housing as the families we serve."

This will be the third site, in addition to Greater Grays Ferry Estates and Germantown House, to combine public housing for seniors with on-site elder care services. A distinctive feature of the building is a glass atrium over an indoor garden, a tribute to the outdoor garden Reynolds kept on the property for many years. The building should be ready for move-in by the end of 2008.

Help for grandparents raising children



Christine Boyd helps PHA grandparents with parenting.

The Kinship Care and Senior Support Network (KSCN) Optimist Club offers support and assistance to adults who are caring for their relative's children. Although the majority of the participants are grandparents, any relative caring for another relative's child is welcome to join.

Club founder Christine Boyd is a PHA resident who raised two grandsons herself and has been helping other seniors in her situation for over 10 years. "We give parenting classes for seniors who are parenting the second time around," says Boyd. "We have workshops on how to relate to children."

Boyd points out that these seniors have already raised

one family and are no longer used to dealing with young children. Many of the children, she adds, have physical and emotional disabilities that require special attention. An array of speakers advises the group on nutrition and legal matters in addition to relationship issues.

The group began as an information and referral service. It quickly expanded into a support group for both guardians and children. In 1997, the Department of Health Services recognized KSCN.

"Raising children 35 to 40 years ago was much different than raising children now," says Charmaine Morton, PHA's coordinator of senior services. Extensive training is provided by the Department of Human Services, as well as several other city agencies.

Grandparents can take advantage of peer counseling programs, community events, and financial assistance that the program offers. Assistance is available for members who need help filling out forms and completing paperwork. Every effort is taken to try to accommodate participants. "We want this to be a safe haven for grandparents that need support raising grandchildren," said Boyd.

The program meets twice a month at the John Street Community Center, although you do not have to be a PHA resident to attend. Currently, the program has approximately 30 participants. For more information, contact Charmaine Morton at 215-684- 1183 or Christine Boyd at 215-765-5348.



Five generations celebrate groundbreaking. Surrounding Commissioner Reynolds are: Jackie McDowell - daughter, Douglas Reynolds - son, Victoria McDowell - granddaughter, Paula Reynolds - Douglas's wife), Amirah McDowell - great granddaughter, Ayanna Spears - great great granddaughter, Sharyah Lawrence - great great granddaughter.

Dorothy "Dot" Jones

We mourn the passing of Dorothy "Dot" Jones, a PHA employee known and loved by many residents for her helpfulness and cheerful disposition. Dot's job was to help residents advance economically; including helping some start their own businesses through the Section 3 program.

Dot, who served on the resident council at Harrison Homes, died on July 5th of complications resulting from a car accident in early June. She was 54.



PHA offers housekeeping services to seniors

The Philadelphia Housing Authority, working with Addus Healthcare, is offering a housekeeping program for seniors within the PHA community. This program was designed to assist those who are not able to clean and upkeep their apartments on their own. Participants are 55 years with disabilities, 65 years or who are unable to care for their apartment due to illness or another circumstance. Funded through a grant, Addus supplies PHA with staff that provides light housework for the seniors involved in the program.

This program was developed in order to accommodate those seniors that want to live on their own, but do not have the ability to care for their apartment by them-

selves or do not have anyone to help them do housework.

Project Managers will first inspect the senior's residence to ensure that they qualify for the program. Services offered include ironing, sweeping, and washing dishes. Seniors are able to utilize this service up to three times a week for three hours a session. Housekeeping sessions run from 9AM to 1PM, or 1PM to 5PM. Currently, the program has 62 participants.

Interested seniors should contact Charmaine Morton at Elder Care Initiatives at 215-684-1184 or their Property Manager at their PHA site.

The PHA Experience • July 2007

www.pha.phila.gov

Record number of Pre-Apprenticeship grads hit top scale

PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program can now claim a new high of 65 graduates who have reached journeyman or journeywoman status in the building trades. Recently, 13 PHA residents graduated to that level in the Carpenters Union.

Journeyman is a more lofty level than the name may sound. It means that a man or woman has completed four years of apprenticeship in the union and is now fully certified. They also earn the highest pay scale in their trade.

"You can go anywhere in the U.S. where a union local exists and they will seek employment for you," says George Johnson, Pre-Apprenticeship Program coordinator.

Johnson also says that once a person reaches journeyman/woman status, they can develop specialty areas and do jobs they really enjoy.

For example, Kevin Dawkins, one of the 13 recent graduates, is a layout carpenter who specializes in blueprint reading, elevation reading, and giving specifications of how a building will be constructed. Very few people have that range of skills, making them more valuable. Kevin is the first African-American

layout foreman in Philadelphia working for Madison Construction.

Dawkins, 25, grew up at Abbottsford Homes. He now lives in Mount Airy. He's also attending Philadelphia University and working toward a degree in mathematics that will allow him to teach underprivileged children. Kevin says reaching journeyman status has allowed him to put his five-year-old daughter in dance and gymnastic classes.

"It's a transformation from having the mentality of the 'hood' to the mentality of the neighborhood," he says. "Where I'm at now, it's much better. I can raise my daughter. She can play out front."

"It's a transformation from having the mentality of the 'hood' to the mentality of the neighborhood," he says. "Where I'm at now, it's much better. I can raise my daughter. She can play out front."

"It's much bigger than me. Now, young guys from the 'hood' can say 'Hey! He's from our projects. He did it. I know I can do it.'"

Allegra King says working as a carpenter will allow her to leave Housing Choice and buy her own home. She has worked for Buckley & Company on the expansion of Route 309, building ramps, lanes and sound barriers. She's also building a better life for her three children, ages 15, 12, and seven.



Pictured at the Pre-Apprenticeship Program graduation on May 24 are: Eric Harris, Sr., Shenecqua Butt, Yuhanna Fields, Gary James, Allegra King, and Carl Green. (Not the PHA's Carl Greene).

King, 32, says her children are really proud of her. Eventually, she'd like to become a safety inspector for OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration).

Yuhanna Fields, who grew up in a PHA Scattered Sites home, had worked as a security guard and short order cook before coming into the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. He says having a career in carpentry means a better life for his three-year-old daughter.

Yuhanna, who has worked on a variety of construction jobs, also has plans to buy property, fix it and sell it. He encourages other PHA residents to get into the program because it gives you discipline and focus.

"If you're hands-on, this is for you. If you're not scared of a little hard work, this is for you. If you want to make good money, this is for you," he says.

Shenecqua Butt believes her career in carpentry will lead her out of Scattered Sites and into homeownership. This 36-year-old had worked as a cosmetologist, at the Post Office, and in retail before getting her chance in the building trades. She says it felt like heaven when she got her journeywoman's card.

"It was really a struggle, between schoolwork and raising a family. When I first went through Pre-Apprenticeship, I didn't have a GED or anything. I know in life you've got to go through something to get where you need to be."

Masters degree for Johnson

This summer Taewanda Johnson, a former PHA resident, became the first in her family to earn a master's degree. She came a long way since she began her college coursework ten years ago when she lived at Bartram and Norris Homes. Back then, PHA had a fantastic opportunity for residents. Through an arrangement with Temple University, a limited number of residents who showed a tremendous effort, drive and ability to succeed, would receive a full four-year scholarship. Only 25 of 500 applicants that year would receive this scholarship. Taewanda was one of them.

This was not an easy assignment. Taewanda says "I had a certain amount of hopelessness living in poverty and the negative connotations that come from society. Having somebody believe in you and give you that extra push and the financial backing, helps you believe that you can do it."

And the scholarship wasn't totally free.

Requirements for the full scholarship included being a mentor and instructor in helping other PHA residents improve their lives so they could become successful. From the time she began the scholarship program in 1996



Former PHA Resident Taewanda Johnson earns Temple degree then masters.

through 2003, Taewanda worked with PHA residents at Tasker Homes, Wilson Park, Johnson Homes, Norris Homes, Queen Lane, Raymond Rosen, and Norman Blumberg. She says she was able to influence many of them to continue their education or seek a skill where they could succeed.

Through diligence she *(Continued Page 14)*

A message from the Executive Director

I am happy to report that this year's PHA Customer Service and Satisfaction Survey again shows that residents of PHA communities are generally happy with where they live and the service they get.

Perhaps the most telling result in the survey is the very first answer – 90% of residents say they are satisfied or very satisfied with their home or apartment. Another question asks whether you would recommend your housing development to a friend or family member. The answer to that one is 78%, which tells us that residents feel better about their homes

than their neighborhoods.

You seem to like the job PHA does on repairs. 89% said routine repairs were done well, and 98% said they were treated well by the person doing the repairs.

PHA appears to be doing a god job of explaining its lease rules. 94% agreed that the agency had done a good job in that area of communication.

When it comes to public safety, 90% of PHA residents said they feel safe in their homes, but only 64% feel safe in their parking area. That reply reflects the current concern over crime.

Some results which we found disturbing included the fact that 36% said they sometimes see abandoned cars in their communities, 46% say they sometimes see broken glass, and 37% see graffiti. A small minority of residents can cause those kinds of problems, which impact an entire community. We have begun a public awareness Clean Sweep campaign to address that issue.

As PHA operates with less funding, it's become more of a challenge to provide the high level of service our customers have become accustomed to. But our employees are doing every-



Carl R. Greene

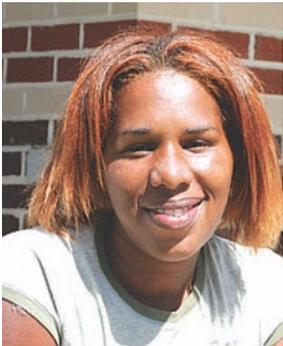
thing possible to make sure your homes are well maintained. As we say in our radio announcement: PHA communities are strong; with your help we can keep them that way. Thank you.

Residents stand up for clean communities

page 6

With PHA's staff greatly reduced, it is more important than ever for all of us to pitch in and keep our communities sparkling. We asked residents at several sites for ideas of how they can help.

“What should residents do to keep their property and neighborhood looking good?”



Bulema Campbell

“It’s a community effort. Everyone should get together and even if it’s not your trash you still pick it up because it still is your community. And if we all put our hand in it we can keep the community clean.”



Rayetta Anderson

“It takes team work. We have to work together to keep these places beautiful. You don’t prove to others that we can’t take care of our own neighborhood. It would also be a good idea to have a neighborhood clean-up day.”



April Brooks

“People just need to keep their community clean. You can tell how a person lives by looking at the outside. If they don’t care about the outside, we all have a problem.”



Tanya Smith

“Get a hold of your children and teach them to have respect for people’s property. Don’t just drop something on the ground. Keep it until you walk past a trash can.”



Belinda Stanley

“If everyone does not pull together, the neighborhood will not continue to be in the condition it is in now. The management should enforce penalties for residents who do not keep their property clean.”



Modesty Ligons

“Neighbors must keep picking up trash and help to beautify the neighborhood. Sometimes the wind blows trash back in your area, but you must be diligent and keep it clean. Some people just don’t care but you must continue the effort.”



Derrick Clark

“Usually people get the message if you lead by example. If you do your part, it often encourages others to follow suit. You must care even if others don’t.”



Simone Richardson

“You must talk to your neighbors and remind them that we must work together. And put your trash in the can.”

Get Your Personal Experience Into Your Paper

Tell us about your “Experience” as a client of the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Simply call and tell us your story! Our paper reaches all residents including: Traditional Sites, Scattered Sites, and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.
Call Anne Martinez at 215-684-8645 or e-mail anne.martinez@pha.phila.gov.

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Neighborhood Network Computer Labs

There are six Neighborhood Network Computer Labs offering 8-week computer classes, beginning mid-July 2007.

These classes cover basic computer concepts in Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. SIGN-UP TODAY!

Classes Locations:

- Bartram Village - Tuesdays 10:00am - 11:30am**
504 Gibson Dr, Philadelphia, PA 19143
- Blumberg Apartments - Wednesdays 9:30am - 11:00am**
2311 W. Jefferson St., Philadelphia, PA 19123
- Harrison Plaza - Thursdays 10:00am - 11:30am**
1240 N. 10th St., Philadelphia, PA 19121
- Johnson Homes - Mon & Thu 10:00am - 11:30am**
25th & Norris Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19122
- Norris Apartments - Wednesdays 3:30pm - 5:00pm**
1915 N. 11th St., Philadelphia, PA 19122
- Spring Garden - Mondays 3:30pm - 5:00pm**
715 Brandywine St., Philadelphia, PA 19123

To Sign-Up Contact:
Monet Williams
Neighborhood Network Coordinator
215-684-4628 or
monet.williams@pha.phila.gov



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Under-reporting your income

Two recent cases involving the prosecution of Housing Choice Voucher residents should make every PHA customer think twice about violating their lease.

In one instance, a family of four lost their rental assistance for withholding information from PHA. The head of the household failed to report to his service representative when he got a full time job. To make matters worse, he continued to withhold that information from PHA at each of his recertification appointments. The Inspector General's investigation concluded that this household received over \$19,000 in housing subsidies to which they were not entitled.

PHA terminated the resident and the District Attorney prosecuted him. He now has a criminal record. In addition, he will be making monthly payments for quite some time in order to repay his \$19,347 debt to PHA.

In another case, a working professional for the School District of Philadelphia forged her income documentation to qualify for more rental assistance.

The woman, a Housing Choice Voucher client,

had worked for the School District and reported it every year until 2001. One day she decided to tell her service representative that she had been let go, writing a letter on school stationery and signing her Principal's name to it.

So that PHA would not question her about providing for her family with no income, she made up a story about a new job as a companion to an elderly gentleman. The gentleman she chose for her scheme was the dead father-in-law of one of her co-workers.

Once the Inspector General investigation exposed her dishonesty, she was terminated from the program and arrested.

The woman, who's both a mother and grandmother, pleaded guilty to criminal charges of forgery and theft. The judge in the case put her on four years of probation and ordered her to repay PHA \$23,457.

PHA has taken a strong stand on lease compliance, with weekly court trials. As you know, there are thousands of people on the waiting list who need public housing. To secure your future, do the right thing and comply with the PHA rules.

IS A CRIME



Survey shows residents understand rules

An increasing number of PHA residents understand that the agency is serious about enforcing the rules in their leases, according to the latest resident satisfaction survey.

Survey results showed: 94 percent either agreed or strongly agreed that management provides information about the rules of the lease, up from 86 percent last year. 78 percent believe that if someone breaks the rules in the lease, management takes action, up from 58 percent.

Joe Daly, PHA Inspector General, credits site managers for changing resi-

dents' attitudes on lease enforcement. "You have the site managers putting more one-on-one time with residents as they come into a development. Residents receive brochures, so they know what the rules are.

"Both managers and resident leaders in the developments are helping to orient the new tenants, so they have a better understanding of what the rules of the lease are," he says.

Daly thinks an anti-fraud brochure sent to residents last year gave them a clear idea of how PHA can use the latest technology to learn who's under-reporting their income, which is a felony. The brochure warned residents that a conviction would make them ineligible for public assistance or public housing in any state for three years.

"I think a lot of people, based upon the knowledge of the technology we're using, ...are being more open in terms of identifying their income," he says.

Linda Staley, Executive General Manager of Housing Operations, says site managers have done several things to get the message out to residents.

"They've been conducting site meetings. They're doing rent blitzes that take them to the residents' homes. They've held town meetings with the resident councils and those people who were delinquent," she says.

Additionally, PHA is taking residents who break the rules to landlord-tenant court every week as opposed to every other week in the past. So the agency has doubled the number of people it's taking to court for lease violations. PHA even

has a courtroom reserved for its cases only.

Residents used to take comfort knowing that it would be months before they faced the threat of eviction. Now, the time is much shorter.

Managers are going door-to-door talking to residents about nonpayment of rent, trash, loud music and other things that can lead to their eviction.

"The message is getting out that there is zero tolerance for lease violations," Staley says. "We're educating residents to let them know what lease violations are and the importance of paying their rent."

For the great majority of PHA residents, who play by the rules, and want a clean, safe environment for their families, the crackdown of violators is welcome.

Amnesty Program offers opportunity to unite families

Are you a single mother raising children without the child support you are supposed to receive? Statistics show that there are many parents like you. PHA realizes that this situation puts the entire family at risk and wants to help through an Amnesty Program.

Many don't realize that fathers who owe child support are currently in viola-

tion of the law. The Amnesty program gives these fathers the opportunity to get protection. Through a special partnership with the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) and Family Court, prior debt that otherwise warrants jail time will be forgiven. The program also presents opportunities for fathers to learn valuable job skills, secure jobs that pay

living wages and support their families. The goal of the Amnesty Program is to create an opportunity for families to reconnect, providing the possibility of a better life for the family.

And there are other benefits of the program. Father's also gain an opportunity to become a legal PHA resident, with the approval of the current PHA leaseholder. PHA will provide free job skills training opportunities, after which the program participant has six months to find employment. Self-sufficiency and homeownership programs will also be offered, ensuring members will continue to get the skills and have the opportunities to uphold and improve their family life after completing the Amnesty

Program. Rent will not increase for six months after job training is completed, even with the increase in income the family will experience.

"PHA has been working with DPW to create this program since April of 2005. We wanted to be certain that families get the support they need to be together and be successful," says Rylanda Wilson of PHA. "This valuable program offers a chance to reunite the family unit, as well as to offer the opportunity of a second chance, in the form of valuable job training and self-sufficiency skills. Because the Amnesty Program combines PHA, DPW, and Family Court, the ability to offer change and results is astounding."





MOVING FORWARD

COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINING PROGRAMS



Administrative Assistant Job Readiness Program & Financial Services Job Readiness Program

Community College of Philadelphia
1700 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19130
215.496.6125

Home Maintenance Repair Program

Orleans Technical Institute
1330 Rhawn Street
Philadelphia, PA 19111
215.728.4725

Personal & Financial Development

MET
3801 Market Street Suite 2002
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215.747.2781

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Medical Billing Pharmacy Technician

Professional Healthcare Institute
1333 West Cheltenham Avenue
Melrose Park, PA 19027
215.792.8810

Hospitality Training Programs

Opportunities Industrialization Corp. Inc.
1231 N. Broad Street 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19132
215.236.7700 x324

Self-Employment Program

Enterprise Center
4548 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19139
215.895.4078

Customer Service Training Commercial Drivers License Janitorial/Housekeeping Training

New Wave Resources, Inc
1321 Arch Street 6th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215.496.9388

Job Placement/Job Coaching

Educational Data Systems Inc.
42 South 15th Street Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215- 684-8052

To register, please contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency coordinator (see page 12). Tuition is free for PHA residents.

Medical Billing

Creative Urban Educational Systems
121 N Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215.782.8810



Stephanie's New career From drugs to business owner

Stephanie McFadden didn't have high expectations for PHA's Community Partners Program when she first heard of it. A relatively new member of the PHA community, Stephanie discovered this valuable opportunity in the PHA Experience. She is enrolled in the Medical Billing program offered by Creative Urban Educational Systems (CUES). Stephanie began classes the following week, marking the start of a promising new career.

Stephanie was able to expand her knowledge of the medical field, building on the experience she had



Medical billing grad Stephanie McFadden

as a front desk receptionist for a doctor's office. She had a positive experience in the course explaining that "everyone was really nice and very helpful, and there were lots of other resources, such as child-care." Stephanie also explained that, "the teach-

ers were available for extra help and made sure you understood the material."

During the last month Stephanie was in the Medical Billing program, she found a job that is "much more convenient," offers "higher pay," and allows her to do what she loves: working with people. She graduated from the program this past June, and is starting a new chapter in her life. Her new career at the Spectrum Health Center allows her a far more comfortable living than she had before, and is allowing her to begin the process of purchasing a home.

Dorothea Barnes struggled for almost 20 years with a drug addiction. She's now celebrating 15 years of sobriety, running a business, and dreaming about a venture to help seniors and their families.

Dorothea, who has been a PHA Housing Choice resident for nine years, says she kicked her habit once she decided she wanted to live, not die. She attended night school and received her diploma from Ben Franklin High in 1998. During the day, Dorothea "doubled up" and attended another class to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA).

Barnes, now 49, got involved in PHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program in March 2001 and began to set goals.

In 2002, Dorothea started attending the Homebuyer's Club workshops and began working on her credit. Over the next few years, she held jobs with St. Agnes Continuing Care, Total Home Health Care



Cleaning business for Dorothea Barnes

Corporation, and the School District of Philadelphia to support herself. (She still works part time as a classroom assistant, helping children enrolled in special education classes.)

Dorothea says she realized that she could not work as a nursing assistant forever because of the physical demands of the job, which include a lot of lifting. That's when she began to think about forming her own business so she could take control of her destiny, leave the Housing Choice program, and buy a home.

Dorothea began attending the Women's Business Development Center in 2004. There, she learned how to write

a business plan and got her business licenses. Since March, she has owned and operated Rejuvenate Cleaning Service from her home, a business that she started with \$2,000 in savings.

Dorothea is also attending The Enterprise Center, one of PHA's Community Partners, to refine her business plan and expand her operation. PHA helped her purchase a computer, printer and fax machine for her business.

Johnson says she's proud of Barnes because of all the obstacles that she's had to overcome.

"It's so awesome to see a young woman who's striving to get what she wants out of life," Johnson says.

Dorothea Barnes wants to expand her cleaning business, but she's dreaming and planning for something else: opening an adult day care center for seniors. The business plan is already written. All Dorothea has to do is raise the money, and she believes she can.



Residents taking computer classes receive certificates for completing various levels of course work. Seen here with Commissioner Reynolds and PHA staff, residents are from Johnson Homes, Bartram Village, Harrison, Norris, West Park and Spring Garden.

Community College may be your key to future

Is fear of math keeping you from succeeding? You may know more than you think you do.

Community College of Philadelphia (CCP) offers two training programs for PHA residents: Financial Services Job Readiness and Administrative Assistant Job Readiness. Yet, response to the programs has been poor, apparently because PHA residents are afraid that they don't have the math and computer skills to succeed.

Faith Brown, one of the instructors at CCP, says the biggest hurdle for students is not realizing that they already have some of the skills they need to succeed. Brown, who grew up in public housing and is now working toward her PhD, says people know more than they think they do.

Brown says fractions are the

biggest problem for most students, until they realize they're already using them in their daily lives. For example, if you had eight people and you were serving pie, how would you split it up?

Basic math is important, she says, to run a service business and to make sure your own paycheck is correct. Students can pick up the skills they need in several weeks, especially if they apply what they learn at school to their home life.

Michele Claybrook-Lucas, who directs these programs at CCP, says they're ready to help residents take the leap, so they can earn a livable wage in an interesting career. These programs offer skills for life, not just training in a narrow field.

Claybrook-Lucas says the Financial Job Services Readiness program requires at

least a fourth grade understanding of basic math—not algebra, geometry or other forms of advanced mathematics. She says participants will receive a test on the first day they attend class, to see where they need help in basic business math: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and how to use a calculator.

Once a student gets up to speed in math, he or she receives training in basic accounting functions. They learn how to enter transactions for checking, savings and loan accounts.

The Administrative Assistant Job Readiness program, teaches basic computer skills, but requires NO math.

Claybrook-Lucas urges PHA residents to at least visit the campus and find out how much skill they really do have by tak-



CCP's first graduation for PHA residents who completed the Amin. Asst. Program on July 10th. (L-R top) Chrystal Thomas, Faye Bonelli, Sheila Harrison, Barbara James, Tamika Jackson, Kimberlin Nelson, Rasheeda Hicks, Ginger Frazier-Miller. (bottom row): Tiffany Delesandro, Asst. Dir. of Business and Industry Programs Michelle Claybrook-Lucas, Dir. of Contract Training and Workforce Development.

ing two tests: the one for math and another that shows the skills they already have that can lead to a job.

"We don't want to waste their time," she says. "That's the reason why we're giving the tests, because everybody's at a

different level."

One of Brown's students, Sheila Harrison, is a Housing Choice recipient from PHA who graduated from the Administrative Assistant Job Readiness program in
(Continued page 15)



Mount Olivet



PHA Homeowners



Greater Grays Ferry Estates

PHA MTE Family Services Program

Homebuyers Club Workshops

WORKSHOP 1

Sponsored by Wachovia Mortgage Corp.

FSS Center

N 1516 Judson Way, Comm. Room
23rd & Jefferson sts.

Saturday, August 11, 2007

Saturday, September 15, 2007

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation
Budgeting & Money Management

Saturday, August 18, 2007

Saturday, September 22, 2007

10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Credit Repair / Home Inspection

WORKSHOP 2

Sponsored by Citizen's Bank

Strawbridge Building

8th & Market sts. 13th Floor
Community Area

Wednesday, August 15, 2007

Wednesday, September 5, 2007

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation
Budgeting & Money Management

Wednesday, August 22, 2007

Wednesday, September 12, 2007

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Credit Repair / Home Inspection

To register call Mr. Gilbert Vega at 215.684.2057 or Ms. Christeen Johnson at 215.684.3124.

Please plan to attend both sessions when registering.



WORKSHOPS DESCRIPTION

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Learn how to use your Housing Voucher (Section 8) to purchase a home.

Budgeting & Money Management

Learn how to define income and expenses.

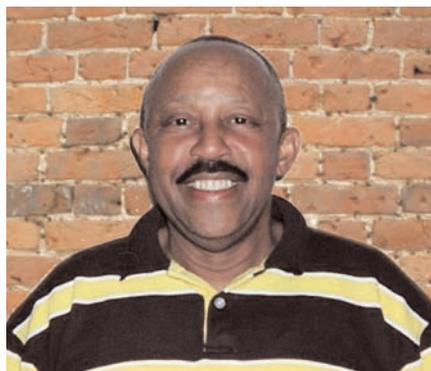
Credit Repair / Home Inspection

Learn how to establish, maintain and repair credit, and tips on how to pass home inspection.



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

HCV landlord tries to bridge the housing gap



West Philly Landlord Edward Williams provides apartments

As a bus driver for SEPTA, Philadelphia native Edward Williams used to take families from the streets of East Mt. Airy to Fox Chase. Today he is taking families from the streets to a home as one of the Philadelphia Housing Authority's Housing Choice

Voucher (HCV) landlords.

"I am by my nature a man of service," says Williams. "It gives me great joy to bridge the gap for people in housing."

Bridge the gap. Provide a service. Serve people. The 67-year old drops these phrases as if he were calling out stops along the route of life.

"When I was young and struggling I had a lot of help from people. They helped me pay my school bill. My mother fed me through the struggle. My family helped," says Williams.

To whom more is given, more is expected. You have to give back. You always have to help people.

"I went from making \$3.50 an hour as a mechanic at Brock's Candy to \$5.25 as a trolley driver at SEPTA. My first year at SEPTA I made \$15,000 and I thought I was rich."

Williams began his career with SEPTA as a trolley driver. He worked his way up until he retired as an assistant director in 1996. At that point, he decided to sell his PECO stock and invest in real estate. In 1999 he purchased Brighton Court, a 70-unit apartment complex. Fifteen units are available for housing voucher holders.

He bought his first house in 1974 after his landlady raised the rent on his apartment. It transformed the way he thought about living.

"When you live well you tend to feel better about yourself. If you have good feelings about yourself you tend to do better," he says. Williams tries to provide that same good feeling to his tenants.

"The misconception is that Section 8 clients are destructive. I am a living

witness to the fact that is not true. HCV residents are very concerned about their housing and tend to keep it up," says Williams.

"We really give them a wonderful unit that is current and color coordinated with the latest in appliances. Many of them are very appreciative, and they are thankful. They are proud that they are able to live well."

Do good and good things will happen to you.

"I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be where I am today," says Williams. "We used to advertise heavily. We don't advertise any more. We don't have any vacancies," thanks to word of mouth.

If you are a voucher holder looking for a good landlord, give Brighton Court Apartments a call at 215-747-4635.

Join James Brown at Parkside Apartments

James Brown

Housing Choice Voucher landlord James Brown says two things happened in 1937 that brought him to where he is today.

"I will tell you this for what it's worth," says Brown. "The housing act was created in 1937...(and) I was born in Richmond, VA."

Both events share a common ground. Housing was created to meet the needs of poor families across the country. And Brown's early childhood gave him a strong desire to do the same.

His mother was a teacher and father was a doctor. Even so, he went to a segregated school and lived in a nice house in the same neighborhood as all of the city's African-Americans. But as children do, Brown said he would ask his parents a seemingly simple question.

"On my way home from school, I would ask my parents, 'why do my friends live in dilapidated housing? The houses were in Richmond's Jackson Ward. They were clapboard houses with no paint and porches crumbling. And my parents would try

to explain," says Brown.

But the explanation was never good enough for the child whose friends lived in the rundown houses.

"I said to myself that I would do something about it if I ever get the chance," he adds.

That spirit of questioning why things were the way they were for people of color pushed Brown to get involved in the civil rights movement and low income housing in Philadelphia. He moved here after graduating from Virginia Union University in Richmond. His first job was as a researcher at Temple University Hospital's department of gastronomy.

Brown however could not escape his interest in housing and says he found himself talking to his landlord about real estate. Those conversations inspired Brown to buy his first building on Parkside in 1963 where he spent most of the time doing light renovations with his wife and friends. That project only piqued his interest even more in low-income housing and soon he found himself in long conversations with peo-



James Brown's apartment building is across the street from Fairmount Park.

ple about urban renewal. Brown eventually left the medical field and went to work for the city's development department. Here his love for decent housing for the poor combined with his passion for civil rights.

"I was doing so much that one day someone stopped me and asked, 'You are a bright boy. When are you going to do something in your community beside fussin' and fighting?'"

Eventually Brown quit the city and engaged in providing low-income housing full time. First he says he got involved in federally

funded low income housing loan programs. Then Brown says he found a way to use tax credits in the 1970s when funds for housing dried up. Finally, in the 1980s Brown says he discovered tax credit programs for historic buildings and founded the non-profit Parkside Historic Preservation Corporation in 1983.

Today the organization owns and operates the Parkside Apartments at 4140 - 4152 Parkside Avenue. He says they have about 70 units and 30-40 percent of them are home to people in the HCV program.

Over the years, Brown says his love for serving the poor has only grown and he offers this advice for other potential HCV landlords.

"People who are poor, even in spirit, need leadership. If you are going to tackle something like this you are going to have to be among the people. I have been here all along, so that if there is a need I can be on it right away."

Voucher holders are welcome to contact landlord James Brown's Parkside Apartments at 215-215-473-4900.

Happy homeowner in Tacony

The Housing Choice Voucher program enabled Yvette Hardy to move from South Philadelphia to the Tacony section of the Northeast. Hardy enjoyed living in that area so much that she used PHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program to begin saving for a home in the neighborhood.

"They were very helpful in helping me build up money for the down payment through the escrow account,"

says Hardy, who moved into her home last October.

The two youngest of Hardy's three children are living with her. "They are 16 and 12 years old and very happy about having their own rooms," she reports. Her previous house had only two bedrooms, and they had to share. "It was difficult," she recalls.

It took Hardy five years to go through

the process and buy her home.

"I took all the first time homebuyers classes, and they were very helpful, too," she added.

She urges other prospective home buyers is to hang in there.

"If they work hard, I would advise them to use the family self-sufficiency programs and whatever else is available to buy their homes," she says.



Former HCV client Yvette Harvey settles in Tacony.

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Audrey Hickmon - FSS Coordinator/Case Manager
1516 Judson Way, 2nd Floor (23rd and Jefferson St.)
Phone #215-684-2682

They ride to your rescue

Who comes to your home at night or on a weekend when, your electricity is out or your basement is flooded? Who's there to reassure you that everything's going to be all right? Who is responsible for PHA's high level of customer satisfaction?

The answer is the members of PHA's night and weekend maintenance crew who handle all the off-hour calls, some of them stemming from offbeat requests. If you've ever had an emergency, these people are the Lone Ranger when they arrive at your door.

Despite recent budget and staff cuts, PHA still does what many private landlords would never do, offering residents a level of service they could not find elsewhere.

The agency accomplishes this by having members of a 12-man team work between 11 AM and 7:30 PM or 3 PM and 11:30 PM. Some crew members work Monday thru Friday while others have a different work week, so they can answer your call on a Saturday or Sunday. The staggered shifts insure that residents get the service they expect while holding down on overtime costs for PHA.

John Tatum, the Maintenance Manager for PHA, says, "Whatever situation we get a night, one of those gentlemen can handle."

He estimates that his crew easily handles over a thousand calls a year. Tatum, who has been with PHA for 24 years, says he and his men thrive on the unknown. They never know what kind of call they'll receive when they come to work or where they're going. "They deserve all the credit. All I do is holler, scream, push and pull them in the right direction."

Tom Upshaw, a rehab specialist with 19 years at PHA, says they rely heavily on the PHAPD and the radio room because "they look out for us."



PHA Night & Weekend Maintenance Crew Members: Center Kneeling- Presnel Cadichon, First Row (Left To Right) - Bobby Bobo, Ike Sitkovetsky, Thomas Upshaw, Mikael Ermakov, Zeke Matysov. Second Row (Left To Right) - Darren Harcum, Boris Rozhitsky, Talal Charibi, Jeff Harmon, John Tatum.

Emergency calls after 4:30 PM are handled by the police radio room. In some instances, police provide a safety backup to crews. Still, Upshaw says, it's just a pleasure to be assistance to residents and he's hopeful that PHA can continue the rebirth of neighborhoods throughout the city.

Dan Quimby, Executive General Manager of Operations for PHA, says the agency is still the best landlord in Philadelphia. No private landlord provides comparable night or weekend service. However, Quimby asks residents not to exaggerate their emergencies and to "take care of your property as best you can because we're going to have difficult time replacing it."

Germantown House offers LIFE

PHA's newest LIFE (Living Independently for Elders) program has opened at Germantown House. PHA is partnering with NewCourtland Elder Services to provide services for seniors aged 60 and older who qualify for nursing home care yet can safely live at home.

Melissa Twersky, the intake coordinator for NewCourtland, says their goal is to sign up 180 seniors for the program at Germantown House. She is excited about the new facility and its location.

"It's a beautiful building. It's spacious. Being right inside Germantown House really helps us forge a relationship with PHA and the community, in the heart of the community that we're serving," she says.

Kelly Williams, PHA's housing liaison coordinator, is contacting seniors who might be interested in the LIFE program at Germantown House. The program is open to residents of Abbottsford, Queen Lane, Suffolk Manor, Morton Homes, Emlen Arms, Champlost, and Hill Creek, in addition to residents of Germantown House and the 12 surrounding zip codes. Williams says her goal is to get as many PHA seniors as possible to enroll in the program.

Both Twersky and Williams say the seniors that they've approached have been very positive about the program. Many don't want to move into a nursing home, and they are pleasantly surprised that Medicaid



Resident tour New Courtland LIFE Center

and Medicare benefits will pay for the cost of the LIFE program.

NewCourtland Elder Services was established by The Presbyterian Foundation for Philadelphia in 1995. The trustees of Presbyterian Hospital established the foundation after selling the hospital to the University of Pennsylvania Health System.

PHA also offers a LIFE program at Greater Grays Ferry Estates in South Philadelphia. There, the agency is partnering with St. Agnes Continuing Care Center at 3001 Moore Avenue.

To find out more about the LIFE program, call Kelly Williams at 215-684-4400.

PHA answers dreams for formerly homeless families

(Continued from Page 1)

transitional housing in West Philadelphia. Clark is very grateful for the opportunity to select a new home with PHA. “Well, it means I can get my family back together, first of all. I feel that’s a big stepping stone for me because I’ve been down and I’ve come to the fork in the road and I’m going on. I’m getting older and at least I have a stable environment.”

Shirley also says that many people have a false image of homeless people.

“I met a lot of different people being homeless. Some of them are business people that got on drugs. They lost everything. Many lost their homes because they lost their jobs... they’re very nice people. You’d never think that they had problems like that.”

Clark and other recently homeless people are receiving help through an agreement between PHA and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition (GPUAC) that calls for qualified families to move from transitional housing to permanent housing. The agreement is the foundation of the Blueprint Program where families staying in homeless shelters move into transitional housing and receive special training.

The agreement spells out how a fam-

ily in transitional housing becomes “housing ready.” The same emergency housing providers serve as case managers for families moved to permanent housing, meeting weekly with those families to monitor their progress.

Gloria Guard, the president of the People’s Emergency Center (PEC), one of PHA’s partners in the Blueprint Program. A total of 290 families have moved into PHA housing in the last four years. The practice of helping families become “housing ready” and making home visits on a steady basis explains why once these families move into PHA housing they stay there.

“Only one of the 49 families we (PEC) moved into PHA has returned to homelessness,” said Guard. “This is a particularly high rate of success and we attribute it to the targeted education and services we provide before placing these families into PHA housing. PHA is the last and only resort for so many of our city’s vulnerable families and young homeless children. Their continued partnership is key to solving family homelessness in Philadelphia.”

The first stop on Home Selection Day for Shirley Clark and the rest of the group is Harrison Homes. It’s apparent how excited everyone is, including a mother and her four chil-

dren, who raced to the entrance of the high-rise.

Once inside, a group of four future PHA residents are surprised at the size of the apartment they visit on the 13th floor. They’re already figuring out where to put their furniture, and they are taken by the breathtaking view of the city from the living room window. Harrison Homes is the first of nine stops that they made during their daylong tour.

Tecola Watson, a soft-spoken 25-year-old mother of three is very grateful that she will have a home for her children, and for the things she learned while in the Blueprint Program.

“It means a lot. It gives my children an opportunity to have their own place to look forward to growing as a family. It’s not the end. It’s just the beginning. I want to be a homeowner.”

Tecola is in school, training to become a licensed beautician, but



PHA’s Sonia Garrett discusses features of new apartment during home selection tour.

wants to eventually go into nursing. She says nobody has to give anyone housing, or anything else for that matter; you have to work for it. And she warns people who take their families and homes for granted, saying “Just as fast as you get it, you can lose it.”

By day’s end, 11 families have selected their homes with PHA. Five others will have to try again because the units available don’t meet their needs. The sun had come out early that afternoon.

New LIFE program

(Continued from Page 1)

Carl Greene said combing public senior housing and healthcare facilities should be seen as a national model. He also said PHA plans to be a major provider of this “service enriched” senior housing. “People trust PHA. They know we will treat them with the dignity they have earned,” said Greene.

Greene said the arrangement would not have been possible without the leadership of Pennsylvania Welfare Secretary Estelle Richman. She said seniors want to be independent and

make their own decisions. She said that’s what makes Germantown House so appealing compared to a nursing home.

For those who don’t yet need the services of the LIFE center, operated by New Courtland Elder Services, Germantown House is just a special place to live. Many residents are already on the waiting list. As the PHA’s Greene puts it, “This is a beautiful building in a beautiful neighborhood. Who wouldn’t want to live here?”

(See related story on Page 12)

Taewanda Johnson

(Continued from Page 5)

became the second in the family, behind her brother, to earn a bachelor’s degree. The degree in social work from Temple University also proved to her son and daughter that you can achieve almost anything when you have a passion for success. Although this was an important milestone, she wanted to push the envelope even further and test her skills and ability. After spending time working for North Central Victim Services and others agencies through Temple

University, she felt that to be recognized as someone being totally dedicated to a profession she must go the next step and earn a master’s degree. She completed a master’s degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix in May.

Taewanda says although the scholarship program no longer exists at PHA, the Philadelphia Housing Authority has a number of opportunities, like the Pre-Apprenticeship program, that are very instrumental in developing and enriching the life course of individuals who want a future that they would otherwise not have. She keeps in close contact with the Pre-Apprenticeship program to see what she can do to inspire others to also become successful.

She attributes much of her success to one man who motivated and inspired her to do her best, “Carl Greene is a man who has a vision and I hope that he continues to develop programs that can assist individuals beyond what society says they can achieve.”

Taewanda eventually plans to start a shelter and cultural enrichment center to help people who are trying to improve their lives.

The PHA Experience

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6TH ANNUAL NATIONAL RESIDENT EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23
THRU SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

AT THE HYATT REGENCY
PENN’S LANDING

The purpose of the conference is to generate discussion about innovative programs and services for residents and to exhibit the successes of housing residents. **WE WANT YOU TO JOIN US!!**

For more info, please contact Jeanette Jacobs
at 215.684.1016 or 215.684.1014



HH TSSI
Tenant Support Services, Inc.

Public and private housing meet at Falls Ridge

page 14



Governor, Ed Rendell called Falls Ridge a "sensational achievement".

PHA Residents who live at Falls Ridge will become part of history as their site gains unique status among public housing developments. In the near future, they will be living in the same neighborhood as people buying new, privately built market rate homes in the western half of the development overlooking Kelly Drive.

It's a far cry from the hulking old-style housing

project that once dominated the site.

In early June, PHA realized a long-held dream with the grand opening of a sales office on the hilltop at Falls Ridge by one of the area's premier homebuilders, Westrum Development. PHA and Westrum had agreed in January 2005 to a \$3 million deal to build new private homes in the East Falls section of Philadelphia. Westrum bought a 16.7-acre section of PHA's former Schuylkill Falls housing development.

PHA has built 135 affordable rental homes on the lower portion of the site and is building 28 affordable homes that have already been sold.

"Everybody who had anything to do with the community knew one thing: you had to get rid of old, outdated, outmoded public housing and replace it with a new, mixed-income community that could really add to the growth and vitality of this neighborhood," said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene. "It's the kind of community that they write stories about and that they do movies about."

Greene praised developer John Westrum as a real American hero, saying it takes a lot of courage to take the risk and build private homes along side public housing. He also praised the vision and passion of

the residents of East Falls. "That is a gigantic statement about civic pride, civic commitment and civic investment in their neighborhood and in their community."

Westrum, CEO of Westrum Development Company, called the grand opening event memorable and said his company was proud to be part of this unique development.

"Five or six years ago, people thought we'd be crazy to be offering a \$700,000 or \$800,000 home next to a PHA site. We've had such a great response to it that we're excited as can be."

Westrum praised Greene for having the foresight to work with his company on the development.

Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, who has lived in East Falls since 1980, said nobody across the country thought this type of development could work, but it has.

"You look at this site, and it's stunningly beautiful," he told the crowd gathered at the event. Rendell added that Falls Ridge is a fine example of government programs that work. He called it "a sensational achievement."

"What we are doing here is going to be a model for the nation," he said.

Boeing careers for Pre-Apprenticeship grads

(Continued from Page 1)

the lead for his students.

Pre-Apprenticeship sent 10 applicants to take a test administered by the Commonwealth to qualify for the training. Six students scored high enough to qualify, and four were actually accepted into the program. Burrow, Gaines and Owens completed the training and are now eligible to apply for jobs at Boeing.

"Of the individuals who have taken the course, all but one were offered a position at Boeing," Williams points out.

"Boeing is a company where you can really advance," says Burrows, who is delighted to be out of the office. The petite mother of two notes that people were surprised to find her in the Pre-Apprenticeship program because she is a woman. But she has always loved fixing things, and says that her family members call on her when they need help with appliances or repairs, even though her brother is a construction worker.

"I like to see the outcome of my work," she says.

The Queen Lane Apartments resident sees a job at Boeing as a ticket to success. "I want to move

my family out of public housing. PHA is just a stepping-stone to help you get to where you need to be," she says.

When it came to the training program, she adds, "I made myself work harder" to prove she could succeed despite her small size. Owens admits he was surprised to find this tiny woman in his class, but he soon learned she was driven to perform.

"I was always competing with her," notes Owens. "I wanted to be the first one."

"We cheered each other on," she counters.

Owens had entered the Pre-Apprenticeship program with the goal of becoming an electrician. He had not wanted to do the Boeing training, although he had scored well on the test. He explains that he is scared of heights and didn't like the idea of working on airplanes.

"I beat him over the head," jokes Burrow, and Owens admits he is now glad he opted to take the training, noting he only has to build the planes, not fly in them.

"I am a young black man, and I want to succeed," he says. He is now pushing his brother and his friends to join the Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

At Boeing, he and Burrow enrolled in the Introduction to Sheet Metal and Assembly training, while Gaines took the Composite Assembler option.

Gaines was working for the caterer at Temple University, where the Pre-Apprenticeship Program graduation was held last year.

"I saw the graduation at Temple, and I said I have to get into this," says the Housing Choice Voucher recipient.

Like Burrow and Owens, he has always liked mechanics and electronics. He praised the Boeing training, saying, "After I got into it, it got more

exciting. You just have to be motivated."

Noting that at 46, he is considerably older than the other students in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Gaines says, "You're not an old dog. You can learn new tricks. The program gives you an opportunity to expand."

To find out more about PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program, call George Johnson at 215-684-8049.



Lawrence Boylae, roofing instructor at PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Shericka Burrow how to perfectly cut a piece of sheet metal. Owens and Burrow and student Juan R. Gaines (not shown) were propelled from Pre-Apprenticeship into a training program at Boeing Aircraft that will enable them to get jobs working on Osprey military aircraft.

The PHA Experience • July 2007

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Kids chowing down at Summer Food Program

Despite recent budget cuts, PHA is once again helping needy kids enjoy their summer vacation with tasty food and good nutrition. The Summer Food Program is underway at 22 PHA sites across the city and will run through August 17th.

All eligible children ages 18 and under are able to receive free breakfast and lunch through the program. It operates Monday - Friday from 8 am to 2 pm.

Last year, PHA's Summer Food Service Program provided 46,000 meals to low-income children throughout the city.

"This program is very important because children have a place to get a full, nutritious meal for breakfast and lunch, and have a full belly. Some of

them don't get that at home on a daily basis," says Janet Martin, who has a grandchild in the program.

Felicia Baker, a mother of ten, says the program gives her a break from meal making while ensuring that her kids get what they need at mealtime.

Gail Glen, Resident Council President at Raymond Rosen, says she knows of some kids who might otherwise go without food "and it's beautiful that we can provide them with the meals here."

The Summer Food Program changed dramatically in 2005 with a switch to a very appetizing, nutritious hot lunch menu that proved very popular with the kids. In fact, some kids were asking if they could come back for supper, which the program does not offer.



Summer Food program locations, such as this one at the Raymond Rosen Community Center, are safe places for kids to hang out with their friends and get a good meal.



A group of young PHA residents enjoy a tasty hot lunch at the Raymond Rosen Community Ctr.

Giving back pays off at Wilson Park

Seniors at Wilson Park were happy to have their poolroom and other areas painted courtesy of the Aetna foundation. This is the first year of Aetna's community day where the company tries to not only put faces on the millions of seniors that have helped make them successful, but to give back to this community and do something for the people they serve.



Aetna and PHA staff outside Wilson Park

While emphasizing that PHA is a deserving entity, Aetna representatives say they had a

great time and that this opportunity made them feel good. Aetna plans to make the senior community day an annual event.

CCP is your key to the future

(Cont. from page 9) early July. She was one of the speakers at the graduation.

Harrison, who is 51, has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant, but was out of work early July. She was one of the speakers at the graduation.

Harrison, who is 51, has worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant, but was out of work last October. She was looking through an edition of *The PHA Experience* when a section on the Community Partners program caught her eye. Initially, Harrison thought she

might not be able to successfully complete the Administrative Assistant Job Readiness program. She's still working on obtaining her high school diploma and had no computer skills.

"The computer, if you don't know anything about it, it's real intense. It's frightening to some of us," Harrison says. "I'm not a quitter. I hung in there and I have a computer at home. What I didn't get done (in class), I came home and I practiced."

Besides gaining computer skills, Sheila learned about customer

service, which is where her real interest lies. She also learned about dressing and interviewing for a job. In the spring, Sheila and a classmate began a job hunt.

Recently, The Watermark at Logan Square, an assisted living facility, hired Sheila. She says her new computer skills were critical to landing her new job and will give her an opportunity to move up in the company.

Everybody who has an opportunity should take advantage of these programs. It can propel them to doing things they never would have imagined."

"This year, we've enhanced the program by teaching them not only about nutrition, but also about dental health from participants in PHA's Skills for Life program," says Troy Robinson, PHA Community Relations Asset Manager.

This year, because of federal budget cuts, fewer hot lunches will be served. Still, Robinson says, children will receive very nutritious lunches. He says no processed meats are used in cold lunches and they feature veggies and fruit. No meal is repeated more than once.

The number of sites offering the

program this summer was reduced to 22, down from 29 last year, also due to the budget cuts. However, Robinson says no needy children will go hungry. They can go to a neighboring site to receive a good meal or PHA will refer them to a city Department of Recreation site that offers similar meals. This way parents and children don't have to travel too far to take part in the program.

Robinson also says they're always looking for volunteers to work at a Summer Food site.

People who want more information about participating in the program can contact PHA at (215) 684-1164.

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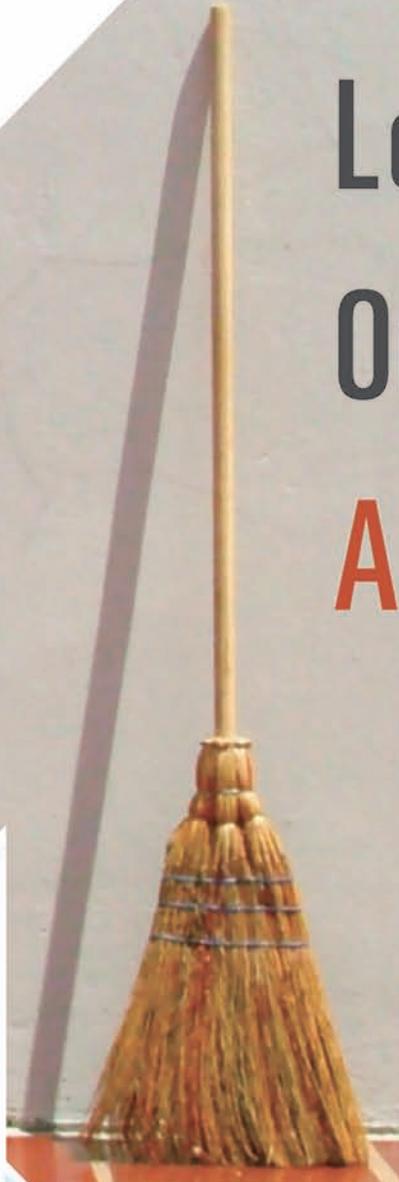
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