

# The PHA Experience



Philadelphia Housing Authority  
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 22

A Community Newspaper for and About Residents

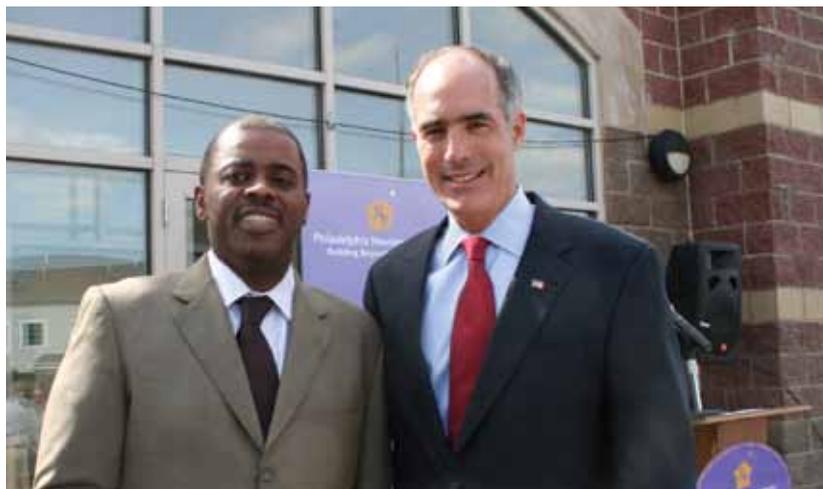
November 2009

## PHA nabs \$36 million for new construction and upgrades

In late September, PHA announced that it would receive an additional \$36 million in federal stimulus money to enhance its public housing and community-building mission. PHA competed with housing authorities around the country for grants in four different rounds of stimulus funding and was successful in all but one. Earlier this year, the agency was awarded \$90.6 million in stimulus money based on a formula that considered population and poverty rates.

“PHA worked aggressively to attract these competitive grants and we’ll be working even harder in the coming months to put them to work to build and improve public housing across the city,” said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene.

On September 22, U.S. Senator Bob Casey travelled to Philadelphia to



*U.S. Senator Bob Casey and PHA Executive Director Carl Greene toured the Pre-Apprenticeship Program’s Workforce Development Center before announcing \$13.9 million for demolition and new construction at Paschall.*

meet with Greene, tour the Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program and announce the first of the three grants.

The \$13.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will go towards the

revitalization of Paschall Apartments in Southwest Philadelphia’s Elmwood area.

“In these troubling economic times, affordable housing and workforce development are more important than ever,” said Senator Casey. “I’m proud to say that PHA is leading the country in this arena, quickly and effectively administering more than \$91 million in federal stimulus funds to build quality housing, create jobs and expand economic opportunities here in Philadelphia.”

The new Paschall Village will consist of 100 rental units and a 4,000 square foot community center with a computer lab. The project is estimated to cost \$37.6 million and is expected to be complete in September 2011. Future plans include a homeownership phase with an additional 71 units.

*(continued on page 15)*

## Homeownership is a dream come true for PHA resident

Shawn El is a mother of three who’s living out her dream. She’s a homeowner in the Brewerytown neighborhood with plans to spruce up her home and eventually pass it on to her children. At one time, the house was her grandmother’s rental residence, so it has sentimental value to her and her family.

Under the 5(h) homeownership program, PHA sells scattered site homes to qualified residents. The opportunity to become a homeowner came as a surprise to Shawn. She was a long-time renter who paid all of her bills on time and kept up to date with all of her utilities. One day, she received a letter saying she was eligible to purchase her home. She could not afford it at the time, but continued to save her money and plan for the future.

*(continued on page 15)*



*Shawn El has become a homeowner in Brewerytown with plans to spruce up her rowhome and eventually pass it on to her children. Shown with her are 5-year-old Zaza (left) who is the playmate of her 2-year-old niece, Eva (right).*

## Renowned local educator proud of his PHA roots

Salome Thomas-EL is a teacher and principal who can identify with his students. He also serves as an example of what one can accomplish despite cultural, social, and economic challenges.

Salome is the seventh of eight children. When he was very young in the late 1960s, his family lived in the Diamond Street Projects, now known as Raymond Rosen Manor. Later, they moved to the 2400 block of north 19th Street, a PHA house he would call home until he graduated college. His father was mostly absent so his mother raised the children on her own.

As a child, Salome was bright and he had a number of teachers and mentors who inspired him and supported his talents.

He graduated from East Stroudsburg University in 1986 and decided to become a teacher. His first choice was to go back to the community where he



*“My students will never think they can’t succeed,” said Salome Thomas-EL, educator and former PHA resident.*

grew up and teach inner-city children who faced the same difficulties he had.

“I wanted those kids to be exposed to an inner-city kid who had grown up and

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Sign-up for:  
**FREE HELP  
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YOUR  
FINANCES.**

**CLASSES STARTING NOW. CALL TO REGISTER!**

### **PHA FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

For families who want to learn how to properly manage their home budget, no matter how small it may be.

All participants will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the program.

Saturday classes available at John F. Street Center, 1100 Poplar Street and evening classes available at 642 N. Broad Street.



**Philadelphia Housing Authority**  
Building Beyond Expectations

**FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL**

**215.684.0393**

*or see your manager*



## PHA's first ever "Family Affair" a big success

PHA's first ever "Family Affair" was a success by any measurement. Several hundred residents from across the city attended the event, which was designed to build awareness of the agency's programs in a family-friendly environment.

The weather was hot, but residents met with Community Partners and other service providers in the shade of a big tent and inside the air-conditioned Workforce Development Center at Greater Grays Ferry Estates where the event took place.

The mid-August event featured one-stop shopping for PHA residents and their families. Individuals were able to learn about training programs offered through Community Partners and PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program. Realtors, representatives from home inspection companies and financial institutions were also on hand to discuss homeownership opportunities and issues with potential buyers.

PHA designed the Community Partners Program to help HCV renters make the transition to homeownership or market-rate rental apartments.

Kenneth Greene, a resident of Johnson Homes, was interested in taking commercial driver training from PHA Community Partner Smith & Solomon. He was laid off from his job as an aide with a private social service agency in New Jersey. He thinks long haul truck driving presents an exciting opportunity.

"I love to travel. I like to be on the move. It's an opportunity to see the world and get paid for it. You get to meet different people and to see different things," Greene said.

Tyreaa Slater, a scattered sites resident who lives in southwest Philadelphia, was interested in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. She has worked for two local bakeries, but there was little chance to advance and improve her earnings. Eventually, Slater

would like to start her own business.

Charlene Reid, another scattered sites resident who lives in North Philadelphia, wants to get into the Call Center Training program offered by the Urban League. Reid, who has worked as a customer representative before, is looking for steady work.

"I can handle it. I worked for H&R Block for eight and a half years," said Reid, who also has an associates' degree in paralegal studies.

Event organizer Malvin Reyes, head of PHA's homeownership program, says training can be completed in about six months. He also wants more residents to take part in Community Partners and other PHA programs before they are facing a deadline.

"We get great participation in our homeownership programs," Reyes says. "If those same residents have unemployed adult children living with them, PHA's Community Partners program could be a double blessing."



PHA's Luz Paradoa and Enrico Crispo greet John Moore, a West Park Plaza resident, at the sign-in tent for the "Family Affair." Moore was interested in forklift training offered by one of the agency's Community Partners.

The theme of the event was "It's Your Future: Act Now!" By the end of the day, 132 residents had signed up for referrals and 89 residents wanted to take part in the Homebuyers Club or

the Financial Literacy Improvement Program (FLIP). Reyes hopes the "Family Affair" event can be hosted in other parts of the city in future years.

## A tale of two sisters: Pre-Apprenticeship takes grads places

When Tuere and Nefertiti Payton were growing up, neither of them ever imagined that they would enter the world of the building trades at almost the same time. Neither did their father who worked as a plumber.

But life eventually steered the two sisters to PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program, which trains residents in a number of construction and building trades and prepares them for well-paying union jobs. Now, the Payton sisters have careers with the Sheet Metal Workers and Plumbers Unions. Their father is both excited and shocked; their mother is simply excited.

Tuere Payton was formally inducted into Local 19 of the Sheet Metal Workers Union in July. She has the aptitude to join just about any union she wants, but the Sheet Metal Workers had what Tuere wanted and more.

"I like how organized they are," she said. "Their motto is 'Do the job right the first time.'"

None of this is surprising, given that Tuere finished 10th in her high school graduating class with



From left, Nefertiti and Tuere Payton at PHA's Workforce Development Center, home of the renowned Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program.

a straight-A average in 2001. She made the dean's list in her first year at Drexel in the pre-med program, but the rising cost of a college education forced her out of school in February 2003.

Between 2004 and 2006, Tuere ran a child care business to support herself. She heard about the Pre-

Apprenticeship Program and called Tenant Support Services Inc. to learn more. Eventually she was admitted to the program in July 2006. At the time, she was an expectant mother. Tuere lived on public assistance and worked as a tutor at PHA's Workforce Development Center while trying to find a career in one of the trades.

"I had a son and I was not about to let him suffer for the choices I made," she said.

Nefertiti Payton's journey to the building trades is quite different from her sister's, but it's a tribute to her courage and will to make a life for her family in spite of some terrific obstacles.

She left high school in her junior year in 1997 to have a child. After obtaining a GED in 2001, Nefertiti worked a variety of jobs including security and day care—anything that would give her a paycheck.

Her family was growing, too; she has two boys and three girls.

Nefertiti entered the Pre-Apprenticeship Program after learning about it from Tuere.

"I got tired of taking odd jobs and I decided to take a chance and go through the school," she said.

Nefertiti graduated last May and passed the test for the plumber's union. She really appreciates all the support she received from the staff at the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. They helped her find childcare so

she could work and support her family while completing her 90-day probation period with the union this summer.

Nefertiti enjoys the precision required of plumbers because "close doesn't count when you're cutting and fitting pipes." And she's extremely grateful to PHA.

"I was just happy that I was a PHA resident, so I could go through the Pre-Apprenticeship Program and get a job," she said.

Both women are dreaming of a future beyond their newfound careers. Tuere wants to take advantage of the union's educational benefits and resume her studies at Drexel with a double major in construction technology and biology. Nefertiti envisions having her own plumbing business and helping parents who also face the challenges of balancing work and family.

Tuere Payton sums up the sisters' odyssey best, saying that adversity builds character and character takes you places.

# MOVING FORWARD

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINING PROGRAMS



● **GED and Adult Basic Education**

Center for Literacy  
636 S. 48th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19143

● **Automotive and Driving Related Training Services**

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

● **Job Placement/Job Coaching and Career Advancement**

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)  
100 S. Broad Street, Suite 1210  
Philadelphia, PA 19110

● **Self-Employment Program/Entrepreneurship**

Enterprise Center  
4548 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19139



**Philadelphia Housing Authority**  
Building Beyond Expectations

Carl R. Greene, Executive Director

● **Home Maintenance Repair**

● **Human Services**

JEVS Human Services, Orleans Technical Institute (JEVS-OTI)  
2770 Red Lion Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19114

● **Personal and Financial Development / Case Management**

Management Environmental Technologies, Inc. (MET)  
3801 Market Street, Suite 202  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

● **Telecommunications Technician Program**

● **Administrative Assistant Training**

● **Hospitality Industry Training**

Philadelphia OIC, Inc.  
1231 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19122

● **Call Center Training**

Urban League of Philadelphia  
121 S. Broad Street, 9th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

● **Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)**

● **Medical Billing**

● **Pharmacy Technician**

Professional Healthcare Institute  
1333 Cheltenham Ave  
Melrose Park, PA 19027

● **Commercial Driver's License (CDL)**

● **Forklift Operator Training**

Smith & Solomon: Commercial Driving  
5301 Tacony Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19137

To register, please  
contact your Economic  
Self-Sufficiency  
coordinator  
(see page 12) or call  
215-684-0393.



# The Center for Literacy can teach you to succeed

As many as 550,000 people in Philadelphia cannot read or do basic math which is necessary for them to hold jobs and get ahead economically.

The Center for Literacy, one of PHA's new Community Partners, can help people overcome those challenges, earn their GED or high school diploma, and find a good job. The training at the Center emphasizes small classes and individual attention.

"We see a lot of people who are functionally illiterate. They might be able to pay their bills, get their driver's license and function on a daily basis, but when it comes to being able to assist their children in school or perform a job that requires them to read the operations manual, they cannot," says Tina Baker-Gee of the Center.

Baker-Gee says many people in Philadelphia are being held back because they don't have the reading, writing, and math skills that

they need. A recent study by the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board shows that half of the city's work-age adults don't have these skills, which are necessary for 75 percent of the jobs available.

Residents who enroll at the Center will receive a special test that helps teachers determine a student's skill level. Students receive homework assignments to practice what they learn, write short papers, and read aloud. They also receive one-on-one instruction when needed.

"We concentrate on helping students grasp the fundamental skills of reading, writing and math, and make them applicable to every day life," Baker-Gee says. "We teach people that when you're at home and you're dividing a pizza among your children, you're actually working on a math problem with fractions. We teach decimals and fractions in terms of money, which is something that everybody can relate to."

Baker-Gee says the program at the Center is exciting with limitless possibilities that can help residents make lifelong dreams a reality. For more information on the Center for Literacy's program, call 215-684-0393.



Center For Literacy teacher Cynthia Allen (left) works with PHA resident Gloria Pittman. Teachers at the Center develop individual plans for each student.



Pamela Pinder (left), a teacher at the Center For Literacy, confers with PHA resident Katherine Sisco on a plan to improve Sisco's reading and math skills. The Center uses examples from every day life to teach students new words and math.

## A message from the Executive Director



It's an exciting time for PHA. Only a few days after Senator Bob Casey joined us to announce that \$13.9 million in federal stimulus would help fund Paschall's redevelopment, we learned that we were receiving an additional \$22 million in stimulus funds for other projects.

Ten million of that will go towards the rebuilding of Mantua. Many residents remember when PHA imploded the old high-rise building in West Philadelphia. With the new funds, PHA will soon break ground in that open field and start work on 101 beautiful, modern units for families.

PHA hasn't forgotten about its conventional sites, either. A \$12 million grant is earmarked for modifications to 4 developments—Wilson

Park, Johnson Homes, Fairhill Apartments, and Harrison Plaza. Once the work is completed, these developments will have more wheelchair-accessible units and common areas. PHA is excited to have the resources needed to better serve our elderly and disabled population.

Thanks to aggressive grant writing efforts and our strong track record of transforming public housing and Philadelphia's neighborhoods, PHA received the 3rd most money of any housing authority in the nation

in the competitive rounds. Combined with the initial \$90.6 million PHA secured in formula funding, this brings PHA's total to \$127 million in stimulus money—money that is being put to good use.

**"We will continue to put our stimulus funds to work, creating jobs, rebuilding neighborhoods and better serving Philadelphia's public housing residents."**

Take a look around the city and you will see PHA's stimulus dollars at work. On September 20, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* ran a front-page article in the Sunday paper about our success in administering stimulus funds quickly and putting people back to work. We are proud to be recognized for our efforts in promoting economic opportunity during these difficult times.

I am very proud of PHA's success in attracting federal investment. We will continue to put our stimulus funds to work, creating jobs, rebuilding neighborhoods and better serving Philadelphia's public housing residents.

Thank you,

Carl R. Greene



## “How do you feel about President Barack Obama’s health care plan?”



**Veronica Arrington**  
-Germantown House

*“I love it. I’m 65-years-old and the insurance plan I have is not paying for a lot of my medicine. I’m disabled; I love the President’s plan.”*



**Jim Bell**  
-Germantown House

*“I like his ideas, it’s just a shame he’s facing so much opposition.”*



**William Bradley**  
-Germantown House

*“I think you have to start with something; you got to begin with something because you never know what’s going to happen.”*



**Isham Draughn**  
-Germantown House

*“I’m in favor of the health care plan because so many people don’t have health insurance at all. And I do think we need a health care plan.”*



**Ronald Mosley**  
-Germantown House

*“I think it’s very necessary, especially for us seniors. It’s not so bad for me because I’m a veteran. But people are just trying to survive on social security and whatnot. It’s a hard way to go.”*



**Arigo Scott**  
-Germantown House

*“I think the president is doing a very good job. He’s trying to do the best he can.”*



**Joseph Wood**  
-Germantown House

*“I feel great about the President’s health plan and I hope he gets it passed for people like me in wheel-chairs.”*

[www.PHA.PHILA.gov](http://www.PHA.PHILA.gov)

## Neighborhood Network Computer Labs

There are ten 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** - Fridays 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
5405 Gibson Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19143

**Blumberg Apartments** - Mondays 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
2311 W. Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Harrison Plaza** - Mondays & Thursdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
1240 N. 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

**Hill Creek** - Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
5573 Hillcreek Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19120

**John F Street Center** - Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Johnson Homes** - Mondays 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
2630-D Norris Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19122

**Spring Garden** - Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
715 Brandywine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Westpark Apartments** - Tuesdays 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
300 N. Busti Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

**White Hall** - Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
4749 Tackawanna Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124

**Wilson Park** - Fridays 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
2500 Jackson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145

**Wilson Park Seniors** - Fridays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
2500 Jackson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145

### To Sign-Up Please Contact:

Jerel Brooks, Computer Technology  
Coordinator at **215-684-0393**  
or [Jerel.Brooks@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Jerel.Brooks@pha.phila.gov)



**Philadelphia Housing Authority**  
Building Beyond Expectations



# Annual Job Fair offers residents hope and opportunity



Over 300 people attended PHA's 5th Annual Job Fair at the John F. Street Center on August 22.

PHA's 5th Annual Job Fair attracted over 300 people to the John F. Street Community Center on August 22.

Luz Paradoa, manager of the Community Partners Program, welcomed everyone who came by. Recruiting companies for this year's fair was a challenge, due to the downturn in the economy. However, some companies were not merely taking resumes, but offering jobs to fair attendees.

Shop-Rite, NewCourtland Elder Services, Bank of America, American Income Life, and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections were among the employers taking part. Residents who attended were also able to learn about the latest job training and education offered through the Community Partners Program.

Deborah Peterkin, a former PHA resident who is now a case

manager for Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI), had more traffic than she expected. The firm, one of PHA's Community Partners, coaches residents on interviewing and creating effective resumes. Peterkin showed residents the best way to show off their personal skills on a resume.

"People don't realize that they have skills. You don't have to be employed by an employer to say that you worked," she said. "If you're a mother, you have skills. If you ever worked on a car, you have skills. A lot of people don't know how to build a resume based on the skills that they have."

Rasheedah Hicks, a mother of two who lives at Raymond Rosen, isn't working right now, but has a wealth of job experience. She has worked at McDonald's as a cashier and assistant manager, a supervisor at Chick-fil-A, and a cashier at Shop-Rite.

Hicks, who graduated from a business administration program at Community College of

Philadelphia, says her dream job is in that field.

"I love it. I have a passion for it," she said "I'm no stranger to work. I've always worked to provide for my family. I love the business field."

Michael Brown, who is not a PHA resident, came to the fair in hopes of landing steady, full time work. He has been looking for a job for 2 1/2 years.

"I have been working as a chef for many years. But the economy has been tough on the restaurant business," he said. "At one job they had to shut the doors. I just started working at another restaurant and they laid me off. Times are tough and that's why I'm here. I received some good information from today's job fair; hopefully, it will pan out."

Paradoa believes that participation by non-PHA residents at the fair is a plus.

"It's giving back to the community," she said.

The Street Center in North Philadelphia was the perfect place for this year's fair. It's easy to reach by public transportation. It has a state-of-the-art computer lab that job seekers can use to work on their resumes or apply for jobs online. It has several smaller rooms that were used for workshops to help people sharpen their interview skills and "dress for success."

"Attendees are bound to walk away with some good information on our job training programs," Paradoa said. "If they're interested in getting their commercial driver's license or training for a position in pharmacy tech or a number of other careers, the fair was a great opportunity to enroll in these programs and get started."

If you missed the job fair and would like information on Community Partners or those employers with openings, call 215-684-0393.

## OIC trains residents for good jobs in growing fields

The Communications Technology program at Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) is an exciting new offering from PHA's Community Partners Program.

The program trains students in fiber optics, technology, cabling and home entertainment and security systems installation.

Aubrey Smith, who teaches the course, says that program graduates receive three industry-recognized certifications from C-Tech and

Leviton, backed and promoted by leading telecommunications companies. The Leviton certification covers "smart home" products such as home entertainment and home security systems. The company is North America's largest maker of electrical and electronic wiring devices.

"There's a high demand for these skills in the Philadelphia area," Smith says. "There are endless possibilities with this and the starting range for these jobs runs from \$11.25 to \$16 an

hour. They go upward to \$30 an hour depending upon a person's drive and ambition."

It's desirable that persons entering this training have a high school diploma or GED, but it's not required. The course work is based on an 8th grade educational level. Class sizes are kept small (the maximum size is 20 students), so students get more attention and plenty of opportunities to ask questions. Instruction is hands-on and students work in teams of two.

Smith believes that students like the hands-on aspect of the course, which he says is engaging and fun.

Classes at OIC are 20 hours per week for 12 weeks of instruction. Students then complete a two-week internship with a local company.

Smith urges interested residents to enter this program because they can gain industry recognition and meaningful employment in a growing field.

"These jobs are real, obtainable, and available," he says.

For more information on the Communication Technology program at OIC, call 215-684-0393.



OIC telecommunications instructor Aubrey Smith (right) instructs PHA residents Jessica Smith and Harold Billups.

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Recruiter/Counselor: 215-236-7700 ext. 347

Training and job placement assistance available

www.philaoic.org



# This past summer was filled

*The Summer of 2009 is gone, but has left us with memories*



The Philadelphia Zoo's Zoo on Wheels program came to Liddonfield on August 5. The kids were given a rare opportunity to get up close and personal with the animals while learning some fun facts about birds, mammals and reptiles.



"Once again, TSSI, with the help of the Pennsylvania Institute of Affordable Housing Professionals, is providing children with the opportunity to be prepared and excel in school through the Back to School Book Bag Giveaway," said Director Asia Coney.



Pastor Danette Ray and the Kingdom Life Christian Center sponsored the visit from the Zoo on Wheels program.



Volunteers stuff book bags in preparation of Tenant Support Services' annual "Back to School Book Bag Giveaway." TSSI provided bags for 1,000 children, up from last year's 648 students.

# with memorable moments!

*of fun-filled activities. How many did you participate in?*



PHA partnered with the Free Library of Philadelphia to bring the Books Aloud! and School Success workshops to six PHA sites. The program was funded through a grant from the Claniel Foundation.



This summer, Ludlow teens and their parents took part in the Ludlow HOPE VI Mentoring Program. Participants attended monthly workshops presented by young successful entrepreneurs from the Philadelphia area at the Cruz Recreational Center. The Mentoring Project continued until the end of September.



Parents and children at Spring Garden played a number of educational games together and took home brand new books during a School Success workshop held in September.



PHA was a proud sponsor of the School District of Philadelphia's Second Annual Back-to-School Block Party in August. Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinators were on hand to give out information about PHA's programs and services.

PHA MTE Family Services Program

# Housing Choice Voucher Homeownership Workshop

For more information, call  
215-684-4311

**John F. Street Center**  
1100 Poplar Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

**Saturday, November 21**  
from 10:00am to 12:00pm



## WORKSHOP TOPICS

### First Time Homeownership Orientation

Learn how to use your Housing Voucher  
(Section B) 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 get tips on how to pass  
home inspection.



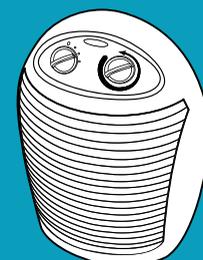
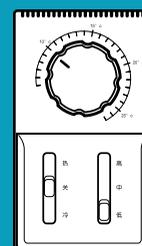
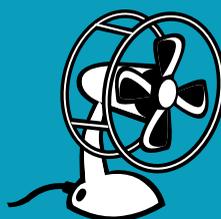
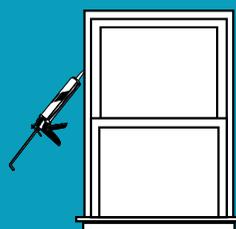
Philadelphia Housing Authority  
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# The Energy Coordinating Agency

## Save Energy and Save Money at Home This Summer!

- Use natural breezes and fans instead of an air conditioner to save on high electric bills
- Open windows at night when it's cool outside
- Use an exhaust fan to push warm air out while pulling cool air in
- Close all windows during the day to keep out the heat

Please visit [www.ecasavesenergy.org](http://www.ecasavesenergy.org) for more information on how to save energy and money.





# Team Children offers affordable computers

There are over 1,000 refurbished computers sitting in Team Children's warehouse in Audubon, PA, waiting for a good home.

If you need a computer, visit [www.teamchildren.com](http://www.teamchildren.com) for details. Prices are as low as \$25. The non-profit organization asks recipients to volunteer for two hours on the day they come for their computer or take flyers home and pass them out in the neighborhood, to spread the word about this great opportunity.

President and founder Robert Toporek estimates that Team Children has sold over 8,000 computers and helped 300-400 PHA families so far. He believes a computer isn't a luxury but a need in today's society.

"New technology costs a lot more than some people can afford. Those children are being deprived of the tools and opportunities they need to compete and contribute effectively in today's rapidly changing, digital economy," said Toporek.

Team Children had very humble beginnings. Its first office location was on 9th and Indiana Street, one of the worst drug neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Toporek's friends would fix up old computers and bring them to Robert for distribution in the community. The organization later moved to their current location just outside Philadelphia and has been there for five years.

Seniors volunteer on Mondays and Wednesdays and teenagers volunteer on Saturdays. Some come in knowing their way around computers, but Team Children is happy to teach those who aren't as familiar with technology. It's not long before the volunteers are pros.

In the summertime, Team Children is open every day. This past summer, they had 20 teenagers from the surrounding community volunteer—the largest number they ever had. It was also the first year they had female and African-American volunteers.

"All kinds of people come through the door to volunteer," said Lisa Robinson, Team Children's public relations director. "Most of the kids really get into working on computers. They learn new skills. The seniors that help them get a sense of fulfillment from teaching. During the summer, these kids just come in and eat up all this knowledge and they go back to their schools and they're just on fire. It's an awesome place to be."

Even though they are called Team Children, it's not just children and families who benefit. The organization has also helped after school programs, day care centers, small businesses, and even senior citizens get computers.

Recently, Team Children partnered with ASPIRA charter schools in Philadelphia and put 90 computers in ASPIRA's pre-school. They believe it's never too early to start teaching kids how to use computers and are hoping to expand the project.



*Team Children's president and founder Robert Toporek with volunteers at their facility in Audubon, PA. The organization currently has over a thousand low-cost, refurbished computers for sale.*

Team Children knows their philosophy is working.

"We have eight thousand letters that tell story after story about how these computers helped children improve their grades, find jobs, go to college

and get opportunities they normally wouldn't have," said Toporek.

For more information on Team Children, go to their website at [www.teamchildren.com](http://www.teamchildren.com) or call 610-666-1795.

## Free communication devices available to Pennsylvanians

Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT), a program of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, helps Pennsylvanians with disabilities learn about and acquire the tools they need in order to learn, work, play, and participate in community life. Thanks to the generosity of AstraZeneca, a Delaware-based pharmaceutical company, PIAT is offering free communication devices to Pennsylvanians.

The Zam Communicator is a lightweight, two-sided communication device that does not generate speech. It was developed to help improve communication between patients who are unable to speak and medical professionals. The device offers a keypad for spelling out words and icons representing medically related messages. The messages are displayed on a dual sided LCD screen at the top of the communication device.

Zam Communicators are available free of charge on a first come, first served basis to individual Pennsylvanians. Individuals will be asked to pick up the device from the Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology main office or pay for shipping.

These devices must be distributed directly to patients and may not be distributed to or through physicians, other health care professionals, medical group practices, or to hospitals. They can be distributed directly to patient groups in individual, outpatient, or health clinic settings. Health care and disability professionals can promote the availability of these devices and encourage individuals to contact their Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC). For a listing of ATRCs, go to <http://disabilities.temple.edu/programs/assistive/atlend/atrc.shtml>.

AstraZeneca and Temple University make no warranty and assume no liability on the device or any of the included components.

If you or someone you know could use a communication device, such as the Zam Communicator or have any assistive technology needs, please contact PIAT at 800-204-PIAT (7428), (866) 268-0579 (TTY), e-mail [atinfo@temple.edu](mailto:atinfo@temple.edu) or visit [www.disabilities.temple.edu/piat](http://www.disabilities.temple.edu/piat).

## One Web Day gets residents connected



To raise awareness about the need for affordable Internet access in Philadelphia, PHA held a citywide event for One Web Day at three of its computer centers.

One Web Day is an international event started in 2006 by Susan Crawford who currently advises President Barack Obama on technology issues. According to Crawford, "Peoples' lives now are as dependent on the Internet as they are on the basics like roads, energy supplies and running water."

On September 23 and 24, One Web Day volunteers conducted computer and web training for residents at Harrison Plaza, Norris Apartments and Emlen Arms for both kids and adults.

Topics at Harrison and Norris included "media literacy" or which websites parents might want to be

aware of if their kids are visiting them. Instructors also went over the basics of how to use Twitter and other social media tools. Afternoon sessions offered information on job searching resources, training websites, and free online computer tutorials.

Evening workshops brought parents and children together for an overview of homework help and college prep resources that are available online. The second day featured educational games and other online education resources. A representative from the school district was also present to talk about their new program, FamilyNet, which gives families online access to their children's progress data, report card grades, attendance, and test scores.

Senior workshops at Emlen Arms taught residents how to set up an e-mail address and download photos. Trainers also introduced residents to helpful websites for health resources, Septa schedules, Google maps and more.

Emlen residents were excited to have the volunteers and their computer expertise.

"This is so helpful," said Paula Johnson, "I really appreciate it."

The topics were developed after discussions with PHA about what

residents were interested in and what they would find useful.

Gwen Shaffer, an Adjunct Professor at Temple's School of Communication and Theater is the lead organizer for One Web Day in Philadelphia. During a conversation with an OWD staffer in Washington D.C., she learned that Philadelphia was one of the largest cities in the U.S. that did not participate, something she sought to change this year.

This is also the first year that One Web Day has incorporated a community service component. Previous events in other cities include a policy discussion in D.C. and a public rally with speakers in Portland, but now, One Web Day is bringing its knowledge to those who can most benefit.





## Summer Food Program winds down

The 2009 Summer Food Program wrapped up on August 26. Since it began on June 24, the program served more than 48,589 meals to children at 21 PHA developments, over 7,000 more meals than last year and an 18% increase.

The Summer Food program didn't just offer hot lunches and healthy snacks, it gave kids some food for thought. Children benefited from lessons on nutrition and visits from the PHA Police Department as part of their Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program.

In addition, PHA hired 38 people to serve food, manage orders and oversee operations. Many of these were PHA residents. Thanks to everyone who came out and made this program a great success!



## The Eagles promote reading

The Eagles don't just want to succeed on the football field; they want to help young people understand the importance of reading. This summer, the Eagles launched Flight Night, a fundraiser supporting the Eagles Bookmobile. The event was held at Lincoln Financial Field and attracted 31,000 people. PHA was one of the sponsors of this event, helping to raise over \$1 million. The evening included a full contact practice by the offensive and defensive teams. Field goal kicker David Akers also entertained the crowd by throwing balls into the stands.

Eagles Youth Partnership coordinator Rachel Weiner said, "We are very excited about the results of this first fundraiser and are planning another Flight Night for next year."

The Bookmobile visited Raymond Rosen and Fairhill Apartments in August. Dressed in an Eagles jersey, the Storybook Man delighted children by reading aloud. According



*Storybook Man, wearing his own special jersey, reads to children at Fairhill Apartments.*

to the Bookmobile team, the Eagles are big on reading because reading aloud is the single most important factor helping a child succeed in life.

After the interactive reading, each child selected a book to take

home and received a bookmark highlighting an Eagles player. To wrap up the event, participants enjoyed having their photo taken with the Bookmobile.



*Children at Raymond Rosen pose with the Eagles' Bookmobile.*

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# Town Watch residents are the eyes and ears of Bentley Hall

A vigilant group of seniors at Bentley Hall have started up a new Town Watch program. The program includes 9 resident floor captains; five of them are also members of the Bentley Hall Tenant Council.

Geneva Beander, Tenant Council President and a floor captain herself, feels it is important for residents to take action and be involved in maintaining safety and security in their community. While there is a security guard at the front desk, he is not able to police all the floors at once. Geneva and her Town Watch team were concerned about the rising crime rate so they decided to step up and do their part.

“We’ve got to help each other. We have to protect ourselves,” she stated.

Residents went to the 23rd Police District for guidance. They spoke to

Officer Denise Dixon who was glad that the seniors wanted to work with the community and happy to assist. Town Watch members attended 8 to 10 hour-long training sessions before receiving their certificates and badges.

The floor captains are responsible for documenting and reporting suspicious activity in the community or building. They call the police and tell them what is happening and where.

“Many seniors don’t come out of their apartments,” said Ms. Beander. “But we check in and make sure everyone is okay. We look out for one another—it’s a buddy-buddy thing.”

Town Watch members are also working closely with the site manager, William Moritz, and social services. As residents, they have a unique, insider’s perspective into what is going on around the development and are

helping to build a sense of community.

The members plan to take turns going to town meetings in Philadelphia. They were invited by Anthony Murphy, the Executive Director of Town Watch Integrated Services to attend a presentation by CeaseFire, a Chicago-based organization that spoke on Temple’s campus on October 22 about their successful anti-gun violence programs. Ms. Beander hopes Town Watch will bring back helpful information from these meetings to the Bentley community.

The program has received very positive feedback. Residents are happy that the Town Watch is at the development and very proud of it.

“I’d love to see Bentley’s example inspire other developments to start their own Town Watch programs,” said Ms. Beander.



First row, from left: Joyce Dickerson, Secretary and 5th Floor Captain, Helen Hawkins, Treasurer and 5th Floor Captain, Flora Williams, Vice President and 2nd Floor Captain, Patricia Ward 3rd Floor Captain, and Geneva Beander, President and 2nd Floor Captain.

Second row, from left: Marjorie Sims, 4th Floor Captain, Bentley Manager William Moritz, and Jonnie Rose, Asst. Secretary, 1st Floor Captain. Not pictured: James Coppedge, 1st Floor Captain and William Morrison, 5th Floor Captain.

## Garden Café opens at NRG

There is a lot of new activity at Nellie Reynolds Gardens since the opening of its Healthy Café on September 16. Residents say that they love the new eatery. When they come downstairs in the morning, they can smell the coffee, purchase a healthy breakfast and catch up with their friends.

Eating breakfast and socializing in the atrium feels like a Florida vacation, according to many NRG residents. They share news about grandchildren, discuss current events, and talk about good things going on in the community while enjoying a healthy snack or meal.



Residents enjoy a healthy breakfast and each other’s company in the sunny atrium of Nellie Reynolds Garden.

“The reaction has been delightful. I can honestly say that all 73 residents and aides at NRG have visited more than once within the first three weeks,” exclaimed Charmaine Morton, who is in charge of the café.

The breakfast menu includes hot breakfast sandwiches, pancakes, sausages, croissants, bagels, fruits, yogurt, natural juices, coffee and tea. The program was established to promote health, nutrition and social exchange among seniors. Healthy snacks and meals are provided at a low cost to residents and their guests.

Patrons have noticed a significant impact on their health, thanks to improvements in their diet. The café has resulted in weight loss and lowered blood pressure. To further

promote a healthy lifestyle, exercise programs are also coming to NRG. A walking club is scheduled to begin in November.

The Garden Café at Nellie Reynolds is open Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 7:00 am to 11:30 am. Soon, the café will be open on the 2nd Wednesday of each month for lunch. The lunch menu will include soups, sandwiches, salads, fresh fruit and more.

PHA runs 3 other Healthy Cafes, including Café in the Park, located at Wilson Park; Café a la Bente at Bentley Hall; and Arms Café at Emlen, which reopened on October 12 after being closed for renovations.

## New website helps people with disabilities

Social Security touches the lives of people with disabilities every day. That’s why 22 federal agencies worked together to create [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov), a comprehensive website designed to offer people with disabilities access to important information they can use.

It’s a one-stop website — not only for people with disabilities, but also for older Americans, employers, Social Security beneficiaries, community- and faith-based service providers and others. It features information on a number of related topics. The site is easy to navigate, and is organized into subject areas, including benefits, civil rights, community life, education, employment, health, housing, technology and transportation.

Disability.gov is also a useful information and referral tool for responding to the questions and concerns of Social Security’s 52 million beneficiaries. Individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), disability or retirement benefits, as well as advocates who work with beneficiaries, will find answers to questions about work incentives, the appeals process, Medicare and Medicaid, youth

transitioning from school to work, accessible transportation and much more.

If you want to get specific, detailed information about benefits available through Social Security for people with disabilities, you can go straight to the source: [www.socialsecurity.gov/disability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/disability). On Social Security’s website, you can even complete your application over the Internet from the comfort of your own home. Just go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability) to start your application.

The Disability.gov website shares general information about how Social Security can help people with disabilities, and much more. The website offers a free subscription service where you can sign up to receive Disability Connection, a quarterly newsletter, as well as other e-mail alerts covering information tailored to your individual interests. Just fill in your email address after clicking on the “Subscribe to Newsletter” link on the right side of the page.



The new Garden Café offers healthy snacks and meals at a low cost to residents and their guests.



# Coney made Resident Empowerment Conference a success



This year's National Resident Empowerment Conference was a great success. 322 people attended the event at the Sheraton Hotel in Center City from August 26 through 30. The conference featured panel discussions and industry experts who spoke on a variety of different issues that concern public housing residents. The conference was informative and fun with a number of social activities and opportunities for networking.

The Conference also coincided with Tenant Support Services' 10th Anniversary.



## Philadelphia Housing Authority

# SENIOR CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER

<b>7th</b>	Black and White Ball - "A Midnight Serenade" <i>Nellie Reynolds Gardens (2653 Glenwood Avenue) – 7:00pm to 12:00am</i> <i>Tickets are \$20. Please call Shirley Chester at 215-684-2464 for more info.</i>
<b>18th</b>	Bensalem Casino Bus Trip <i>Bensalem, PA – 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</i>
<b>23rd</b>	Thanksgiving Day – "Day Of Thanks Ceremony" <i>Wilson Park Community Center (2500 Jackson Street) – T.B.A.</i> <i>This event may include the Wilson Park Choir</i>

### DECEMBER

<b>3rd</b>	Play "Miracle Of Christmas" <i>Sight and Sound Theatre (Lancaster, PA) – T.B.A.</i> <i>Tickets are \$25. Lunch included.</i>
<b>2nd, 3rd,</b>	Holiday Tree Lightings
<b>4th, 8th,</b>	<i>Locations to be announced soon</i>
<b>9th</b>	<i>Check with your site manager for more details</i>

**The PHA Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Construction Trades is now accepting applicants for its 23<sup>rd</sup> cycle.**

**Program is free and stipend is available, but only PHA residents are eligible.**



This 21 week program prepares residents to enter the building trades and provides instruction in math, reading and construction skills. Pre-Apprenticeship helps graduates attain and maintain employment.

Interested applicants can apply in person Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the PHA Workforce Development Center, 1905 Vare Avenue, 19145.

**For more information, please call 215-684-8049.**

# Stimulus funds for Paschall, Mantua and accessibility

(continued from page 1)



The new Mantua will have 101 rental units. The main complex will surround a gated courtyard with 92 parking spaces and a private, landscaped green for residents.



The new Paschall Village will consist of 100 rental units ranging in size from 1 to 3 bedrooms with off-street parking and front and back yards.

Rochelle Willis has lived at Paschall for six years with her children. She finished the Pre-Apprenticeship Program on March 20, 2009 and is now a carpenter for PHA, a job that she loves. Rochelle recently worked with vacancy reduction teams at Raymond Rosen but now she's back with the Weatherization and Value Enhancement or WAVE crew.

Like many of her neighbors, Rochelle is concerned about the drug and criminal activity around the development. The current Paschall Apartments is an outdated site built in 1966 that features closed-off courtyards and dark alleyways, making it difficult to police.

PHA's redevelopment efforts will not only transform Paschall's physical appearance, it will also improve safety and security in the community.

"I think the stimulus money for Paschall is great," Rochelle Willis said. "I'd like to see good people who will take care of the property and change the neighborhood move into the development."

Ms. Willis is requesting a Housing Choice Voucher and is in the process of finding a new home for her family. She credits PHA's relocation staff and Paschall manager Lenora

Williams for making the transition as smooth as possible.

"The process has been great. Everything's been flowing fine," she said.

Rochelle added that she would love to come back if she could purchase a home of her own at the new Paschall Village.

PHA hopes to finalize relocation by the end of the year so demolition can begin.

On September 25, Mayor Michael Nutter and Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell joined Executive Director Greene in West Philadelphia to

announce PHA's second and third competitive grants.

Ten million in stimulus funds will be used to help build 101 new units on the former Mantua Hall site, which was imploded in March 2008. The new development will feature 10,000 square feet of commercial space. The construction is part of PHA's master plan for revitalizing the neighborhood.

"West Philadelphia is the place to be," said Councilwoman Blackwell. "PHA and the city are working together to

transform Mantua by building new housing and bringing businesses to the neighborhood. There is no greater calling than making sure people have a decent, safe, beautiful place to live. I look forward to the grand opening."

Another \$12 million grant will be used to make wheelchair accessibility upgrades at four conventional PHA sites—South Philadelphia's Wilson Park development and North Philadelphia's Johnson Homes, Fairhill Apartments, and Harrison Plaza.

## Renowned educator

(continued from page 1)

graduated from college. If nothing else, I hoped my example would inspire them," he wrote in his first book, *I Choose to Stay*.

Salome gained national attention for his work at Vaux Middle School in North Philadelphia. He revived the school's chess club, which had been a powerhouse in the seventies and eighties. Thomas-EL's optimism and encouragement inspired his young team to great heights. Within two years, they were winning national chess championships.

Chess taught his students a number of invaluable skills. The team not only gave students confidence and focus, but an opportunity to travel and have new experiences.

In addition to coaching the chess team, Thomas-EL always went the extra mile for his students. He made sure that they ate a healthy breakfast, got home safely after evening practices

and attended a number of math and reading enrichment programs. He became a father figure for many who didn't have a positive male role model at home.

Above all, Thomas-EL stressed positive thinking. "My students will never think they can't succeed."

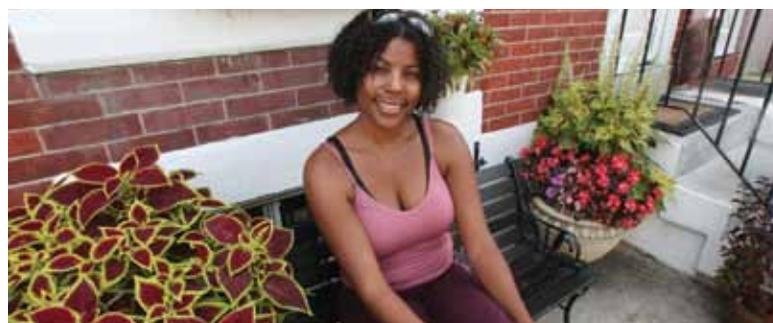
In 2006, Philadelphia Magazine named Salome Thomas-EL "Best Philadelphian." He has won a number of teaching awards for his dedication and commitment to his students. One of the greatest joys in his life is attending his former students' graduations.

### WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

The PHA Experience would like to share your story with our readers. To get your story into the Experience, call Nancy Loi at 215-684-8645 or send an email to [nancy.loi@pha.phila.gov](mailto:nancy.loi@pha.phila.gov)

## New home in Brewerytown

(continued from page 1)



Ms. El had steady employment as a school bus driver. She had tried several other jobs after graduating from high school, and settled on bus driving because the hours were good and the kids were interesting.

Shawn later called PHA and asked if she could still buy the home she lived in. Sheila Morrison-Wesley of the agency's Homeownership Division was only too glad to help out.

Once she decided to take the leap toward homeownership, Shawn found out that the effort requires time and patience.

"It was a long road getting here," she says.

Shawn took homeownership classes through one of PHA's partners and researched participating lenders. Finally, the big day occurred in May 2007 when she closed on her first home.

"It was surreal. I was so happy. My mom wanted to go with me, but it was something that I wanted to do by myself," she says. "After I signed the paperwork, I just sat there just glowing."

Shawn El recommends that other PHA

residents seriously consider taking advantage of the 5(h) homeownership program. She says it's cheaper than renting and jokes that she doesn't miss income certification one bit.

## Prison Runs

If you need to visit a loved one in prison, please contact **J&H Transport, LLC.**

Traveling to 25 State correctional institutions

For Reservations please call

**(215) 989-9436**





# HOLIDAY

# PARTY

Join us for an evening of dining and entertainment.

Where: John F. Street Community Center

1100 Poplar Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

When: Friday, December 11  
6:00 pm to Midnight

Info: Tickets \$35 per person  
For tickets, please call 215-684-1016

\*Proceeds support TSSI's Toys for Tots campaign.



**TSSI**  
Tenant Support Services, Inc.



Philadelphia Housing Authority  
Building Beyond Expectations