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The PHA Experience

Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 17 | A Community Newspaper for and About Residents | June 2008

Ludlow Homes sell despite credit crunch

There's a lot of talk these days about the housing market being in a rut. Don't tell that to the families who have reached agreements to buy the new PHA houses at Ludlow. These homebuyers saw an opportunity and seized it.

"A lot of the families who are moving in can see that Northern Liberties West is a neighborhood on the rise, and they want to grow with it," says Malvin Reyes of PHA's Home Sales team. "The area still has some rough patches but it is quickly changing, and these new residents are making a great investment in their futures."



New Ludlow homeowner Lashawn Purdie accepts keys from PHA's Cheryle Smalls. Lashawn loves her brand-new home.

One of the new buyers is Lashawn Purdie, who like several others, is expected to move this June. Purdie, who lives with her 7-year-old son, had been living at Greater Grays Ferry Estates before making the big move into first-time homeownership.

Purdie is a social worker for the State of Pennsylvania and a part-time student at Temple, where she is majoring in criminal justice. She

plans on a career in probation and parole because she'd like to help people coming out of the prison system get back on their feet.

During her two years renting in Grays Ferry, she received several open house invitations from PHA, but she had to overcome some credit problems.

She received counseling from one of the agencies that works with PHA residents to help them restore their credit and save for a down payment on a home. Housing counseling helped her budget her money, too. She doesn't shop as often as she used to, cooks at home more, and buys DVD's instead of going to movies.

Purdie now owns a 3-bedroom home with two baths. She and her son have their own bedrooms while the third bedroom is an exercise room. But there were other features that attracted her to Ludlow.

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Pageant winner had to jump through hoops

Fourteen-year-old Tykia McWilliams was very nervous at the start of the first PHA North Boys & Girls Club beauty pageant. By the end of the evening, she had shown the judges enough poise and confidence to be crowned Miss Fairmount Boys and Girls Club. But before winning the crown, she had to jump through a few hoops.



Hula Hoops will never be the same after Tykia McWilliams shows how to use them in a dance routine that helped her win first place at the PHA North Boys and Girls Club Beauty Pageant.

Tykia, an 8th grader at Spring Garden Elementary School, won the crown with an impressive Hula Hoop routine in which she danced swinging the hoop on every part of her body. The performance required grace and skill and was stumble free. She chose to use the Hula Hoop because she "just wanted to do something different that would make me stand out."

The pageant winner said she had played with Hula Hoops as a small child and devised the prize-winning

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It's always darkest after Dawn moves to S.C.

"Philly is always going to be my home," insists Dawn Staley.

"South Carolina is borrowing me right now," adds the Philly-born and public housing raised basketball powerhouse, who left her position as Temple University's women's basketball coach last month to coach the University of South Carolina Gamecocks.

Staley is a Philly star in every sense of the word. During her eight years at Temple, she was named Big Five Coach of the Year five times and guided the Owls to six NCAA tournaments. Staley was a standout player for the WNBA before retiring in 2005 and earned three gold

medals playing for the U.S. Women's Olympic basketball team. She'll be an assistant coach on this year's team.

Staley acknowledges that her roots are here, and her Philadelphia connection will continue.

"This is my hometown, the programs that I started will go on," she says of the Dawn Staley Foundation, a nonprofit that sponsors a leadership academy, a summer basketball league and an after-school program for middle school age girls.

Staley calls growing up in PHA's Raymond Rosen housing site "a great experience. It was my foundation."

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You've known each other since high school. You've always been the best of friends and now, both of you have reached the wonderful age of 40.

Congratulations!

Over the years, the two of you have shared stories about relationships, children, and ambitions — in both good times and bad. But now it's time to add “**breast cancer screenings**” and “**mammograms**” to the list of things to discuss. One in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, but when the disease is diagnosed early, the five-year survival rate is 98%.

But don't leave it at the talking stage. After the conversation, both of you should make an appointment for a mammogram **today**.

At Keystone Mercy, we believe every one of our female members over the age of 40 should have a mammogram **once a year**.

We also believe that one good way for that to happen is to talk about it.

Members who need help scheduling an appointment can call **1-800-521-6860**.

KEYSTONE MERCY

A Program of Keystone First and Mercy Health Plan

Coverage by
KeystoneFIRST
Independent Licensee of the
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

New PHA homeowner says ‘you can do it!’

Angela Allen, a Housing Choice Voucher resident, was tired of renting. The desire to have her own place had already been growing before she began receiving notices in the mail from PHA about homeownership. Ms. Allen had a good work record; she’s worked as a secretary at St. Ignatius Nursing Home in West Philadelphia for nine years. She had even won an award for saving someone’s life.

However, Angela needed some help on budgeting and credit.

That’s where PHA’s home buying and counseling programs came in. She learned how to save money and how to improve her credit by controlling her spending so she could achieve the American dream. Angela says budgeting is the most important thing she learned in the home buying classes.

“If you want something in life, you can’t be splurging on

certain things,” she says. Angela also found out that grants are available from public and private groups to help first-time homebuyers, once they build up some cash. Eventually, she received grants from Women’s Opportunity Resource Center (WORC), Citizens Bank, and the CDC Partnership to use toward a down payment and closing costs.

Now, Angela was ready to begin looking. She began working with a local realtor who sent pictures of homes for purchase via the

Internet.

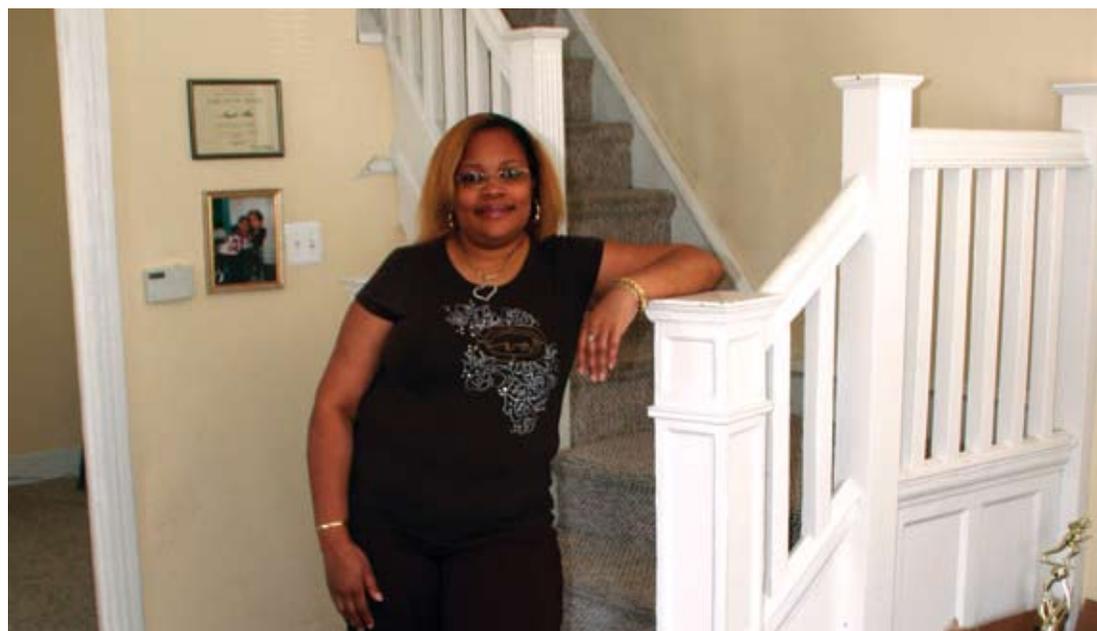
After seeing about ten houses, she settled on a home in West Philadelphia, not far from her workplace.

At one time, she had lived across the street from the corner home she now owns.

“It’s big. It’s spacious. The neighborhood...is well kept up. The neighbors look like they take pride in their property,” she says.

“Don’t ever think that you can’t own your own home.”

Angela Allen



Angela Allen in the living room of her new home.

Her two sons love her new 1,400 square foot home, which has four bedrooms, and a big front porch. Allen says having upstairs and downstairs rooms is a plus, too, especially when you need some peace and quiet. And the back

yard is also a plus; one of her sons can now have a dog. It took just six months from the time Angela Allen contacted PHA’s homeownership department to realize her dream of homeownership.

“I figured I would own a home, but I didn’t think (it would happen) so soon,” she says. “Don’t ever think that you can’t own your own home, because you can do it!”



PHA Executive Director Carl Greene joined Mayor Michael Nutter and City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell at a City Hall news conference to announce a new campaign to reduce the number of people living on the street and the number of families living in shelters. Mr. Greene applauded the mayor for bringing “a new vitality and a new energy” to the effort to reduce homelessness in the city.

PHA’s June 28 Job Fair to offer one-stop shop for job hunters

Need a job? PHA is ready and willing to help. Just shine your shoes, put on your best suit and head off to PHA’s 4th Annual Job Fair on Saturday, June 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the John F. Street Community Center, 1100 Poplar Street.

“Everyone is welcome to participate in our job fair,” says Luz Paradoa, Program Manager of PHA’s Community Partners Program. “We will have our Community Partners here with material and advice, as well as employers with real jobs to fill.”

Bring your resume, if you have one. If you don’t, resume writing workshops will be run by Janice Harvey from the REDI program. To prepare you for the all-important interview, she’ll also be running workshops on skills and techniques to help land that job. There will also be a workshop about dressing for success.

The Job Fair will be an opportunity to meet representatives from over 30 employers, including Rite Aide,

Genesis Healthcare, Shop Rite and Manpower. A computer lab will also be set up with opportunities from employers who cannot personally attend the Job Fair, but will accept online applications. Aides will be on hand to help job hunters navigate the employers’ web sites and fill out the applications.

The Job Fair offers the chance to speak directly with employers who

are hiring and can interview you on the spot. Private rooms will be available for personal interviews.

So if you are looking to find a job or interested in finding a better job, the PHA Job Fair is the place to be on June 28. For more information, call Luz Paradoa at 215-684-4366 or Rylanda Wilson at 215-684-4161.



The PHA Job Fair provides an opportunity to meet employers with real jobs available.



LIFE participants ‘[M] Power’ their brains

Marlene Upshur was beaming. She had just had her first “date” with a computer, and she was feeling terrific.

“It was exciting!” said Upshur, a participant in the New Courtland LIFE Program at PHA’s Germantown House site. (LIFE stands for Living Independently for Elders). The program is designed to meet the needs of nursing home-eligible adults over the age of 60 who desire to continue living in their own homes or own community through the aid of supportive services.

Ms. Upshur, 68 and recovering from hip surgery, is able to do just that and was delighted to find herself in front of the new [m] Power system now used at New Courtland LIFE. The technology,



Marlene Upshur

explains Beth Cwiklinski, center director of the New Courtland LIFE program, is designed to promote mental fitness for seniors, which is an important way to help keep the brain sharp even as the body ages. Still, to promote long-term participation, the exercises are also designed to be fun.

Users of [m] Power are not required to have any computer background at all. Logging in simply involves face recognition, and the touch screen is totally user-friendly. “Our participants have been amazed to find they can do math problems,

games and puzzles on the computer,” said Cwiklinski.

Seniors turning high tech at LIFE program

[m]Power gives Upshur even more to love about the New Courtland LIFE program. “It’s the best thing in my life,” said the former Philadelphia Board of Education employee. “New Courtland LIFE gets me out of the house and into the world—a world that now involves computers—through a program that is accessible and...fun!”

“I love puzzles and knitting, and now computers,” added Vera Cheeks, 80, who has also had her first date with [m]Power. Ms. Cheeks was delighted to find that she could instantly connect to the technology. “I was matching objects and unscrambling words, and it wasn’t difficult at all. I have some eyesight issues, but I could really see this screen just fine.”

Watching over the two New Courtland LIFE participants is Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator Agina Shaw. “The [m]Power system has been a real hit,” she said. “Computers can open the door to a whole new world for our LIFE participants, empowering them to live more independently.”

PHA partners with New Courtland to provide LIFE services at Germantown House and with Mercy Health at Wilson Park. Part of the New Courtland Elder Services network, New Courtland LIFE provides eligible residents of its service area with home health care, personal care support, prescription coordination, physical

therapy, recreational activities and transportation to health-related appointments, among other services, and is covered by

Medicaid/Medicare or private-pay. To enroll or request more information call 1-888-NCLIFE4 (625-4334). PHA residents can also call Kelly Williams at Germantown House, 215-684-4400.

“It was exciting!”
Marlene Upshur

“I love puzzles and knitting, and now computers.”
Vera Cheeks

Philadelphia Housing Authority SENIOR’S CALENDAR

JUNE

- 27th Wilson Park Senior Center’s Senior Prom – For tickets call 215.684.4895
2508 Jackson Street from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- 27th Arms Café Ice-Cream Social
6733 Emlen Street from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

JULY - SUMMER SAFETY MONTH

- 3rd PHA – New Courtland Living Well, Learning Well Series
6950 Germantown Avenue from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- 9th Hot Fun in the Summertime Health Fair – Excess Health Issues
Liddonfield Senior Center at 8800 Jackson Drive from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- 11th Arm’s Café – Jazz Breakfast on the Terrace
6733 Emlen Street from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
- 25th Germantown House Summer B-B-Q
5457 Wayne Avenue from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

AUGUST - VACATION MONTH

- 1st Under the Boardwalk Beach Party
Wilson Park Senior Center at 2508 Jackson Street from 10:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- 22nd The Philly Senior Sports Day – For Tickets call 215-684-5950
Citizens Park at Patterson Avenue from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

SEPTEMBER - GRANDPARENTS’ MONTH

- 10th Senior Advisory Board Quarterly Meeting
Emlen Arms at 6733 Emlen Street from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- 16th - 19th Wildwood NJ Trip (3 Days 2 Nights) – For more information call 215.684.5950
Buses leaving from Liddonfield Older Adult Center
8800 Jackson Drive
- 25th Caregivers Workshops
John Street Community Center from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.



Charlrita Reid decorates Destiny Thomas’ face at a Health Fair held in May at Wilson Park Community Center.

Residents find PHA's renovations uplifting and rejuvenating

PHA's \$23 million investment in site repairs and upgrades is sitting well with residents. The agency has gone back to the basics of property management to make its developments sparkle and give residents homes they can be proud of. Teams of managers have visited sites across the city to make first-hand recommendations on ways to improve public housing properties

so residents and the surrounding neighborhood can benefit.

Two resident leaders, Wallace Nicholson and Marlene Lynch, recently expressed their satisfaction to the PHA Board of Commissioners.

"It's uplifting to the morale of the people."
Wallace Nicholson

Nicholson, the resident council president at Holmcrest Homes in the Far Northeast, noted that residents had been asking for renovations for the

last 10 to 15 years. They received them in the form of new windows throughout the development, interior and exterior painting, and Venetian blinds.

Nicholson believes the new windows will make Holmcrest more energy efficient and safer for the residents. He points out that the old windows were too small and made it hard to escape in case of an emergency, such as a fire.

"It [the old windows] was like half a window. You slid it back and the other side didn't move. Now, we have full windows if you have to get out," he says.

The paint job at Holmcrest has made the development brighter, even shiny at night, Nicholson says. The Venetian blinds bring a uniform, more consistent look to the apartments; in the past, some residents had shades while others had curtains. "When this was done, everyone was rejuvenated and encouraged and lifted up. It's uplifting to the morale of the people," Nicholson says.

Over at Champlost Homes in Olney, residents are thrilled that their community center is receiving a face-lift.

Marlene Lynch, acting president of the resident council there, says new, energy efficient windows have been installed at the center. New blinds will be installed, too, which will help protect the computers in the



Resident leader Wallace Nicholson shows off the new windows at Holmcrest.

center's computer lab. Crews are also repainting the center with washable paint that can be easily cleaned of fingerprints and other dirt so the center can gleam.

"I want to thank Mr. Greene for what he's done," Lynch says. "No

other person ever did anything." Lynch says the renovations will make the community center, now 48 years old, a more attractive place to residents of Champlost and the surrounding neighborhood.



Marlene Lynch says the renovations at the Champlost Community Center will make it a more attractive place for residents.

A message from the Executive Director



It is always educational for me to read the annual PHA Resident Satisfaction Survey. It's the one time each year I am able to get an overall sense of what our customers think of the product and service we provide.

The very first response in the survey stands out for me. It says 88% of PHA families are satisfied or very satisfied with their homes. It is gratifying to know that so many of you think we are doing a good job in that regard, but the results also tell us we can still do better.

Public safety also continues to be an issue on many of your minds. While 87% of respondents say they feel safe or very safe in their homes, 32% say they feel

"A recent survey says that 88% of PHA families are satisfied or very satisfied with their homes."

unsafe or very unsafe in their parking areas. When asked why crime is a problem, 50% of respondents say it's because "residents don't care" enough to want to solve the problem. That tells us that we must do a better

job of informing residents how they can join Town Watch and other programs to make their communities safer.

Other responses remain consistent from previous years. The great majority of customers are satisfied that

management and repair staff are responsive and professional. About 73% would recommend their housing development to a friend or family member looking for public housing.

Our property managers and support employees take great pride in satisfying every customer. We have endured tremendous staff reductions in the past two years because of decreasing federal funding, and have had to reduce some services as a result. But our commitment to you is as strong as ever. I encourage you to get involved with the resident organization at your site or in

your neighborhood as a way of joining with us to make your community even stronger.

Thank you,

Carl R. Greene



How are your children spending the summer?



Karimah Muhammad
– Johnson Homes
Son, 12-year old Jabril Shabazz
“Going to camp on the Parkway.”



Eileen Aponte
– Johnson Homes
Son, 5-year old Sintere
“Working to place him in camp for two weeks and going to amusement park.”



Antoinette Alexander
– Johnson Homes
Children - Lumuel, Talina, Charine
“Going to camp for the entire summer.”



Glendell Howard
– Johnson Homes
4 year old Damani
“Going to camp for six weeks.”



April Brooks
– Greater Grays Ferry
“I’m taking my teenage grandchildren to the amusement parks and to some historic sites.”



Imone Richardson
– Greater Grays Ferry
“We’re planning a great summer together. A picnic or two. Perhaps we’ll fly a kite or take a hike outside the city. As long as we are together.”



Latafha Ford
– Greater Grays Ferry
“It will be fun for the both of us. The kids off to camp, and I’ll enjoy time to myself.”

www.PHA.PHILA.gov

Neighborhood Network Computer Labs

There are four Neighborhood Network Computer Labs offering eight-week computer classes on an ongoing basis.

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

Classes Locations:

Bartram Village - Thursdays 10:00am - 11:30am
5405 Gibson Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19143

Blumberg Apartments - Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00pm - 3:30pm
2311 W. Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Hillcreek - Wednesdays 10:00am - 11:30am
5573 Hillcreek Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19120

Johnson Homes - Thursdays 10:00am - 11:30am
25th & Norris streets, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Spring Garden - Mondays & Wednesdays 1:00pm - 2:30pm
715 Brandywine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Westpark - Mondays & Wednesdays 3:30pm - 5:00pm
300 N. Busti Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

White Hall - Tuesdays & Wednesdays 10:00am - 11:30am
4749 Tackawanna Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124

Wilson Park - Thursdays 9:00am - 11:00am
2500 Jackson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145

Computer Labs Also Available At:

Harrison Plaza - 1240 N. 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

John F Street Center - 1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Norris Apartments - 1915 N 11th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Workforce Center - 3200 Vare Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19145

To Sign-Up Contact:

Monet Williams
Neighborhood Network Coordinator
215-684-4628 or
monet.williams@pha.phila.gov



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations



Young teens also need Skills for Life program

For 13-year old Portia Kinard, the program at the Harrison Elementary School Beacon Center is a safe haven.

“When people leave school, people get into arguments and fight,” she explains. “Here in the program, they protect you. They know where you’re going and what you’re doing.”

“And they feed you well,” she adds with a grin.

But most of all, the program provides a place where Portia can explore new academic frontiers and achieve academic success.

“Here in the program they protect you.”
Portia Kinard



Portia Kinard



Brittany Leary

Portia brings her homework to the program and the counselors have helped her bring her math grade up from an F to a C+. As her grades are improving, Portia intends to apply to the city’s premier high schools: Central, Girls High and Masterman. She has not decided whether she wants to be a professional singer or a pediatrician, but here she can pursue all her options.

“She sings with two other girls. We call them the Beacon Ensemble,” explains counselor Lea Perkins. “We had a Gospel-Rama Night and between 100 and 200 people came out.”

Portia credits the program with giving all the youngsters whatever tools they need to become engaged. “If you want to jump rope, they will find you a rope. If you want to play tennis, they will help you. If you want to use a computer, they will find one.”

Program builds skills

Portia likes computers. She especially likes a program called Teen Biz that posts articles of interest to Teens and then asks them questions about it. Teen Biz also has puzzles and an e-mail tool that enables the youngsters in the program to write to one another under the watchful eye of counselors like Lea Perkins.

“This is a great program,” says Perkins. “It helps them build their reading skills, and they can write to one another. And we can monitor what they’re writing.”

Brittany Leary, 14, is on the computer now, checking the Teen Biz stories and writing to her friends.

Brittany says that when she began the program, she struggled in school. It was especially difficult for her to keep from talking in class. “Here they kept telling me, ‘you need to change your behavior.’ They said if I did, I’d get good grades.”

And that has happened. In addition, Brittany’s relationships with her teachers have improved.

“Before, they never asked me to do a lot of things. Now, they ask me to help because they know I work hard.”

The Skills for Life program follows youngsters through high school. The program requires daily attendance and provides career and college counseling, homework assistance and social activities.

For more information, please call 215-684-4161.

Skills for Life Sites

Crusaders for Christ Christian Academy

1201 South 47th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143
215-387-3014

Diversified Community Services

Vare Beacon
2101 South 24th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19145
215- 952-0806

Frankford Group Ministry Frankford Beacon

500 Oxford Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19124
215- 743- 0122

Friends Neighbors Guild

703 North 8th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215- 923-1544

Germantown Settlement

Building C
5538 Wayne Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215- 849-3104

Cunningham Community Center

Harrison Plaza
1350 N. 10th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122
215- 684-2519

Southwest Community Center

6424 Woodland Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19142
215- 729-8911

The Lighthouse, Youth Services

141 West Somerset Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19133
215- 425-7804

W. Phila Alliance for Children

1401 North 60th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19151
PO Box 28885
215- 452-0333

United Communities Southeast Philadelphia

Bok Beacon
8th & Mifflin Street
Philadelphia, PA 19148
215- 952-8549

RAB president speaks up



RAB president Asia Coney

Asia Coney, president of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB), thinks that the recent decision by the Chicago Housing Authority to eliminate tenant councils at mixed-use sites “is a very bad idea.”

She adds that tenants who live in housing sites that mix renters and homeowners “still need a voice and representation.”

At PHA mixed sites, renters are represented by Resident Councils, and homeowners have their own homeowners association. “We meet with their representatives and work together,” says Coney, who adds that on a daily living level at those sites it is hard to distinguish the renters from the homeowners.

Coney points out that the tenant councils have a working relationship with PHA managers that helps to make sites more livable for everyone. “If any individual is tardy with the rent,” she says, “a member of the resident council can go to the resident and tell them that is affecting the revenue at the site and putting the resident’s family at risk.”

She adds that the council also helps when new PHA managers come on board and aren’t familiar with issues at the site. “It’s a partnership,” adds Coney. “I happen to feel where there is resident or tenant participation, it makes for a better run site.” PHA has no plans to follow the Chicago model.

Nations’s largest housing authority hurting

Reductions in funding from the federal government continue to plague the nation’s housing authorities, and in particular the nation’s largest housing authority in New York City.

Federal under-funding has become so severe there that the agency’s leaders say they will have to close all community and senior centers in their system and

raise rents by five to 15 percent on their highest income households.

Like many housing authorities, NYCHA has had to shift money for the past few years from its capital budget to its operating budget to cover day-to-day activities. The capital budget is used to maintain the apartments and buildings. The head of NYCHA, Doug Apple, told

City Council that some apartments might no longer be rentable because of the lack of capital funds to maintain them.

The consequences in New York are greatly magnified because of the sheer size of the agency. It serves about five times as many residents as PHA. Yet Philadelphia has suffered from the same

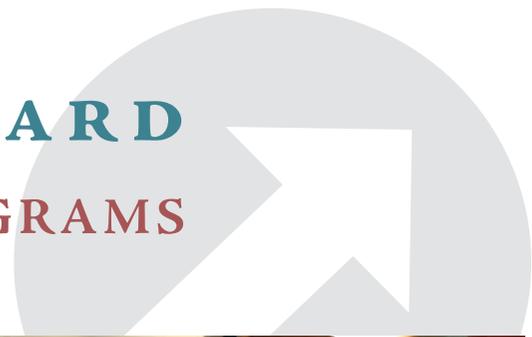
funding cutbacks as New York. The downward trend in public housing funding has continued since 2002.

PHA executive Director Carl Greene has said on many occasions that unless there is a change in priorities at the federal level the future of public housing is bleak. That’s an assessment shared by housing officials nationwide.



MOVING FORWARD

COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINING PROGRAMS



Administrative Assistant Job Readiness Program

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

Home Maintenance Repair Program

Orleans Technical Institute
2770 Red Lion Road
Philadelphia, PA 19114
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
215.782.8810

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

Commercial Drivers License Customer Service Training Environmental Services 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
215.568.8316

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



Philadelphia Housing Authority
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A once in a lifetime opportunity comes to Raeem Allen

Raeem Allen grew in North Philadelphia without a father and with little money. His family lived in homes that are part of PHA's Scattered Sites program. Yet, Raeem managed to make a success of himself through courage and hard work. He's joined the middle class and owns a home in Northeast Philadelphia. He can offer more to his two sons than he could have ever expected as a child.

Allen, now 25, recently achieved "journeyman" status with the Cement Masons Union having gotten his start through PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship program. But his journey to getting his union card was very unusual and a testament to his grit, intelligence and determination.

Allen was a student at Benjamin Franklin High School when he received a job offer from his cousin, who worked for Try Hard, Inc., a concrete company. He began working on weekends and during the summer, learning all he could about the concrete business, until he graduated from high school in 2000.

Began taking classes

After graduation, Allen stayed with the company full time, making good money for a high school graduate, but nowhere near what he'd make as a union cement mason.

Two years later, Allen ran into George Johnson, the director of the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. He began working for Johnson, who owns a small remodeling company independent of PHA, and

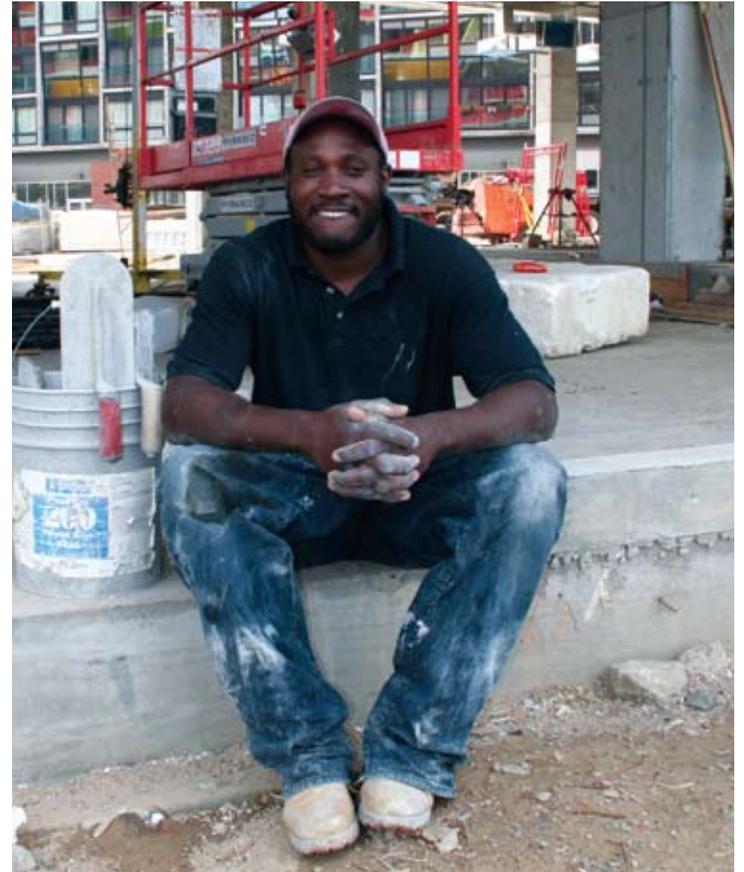
impressed Johnson with his skill and craftsmanship.

Allen began taking classes in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program in 2007, but it was apparent to George Johnson that this young man already had the skills he needed to qualify for a union job. Johnson spoke to Mike Fara, the president of the Cement Masons Union. The union gave him credit for his previous work experience and decided to test him by sending him to a work site at Philadelphia International Airport. Allen passed with flying colors.

"I was like 'Yes!'" Allen says. "I was very, very grateful. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. Many guys don't get that far." (Usually, the union requires several years of classes and work as an apprentice before candidates qualify for their permanent or "journeyman's card.")

Life has definitely changed for Allen. "I can afford to take a vacation. I have a car now. I meet great people. I'm just grateful," he says.

In fact, when he spoke with The PHA Experience, Allen was on vacation with his two sons at Disney World in Orlando.



"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity," says Pre-Apprenticeship grad Raeem Allen.

Prison Runs

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PHA to offer free financial classes

Are you having problems making your rent payment the first of the month? Is it a struggle to purchase your kids' school supplies, clothing and groceries and still pay rent?

PHA believes that paying rent on time is so important, that the agency will be offering free Financial Literacy classes starting in September to help residents budget their income.

"We want to educate our residents about the importance of paying their rent on the first of the month and give them some tools to do so," explains admissions manager Charles Lanier.

"We want to educate our residents about paying rent."

Charles Lanier - PHA Manager

There will be four classes in the course, which will be held at Johnson Homes, Harrison Community Center, West Park Apartments, Wilson Park Community Center and Hill Creek Computer Center. All of these locations are HUD-funded Neighborhood Network Computer Centers, so participants in the program will be able to use the

computers to conduct the financial planning transactions that they learn in class.

"We'll be giving them tips on how to shop. We'll explain how to save for those occasions that come every year like Christmas and the first day of school. We want them to be better prepared to have a good holiday and also pay their rent on time," he adds.

PHA is partnering with the Wachovia Foundation to offer the classes. Trained staff members will be teaching the course, and financial planning materials will be provided. Residents who are regularly late paying rent will be strongly encouraged to attend, but the classes are open to all residents. For more information, call 215-684-4161.



The Carpenters — Ten PHA residents beam with satisfaction after graduating from PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program and qualifying as journeymen carpenters. The new graduates are, from left to right, Jacqueline Jones Clark, David James, James Witherspoon, Tiffany Briggs, Ashanti Freeman, David Moody, Jamal Johnson, George Johnson-training coordinator and Lance Washington. Not shown are Theresa Howard and Natasha Maple, who were unable to attend the ceremony.



Mount Olivet



PHA Homeowners



Greater Grays Ferry Estates

PHA MTE Family Services Program

Homebuyers Club Workshops

WORKSHOP 1

Sponsored by Citizen's Bank

Strawbridge Building

8th & Market sts. 13th Floor

Community Area

Tuesday, July 22 at 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation
Budgeting & Money Management

Tuesday, July 29 at 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Credit Repair / Home Inspection

WORKSHOP 2

Sponsored by Wachovia Mortgage Corp.

John F. Street Center

1100 W Poplar St.

Saturday, July 19 at 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation
Budgeting & Money Management

Saturday, July 26 at 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Credit Repair / Home Inspection

To register call Mr. Gilbert Vega at 215.684.2057 or Ms. Barbara Stewart 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

Curbside recycling and trash pickup keep PHA sites clean

Summer in the city can be hot and gritty, but PHA sites will be greener and cleaner now that curbside recycling is coming to all sites and curbside trash pickup will begin at Wilson Park.

Residents at Wilson Park, Harrison Plaza, and College View

began helping to clean up the environment on June 1, when the City of Philadelphia started weekly pickup of all recyclable

items, including cans, plastic bottles, newspaper and cardboard. PHA provided recycling bins to all residents. The different items do not need to be separated. Everything can go into one bin,

and dedicated recyclers can use an additional container, like a laundry basket or box, if necessary.

“We hope that everyone will buy into the recycling project,” said General Manager Ron Docimo.

“We’re happy to be working as a team with the City to encourage recycling in our sites.”

Every two weeks throughout the summer, new sites will be added to the program until

all PHA residents are able to help create a greener Philadelphia.

At PHA’s Wilson Park site, not only are residents able to recycle at the curb, for the first time they can also

place their trash in front of their homes for weekly pickup.

“It is much more convenient to put it out front,” said Wilson Park Property Manager Brett Holden. “It will be easier for the residents, and it is going to help our workload, also.”

Until June, Wilson Park residents had to take their trash to the corner, resulting in a huge mountain of trash every week. The City’s trash trucks could not enter the development because Wilson Park, like other older public housing sites, did not have city streets running through.

That situation has changed now that PHA has built streets that run through the development. Now the trucks can enter and take both the trash and the recyclables.

“We hope that everyone will buy into the recycling project”

Ron Docimo - PHA GM



Trash is now set inside containers at curbside instead of the old big pile at the end of the block. Recycling has begun as well.

Not only was the weekly trash pile an eyesore, but, according to Holden, “There was always left over trash blowing around after the

pickup. This will help the site look cleaner.” And keeping PHA sites looking great is a beautiful thing.

Town Hall meeting for the disabled

PHA held a Town Hall Meeting for disabled residents that in May at the Wilson Park Community Center. More than 100 disabled housing residents came to hear an extensive review of PHA’s wheelchair-accessible apartments and houses. An independent study showed that more than 7% of PHA homes are certified as accessible under all federal standards.

PHA and the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development remain in talks over this issue as well as a new Moving to Work agreement. The previous agreement ended on March 31, but both sides are hopeful a new deal will soon be worked out.



Rose Bryant, resident leader at Liddonfield Homes, speaks at a Town Hall Meeting for disabled residents.



The forum also gave disabled residents an opportunity to give feedback on how PHA can better serve their community.

WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

Have you become a new homeowner? Started your own business? Graduated from college or a professional training program?

The PHA Experience would like to share your story with our readers. To get your story into the Experience, call Nadine Bonner at 215-684-8645 or send an email to nadine.bonner@pha.phila.gov



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Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations



Ten public figures who might surprise you - they all lived in public housing



Pedro Ramos
Former City of Philadelphia
Manager Director



Tom Knox
Businessman and Philadelphia
Mayoral Candidate



Jimmy Carter
Former President
of the United States



Fred Thompson
Republican Presidential
candidate



Tracey Steele
Arkansas State Senator



Joel Klein
New York City
Chancellor of Schools



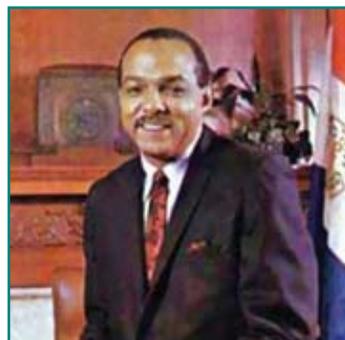
Sterling Johnson
Federal Court Judge



Robert Johnson
Bronx, NY
District Attorney



Willie Brown
Former Mayor of San Francisco



Carl Stokes
Former Mayor of Cleveland,
First African-American
Mayor of a major city

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Neighborhood Network Coordinator, Computer Technology,
Amnesty Program
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Barbara Stewart
ESS Coordinator
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Gilbert Vega
ESS Coordinator
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Audrey Hickmon
FSS Coordinator
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Team E
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Michelle Henderson
ESS Coordinator
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Zip Codes: 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 24, 35, 36, 37, 49, 52, 54

Boys and Girls Club Programs at PHA Sites on high note

“Another fantastic day for us to learn and play,” is the way seven-year-old Aisha Hawkins describes the after school activities she enjoys at the Boys and Girls Club program at PHA’s Wilson Park Community Center.

Every weekday between 3 and 8 p.m., more than 150 children get help with their homework, learn computer skills, grow butterflies from caterpillars, dance, cook, play basketball and help their neighborhood by removing graffiti and picking up trash. In addition, there are two age groups for baseball and softball sponsored by the Phillies.

The program started last year when PHA developed a partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs to run the after school and evening activities at Wilson Park in South Philadelphia and the John F. Street Community Center in North Philadelphia.

PHA Executive Director Carl Greene says this has been a win-win for everyone. “We have been looking for the opportunity for an organization to make use of these great facilities. Our residents

and the neighborhood children benefit, which means we are a stronger community.”

Chief Professional Officer for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia, Jeff Waldron says, “we had a tremendously successful first year and exceeded expectations on the number of children who wanted to be active with the program. The partnership with PHA is outstanding, and the folks I have dealt with have been professional. We’re looking forward to a long future together.

Touching body and mind

The program touches all aspects of the children’s lives. Meals are donated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. On occasion the kids have fun fixing their own snacks of hot dogs, fried chicken, fruit salads, pancakes, tacos and cup cakes.

The character is also nourished through rules and boundaries. Cursing is not tolerated, and respect for others is stressed. The 18-year olds are encouraged to

take a leadership role. Clean-up is required as a means of respecting the environment.

To improve family health, they arranged for Wachovia and Keystone Mercy Health Plan to sponsor a health and fitness day for parents and children. The event included confidential health care screenings and information for finding out what immunizations were needed.

Harold Reed, a counselor at Wilson Park, notes, “This is what elementary school children need, an opportunity to learn different skills and have fun doing it. The evening program is really a great component for the teenagers because they have nowhere to go.” Reed adds that because of funding, the program is limited to 150 youngsters.

If you’re thinking that this might be a great program for you or your child, you can get on the waiting list for Wilson Park by calling 215.684.0014, or the Street Center at 215.684.3959.

The Summer Program runs from June 15 to August 15, 2008.



Sharaday Simmons speaks with counselor Denise Matza about joining the Boys and Girls Club Programs.



“This is what elementary school children need,” says counselor Harold Reed, shown here with Chasity Arroyo and Wilson Clemons.

Hula Hoop Queen

continued from page 1

routine quickly. Tykia credited Ashley Spearman, the pageant’s coordinator, for encouraging her to take part in the pageant.

An audience of about 130 parents, family and friends turned out at PHA’s John F. Street Community Center to cheer the youngsters on. Other contestants, including runner-up Kierra Stevens, performed monologues featuring either poetry or comedy. The contestants also modeled evening gowns as part of the pageant.

Spearman, the program coordinator at the center, planned and directed the pageant. A theater major at Temple University, she has worked in professional theater. She believes that the pageant also teaches the kids how to present themselves before an audience, as well as helping them realize their own potential. Tykia McWilliams, for example plans on attending prestigious Central High School with the goal of becoming a lawyer.

The pageant was a financial success, raising \$1,200 to replace equipment and games at the club.



Queen Tykia McWilliams (wearing crown) and her court at the first PHA North Boys and Girls Club Beauty Pageant.

Notice to Section 8 Voucher Tenants: (Housing Choice Voucher Program Tenants)

Recently, PHA reached a tentative settlement with Community Legal Services, Inc. (“CLS”) in the class-action lawsuit *Henderson v. Morrone* (PHA) 79 cv 4190 (E.D.Pa.) (“the Henderson case”). This recent settlement is about CLS’s claim for attorney’s fees from PHA for CLS’s successful defense of the 1983 Consent Decree in the Henderson case. The 1983 Consent Decree, in short, helps protect Section 8 Voucher tenants from being cut-off that program arbitrarily or unlawfully. Because of CLS’s efforts in 2005 - 2007, the Consent Decree remains in force.

Section 8 Voucher tenants will not be affected by this recent settlement between PHA and CLS. In short, if the settlement is approved by the Court, PHA will pay CLS \$21,482.00 to resolve CLS’s outstanding attorney’s fee claim.

Section 8 Voucher tenants may comment on, or object to, the tentative settlement between PHA and CLS. To insure that the Judge will consider your comments or objections, they must be presented in writing by mail, or delivered by hand, to: Clerk, U.S. District Court, Room 2609, 601 Market St., Philadelphia PA 19106. Written comments or objections must begin with this caption: “Henderson v. Morrone and PHA, 79-4190”. They must be received by the Clerk by July 25, 2008, or by the 20th day after this Class Notice is published in *The PHA Experience*, whichever is later.

The Judge has scheduled a hearing for Wednesday, August 6, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. in courtroom 3A, 601 Market St., Philadelphia PA. At the hearing, the Judge will consider any timely written comments and objections to the settlement. The Judge may also consider oral comments and objections at the hearing.

For more information about the tentative settlement, or about the Henderson Consent Decree, Section 8 Voucher tenants may consult an attorney of their choice or write to the CLS attorneys:

Paul A. Brooks, Esq. and Gould D. Gould, Esq., Community Legal Services, Inc.
1424 Chestnut St., Philadelphia PA 19102

You may also call for Mr. Brooks and Mr. Gould at (215-981-3700) – say that you are calling about the Henderson case.

Hon. Michael M. Baylson, U.S. Dist. Judge



Summer Food Program adds food for thought to menu

PHA's popular Summer Food Program will have food for the minds of young people as well as for their bodies this year. The program begins Monday, June 23rd at 22 PHA sites across the city and runs through Friday, August 22nd. Over 36,000 meals were provided to low-income children throughout the city last year.

Troy Robinson, PHA Community Relations Asset Manager, says the agency will also offer two reading programs, courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

The Free Library's summer reading program, "Catch the Reading Bug," will be available at all 22 Summer Food Program locations. "Catch the Reading Bug" is a national reading program that combines reading books about nature – especially bugs – with nature projects. Children, preschool through 6th grade, can sign up at their local Library and start a reading folder. They earn stickers and prizes weekly by reading Library books, using other Library materials, or by participating in activities.

A second program, "Books Aloud," will be offered at four PHA sites:

Bartram, Wilson Park, Spring Garden and John F. Street. This is an early literacy program that works with young children and their parents to bring families together. Participants take the books home after each workshop.

"The reading component will be a great addition to this program. We are proud to work with the Free Library to make sure our kids continue to learn during the summer months when they are away from school. The kids are coming in for two meals a day. We'll feed them some knowledge while they're here as well," said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene.

Under the Summer Food Program, all eligible children ages 18 and under are able to receive free breakfast and lunch. The program operates Monday — Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Summer Food Program changed dramatically three years ago with a switch to a very appetizing, nutritious lunch menu that proved very popular with children. No processed meats are used, and the meals feature vegetables and fruit.

In addition to the reading programs, the Keep Philadelphia Beautiful program will bring its anti-litter program to every Summer Food site as well. "Providing information to our youth to make them conscious about their surroundings, picking up after themselves as well as others, instills a sense of community service and responsibility," Robinson says.

Although there are fewer sites offering the Summer Food Program, no needy children will go hungry. They can go to a neighboring site to receive a meal, or PHA will refer them to a city Department of Recreation site that offers similar meals.

Robinson believes the program has grown in importance this year because of the economic downturn and rising food prices. "It's more important now that we assist our children and their parents in learning how to make wise choices and serve nutritious meals that are still affordable, as opposed to buying fast food that's affordable but not nutritious."

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



The summer food program offers healthy, nutritious meals that children enjoy.

Losing Dawn Staley

continued from page 1

She lived there until she was 22 and graduated from the University of Virginia. "We had a grand time growing up," she recalls.

"We took care of one another, we cleaned up our block together. I would not sacrifice how I grew up or where I grew up for a suburban life."

The youngest of five children, Staley credits her mom, Estelle, for instilling discipline in her and her siblings. "People say the neighborhood raises you. Well, my mother raised us. My mother kept a neat and tidy house. We always had the cleanest and best looking block."

But of all the things that Raymond Roses could provide, Staley acknowledges, "I just needed a basketball court." After starring at Dobbins High School, Staley went on to play for the University of Virginia, where she was named a Kodak All-American three times, played in four NCAA tournaments and still holds the NCAA record for steals with 454.

"My motivation was just to be the best I could be," Staley says. "Once I figured out that basketball was going to be my vehicle to a college scholarship, that's when I really honed in on it, perfecting it."

She points out that, "A sport affects other aspects of your life. You have to go to school, and you

have to be disciplined." To young people today, Staley recommends discipline, noting that a "disciplined person can do anything."

She enjoys meeting with the girls in the after-school programs, where she talks with them about their daily lives and encourages them to succeed at school.

"I think that's important, to be seen as someone who gives hope to other people."

She says she will be working with the president of the Dawn Staley Foundation to bring some of those good programs to South Carolina, but the move happened too fast for her to organize everything.

Staley says that she made the decision to go to South Carolina for both personal and professional reasons. Her mom had a stroke, and Staley felt she could not accommodate her needs on a daily basis. When her mom moves to South Carolina, Staley can rely on her brother in Columbia and her sister in Raleigh (North Carolina) for help.

"Professionally I feel good about it," she says, "It is a bigger conference, and I'll be challenged on a daily basis. It is a question of competing and playing at a higher level."

But her Philly connection will continue, and perhaps someday we can borrow her back.

Ludlow Development sells well

continued from page 1

"I liked the garage, liked the off-street parking," she says. "I like the space of the walk-in closets and the washer and dryer hookups that were on the first floor."

The new owners at Ludlow are fortunate they qualified to buy. PHA's Reyes says, "It's no secret that financial institutions are struggling, and that has led them to set higher standards for credit scores, making it harder for people to get mortgages. This is keeping some potential buyers out." Reyes says some PHA clients working toward owning their own home will need longer to work up to the point where they will be eligible to buy.

Families interested in buying an affordable home in Ludlow haven't totally missed out. PHA's partner, APM, has begun building 53 more homes for sale. These homes, costing about the same price as the PHA units, will be available at about this time next year.

As for Lashawn Purdie, she says she was a little scared at the price of

her new home, but was reassured by the financial help she'd receive from PHA. "Owning a home is a big investment. Not many people have their first home being a brand new home," she says.

Purdie also encourages other PHA residents to think seriously about becoming homeowners, saying that the sacrifices you make are worth it. "Anyone can own a home," she says. "It's just up to you!"



Lashawn Purdie inspects her newly bought three-bedroom home before moving in at PHA's Ludlow Homes. Almost all 50 homes at the site have now been purchased

HCV resident proves it's never too late for education

Anodja Creighton is working her way to the mountaintop and what a journey it has been, taking courage, faith, determination and hard work.

The recent Community College of Philadelphia graduate is on her way towards a Criminal Justice

degree from LaSalle University. But it was a long road to travel.

Creighton, 43, dropped out of school at age 14 and, in her own words, was "raised with drugs" by an "uncle who was part of the black mafia." By the time she turned 18 she had a daughter,

but no hope and a bleak future seemed to lie ahead.

Anodja decided to start changing her life in 1985, by enrolling at Philadelphia School of Office Technology. She graduated two years later from a clerical office assistant program, but she still had no GED.

Attorney, Lawrence Elliot Hirsch, hired her as his administrative assistant. While working for him, Anodja continued her struggle to get that GED. The math was a killer for her, but finally, in 1996, she passed the test and got her diploma.

Ten years later, after working for several social service agencies for children, Creighton decided to go to college, get a degree and become a juvenile probation officer. In May, she graduated from Community College of Philadelphia with honors and an Associates Degree in Applied Science.

Jenavia Thompson-Weaver, Assistant Director of Student Life at Community College of Philadelphia, said Creighton distinguished herself as a student ambassador. Only 25 students

are chosen for those jobs, which reward them with 9 paid credits (a scholarship equal to almost \$1,100) and a \$75 stipend each semester. With a 3.24 grade point average and her activities, she received the Dean's Leadership Award this year.

"Anodja has set herself apart as being very articulate, very enthusiastic and very committed to getting information to new and continuing students," Thompson-Weaver said. "She's also a member of Phi Beta Kappa, the international honor society."

Thompson-Weaver believes that Anodja is "a woman who has learned to make the most out of every minute," always has a positive attitude, and reassures everyone that they can achieve their goals, whatever they are."

Anodja chose to study Criminal Justice at LaSalle, where she is also receiving a scholarship, so she could help others.

"Our youth are suffering," she says. "I have a bond with the young people of today. I build a relationship with them in which



Anodja Creighton

they can begin to trust. Maybe that can be the beginning to rehabilitate them from a life of crime, from a life of drugs, from a life without education."

When she graduates from LaSalle, Anodja also plans to "graduate" from the Housing Choice Voucher program. She'll be at the top of the mountain with no need to look back.



Proud CCP Graduates — Five PHA residents graduated from Community College of Philadelphia's Administrative Assistant Job Readiness Program in May. Here are the graduates with their PHA counselor: (First row, left to right) Towanda Kent, Jessica Crawford, Michele Claybrook-Lucas of CCP, Kimberely Jones, and Serita Bennet. (Second row) PHA Self-Sufficiency Counselors Nyla Jones, Michele Henderson, Marlena Smith, Jenneane Tillar and resident Jason Goode. The program includes life skills, customer service, computer use, filing, and workplace manners.

RECYCLING IS COMING TO PHA



STARTING JUNE 1, CURBSIDE RECYCLING BECAME AVAILABLE AT SELECTED PHA SITES.

Throughout the summer, we'll be adding more sites so everyone will be able to recycle cans, newspapers, plastic bottles and more. We'll provide the containers. You provide the recyclables. Everything goes together in the same bin! For more information, speak with your site manager.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE A CLEANER, GREENER PLANET.





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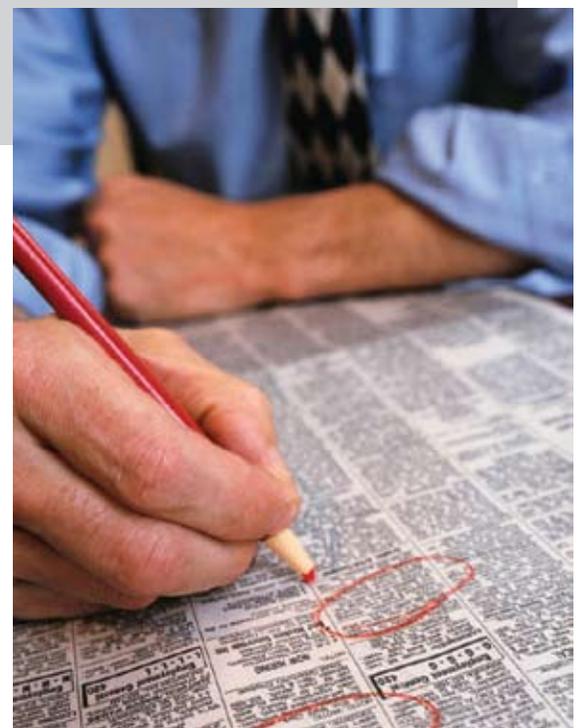
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