

The PHA Experience



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 20

A Community Newspaper for and About Residents

April 2009

Warnock development well under way in N. Phila

In the face of a weak economy, PHA is investing \$37.5 million in a neighborhood that really can use it.

Construction of the Warnock development in North Philadelphia is moving swiftly. Work at the new site began in mid-November. When completed late this year, Warnock will house 95 affordable rental units in two buildings.

“The recession has certainly made it more expensive to borrow money, but lenders and the public believe in us because of the successful track record we’ve compiled,” said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene. “Warnock Street is the latest example of what can be done through good times and bad when you follow a well-designed strategic plan and stick to doing what you do best.”

Warnock Phase I will have 50 walk-up units and town homes for families



Construction of PHA’s Warnock Street development began in mid-November. It represents a major investment in North Philadelphia and a boost to the economy.

on the 2800 block of north 11th Street with off-street parking and first-rate amenities. It will also have an added

safety feature: all units will be equipped with sprinkler systems to reduce the risk of fires and catastrophic damage.

“The Warnock project is the first multi-unit, single family development that is fully sprinklered in the city,” said PHA architect Michael Johns. “We are a model, not just for public housing, but for private development, too.”

Warnock II is a three-story building that will comprise 45 senior apartments and 36,000 square feet of nonresidential, commercial space. The senior units will occupy all of the third floor and part of the second floor. PHA will move some of its offices from 642 N. Broad Street to the 2800 block of Germantown Avenue. The agency is also investigating the possibility of adult day care at the site.

PHA is in the process of transitioning many departments out of leased office space into office space that it owns. Moving the Housing Choice Voucher program headquarters from leased space

continued on page 15

A woman finds her place in the brotherhood of Local 8 Legacy of Blumberg: former resident turned filmmaker

Alia White never imagined having a career as a carpenter in one of Philadelphia’s trade unions. She graduated from Germantown High School in 1987 and went on to become a successful hair stylist, a job she enjoyed. She dressed up for work, met lots of interesting people and the pay wasn’t bad either.

About the time her daughter began college several years ago, White’s mother (a retired PHA police officer) began encouraging her to look into the Pre-Apprenticeship program. Her brother, John White, was in one of the early graduating classes and had made it into Local 98, the Electrical Workers’ Union. Even as an apprentice, he was earning good money and that made Alia think.

“At the time, my daughter was going to college and with hair [styling], there are no benefits. When it’s good, it’s good. When it’s bad, it’s bad. I knew that once I got into a trade, I would be able to get an annuity, a pension,



Pre-Apprenticeship graduate Alia White outside of the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where she works as a carpenter.

benefits, have a union card, and just be part of a bigger picture,” she said.

continued on page 14

Twenty years ago, Tracey Jenkins was a kid living at Norman Blumberg Apartments. He remembers having a gun held point blank at his head, people being beaten, and hearing gunshots fired. He has memories of being chased knowing that if he was caught, he would not be around to tell the story. He says what kept him out of trouble was his faith in God, his ability to turn a negative into a positive, and the constant search for a brighter future.

Today, he is telling his story and working hard to put together a documentary about life in Blumberg which also includes the good times—when there was a sense of community and when neighbors looked out for each other.

Tracey says, “The good and the bad came from within. This is my story and these are my people.”

As the oldest of 12 children, Jenkins wants to use this video to show children that the



“This is my story and these are my people,” says filmmaker Tracey Jenkins about his Blumberg documentary.

future can be bright, “because the majority of the time in a secluded neighborhood,

continued on page 14

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Maintenance Mania Page 03



Winter Photos Pages 08 & 09



Science Fair Page 11

INDEX

Resident Council Elections 03

Executive Director Message 05

Resident Inventor . . . 07

Oxford Playground. 12



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FINANCES.**

CLASSES STARTING NOW. CALL TO REGISTER!

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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.

Day, evening and Saturday classes available.



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FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL

215.684.0393

or see your manager



New maintenance initiatives are sweeping through PHA

Since the Maintenance Mania program began several months ago, close to 10,000 repairs have been made, allowing for quicker response times to maintenance requests. The program's success lies in part on the comprehensive approach taken by the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Nearly every department

at PHA is involved in this initiative including maintenance, operations, the warehouse, quality control, quality assurance and finance.

Marian Grimes, a resident at Greater Grays Ferry Estates, recently had a water problem repaired.

"Now that the work is complete, I can paint my kids' room. The workers are going from apartment to apartment fixing stuff. I'm glad it's getting done," she said.

PHA is always seeking new ways to better meet the needs of its residents, including making repairs. This is a tall order since PHA customarily receives 400 service orders each day. Reduced operating funds from the government and an aging housing inventory have also made this task increasingly difficult.

As PHA makes progress on completing repairs, an even better way to get things done has been discovered. This new and improved program is called the "Maintenance Wave."

Executive General Manager of Development Greg Hampson says, "With this fantastic new program, crews work at a site 10 hours a day, 7 days a week until repairs are completed. With these extended hours and working on weekends, it is easier to catch residents at home so the repairs can be made. It's a lot

of work, but we're making it work for residents."

If your unit is in need of a repair, call 215-684-8920 and give the operator your client number. Your site manager will produce a service order after checking out the problem.

"It's a lot of work, but we're making it work for residents."

PHA's Greg Hampson



Marian Grimes of GGFE, who had a water problem repaired, is just one of the many PHA residents benefiting from Maintenance Mania.



Maintenance workers have made close to 10,000 repairs since Maintenance Mania began.

TSSI is giving residents a voice: council elections ongoing

After an exciting and historical presidential election, the democratic spirit continues at PHA developments.

Tenant Support Services, Inc. is holding a series of community meetings to discuss upcoming elections to Resident Councils—the first step in the election process. Representatives from TSSI were on hand to give an overview of the process and discuss the councils' roles and responsibilities. TSSI is also working with the League of Women Voters to organize and hold some of the elections.

Council members serve a three-year term. Afterward, TSSI holds community meetings at the sites to kick off elections and recruit again. The goal of the meetings is to keep residents informed and encourage them to participate in the process.

In addition, TSSI is looking for four residents from each development at these initial meetings to serve as the election committee during the preliminary stages. The committee will work with TSSI to set dates for the elections and assist in getting the word out to residents.

Christine Boyd is one of the newest resident council leaders. Boyd was elected to the Harrison Plaza council for the first time in May of 2008, but she has been active in the community for some time.

Christine says she has wanted to run for resident council ever since she first moved into PHA. However, her family commitments and her ongoing work in the community prevented her from doing so — until last year, when she realized that there were no programs being held at the Harrison Plaza community center.

"It was just sitting there," she said. "It was ridiculous."

Boyd prayed for a long time before making her final decision to run.

"I asked God if this was for me, if I should take the responsibility."

Diversity was an important factor to Boyd as she put together her board.

"I wanted a mix of people who could bring different things to the table — young and old, men and women," Christine said.

Boyd described the election process at Harrison last spring as smooth, but is now utterly focused on the tasks in front of her council. She stressed responsibility and advises prospective candidates to make sure that this is what they want.

"It's not for yourself and it's not for glory," she cautioned.

Boyd says that she loves representing the residents at Harrison and absolutely believes in putting them first.

"That's what you're there for," she said. "You took the oath and you set everything else aside."

To be eligible for positions on the council, candidates must be at least 18 years old and listed on the lease. Only one person per household is allowed to run. Community meetings for Queen Lane and Raymond Rosen are scheduled for May 5 and for Champlost Homes and Blumberg Family on May 20.



Bentley Hall Election Committee members Christine Jennings and Patricia Ward look on as resident Helen Hawkins casts her vote in the Resident Council election.



Clockwise: Asst. Treas. Joyce Hester, Pres. Christine Boyd and VP Bertram Martin meet in the Resident Council office at Harrison Plaza.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAMS

moving forward



To register please contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator (see page 12).



Training Programs:

- Medical Billing
- Pharmacy Technician
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Personal and Financial Development
- Home Maintenance Repair Program
- Self-Employment
- Call Center
- Automotive and Driving Related Training Services
- Administrative Assistant
- Hospitality Industry Training
- Job Readiness
- Job Placement
- Case Management
- Human Services Program
- Telecommunication Technician Program
- Educational Training and Support Services



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TUITION IS FREE FOR PHA RESIDENTS



Financial Literacy Program help residents make the most of their money

In tough economic times, it takes more effort than ever to make the most of your money. Recognizing the importance of managing your funds is the first step towards financial freedom, so PHA is offering a free Financial Literacy Improvement Program (FLIP) to help residents budget their income.

Classes are offered once a week and the program runs for six consecutive weeks. To accommodate as many people's schedules as possible, morning, evening and Saturday classes are available at various PHA locations.

In February, Linda Briggs and Lisa Ortiz completed the weekday courses at Raymond Rosen. When asked what inspired her to sign up for the program, Briggs said, "I want to be self-sufficient — to purchase my own home and keep it."

Ortiz shares a similar dream of homeownership and wanted to improve her credit score.

While Briggs' major motivation for participating in FLIP was bettering her financial situation, she noted that the struggling economy was a factor as well.

The classes Linda and Lisa attended were facilitated by Laverne Jones from the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement, one of the organizations partnering with PHA for FLIP.

"Our teacher was very informative,"



PHA Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator Michele Henderson, Linda Briggs, and PCCA's Laverne Jones celebrate the completion of the first weekday sessions of FLIP classes in February.

said Linda. "The most interesting thing I learned was that your money can go a long way if you budget correctly and learn how to spend wisely."

Both participants emphasized the importance of learning how to make sacrifices.

Briggs recommends participating in FLIP, saying, "A lot of us have been going into debt with no idea where your money went and nothing to show for it. This course taught us to keep a log of our spending, eliminate things, and learn how to put up money for

your home. It was really helpful."

Ortiz agreed, adding that it was important for people to stick it out through all six classes.

"You need to see it through and give it a chance. You can change a not-good situation and improve things over time."

Students are taking what they learned in the classroom and applying it to life—with definite results. Since their successful completion of FLIP, things have been looking up for both Linda and Lisa.

"I noticed that I have more money to put aside, clear my debt, or be able to maneuver with," Briggs said, "Instead of running to the corner store every time I get money, I can pay my bills on time."

FLIP participants benefit in many different ways. The program — and Ms. Jones — even inspired Ortiz to quit smoking cigarettes, which is saving her sixty dollars a week.

"FLIP dramatically changed my life," she enthused. "It helped me figure out who I was and what was important to me."

Whatever your financial goals may be, signing up for FLIP is a step in the right direction toward a brighter future.

For more information or to register for FLIP, please call 215-684-0393.

Doors — and books — open at PHA library

Even on a warm, sunny day, you can find nine-year-old Curtis Jamal Clinton, Jr. in the PHA library at the John F. Street Community Center. He might be sitting in one of the green armchairs in the room, reading *Captain Underpants* —one of his favorite books. Or he might be at one of the library's 12 personal computers, checking his favorite websites or researching famous people like Malcolm X for his own personal interest.

Curtis, a participant in the Boys and Girls Club program at the center at 11th and Poplar Streets, says he spends a lot of time in the library. He is just one of the many people in the neighborhood benefiting from the new facility, which officially opened on January 29.

Curtis' 11-year-old sister, Nasihah White, is also a fan of the library. "It's

fun," she says. "It's got nice books — they're interesting. Just my type."

The library definitely has something for everybody. Its shelves hold 4,000 to 5,000 books—interested readers can find everything from children's books to non-fiction and reference materials. PHA employees donated many of the books through an agency-wide book drive last winter. The Free Library of Philadelphia and Mary Ann McNamee, a private citizen living in South Philadelphia, generously provided additional donations.

Naim Churn, also 11-years-old, remarked that the library is "a quiet place to be where we do our homework." But all three children agree that it is a comfortable community place too where they can socialize and enjoy themselves.

"It's not that quiet. You can talk at your own level," said Nasihah.

For now, readers can enjoy the books while in the library. Library users will be able to check out books in the near future when PHA purchases the necessary scanning equipment and computer software.

The library is open from 12:00 to 3:00, Mondays through Fridays, for members of the community. From 3:00 to 8:00, the library is used by children participating in the Boys and Girls Club program. Adult computer classes are also held on Tuesdays from 1:00 to 2:30.



Boys and Girls Club participants Nasihah White, Curtis Clinton, Jr., and Naim Churn happily spend an afternoon at PHA's library at the John F. Street Community Center.

A message from the Executive Director



PHA was recently notified that it would receive \$90 million from the federal economic stimulus package. I am grateful that our new president and members of Congress understood the important role that public housing plays in this nation's social safety net and how badly these resources are needed. The \$90 million will serve as a down-payment on the hundreds of millions of dollars of work that lies ahead.

"It's very important to us that every customer has a quality home, whether brand new or not."

The first project gets underway soon, the complete renovation of 300 houses that PHA owns in scattered neighborhoods. The

upgrades will include energy enhancements such as new windows, roofs, and Energy Star appliances. These are 300 properties that would have remained vacant, but instead will now become homes for families from our long waiting

list. This work carries an additional benefit. The improvements to the

PHA houses will make these blocks and neighborhoods look better and increase their value.

PHA has become renowned for its housing production program. We have a record of completing two to three projects a year over the past ten years, yet there is still so much to do. As reported on the front page of this paper, work has begun at the new Warnock Street site. And work will begin shortly on Mantua Square.

We haven't forgotten about the residents living in our older buildings. Maintenance crews have been working seven days a week keeping up with the list of service orders. It's very important to us that

every customer has a quality home, whether brand new or not.

The stimulus provides a great start after many years of neglect from the federal government. We should all feel good that Washington is again paying attention to the people who live in America's big cities.

Thank you,

Carl R. Greene



How is the slow economy affecting you?



Hedy Foley

- Liddonfield

"Doesn't affect me because my parents taught me how to save and not squander my money."



Denise Hudson

- Liddonfield

"Don't have enough money to pay for everything. Trying to make ends meet. Buying less food, clothes and trying to survive."



Malaka Massey

- Liddonfield

"Just hanging out with the kids. Not going to the movies or buying clothes and going out with the girls."



Charles Meyers

- Liddonfield

"Play more lottery numbers. Eating out now means having a meal on the porch. But if you cut back too much, you become depressed."



Gloria Redd

- Whitehall

"You have to budget. No more going out to dinner or different engagements."



Crescencia Rivera

- Whitehall

"I had to change where I live because the rent was too high. Buying fewer clothes, not going to the restaurants, a lot of stuff. Hope everything gets better for everybody."



Lucy Vega

- Spring Garden

"Everything is expensive, so I'm cutting coupons and looking for sales."

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 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Johnson Homes - Mondays and Thursdays 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 **215-684-8179**
or Jerel.Brooks@pha.phila.gov



Philadelphia Housing Authority
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PHA inventor is seeking an inve\$tor

Agnes Ferguson Royal has a dream, but she's finding out that dreams take money.



Agnes Ferguson Royal received a patent on her baby bottle cap in May 2002. She spent thousands of dollars to get the patent from money she saved from her income tax refunds.

The Germantown resident, 49, has patented a new bottle cap for baby bottles. The cap fits on the top and the bottom of the bottle, so it won't get lost. If you put the bottle down, the cap is flat so that the bottle stands on it while you clean or burp an infant.

Royal received a patent on the bottle cap in May 2002. That alone took several thousand dollars, money she saved from her income tax refunds. However, her biggest challenge is finding an investor with money so a manufacturer can make the cap.

"I don't have a problem of worrying about whether or not they will like it. I just don't know where to get or meet investors personally so that they can see it up front," she said.

Agnes, who works as data entry clerk

at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Wynnewood, has four children. Two of them are grown while the other two are at home. She has some business and computer training, but that'll get her only so far.

One day, Agnes received a packet of coupons in the mail. One of them asked, "Do you have an invention? Do you have any ideas that you want to tell us about?"

That message and her constant financial struggles got her thinking.

"I was tired of being broke. So I said, 'I need another income.'" Agnes Ferguson

"I was just tired of being broke. So, I said, 'I need another income.'"

The result was the bottle cap, something all parents with infants would find useful — if she could only get it made.

Royal estimates that she needs about \$15,000 just to start: \$5,000 for legal



Royal's patented bottle cap is flat, so the bottle stands on it while you clean or burp an infant. The design also lessens the chance of losing the cap.

fees and \$10,000 to make the mold and get production going.

The hard plastic cap would sell for \$2.50 or \$3 and it would fit on several different kinds of bottles.

Agnes would leave the Housing Choice program and buy her own home if her bottle cap is profitable.

"I would feel like I really accomplished something big and it's my dream," she said.

Nonetheless, Agnes, who plays the organ at church, is grateful for what she has, saying that her faith and the dream of her invention making it to store shelves has sustained her.

Pre-Apprenticeship grad's new future

Almost four years ago, Shon Monroe was accepted into the prestigious Operating Engineers union and their apprenticeship program. He was one of only 25 people to make it into the program out of 300 who tested and interviewed.

Shon expects to obtain his journeyman's card in June, giving him a career with salary and benefits he could have never imagined. Even at the apprentice level, he is making enough money that he and his wife, Amara, bought a home in Levittown in January 2008 and left the Housing Choice program permanently.

The couple has five children, two boys and three girls, ages two to seven. Shon's job allows Amara to work from home as an Avon representative. Once he reaches journeyman status, Shon will make around \$31 an hour plus benefits.

"I feel blessed to be in this position. My life has been altered greatly," he says.

Shon believes the most important thing he has learned in apprenticeship is the virtue of humility combined with a willingness to listen to others with experience.

He says safety is important when you're working with heavy machinery and vividly remembers the day a co-worker died in an accident.

"All that stuff is machinery and you can be around it at a certain time when something goes wrong mechanically. Something could break. It's opened my eyes to a lot of things around me," he says.

Shon comes back occasionally to speak to current students enrolled in the Pre-Apprenticeship program and share his experiences, hoping that he inspires them.

"You have to buckle down. You have to listen. You have to stop trying to know it all and let somebody guide you," he tells them.

Shon says the best thing about the job is that he's not in one spot all the time. One day he could be working somewhere in Pennsylvania and the next day he could be across the river in New Jersey. And the job is challenging because it requires lifelong learning.

Just four short years ago, Shon Monroe had limited career prospects. Today, he has a good job, a home, and a happy family. Shon Monroe has become his own man.



Pre-Apprenticeship grad and operating engineer Shon Monroe hard at work at a site. Shon expects to obtain his journeyman's card in June.

5th graders poster contest



All fifth grade science students have an opportunity to enter an energy conservation poster contest this spring. The contest is part of PHA's commitment to Energy Conservation and a more sustainable future for Philadelphia. This project is a partnership among PHA, the School District of Philadelphia and Earth Force, a non-profit already conducting environmental education in schools.

Participating science classes sign up for a fun-filled interactive assembly

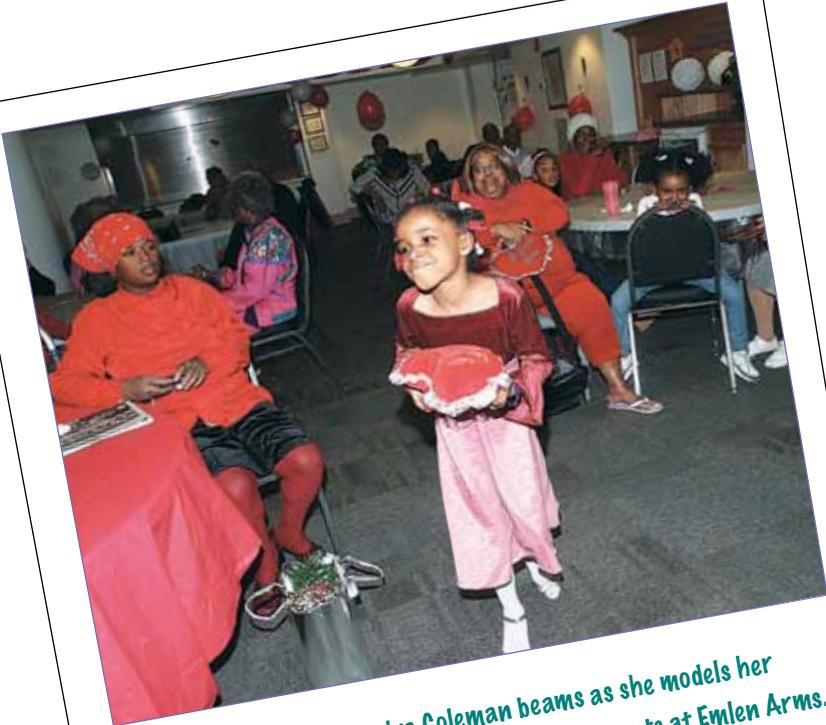
overview on energy conservation, and the rules for the contest. Students learn how each person can help lower energy bills and reduce their impact on the environment (reducing greenhouse gases).

The winning poster will be reproduced for display throughout Philadelphia Public Schools, and will be made into a mural. To register your fifth grader's science class, have his/her teacher call Tom Davidock at 215-884-9888 x103.



This past winter was filled

The winter of 2009 is gone, but not forgotten. We captured many of



Seven-year-old Samira Coleman beams as she models her Valentine's Day outfit for parents and grandparents at Emlen Arms.



O'Dell Steel, activities director for the resident council at Emlen Arms, presented grandchildren of residents with heart-shaped pillows.



Members of Grace Tabernacle Church entertained seniors at Wilson Park with a musical retrospective as part of the Black History Month celebration.



The skit included performances by Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin impersonators that had residents singing along.

with memorable moments!

PHA's fun-filled events in photos. How many do you remember?



Wilson Park residents and choir members Ricardo Dredden, Deacon Pleasant, Leonard Young and Harvey Roberson provide some spiritual inspiration during a Black History Month celebration that took place February 20th.



Volunteers from PHA, the University of Pennsylvania and Oxford Village help assemble the new playground equipment on Build Day. See page 12 for story.



Residents at Nellie Reynolds Gardens had front row seats to the live three hour radio broadcast held in the atrium of the senior building on February 17. The broadcast was part of WURD's special Black History Month programming.



Participants in the Skills for Life program spend a Saturday cooking up a storm for their fundraiser. The students were raising money for a trip to New York.



Ludlow



PHA Homeowner



Falls Ridge

PHA MTE Family Services Program

Homebuyers Club Workshops

WORKSHOP 1

Sponsored by Citizens Bank

Strawbridge Building

8th & Market sts. 13th Floor

Community Area, 19107

Wednesday, April 22,

Thursday, May 7 & Thursday, June 11

from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Budgeting & Money Management

Wednesday, April 29,

Thursday, May 14 & Thursday, June 18

from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Credit Repair / Home Inspection

WORKSHOP 2

Sponsored by Wells Fargo Mortgage Corp.

John F. Street Center

1100 W Poplar St., 19123

Saturday, April 18,

Saturday, May 16 & Saturday, June 13

from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Budgeting & Money Management

Saturday, April 25,

Saturday, May 23 & Saturday, June 20

from 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
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PHA awards efforts of young scientists

"I'm so happy I won. It took weeks of hard work, but it paid off."

Those were the words of 5th grader Arianna Hill who won first place in the PHA Energy Conservation Award at the Carver Science Fair.

Each year, nearly 1,000 Philadelphia school children participate in the science fair. The fair encourages urban youth to pursue academic achievement and careers in science.

And this year, in the special awards category, PHA awarded prizes for outstanding projects in energy conservation in two categories: elementary grades four to six; and secondary grades seven to twelve. Arianna won a fuel cell car and experiment kit for her project entitled "Top It Off,"

which looked at how "green roofs" provide cooling for buildings.

PHA awarded prizes for outstanding projects in energy conservation.

PHA's second place winner in the elementary school category, Sachin Patro, won a family membership to the Franklin

Institute. He says he entered the conservation category because of his dedication to keeping the Earth from being destroyed by global warming. And he won for his project on hybrid cars because, "I had the right way of explaining why this issue is important to all of us."

Winners in the secondary grades were first place winner Kingsley Delacato, who was awarded a Nikon Cool Pix digital camera, second place winner Jazzmyn Mills, who also received a family membership to the Franklin Institute, with an honorable mention going to Jessica Brown.

The Carver Fair is jointly sponsored by Temple University, the Academy of



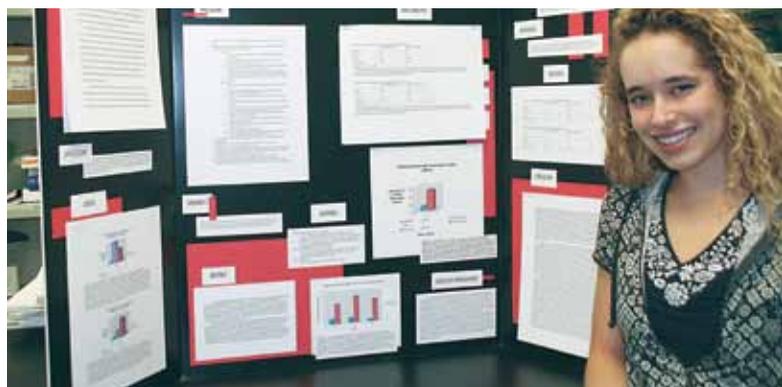
PHA Assistant Executive Director Operations Carolyn Carter with elementary school winners Sachin Patro and Arianna Hill.

Natural Sciences, the School District of Philadelphia and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. It is open to all students in grades four through twelve who attend Philadelphia public, charter, parochial, and private schools, as well as to city home-schooled students.

The George Washington Carver Science Fair is named in honor of Dr.

George Washington Carver: scientist, inventor and humanitarian.

The dates for the George Washington Carver Science Fair for next year have not yet been scheduled, but the fair is held in February or March. Registration occurs in January. For more information, consult the George Washington Carver Science Fair website: www.temple.edu/carversciencefair.



Kingsley Delacato presents her science fair project, which won first prize in the PHA Energy Conservation Award, secondary school category.

Former PHA resident honored at Carver Science Fair

In March 2008, the *Experience* profiled Tyraine "Grand Hank" Ragsdale, the renowned chemist and rapper whose educational rap lectures combining hip-hop and science demonstrations have educated and inspired countless students in Philadelphia and around the country.

In March 2009, Ragsdale was presented with the George Washington Carver Award at the 30th Annual Science Fair. The award recognizes an individual

who has had great impact on the lives of future scientists.

Tyraine was ecstatic when he heard about the award.

"It was really about trying to hold back the joy," he said.

He sees it as a success marker, a sign of the effect his work has on both students and science teachers.

During his acceptance speech, Tyraine spoke warmly about growing up at the old Mill Creek development and the lessons he learned there. He saw what not having a proper education could do, but he also emphasized the positive side and the strong sense of community that was present.

"It was a place where people cared about one another. The compound was a family," Ragsdale said.

Over the last year, Tyraine's company, Grand Hank Productions, has experienced steady growth. In addition to moving its



Grand Hank receives the George Washington Carver award for his outstanding accomplishment in science, education and community service.

product line, GHP is also partnering with the school district and the New Freedom Theatre to hold live events such as "An Evening of Science with Grand Hank." Ragsdale hopes to schedule more family-based and community-based events.

"Anybody can be a scientist... including you." Grand Hank

"My mission is to reunite families; to get parents to participate and reconnect with their child's education," he explained.

Grand Hank's motto is "Anybody can be a scientist...including you!" He tries to reach students through educational programs and teach them that they can understand math and science if they give it a chance.

"Learn one piece and then build on it," he advised aspiring scientists.

Parents and students can also watch Grand Hank on The Science of Philadelphia and The Science Lab of Grand Hank on Channel 52. Check your local listings.

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 Nancy Loi at 215-684-8645 or send an email to nancy.loi@pha.phila.gov



2009 Summer Food Program

JUNE 22 through AUGUST 21

21 PHA locations offering breakfast and lunch. Good food and great nutrition for the kids!

For more info, please call: 215-684-3722



A new place to play at Oxford Village

Just in time for spring, PHA residents and employees joined forces with students from the University of Pennsylvania and a Washington, DC based charitable organization to give Oxford Village a much-needed new playground.

The brand new playground set, which was generously provided by Make Kids Smile, Inc., replaced an old metal swing set on the site that had not been used for at least twelve years.

The project came about when April Ognibene, a Penn student and member of the university's Alpha Phi Omega service organization, wrote to PHA Executive Director Carl R. Greene with an offer to build a playground on a PHA site.

"We are proud to join Make Kids Smile, volunteers from the University of Pennsylvania and our own residents and employees to bring this new playground to Oxford Village."

said Director Greene. "Having a safe, well-equipped place to play is important to a child's happiness and overall well being."

Build Day was held on Saturday, April 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. About 50 people came out to help install the playground equipment.

The playground provides a safe and fun place for kids to play that is also close to home.



Children who live at Oxford Village wasted no time in making good use of the new playground facility.

CCP offers free tuition to laid-off workers

Community College of Philadelphia's Opportunity Now Program is a tuition-free opportunity for laid-off Philadelphians. It is available to Philadelphia residents who have been laid off permanently or indefinitely from full-time, non-seasonal positions.

Applicants must have a letter from the former employer on official

company stationery stating the actual date of the layoff and a statement that the former employee lost a "non-seasonal" full-time job through no fault of his or her own, but due to the economic climate. The applicant must also supply a copy of his/her last pay stub.

Applicants must also follow the

regular admissions, advising and registration procedures. While the program offers a waiver of tuition for up to 12 credits for one semester, applicants will have to pay their own costs for required textbooks, supplies and fees.

For more information, please call 215-751-8193.

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Sign up* for the MET, Inc. 2009 Summer Paid Employment Programs!

**What are your plans for this summer?
Interested in finding a job or internship?**

*To register, call Ms. Deb Grant or Mr. Corrie Mitchell at 215-546-7991 ASAP.
Preference given to PHA residents.*

**You must be 14-21 years old.*

MET a PHA Community Partner

Job readiness grads ready to build new careers

Don't let reports about the recession stop you and your dreams of building a career.

That was the message as 18 PHA residents graduated in early February from the Administrative Assistant Job Readiness Program at Community College of Philadelphia.

The Community Partners program teaches basic computer skills, how to write an effective resume, business etiquette and how to interview for a job.

Dana Beckton, training manager at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, told graduates to listen to their inner voice that says, "Yes, I can," and to be proud of their past and their experiences.

"Many times people feel intimidated about where they came from, instead of using that experience to say, 'I have something of value that someone else doesn't have.'"

The graduates ranged in age, proving that it's never too late in life to learn and improve yourself.

Twenty-one-year-old Sharnique Perkins said graduation and becoming an administrative assistant is just the beginning for her.

"I would like to do more on the business side of things. I want to open up my own business, so I want to take some business courses," she said.

Graduation for Sharnique was really special; her mother and father have graduated from Community Partners programs, too. Sharnique's mother is a certified nursing assistant and her father recently graduated from the Pre-Apprenticeship program.

Blondell Murphy, 55, a resident of Greater Grays Ferry Estates, wanted to improve her computer skills and improve her chances of advancing with her employer, Philadelphia International Airport. She assists travelers who need directions and other information.

"I like my job, but I just feel I want to do something different and go a little

further. I know I waited a little late in life, but like they say 'never too late.'"

Thirty-three-year-old Rasheedah Salaam wanted to get back to work after dealing with illness for an extended period. She had worked in customer service at the Philadelphia Zoo.

"It's horrible to sit home and do nothing. You want to get out there. You want to get into the work force. You want to feel that you're accomplishing your goals," she said.

Salaam, who's a high school graduate, said she wanted to set a good example for her 10-year-old daughter. She'd like to go to college and get a nursing degree.

Jan Harris, director of the Career Services Center at CCP, says having a positive attitude is important, no matter what the economic conditions are like, when you're looking for a job.

All graduates received a guide to the services at the Center and they also received access to the computer lab throughout February, allowing them to work on their cover letters and resumes, have them reviewed, and make changes.



Twenty-one-year-old Sharnique Perkins said graduation and becoming an administrative assistant is just the beginning for her. She eventually wants to open her own business.



Sitting (l-r): Linda Benns-Redding, Blondell Murphy, Tawanda Harvey. Standing (l-r): Rasheedah Salaam, Salaka Thompson, Sharnique Perkins, Sheena Fortune, Tracy Scott, Margaret Griffin. Far left: Michele Claybrook-Lucas, Community College of Philadelphia.

"You want to get out there. You want to get into the work force. You want to feel that you're accomplishing your goals." Rasheedah Salaam

Former HCV resident finds her destiny

Determination is another name for Clematis Walker.

After completing her degree at Community College of Philadelphia, the former HCV resident set her sights on going to nursing school. She missed the deadline for Northeastern Hospital's nursing school, but that didn't stop her from pursuing her goal.

"I kept calling the recruiter. If I didn't call her every day, I called her every other day," Walker recalls. "Finally, she said, 'Anyone that calls as much as you do must really want this. You're in.'"

Of course, getting in and staying in are two different matters, but despite raising two children and working as a Certified Nursing Assistant, Clematis stayed in school and became a registered nurse. Even that was not enough for her – today she is studying for a master's degree in nursing at Temple University.

The master's, she explains, will give her more career choices. And choices are important to Walker.

"I like choices. I don't want to have someone else say what I can do," she says.

"When you are on housing assistance, you can only live in certain places. You may want to live somewhere else, but all landlords don't take vouchers. So you may have to live somewhere you don't like," she explained.

Clematis left the voucher program two years ago and lives with her children in Mt. Airy, but she has an eye on a home in Montgomery County. Two years out of nursing school, she earns \$60,000 a year and can expect a hefty increase when she reaches her third anniversary this summer. Her credit is good, and she's saving her money to purchase the home of her dreams.

Still, Walker is grateful to PHA for helping her achieve her goals. She was a newly divorced mother of two toddlers when she received her voucher 13 years ago. She attended PHA's Financial Self-Sufficiency workshops, but none of PHA's programs at the time would have

helped her obtain her nursing degree, so she proceeded on her own.

Her employer at the time was very flexible, allowing her to work around her school schedule. PHA was also cooperative with their appointment scheduling.

"Ms. Jenkins (Aleah) was my first case worker, and she was very nice about rearranging dates and times," Walker said.

ESS coordinator Gilbert Vega would also call her to see how she was doing.

"He was very nice."

Walker appreciates the role of public housing, but notes, "I believe these systems are here to assist you, but not to live on for a lifetime."

"Life is so much better now," says Clematis, who was able to take her two teen-aged children to Disneyworld last year.

"You have power over your own destiny instead of relying on someone else."

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Former resident turned filmmaker

continued from page 1

in uncomfortable situations, they are geared to do the wrong thing.”

In addition to the video documentary, Tracey partners with community leaders to find role models who will work with children. He is also trying to establish programs geared toward keeping children engaged, busy, and educated while letting parents

know that they can support their children by recognizing their accomplishments.

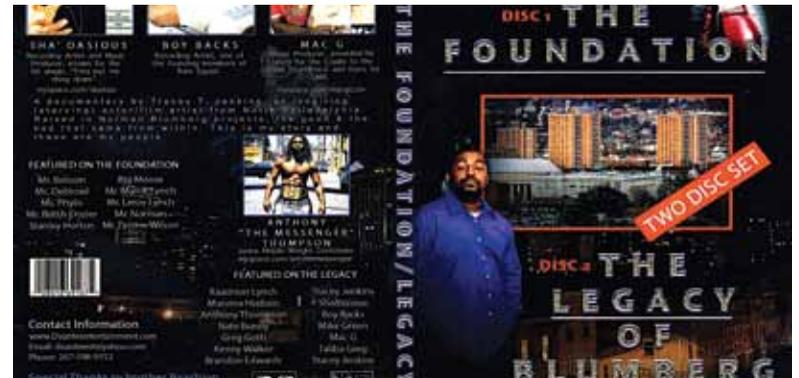
This documentary has been five years in the making with footage that covers more than twenty years of history.

“I want to give my point of view. And I want to show through my documentary that there are people at Blumberg, and elsewhere, who

are able to stay focused and do the right thing,” Jenkins said.

The goal is to finish the two DVDs, “The Foundation” and “The Legacy of Blumberg,” by summer. Tracey encourages anyone interested in a copy to visit his web site at www.dvanteentertainment.com.

“You can be positive and stay positive and be a light to your environment.”



Jenkins hopes to use the documentary to show children that the future can be bright. He expects to finish the two DVDs by this summer.

Philadelphia Housing Authority SENIOR CALENDAR

APRIL - SENIORS VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATION MONTH

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 17 th | Volunteer Celebration
<i>Emlen Arms (6733 Emlen Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |
| 24 th | Volunteer Celebration
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |

MAY - OLDER ADULT MONTH

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7 th | Women's Day Celebration Tea
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.</i> |
| 8 th | Senior Advisory Board Meeting
<i>Abbottsford (3226 McMichael Street) – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.</i> |
| 14 th | Health Fair - “You Are What You Eat”
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |
| 15 th | Health Fair - “Aging in Place”
<i>Emlen Arms (6733 Emlen Street) – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</i> |
| 22 nd | Underground Railroad Tour Trip
<i>Belmont Mansion (2000 Belmont Mansion Drive) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |

JUNE - MEN'S HEALTH MONTH

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 12 th | Annual Wheel Chair Races
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |
| 18 th | Sight & Sound Trip Fashion Show (Lancaster, PA)
<i>Departure at Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.</i> |
| 19 th | Men's Day Grill & Chill
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.</i> |
| | Annual Juneteenth Celebration
<i>Emlen Arms (6733 Emlen Street) – 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.</i> |
| 29 th | Fall Prevention
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 10:00 a.m.</i> |
| 30 th | Men's Health Issues
<i>Wilson Park (2500 Jackson Street) – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.</i> |



A place with Local 8

continued from page 1

Alia, who has a sunny disposition, was admittedly scared about going into what many still think of as a man's job—not to mention the classes she'd have to take to get her union card.

“I was scared at first. I just felt like, ‘I have to go back to school after all these many years. I have to go to work dirty.’ Working around the circular saws was a little intimidating, but after I got into the swing of things, it was fine,” White said.

The Pre-Apprenticeship program got her ready to take the union entrance exam, especially with a refresher math course. Carpenters rely heavily on math and have to measure their materials precisely, so they have a good fit and avoid waste.

Once she was admitted, union members

welcomed Alia with open arms, particularly through their group “The Sister in the Brotherhood.” She is very grateful for their support.

In May, Alia White will complete her four-year-long apprenticeship and get her journeyman's card, making her a full-fledged member of Local 8. She works at the Philadelphia Convention Center and has a career that will allow her to leave the Housing Choice Voucher program and become a homeowner, ideally in Mount Airy or Germantown, two neighborhoods she really loves.

But Alia, who encourages other women to go into the building trades, has even bigger dreams.

“You can always go higher, higher and higher. You can specialize in certain things. My goal for the future is to have an HGTV (home improvement) show.”

TSSI helps residents retain their homes

Tenant Support Services, Inc. will be implementing a new program in May geared toward preventing eviction and helping residents maintain their housing in the event of sudden reductions in income or debilitating illness. The Housing Assistance Retention Prevention Program (or HARPP) will be open to all public housing and assisted housing residents who are experiencing severe financial hardship.

Asia Coney, Director of TSSI, said, “During these troubling economical times, it has become necessary to launch HARRP. It is our hope that we (TSSI) will be able to assist residents and families in maintaining the most basic need of shelter.”

Interested applicants must get a referral from their managers. A committee composed of Resident Council members and PHA staff will review all referrals to ensure that applicants meet the criteria and select recipients accordingly. Depending on the residents' circumstances, applicants will either receive a referral for the Community Partners programs, which links residents with training in a variety of different fields, or a one-time grant of \$100 - \$500 in rental assistance that will be paid directly to the Housing Authority.

For more information, please contact your management office.

A dream come true for PHA resident

April S. lives in the home she always dreamed of owning along Cobb's Creek Parkway in Southwest Philadelphia. *(The subject of this story requested that we not publish her last name.)*

S., who has five children, closed on her spacious home in February. It

has six bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths, hardwood floors, and a finished basement. She believes having her own home creates a better family atmosphere and, eventually, she'll have something to pass on to her children.

April, 34, who suffers from a

medical condition and is on Social Security disability, benefited from the Housing Choice homeownership program. Before she was diagnosed, she had worked for ten years in the grocery and restaurant business. Her condition is manageable, but incurable.

One day, Cynthia Vance, PHA's service representative in West Philadelphia, told her about the homeownership program. April was scared at first, but she decided to work on fixing her credit. She also began looking for a home while doing all she could to save money for a down-payment and closing costs. It took her about two years to save enough money while taking classes on how to be a homeowner, including how to fix and maintain a home.

"It was hard work, but I was determined to have my own home," April said. "I am a very strict person. If I don't need it, I won't buy it. If I have to go to a thrift store to get it, I'll go get it."

April emphasizes that her children



"It was hard work, but I was determined to have my own home," April said. She's shown here in the living room of her spacious home.

come first, and good food and a nice home are critical to their upbringing. As a child, she grew up not knowing where she might spend the evening; very often it was with friends or relatives. She encourages other residents to take advantage of PHA's homeownership opportunities.

"If they put their mind to it, they can

do it," she says. "I been through a lot, but I got here and they can, too."



April S. lives in this beautiful neighborhood along Cobb's Creek Parkway in Southwest Philadelphia. It's a neighborhood she always dreamed of living in and owning her own home there.

Warnock housing development well under way

continued from page 1

on North Broad Street to space PHA owns on Germantown Avenue will save the agency a substantial amount of money.

In addition, the building will have a "green roof" with seating areas and grills that will be accessible to residents. The "green roof" will lessen

storm water runoff that might overload the city's sewer system while providing energy savings. It will also offer seniors a safe place to go and relax, with a walkway, so residents can stroll down the center of the roof and use it as exercise.

"Nellie Reynolds Gardens was our first experience with a green roof, and our focus was strictly on environmental concerns," Greene said.

"I'm very excited about this development. It's in an area that's had significant challenges over the years."
Councilman Darrell Clarke

"When I climbed up and saw the newly installed roof for the first time, I realized the concept wasn't only good for the ecology, it also provided a scenic green space that seniors could use for activities. I determined at that point that for future green roofs we would include a recreational component where possible."

City Councilman Darrell Clarke, whose district includes the Warnock neighborhood said, "I'm very excited about this development. It's in an area that's had significant challenges over the years. The last development in that area was probably more than 10 years ago."

Clarke believes that Warnock II, which faces Germantown Avenue, will help the commercial corridor and encourage more private

investment in the neighborhood. He went on to call PHA a "shining star" that has built quality developments on par with any other in the city.

The new development is conveniently located near public transportation. Several SEPTA bus routes serve the area, and the Broad Street subway, two regional rail lines, and Amtrak are nearby.

Prison Runs

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The view from 11th and Cambria streets — roofers work on the framing of the Warnock I development, which will be completed late this year.



The Warnock I development will provide 50 new affordable rental units. These one, two, and three-bedroom units will have off-street parking, central air conditioning and other first-rate features.

The Energy Coordinating Agency

Save Energy & Save Money at Home



Caulk and rope caulk windows. Close storm windows or install plastic window kits.



Switch from air conditioning to fans to stay cool. Exhaust hot air when it's cooler outside.



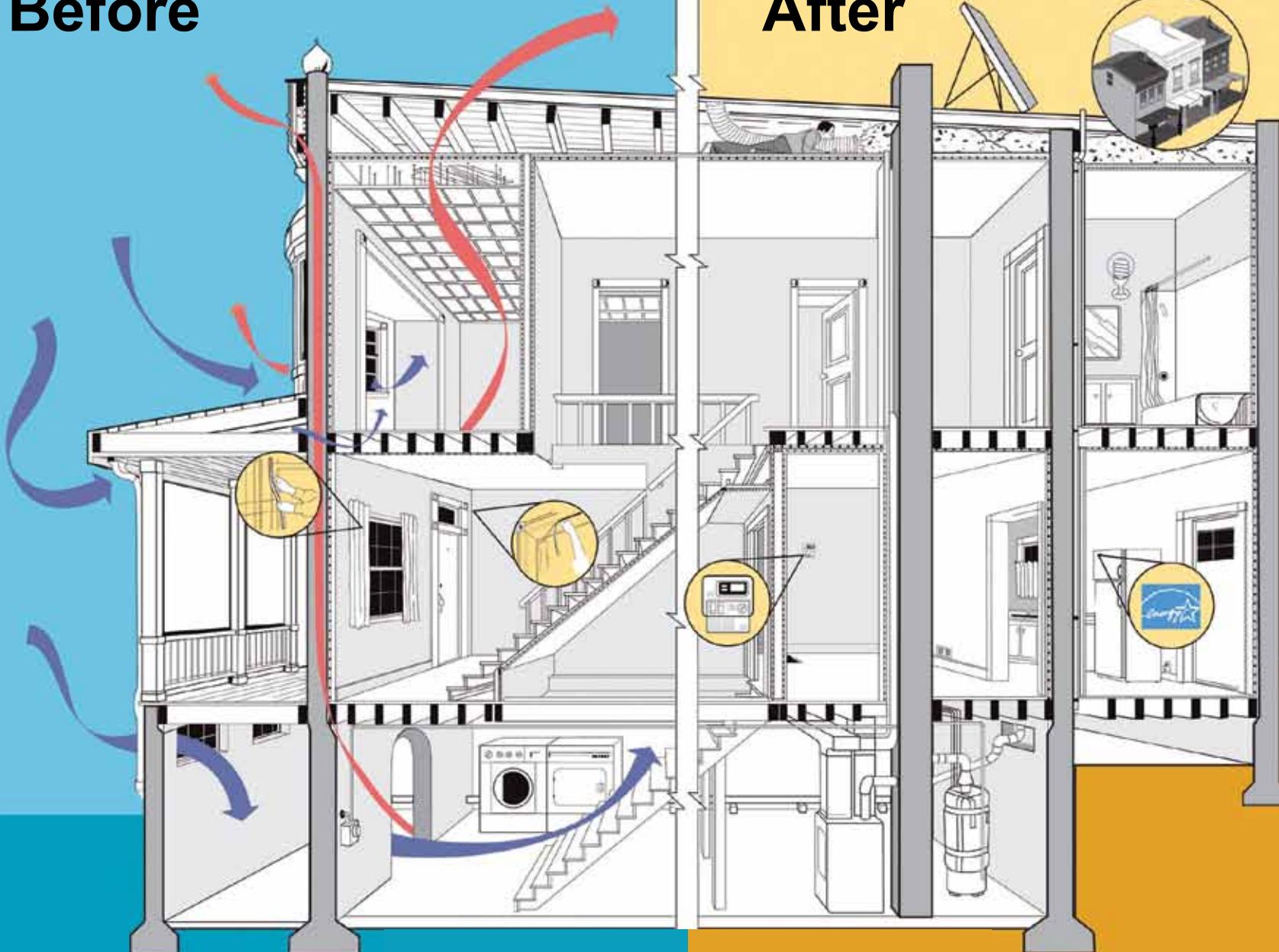
Reduce your need for electric space heaters. Wear winter clothing in your home during winter.



Keep your thermostat temperature at 74° in the summer and 68° in the winter.

Before

After



Please visit www.ecasavesenergy.org for more information on how to save energy and money!