

The PHA Experience



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 21

A Community Newspaper for and About Residents

July 2009

Residents breathe easy with the Healthy Homes program

The Philadelphia Housing Authority is the only housing authority to receive a prestigious "Healthy Homes" grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. PHA faced tough competition for the grant, as it is also one of only five recipients in the country to be chosen for the award. It is the second time PHA has won a grant.

PHA's Executive Director Carl Greene was invited to participate in the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes in Washington D.C. on June 9. He met briefly with Acting Surgeon General Steven Galson at the event, which sought to address the serious issue of home-related preventable illnesses like asthma and lead poisoning.

The grant will have a significant impact on PHA's own mission to ensure that our children are healthy and that families are living in safe homes. The



PHA Executive Director Carl Greene and Acting U.S. Surgeon General Steven Galson mark PHA's selection as the only housing authority in the nation to receive a "Healthy Homes" grant. Greene participated in the Surgeon General's Call to Action To Promote Healthy Homes in Washington. The \$871,664 "Healthy Homes" federal grant is aimed at reducing the causes of asthma, lead poisoning, and allergies in children of low-income families.

\$871,664 grant will fund the second round of the Healthy Homes program,

which is aimed at correcting health and safety hazards in the home that might

cause or exacerbate asthma attacks. Asthma triggers that can be found around the house include mold, pet dander, pesticides and tobacco smoke.

"It is a great honor to receive this grant and, more importantly, it is a great boost to supporting healthy homes in Philadelphia. We appreciate the administration recognizing our effort to create a healthier environment for children living in public housing and look forward to continuing this important work," said Greene.

PHA will partner with both Tenant Support Services, Inc. and the Drexel University School of Public Health for the program. TSSI will hire six residents to work as outreach workers and inspectors. Drexel will then teach them the necessary skills in analysis and interviews. In addition, Drexel will be

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Pre-Apprenticeship grad says faith makes a difference

Ellen Brown Bronson believes her success as a carpenter is all part of a divine plan.

Bronson, 24, is the first woman from PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship program to be named a foreman. Now, she leads a scattered sites repair crew. She and her husband are in the process of buying their own home. And she's attending Strayer University in pursuit of a business degree so she can start her own construction business.

The future did not always look so bright for Ellen. She dropped out of Ben Franklin High School in her junior year to help support her family. Her mother had an addiction problem and she had no father. She entered the Job Corps program.

"High school wasn't doing it for me. Job Corps gave me a career and also I got my GED," she says.

Bronson received her first lessons in carpentry through Job Corps and then heard about the Pre-Apprenticeship program in



"I love seeing things go from nothing. I love seeing the end of my work," Ellen Brown Bronson says. "One day I want to build my own home with the help of my husband. I want to know all aspects of the construction field and I want to own my own construction business."

2002. She graduated that December and passed the entrance exam for the Carpenter Union.

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PHA and City join forces to help the homeless

In the living room of Mark Jackson's Hill Creek home are photographs of him standing with PHA Executive Director Carl Greene and Mayor Michael Nutter in front of City Hall.

The pictures are a symbol of just how far Mark has come. Not too long ago, he was living with his grandson Christopher in shelters and transitional housing. Now, he has a permanent place to call his own.

A year ago, the Philadelphia Housing Authority established a historic partnership with the City of Philadelphia to address the problem of homelessness.

On May 28, Mayor Nutter and Mr. Greene publicly praised the initiative's successes so far. Since it was launched, Philadelphia has seen a 4.4% decrease in the city's overall homeless population, which includes the number of people in shelters and on the streets.



Mark Jackson and his grandson Christopher in the living room of their Hill Creek home. Of his new PHA home, Jackson says, "This was the house in my mind."

PHA provided 300 units in various developments for families and an additional 200 housing vouchers.

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CLASSES STARTING NOW. CALL TO REGISTER!

FREE HELP
WITH
YOUR
FINANCES.



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Carl R. Greene, Executive Director

FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL
215.684.0393
or see your manager

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.

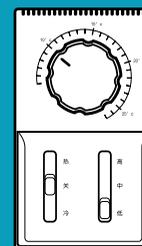
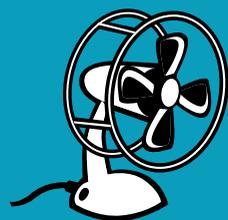
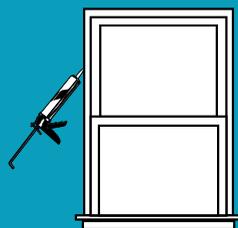
Evening and Saturday classes available.

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 for more information on how to save energy and money.





Ludlow & Nellie Reynolds: award winning developments



Executive Director Carl Greene made a presentation on the Ludlow development to judges at the National Development Council competition in May. Ludlow received the second place award in the Affordable Housing Development category.

PHA residents at Ludlow and Nellie Reynolds have something new to be proud of: they live in award winning developments.

The National Development Council has recognized Ludlow as one of the nation's best affordable housing neighborhoods in America.

The Council, the oldest national nonprofit community development organization in the U.S., recognized Ludlow at the NDC Academy in Washington, DC, in May. Ludlow received the second place award in the Affordable Housing Development category.

"We have seen that building new homes also means breathing new life into Philadelphia's people and communities. Quality housing and strong neighborhoods are our product, so recognition from the National Development Council is gratifying and serves as validation of the work we do," said PHA Executive Director Carl R. Greene.

PHA set an example at Ludlow for developers of affordable housing by building 60 homes certified to the federal ENERGY STAR standard. PHA is the first housing authority in Pennsylvania to build homes to that standard.

In early June, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania recognized Ludlow and Nellie Reynolds Gardens during the Commonwealth Awards as "Smart Growth" developments that are environmentally friendly, energy efficient, and walkable. PHA was the only housing authority recognized at the Commonwealth Awards.

The judges believe that PHA is a model for public housing authorities around the state as they gave Bronze Awards to both sites. They felt that the energy efficient homes at Ludlow lower the cost of maintaining them, while improving the overall energy efficiency of the neighborhood. For Nellie Reynolds, the judges liked the use of recycled materials used to build the site and its "green roof." They said the senior site demonstrates PHA's commitment to sustaining the environment.



Judges for the Commonwealth Awards felt that the energy efficient homes at Ludlow lower the cost of maintaining them, while improving the overall energy efficiency of the neighborhood.



PHA received Bronze Awards for its Nellie Reynolds Gardens and Ludlow Scattered Sites developments at the Commonwealth Awards ceremonies. Shown here are (from left) Eric Menzer, Chair, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Board of Directors, Judith Schwank, President of 10,000 Friends, Prof. Gary Hack, Jury Chair, Former Dean, School of Design, UPenn, and PHA's General Manager Program Development and Design Michael Johns.

Residents, experts to gather for National Resident Empowerment Conference

The 8th Annual National Resident Empowerment Conference will be held August 26 through 30 at the Sheraton Hotel in Center City. Public housing residents from all over the country will gather for five days of workshops and discussions.

Speakers will include residents, public housing officials, and experts in the housing industry.

Philadelphia Housing Authority Executive Director Carl Greene and Tenant Support Services Director Asia Coney are scheduled to give this year's opening remarks and welcome visitors to the city with Mayor Michael Nutter and former Mayor John F. Street, who serves as Chairman of the PHA Board.

The conference was established to keep residents informed of

programming that is available to them, HUD regulations that directly affect their lives, and changes in the housing authority. Workshop topics range from the implementation of youth initiatives to the issue of aging in place.

Partner banks will be present to assist residents interested in securing a mortgage. Other financial institutions will also provide attendees with budgeting tips and advice on retirement plans.

The goal of the conference is to empower residents by giving them the tools they need to be self-sufficient, which is TSSI's overall mission.

"We're looking forward to sharing additional information and bringing together some of the most talented

individuals in the field and leaders from around the country to educate residents," said Director Coney.

This year's conference is particularly special, as Tenant Support Services will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary in September. TSSI will be marking this milestone with a champagne celebration at the event.

Between 300 - 400 participants are expected to attend this year's conference. In the past, visitors have come from as far away as Scotland.

Registration forms and informational flyers were mailed out to residents in January. For more information, contact Jeanette Jacobs at 215-684-1016.



A scene from last year's Resident Empowerment Conference. Public housing residents from all over the country gathered for workshops and discussions.

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.



Community Partners offers expanded list of programs



Keishla Woods (left), Life Skills Instructor at OIC, talks with Tinze James (right) at the Community Partners Program Awareness and Recruitment Day at the John F. Street Community Center. Looking on is Kim Bryant (center), an OIC student. James told The PHA Experience that she's interested in the hospitality training offered by OIC.

The newly expanded Community Partners Program held an awareness and recruitment day for residents in late June. Three additional programs are now being offered, raising the total from 13 to 16. There are several exciting, new choices for residents who want to improve their job and life skills as they work toward self-sufficiency.

"This is the best set of offerings that we've ever had," said PHA General Manager of Workforce Development

Enrico Crispo. "These are serious career-focused opportunities. It's a great opportunity for all PHA residents, especially for job-related programs that offer internships or job placement or both."

Jewish Employment Vocational Services (JEVS), which will continue to offer its popular home repair courses to residents, is also offering courses that will lead to state certification in human services. Participants will learn the skills

necessary to work with at-risk populations. The program takes six months to complete, provides 38 hours of college credit, offers internships and helps residents find work in this field.

Another new offering is call center training. Residents enrolled in this program will gain skills useful in many customer service positions that can be applied to virtually any job. Managers and human resource people from local businesses take part in some of the training and offer networking opportunities.

Residents interested in auto mechanics can now take training at Community College of Philadelphia for automotive repair and inspection. Graduates of the program will receive certification by the Ford Motor Company and be recognized officially for inspection and repair of vehicles.

Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) has added a communications technology program that will train students in fiber optics, home telecommunications, and expanding old-style copper cables. Companies such as Verizon and Comcast are looking for people with these skills. Residents who graduate from the program will receive national certification in communications technology, or C-Tech, which opens the door to jobs of the future. OIC

is also offering an administrative assistant program, something formerly handled by Community College of Philadelphia.

For those residents who need to improve math, reading and writing skills, the Center for Literacy will offer training. The course work includes training and preparation to take and pass the GED test.

Smith & Solomon has joined the Community Partners Program and offers residents the training to receive a Commercial Driver's License to operate big rigs or OSHA certification for forklift driving. The company works with over 300 employers to help its graduates find jobs.

For more information on the Community Partners Programs, please contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator (see page 12).



Jerel Brooks, PHA Computer Technology Coordinator, explains the Neighborhood Networks program to Calvin Cunningham during the Community Partner Programs Awareness and Recruitment Day at the John F. Street Community Center. Many PHA residents need to acquire basic computer skills so they can prepare a resume and become more employable.



A message from the Executive Director



I recently enjoyed a very gratifying experience, reviewing the results of the annual PHA Resident Satisfaction Survey. This is the one opportunity we get each year to look at a comprehensive report on how good a job you think we're doing.

Perhaps the most important question we ask each year in the survey is: How satisfied are you with your home? A resounding 94% of you told us you are satisfied or very satisfied with your house or apartment. Last year, the figure was 88%.

One trend we have noticed is that satisfaction levels at our newer sites were extremely high while

the scores at some of our older sites were slightly lower. This year, as many of you know, we have been aggressively addressing maintenance and weatherization issues, investing more of our resources into those areas.

We want to be sure that every one of our properties, no matter its age, remains in excellent condition and is energy efficient. When you call for a repair you should expect to be treated courteously and professionally. The survey indicates that has been your experience. 94% of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the way they were treated by the repair person.

I was disappointed, however, to see that only 81% said they were happy with how well the repairs were done. That's a drop-off from past years, and something we are correcting. While we made thousands more repairs in the past year, we know we can't allow the quality of our service to you to erode.

I want to thank the hundreds of families who took the time to respond to the survey. All of us who work at PHA are reinvigorated by your level of satisfaction and appreciation of the product and service we provide. We are also grateful for the good care most of you take of your homes. That helps us serve you better.

The positive relationship between PHA and our customers is a big reason public housing in Philadelphia is often the best housing in the neighborhood. We look forward to continuing to work with you to keep our communities strong.

Carl R. Greene

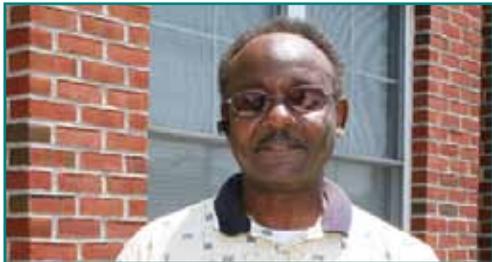


“What are your plans for the summer?”



Audrey Darien
-Blackwell Homes

“Planning our annual block party this summer and spending time caring for the garden in front of my house.”



Issam Fadul
-Blackwell Homes

“Going overseas this summer to Sudan for a month to visit family.”



Wanda Goodbread
-Blackwell Homes

“Trying to make our block more beautiful, taking pleasure in the wonderful warm weather and just enjoying being alive.”



Michelle Harrison and son
-Blackwell Homes

“Taking a few trips to Wildwood, relaxing, barbecuing, just trying to enjoy the summer.”



Lynn Laville
-Blackwell Homes

“Going to take classes this summer so I can eventually become a teacher. Also, going to take my children to an amusement park. And, of course, going to take care of all my plants.”



Randy Sewell
-Blackwell Homes

“This summer I’ll be working hard and perhaps take a visit to Myrtle Beach to get away.”



Louise Washington
- Mt. Olivet

“Going to enjoy summer at home. I am blessed that my relatives visit me since I can’t get around much anymore.”

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



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations



Pre-Apprenticeship grad has new vision of himself and his future

Twenty-five-year-old Parrin Terry has seen a lot in his short life and it has changed his view of the world and himself.

Terry, a Pre-Apprenticeship graduate who returned from military duty in Iraq and Afghanistan in February, says he has learned to respect life more, to

treat people better and to have a better outlook. Nearly two years in a war zone will do that to you.

life as a joke, wasting time. In the military, they taught me to be on time for everything. One second can cost you your life," he said.

family's house that I didn't know I could be able to fix," he said. "You're actually helping somebody and they're happy at the end of the day."

Some readers may remember Parrin Terry from a profile in the November 2007 edition of *The PHA Experience*. Parrin left for Afghanistan on Thanksgiving Eve 2006. Before leaving, he spoke to participants of the Pre-Apprenticeship program, telling them how it took him from a life of dead-ends to one with career track possibilities. The Army was going to enhance those possibilities. And, it did in a way he didn't expect.

After his discharge from the Army in February, Terry went back to the Pre-Apprenticeship Program and took the test for the Plumbers Union. He passed and now works as an apprentice with Local 690, a group that supplies PHA with plumbers for the Maintenance WAVE (Weatherization and Value Enhancement) program at various sites.

Terry began his latest apprenticeship in April and has just less than four years before he receives his journeyman's card, but he is already thinking ahead. Eventually, he'd like to return to school for training in criminal justice and work as a probation officer to help troubled youth. Terry imagines buying a home and turning it into a center for special programs because "the youth have nowhere to go" as programs are cut for budgetary reasons.

Parrin had worked as a plasterer after graduating from the Pre-Apprenticeship program in June 2003. He joined the Army to get training in electronics, so he could work in that field. That promise never materialized, but the habits he developed in the military changed his life forever.

Parrin believes the military has made him a better apprentice this time around. He now takes the initiative to do things when he arrives at work in the morning. Parrin wants to be known as a hard worker with values, and he enjoys his job.

Parrin Terry says before he served in the military he could never have imagined trying to develop one career for himself while dreaming about a second one. But, life in a war-torn area will change the way you think about yourself and the opportunities you have.

"It taught me to respect life a thousand times more than I did. I used to take

"There's always something to look forward to. Things that I always saw in my own house or someone in my



"There's always something to look forward to. Things that I always saw in my own house or someone in my family's house that I didn't know I could be able to fix," Parrin Terry said. "You're actually helping somebody and they're happy at the end of the day."

Emlen Arms resident recycles art for all to enjoy

Jean Hodge has a knack for turning trash into something useful.

Ms. Hodge, 64, explained how the project came about, saying, "They had an old picture in the tenant council room that they were going to throw out so they could put a new one up, so I said, 'Let me have it and see what I can do with it.'"

"People always said that I can take trash and make something out of it," she said, "The frame and canvas were in good shape—no holes, so I just painted over top of the flower that was already there."

Jean created a beautiful piece of art from a painting she salvaged at her residence, Emlen Arms. Ms. Hodge's resourceful approach to art addresses significant environmental and economic concerns. By reusing materials, Ms. Hodge helped eliminate waste and found an inexpensive way to express her creativity.

Her imaginative and practical style is something for which Jean says she's often been recognized.

Senior Program Manager, Charmaine Morton, said "I was very impressed with her creativity in developing such a great picture—it's very expressive."

Ms. Hodge repainted the canvas, turning the outdated painting into a more modern abstract piece. According to Jean, the picture took her about an hour and a half to redo.

Before retiring, Jean was employed by Coca Cola as a forklift operator. She has no formal artistic training.

"It's a hobby, just something I like to do," she said. "It just so happens that it turned out pretty good."

Ms. Hodge also makes use of her artistic touch around the holidays, helping with decorations. For those who admire her work and wonder when she will create another piece of art, Jean has a simple response: "Whenever I get some more junk."

Ms. Hodge's art hangs in the lobby of Emlen Arms for the enjoyment of visitors and residents alike.



Amateur artist Jean Hodge proudly stands in front of her painting which hangs in the lobby of Emlen Arms. "It's a hobby, just something I like to do," she said, "it just so happens that it turned out pretty good."

The PHA Pre-Apprenticeship Program for Construction Trades is now accepting applicants for its 22nd 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.





This past spring was filled

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



Residents of Nellie Reynolds Gardens enjoyed a special Mother's Day celebration together in the sun-bathed atrium of the building.



Housing Choice Voucher residents attended a PHA Homeownership Seminar at the John F. Street Community Center to learn more about the homeownership process and to talk to realtors and bank representatives about mortgages.



PHA held a series of open houses in June to share with senior residents in the neighborhood information about the upcoming Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services.



PHA Police Officer Sylvia Knuckles and Kelly Williams, Administrator of the Adult Day Center at NRG, manned the PHA booth at this year's Gospel Fest, sharing information about the DARE and GREAT programs with kids and their parents.

with memorable moments!

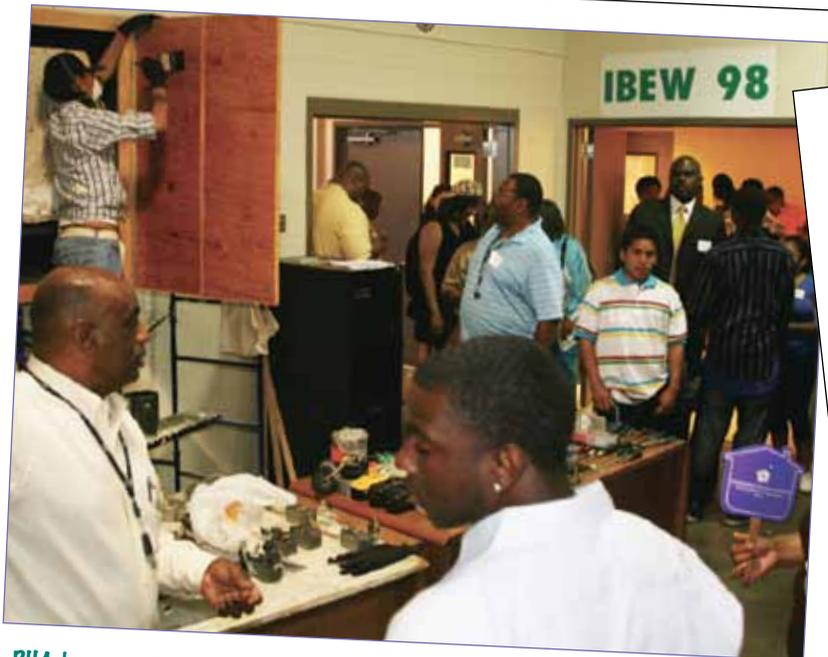
PHA's fun-filled events in photos. How many do you remember?



Seniors enjoyed a delicious home-cooked meal in the community center of Champlost Homes.



The luncheon in June was organized by Champlost's Senior Committee and sponsored by the Tenant Council as a belated Mother's Day celebration.



PHA hosted visitors from the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles in June. The group, which included residents, community leaders, and housing authority officials, were given a tour of several developments and the services PHA offers to its residents.



The competition was fierce as seniors raced to the finish line at Wilson Park's annual Sounds of Summer and Wheelchair Race.



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, August 12,

Thursday, September 17 & Thursday,

October 22 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Budgeting & Money Management

Wednesday, August 19, Thursday,

September 24 & Thursday, October 29

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, September 19 &

Saturday, October 17

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

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Budgeting & Money Management

Saturday, September 26 &

Saturday, October 24

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 get tips on how to pass home inspection.



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations



Students show they're not too young to start thinking green

Students from a West Philadelphia school showed that they really do understand how to save energy and the environment as they were awarded first prize in PHA's inaugural Energy Conservation Poster contest.

The fifth graders at Penn Alexander School designed the award-winning poster titled "Heading Toward a Greener Philadelphia One Step at a Time." The students were

recognized in a special ceremony at their school in mid-June, received certificates and had their photo taken with their winning poster.

The contest was open to all fifth grade science students in Philadelphia public schools. They were asked to illustrate energy conservation and a more sustainable future for Philadelphia. Students from 17 schools created a total of 30 posters.

"It is inspiring to see the dedication and passion shown by the students at Penn Alexander. At this age they already understand how important it is to conserve energy and protect our environment, and how each person can play a role in that effort. I congratulate them for their winning design and thank them for their hard work and commitment," said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene.

PHA sponsored the contest along with the Philadelphia School District to educate and empower students to influence their families and people in their neighborhoods to save energy and care for the environment. This reflects PHA's emphasis on eco-friendly construction techniques, and the agency's belief that creating a cleaner environment is an issue that affects everyone.

"The earlier we can begin delivering the right messages about conserving energy and being eco-friendly, the greater impact we can have on



A student at John Paul Jones Middle School, which placed second in the contest, works on a poster entry.

creating a more sustainable future for Philadelphia. These students show that even our young people can play a positive role in this endeavor," Greene said.

The winning poster will be reproduced and distributed throughout the Philadelphia School District. In addition, the image will be interpreted for a mural at the new Green Energy Education

Center of the Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA), through a partnership with ECA and the Mural Arts Program.

A panel of five judges including a representative from PHA, the Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA), Delaware Valley Earth Force, The Mural Arts Program and the Clinton Climate Initiative selected the winning designs.



PHA's Assistant Executive Director, Carolyn Carter, joined Penn Alexander's class with the winning poster during the award ceremony.

New media arts high school opens for former high school dropouts

In November, Youth Empowerment Services (YES) will open the doors to its new alternative high school—the Center for Art, Media and Communication or CAMaC.

The school will serve 100 students between the ages of 16 and 21 who have dropped out of school. CAMaC offers them a chance to start wherever they are in their high school education and take the number of courses necessary to receive their high school diploma. In addition, students will be prepared for jobs and post-secondary education.

Like YES's other programs, the new school will emphasize media arts and encourage its students' creativity and artistic talent.

YES received approval from the Philadelphia School Reform Commission on April 22, but Executive Director Taylor Frome has been thinking of establishing a school like this since 2001.

"We discovered that media is an effective way to get students who dropped out excited about learning.



YES students work with a film crew in the program's digital media studio. YES's new alternative school will feature a number of media labs.

It's a great thing to have a school built around this," said Frome

Students will have access to a number of media labs including studios for video production, music production, website design, mural arts and graphic design.

Designing school programs that people want to attend is YES's particular area of expertise. Quite a few things will set CAMaC apart from the traditional high school model. Director Frome credits both the positive environment and the supportive peer group.

"It's also a really fun school. Students are learning a lot while having a good time. And everyone is here voluntarily," she said. "They made a choice and decided to come back."

CAMaC will be located at 2701 N. Broad Street, near the intersection of Broad and Lehigh Avenues.

YES will begin taking applications for the school in September. For more information, email camac@yesphilly.org or call Deborah Harris at (215) 769-0340, extension 233.

A garden flourishes at John F. Street Comm Ctr.

Some kids might turn their noses at broccoli, but the kids at the Boys and Girls Club at the John F. Street Community Center can't get enough of it. In fact, they're growing it themselves—along with tomatoes, peppers, sunflowers and eggplants.

Under the direction of Mary Green, a public health nurse at the neighboring 11th Street Health Clinic and part-time instructor at the Drexel University School of Nursing, they have been helping to cultivate a vegetable garden behind the community center at 11th and Poplar.

Green loves working with the kids, who are all enthusiastic about this new project. She came to the clinic last September and, in her words, "I was always interested in doing community service and the kids are really excited about growing things. They're just a riot."

Teens4Good, a community service organization that runs 5 other "urban farms" throughout the city, dug the original plots and maintains the garden. In May, they designated two plots for the kids at the Boys and Girls



Mary Green from the 11th Street Health Clinic offers the kids from the Boys and Girls Club a taste of fresh broccoli from the garden growing behind the community center.

Club. They planted vegetable seedlings in a terrarium before transplanting them outdoors.

The garden is a great opportunity for kids living in the city to get their hands dirty and learn about gardening and good nutrition.



Philadelphia Department of Public Health Public Health Alert—H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu)

What is H1N1?

A new type of flu called H1N1 or swine flu has started to make people sick. It is a disease like regular (seasonal) flu. This virus came from a virus that usually makes pigs sick. Many countries around the world, including the United States, have H1N1 cases.

How is it spread?

You cannot get H1N1 from eating pork or pork products. H1N1 is spread the same way that regular flu spreads: from person to person through coughing or sneezing of sick people. Sometimes people can get the flu by touching something like a door knob that has flu germs on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes before washing their hands.

Protecting yourself and others from H1N1

Stay home when you are sick. When you are sick, stay home from work and

school to protect others from getting sick. Wear a facemask or handkerchief to cover your mouth and nose if you have to go out.

Cover your cough. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw away the tissue.

Do not allow visitors. Ask friends and family not to visit while someone is sick at home.

Signs and Symptoms

H1N1 symptoms are like the symptoms of regular flu.

- Headaches
- Body pain
- Tiredness
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Coughing
- Fever
- Chills

See a doctor if you have a high fever, trouble breathing or cannot keep food or liquids down.

Preventing H1N1

Wash your hands! It will help protect you from germs.

Avoid being around sick people. You can get the flu if a sick person coughs or sneezes around you.

Try not to touch your face. Germs spread when a person touches something that has germs on it and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth.

Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, manage your stress, drink fluids and eat healthy.

For more information:
www.phila.gov/health and
www.CDC.gov

Supreme Court nominee is a public housing success story



President Barack Obama's recent Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor's story is one made only in America.

A Bronx native, Federal Judge Sotomayor spent her early years in New York public housing. She first set foot in the Bronxdale Housing Projects, located in the Soundview section of the Bronx, in 1957 – humble beginnings for a woman of Sotomayor's esteem.

Some of her fondest memories as a child include submerging herself in Nancy Drew detective mysteries, which lead to dreams of a career as a

police detective. An episode of Perry Mason shifted the young reader's career aspirations to the field of law.

While living in NY public housing, Sotomayor attended the prestigious Cardinal Spellman High School, where she was the valedictorian of her graduating class. Princeton University awarded the high school standout with a full scholarship. Though initially intimidated by the few women and Latinos at the university, Sotomayor went on to graduate summa cum laude.

Yale Law School followed Princeton on the judge's academic path. A full scholarship helped Sotomayor make it all the way to the New York Bar. Fresh out of law school in 1979, she began her legal career as an Assistant District Attorney in New York County. Over the next 18 years, Sotomayor would hold various positions, including Federal District Judge of New York State's Southern District and board member of The State of New York Mortgage Agency, where she consistently fought for the rights of the impoverished to secure affordable housing.

Nearly two decades of diligent legal work was capped in 1997 with President Clinton's nomination of Sotomayor for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

If Sotomayor's appointment is confirmed by the Senate, she will be the first Hispanic justice on the Supreme Court.



Sonia Sotomayor with her parents in NY public housing project.

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Summer Food for the body and the mind



DaeShaun Mays takes part in PHA's Summer Food Program at Westpark. He is shown here enjoying a healthy and nutritious hot lunch in the development's community center.



PHA's Summer Food Program ensures that kids have a healthy, nutritious lunch. All eligible children ages 18 and under are able to receive free breakfast or a snack and lunch.

PHA's Summer Food Program is underway at 21 sites across the city offering children nourishment for their bodies and minds. Young PHA residents and children from surrounding neighborhoods receive a good breakfast and lunch and lessons on good nutrition.

The program has been offered since 1981, serving breakfast and lunch for school age children to make up for meals ordinarily provided at school. Last year, 41,000 meals were served, but increased participation is anticipated this year due to hardship caused by the recession and expansion of the program.

All eligible children ages 18 and under are able to receive free breakfast or a snack and lunch through Friday, August 21. The program operates Monday to Friday from 8am to 2pm.

PHA Executive Director Carl Greene said the Summer Food Program is part of a long-term commitment by the agency to improve the lives of its residents.

"Summer Food is our commitment to keeping our residents healthy with well balanced, nutritious meals. This year, more importantly, we want to make sure that people get the proper diet that they need. We're in a bad economy now. This is just one program that PHA will continue to offer in the lives of our residents," he said.

Kajet Washington, Coordinator of Economic Programs for PHA, said Summer Food is more important than ever.

"Oftentimes, school lunches are one of the meals that kids are sure to get. Since school is out, children will at

least get two meals, breakfast and lunch. Some of the lunches are hot meals," she said.

There is also an emphasis on providing children with nutritious foods. No processed meats are used in the lunches, which feature vegetables and fruit.

If children do not live near a PHA site, they can go to a neighboring site or PHA will refer them to a city Department of Recreation site that offers similar meals.

People who want more information about the program can contact PHA at (215) 684-4366.

Spend this summer with a good book: PHA offers reading workshops for families

PHA will offer two fun-filled reading programs for families starting in August, thanks to the Free Library. The workshops focus on pre-school and school-aged children. A group of PHA residents will help coordinate the program at each site for the library volunteers as they conduct the reading programs, "Books Aloud" and the "School Success." Both programs focus on teaching parents skills and activities for reading.

Because literacy skills are developed long before children learn to read, the single best way to ensure their success is reading out loud. The workshop, "Books Aloud," brings parents and pre-school children together, providing parents with tips to successfully read out loud to their young ones.

The "School Success" workshop is geared toward parents with school-aged children. In this workshop, parents learn how to encourage their

children to read aloud. This can be a bonding experience, especially if you select a book that you both enjoy. The workshop also explains the benefits of the after school programs at the library. The Free Library wants everyone to know that they have many resources that can be helpful and rewarding for both parents and children.

The literacy program will run from August 17 to October 16. The workshops will be offered twice at each PHA location (listed below). Free books will be given to all workshop participants. In addition, each family will be invited to the Central Library to see a "Sundays on Stage Program" that includes music, dance and storytelling.

Help your children succeed through participating in these free workshops. A meeting will be held at each site mid-summer to sign up, coordinated by resident leaders. To get more

information about these programs, please call Carla Fleming at (215) 684-3959.

Reading Program Sites:

- Harrison Plaza
- John F. Street Center
- Raymond Rosen
- Spring Garden
- West Park
- Wilson Park

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

Eagles Book Mobile tackles reading



Once again, the Eagles Book Mobile will visit a few PHA sites this summer. At each stop, a larger-than-life character named Storybook Man will entertain the children and read them books aloud. Afterward, each child can choose a free new book to take home.

The Eagles Book Mobile is part of Eagles Youth Partnership. Founded in 1995, they serve over 50,000 low-income children in the Greater Philadelphia area with a focus on health and education.

The Eagles are holding their first Flight Night at Lincoln Financial Field on August 2 to raise money to support the Book Mobile. PHA is a proud sponsor of the event. The Eagles had previously held an annual carnival and auction to raise money.

Bring the Book Mobile to your community center this August! Have your resident leader contact Anne Martinez at (215) 684-4139 today.



Pre-Apprenticeship grad's faith

continued from page 1

For the next two years, Ellen worked for PHA. Then, she worked a string of private construction jobs for several years until coming back to work on the agency's Maintenance Mania program, which dramatically cut the backlog of work orders at both conventional and scattered sites. After the Maintenance WAVE (Weatherization and Value Enhancement) program began, Ellen became a foreman. She is a member of Carpenters Local 1073, one of the unions with which PHA contracts for the ongoing repair work.

Bronson says she was surprised when she was asked to become a foreman, but believes it's all part of a divine plan. She feels that faith, vision, and determination have gotten her to the career and the life she wants to live. Ellen now supervises some of the people who mentored her and she is quick to praise them, saying she hasn't forgotten where she came from.

As for her career in carpentry, Bronson says it gives her a sense of accomplishment and pride.

"I love seeing things go from nothing. I

love seeing the end of my work," she says. "One day I want to build my own home with the help of my husband. I want to know all aspects of the construction field and I want to own my own construction business."

Bronson urges those residents who have the opportunity to take advantage of the Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

"It's possible. Never give up. Keep going. Everybody hears about that four-year apprenticeship and they shut down. Time flies. If I can do it, you can do it," Bronson said.

Healthy Homes

continued from page 1

responsible for quality assurance, program evaluation and documentation of the project's results and findings.

Over a period of seven months, outreach workers will conduct a number of home visits and phone calls. Families will be asked to answer a series of health surveys and learn different ways to help address—and reduce—asthma triggers found in their homes. As part of the process, inspectors will conduct a

walk-through of the home with the residents, take dust samples, measure particles in the air and measure the amount of water in the walls. Surveys are repeated to see if improvements are made in the child's health as a result of the visits.

This summer, PHA will look for 200 families who are part of the Housing Choice Voucher Program or live in scattered site housing to volunteer in the program. To qualify, households must have children under the age of 6 who have been clinically diagnosed with asthma.

Housing the Homeless

continued from page 1

"This program is a shining example of what can be achieved when tough challenges are viewed as common goals," said Mr. Greene. "We have seen that when we join efforts we can address great needs, and we look forward to continuing this very important work."

The program not only provides people with a roof over their heads, but services to help them get back on their feet and remain self-sufficient, such as financial counseling, drug rehabilitation, and educational programs.

But, both the city and PHA agree—there is more work to do.

This year, PHA will provide another 500 housing opportunities for homeless families and individuals—a combination of public housing and vouchers.

Mark Jackson was one of the people attending the announcement and he can attest to how the initiative has changed his life.

"I was really, really happy. I felt like I was really part of something. I have never been so proud of myself than to have been here," Mark said, pointing to the pictures from the event.

Jackson, who is 58, grew up in the Germantown area where gangs and violence were prevalent.

He went on to drive tractor-trailers for 30 years, but a disability left him unable to work. In 2003, he started living from house to house, staying with friends and family. For a while, he stayed on the streets.

In December 2006, he decided that he had enough and took Christopher with him downtown to the Department of Health and Human Services.

"I'm a proud man. Going to a shelter was something that took a lot for me to submit myself to. But I had to do what I had to do," said Jackson.

He was eventually placed at Stenton Family Manor where he stayed for six months and saved up money. Despite his hardships, Jackson maintained a positive attitude and kept an image of his dream house in mind.

"I believe the mind is very powerful," he said. "If you can think it in your mind, you can hold it in your hand."

While Jackson and his grandson were living in transitional housing, he received a letter from PHA telling him that he had reached the top of the waitlist and asking him to come in for home selection. When his name was called first to select a home, he almost cried.

"This was the house in my mind with the bush in the front. I had this house for years but we hadn't met up yet. But when I put it out in the universe, it came back with a bush, a bigger bush, a big tree and all of this land," he beamed. "This is really, really mine."

While Mr. Jackson has achieved his dream of having a permanent home, he still wants to do more. He'd like to speak at shelters, particularly men's shelters, and encourage those who have been where he has been and change their way of thinking.

"I want to give them the motivation to take the steps I've taken, to go down the roads I've been down and end up like me," he concluded.

Philadelphia Housing Authority SENIOR CALENDAR

JULY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 29 th | Focus Group with Dr. Anne Slaughter
Wilson Park Community Room – 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. |
| 31 st | Birthday Parties of the Month Celebrations
Wilson Park, Cassie Holly and Liddonfield Senior Centers – 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. |

AUGUST

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 3 rd | Historic City Tour and Big Duck Ride Of Waterfront with Lunch
Penns Landing Port – 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. |
| 5 th | First Annual Watermelon Festival
Wilson Park Grounds – 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. |
| 13 th | "Jazz and Blues At The Park" (A Candlelight Dinner Affair)
Wilson Park Community Room – 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. |
| 19 th | C.V.S. Pharmacy Drug Interaction Workshop
Liddonfield Senior Center – T.B.A |
| 21 st | Mini-Health Screening (Blood Pressure Screenings and Hearing Tests)
Wilson Park Community Room – 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. |

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 4 th - 8 th | Liddonfield Overnight Trip
Wildwood, New Jersey – T.B.A |
| 9 th | Ice Cream Social
Emlen Arms – T.B.A |
| 11 th | Philadelphia Housing Authority Senior Health Fair (Let's Get Physical)
Location: John F. Street Community Center – T.B.A |
| 16 th | Bensalem Casino Bus Trip and Buffet Luncheon (Wilson Park)
Bensalem, PA – 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. |
| 24 th | SOWN Support Group
Liddonfield Senior Center – T.B.A |



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Maintenance WAVE makes residents' homes more energy efficient

Residents' homes will be more comfortable and energy efficient thanks to PHA's Maintenance WAVE. The letters stand for Weatherization and Value Enhancement, and the program is aimed at saving energy and making needed improvements to PHA properties.

Since early March, WAVE crews have converged on a number of older conventional sites and scattered sites, one at a time, to upgrade the properties. They have plugged energy leaks, fixed plumbing problems, installed energy efficient lighting, and checked for possible electrical hazards. PHA has a commitment to making housing more energy efficient and protecting the environment, while also making needed repairs.

"This is a unique approach that was developed to most efficiently make repairs while also bringing weatherization improvements to our sites. These repairs and upgrades are eco-friendly and reduce costs by decreasing energy and water use. It has the added benefit of creating jobs during this economic downturn," said PHA Executive Director Carl Greene.

The WAVE employs carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and glaziers in four teams. Two teams numbering around 35 people each handle orders at conventional sites, while two smaller teams of around 7 people each handle scattered sites.

Teams work seven days a week, even completing upgrades at residents' homes on weekends. Team members work shifts of 10 hours a day, four days a week. Graduates of PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program are included on the teams, providing employment and experience for PHA residents.

The WAVE program is very efficient, according to Greg Hampson, PHA Executive General Manager of Development.

"We visit a site before WAVE crews ever arrive to do their work. We go into every unit and common areas, and inspect for anything that's broken or in need of maintenance. Then, we generate the work orders for the site," he said.



Graduates of PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship Program are included on the WAVE teams, providing employment and experience for PHA residents. These two graduates are shown repairing a floor in a home at Oxford Village.



Crew members receive their work orders and materials at the truck shown in this photo at Oxford Village.

Hampson said once the site visit is complete, materials are ordered and the WAVE crew swarms the site. No time is lost because everything is in place, including a computerized mobile unit at the site where crews get their work orders.

Jen Ragen, a PHA Assistant Regional Manager, supervises the WAVE crews at those sites. She estimated that from 100 to 200 work orders are completed each day, depending upon the size and complexity of the job.

Next up, PHA hopes to use newly available weatherization funds to expand its Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program and further support green job creation and retention.

Prison Runs

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Job Fair

**Where: John F. Street Community Center
1100 Poplar Street, 19123**

When: Saturday, August 22, 2009

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Representatives from local companies will be taking applications including Brightside Academy, NewCourtland, Exit Realty, American Income Life and many more!

For more information call [215.684.0393](tel:215.684.0393)



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Carl R. Greene, Executive Director