

The PHA Experience



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 24

A Community Newspaper for and About Residents

November 2010

PHA moving ahead with development plans and service to residents

Leaves falling and a chill in the air are signs that Fall has arrived. This season symbolizes transition. Due to recent events, PHA is also experiencing a shift. On September 22, the Board of Commissioners voted to remove Carl Greene as Executive Director. The Board is currently interviewing candidates for the position of interim executive director. But even as leadership changes, some things are guaranteed. PHA will always build beyond expectations and provide outstanding services to residents.

PHA's General Manager of Community Development and Design, Michael Johns, said the agency's building and redevelopment plans are moving right along.

"Our current planned developments will be completed on time and within budget," he said. "We are still doing master planning for future projects."

Johns, who is PHA's chief architect, said his team is reviewing the agency's scattered sites portfolio for future repairs and rehabilitation.

"We're still doing physical needs assessments of our existing conventional



The first phase of Mantua Square will be completed by the end of this year.

sites," he added. "We'll be making arrangements to set aside the money necessary for repairs and upgrades. Our goal is to continue doing great work with the same high quality, and the same enthusiasm for our residents and our communities."

PHA has seven developments that are moving rapidly toward completion.

- The final 19 homeownership units at Martin Luther King Plaza are under

construction and should be completed this December.

- The completion of Phase I of Mantua Square will occur by the end of this year while Phase II should be completed early 2011, for a total of 101 units.
- Construction crews are laying the foundation for the new \$38 million Paschall Village with completion of that development expected by the end

of next year.

- The reconstruction of Plymouth Hall, which was severely damaged by fire six years ago, will be completed by next summer.
- The last 23 units of the Lucien E. Blackwell development on Markoe Street will be finished by March 2011.
- A \$31 million rehabilitation project covering 340 scattered site units should be completed this year.
- 100 accessible units should be completed next spring. Twenty-five buildings, each with four living units, are being constructed.

PHA residents can also expect to receive the full range of services through the Community Partners program, which offers job training and education opportunities. Residents interested in the construction and building trades can sign up for the Pre-Apprenticeship training program. The Homeownership Division will continue counseling residents and Senior Programs offers residents 55 and older a wealth of activities and services.

Pre-Apprenticeship graduate is on the right track

Tyreek Simmons has always liked working with his hands. For the past five years, he has been buying cars at auctions, fixing them up and selling them. He purchased his first car for \$75 and sold it for \$1400.

Some of the cars he bought were full of old tools. Tyreek listened to his gut feeling and saved everything, even the tools that were unfamiliar to him.

Meanwhile, he kept his eyes open for more opportunities. When a friend who is a journeyman carpenter told Tyreek about PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship program, he jumped at the chance to learn about the building trades and work towards joining a union.

Tyreek's family has a long history with the Pre-Apprenticeship program—his mother was one of the first graduates. The instructors wanted her to become a union electrician, but she decided to



Pre-Apprenticeship graduate Tyreek Simmons works as a Communications and Signals Helper for Amtrak.

pursue a career in the medical field. Now, she is in the process of becoming a RN.

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PHA star singer is driven by faith & talent

Residents may recognize Elder Goldwire McLendon from PHA's Christmas Caravans, which goes to senior sites to sign carols and spread holiday cheer in December.

But now, millions of Americans also know this Mt. Olivet resident from his amazing performance on BET's Sunday Best, a gospel talent show.

Mr. McLendon has been singing since he was 9. His church in his hometown of Jacksonville, Florida encouraged him and the other young people to perform during services. When he was 16, he helped form a quartet. In 1947, Goldwire moved to Philadelphia and has continued singing with various groups ever since.

One day in March, a close friend of the family told him to go downtown and audition to be on Sunday Best, which is hosted by Kirk Franklin and features



Elder Goldwire McLendon, a finalist in the Sunday Best competition on BET, stands in his Mt. Olivet home.

celebrity judges like Donnie McClurkin, Yolanda Adams, and Mary Mary.

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PHA FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

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

Saturday classes available at John F. Street Center, 1100 Poplar Street and Thursday evening classes available at Warnock Village, 2850 Germantown Avenue.



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FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL
215.684.0393
or see your manager



“Food For Life” successfully brings healthy choices to residents

PHA residents enjoyed much better access to affordable fresh fruit and vegetables this summer, thanks to the highly successful “Food for Life” program, which operated in four neighborhoods.

The farmer’s market ran for 12 weeks from late June to mid-September and attracted plenty of customers who otherwise have to travel great distances to buy fresh produce and maintain a healthy diet. Many Americans eat too many processed foods that can cause weight gain or lead to health-related

problems, simply because they live in so-called “food deserts.”

To provide healthier food options, PHA partnered with the Reading Terminal-based Iovine Brothers Produce. Iovine Brothers visited four PHA sites one day a week: the John F. Street Community Center, Raymond Rosen, Wilson Park, and Greater Grays Ferry Estates.

The company has partnered in the past with The Food Trust, a nonprofit group that works to improve access to healthy, affordable food and to educate

children and families about nutrition. Vinne Iovine, co-owner of Iovine Brothers, believes that if price and quality are right, people will be eager to try something new.

Residents at PHA’s Raymond Rosen development were thrilled to have choices this summer where none existed before.

Sharelle Kingwood said Iovine Brothers offers more variety than she would have at other places and the pricing is more affordable. Watermelon is her favorite fruit.

Sharon Thompson, a former resident who still lives in the neighborhood, likes the convenience and the prices.

“I like it because you can pick your own food. Most of it is reasonable compared to the markets. The people are nice, too.”

One of those nice people is Aber El-Zaher, a 16-year-old PHA resident working at the counter. As part of the program, Iovine hired two residents to set up the stands at the sites and man the counters. Residents were able to work up to 40 hours a week at \$9 an hour as part of PHA’s Community Partners program. The program emphasizes job training and self-sufficiency.



Sharon Thompson, who lives near PHA’s Raymond Rosen development, takes a look at the strawberries on sale. Iovine Brothers Produce visited that site and three others once a week during the summer as part of the Food for Life program.

El-Zaher smiled at the customers and said she enjoyed working behind the counter helping people.

The other housing resident, 19-year-old Devon Sumpter, was excited to have a job and some direction in life. He had been unemployed until the opportunity with Iovine Brothers came up.

“You find great people here, and meet new people,” he said.

Customers had several convenient options for payment at the market. Iovine Brothers accepted cash, food stamps, WIC checks, credit, debit, Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, and Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program vouchers from the WIC program.

Based on the success of the market this summer, PHA is looking to partner with other outside organizations to provide good nutritional options to residents in the future.

Track star is a shining light to family and others



Zakia White (left) is proud of her daughter, Cierra, who is an A and B student and holds state records for track.

Cierra White runs like the wind and flashes a smile that will brighten your day. The 17-year-old’s performance on the track and in the classroom has made her family and friends proud of her. Major colleges are calling about the possibility of an athletic scholarship. Penn State, Pittsburgh, Temple, Miami of Ohio, LSU, Michigan, and Iowa State have formally expressed interest in having her on their teams.

Cierra, who will graduate from George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science next spring, holds the state record in the 100 and 200 meter dashes. She won the 100 in 11.5 seconds and the 200 in 24.2 seconds. And she’s as good in the classroom as she is on the track. Her mother, Zakia White, notes that her daughter is an A and B student and takes part in her school’s gifted student program.

“I’m so happy for her,” Zakia said. “When I was in high school, I didn’t

do too well. But it’s easy for her. I don’t have to remind her. She just does the work and what she’s supposed to do.”

Cierra’s participation in track started out simply enough.

“In elementary school, we just used to run in the gym,” she said. “Then I heard that they had a team. It seemed like fun.”

Her mother has always supported Cierra’s participation in track because it keeps her busy and away from activities that could cause trouble. She has a great work ethic, working hard and coming to practice early, and credits her coach Raymond Womack with helping her to grow.

Perhaps Cierra’s biggest strength is her ability to focus. Many star athletes have trouble managing their school work with their heavy practice and play schedules. Her philosophy is rather simple.

“I try to stay stress-free, try to stay

calm and cool,” she said. “When I get home from practice, I do my homework.”

Cierra knows that running track won’t pay the bills. She’s thinking seriously about a career outside of sports. Her favorite subjects are algebra and anatomy.

“I wanted to become a pediatrician, but I’m not so sure right now,” she said. “I know that I want to work with children.”

Her mother is also making career plans. Zakia White, who currently works as a driver for a cleaning service, is getting ready to go back to school via the Community Partners Program. She will train to become a Certified Nursing Assistant.

As mother and daughter work toward new goals, they haven’t let the excitement of the moment blind them. They credit strong family support and lots of love as the key to success.

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

● 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 call
215-684-0393.



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PHA receives million-dollar grant for CNA training program

PHA's long-running Certified Nursing Assistant training program is getting a boost this year.

The Community Partners program received a one million dollar grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. The money will go towards enhancing the CNA training program offered by the Professional Healthcare Institute, a PHA Community Partner.

Thanks to the grant, the program will offer an improved supportive

side in addition to the training. Case managers and job developers will assist participants in addressing personal challenges and issues while helping graduates with their job search. The supportive services will be available through the life of the program.

"I think it's a great advantage to the students," said Jeanne Bund, Director of the Professional Health Institute. "It's a beautiful complement to the training."

Pennsylvania has a demand for Certified Nursing Assistants. CNAs play a major role in the operation of hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, personal care homes, LIFE centers, and adult day centers. The CNA program can be the start of a lifetime career or the first step to other well-paying health professions.

The 8-week training at the Professional Health Institute is a mix of classroom time and practical clinical instruction in basic patient care. Students learn about hygiene, nutrition, medication administration, how to lift patients, and how to administer simple medical tests such as blood pressure. Instructors also prepare participants for the state certification exam.

The program also includes a two-week externship. The Community Partners program will assist students in finding a placement that best suits them. Participants will gain valuable hands-on experience working in their particular area of interest, whether it is with youth, persons with disabilities, seniors or other groups.

Graduates will be tracked after placement. Those who are interested in continuing their education



Certified nursing assistant students Ebony and Cindy Hargrove practice administering a blood pressure test during training.

will have the opportunity to apply for scholarships and tuition reimbursement.

"We're offering graduates continuing career development," said Enrico Crispo, General Manager for Workforce Development. "The CNA training is a foundation; if graduates are interested in career advancement and becoming an LPN or RN, we can help."

The grant applies to residents enrolling now in the program. PHA is looking

to reach 250 residents over the next two years. A small stipend is available for residents who participate and complete the program.

For more information about PHA's Certified Nursing Assistant program, please contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator or call 215-684-0393.



A grant from the State will be used to provide enhanced supportive services to students in PHA's Certified Nursing Assistant training program.



PHA Opportunity Boards



The next time you stop by your management office, look for PHA's new Opportunity Boards.

The Opportunity Boards posted outside of the management office are a great source of information for PHA residents regarding:

- Job opportunities
- Internships
- Scholarships
- Training programs

The boards will be updated regularly so keep checking back!

For more information, please contact 215.684.0393 or 215.684.1024

Disabled homeowner finds happiness in Temple neighborhood



Diane Walker enjoys the spacious kitchen in her new home just west of the Temple University campus. She thinks that owning a home is a good way to "plant roots" and avoid moving.

Diane Walker admits that she wasn't too keen on the idea of moving to North Philadelphia at first, but she decided to take a chance.

Today, after a lot of hard work and help from PHA's Homeownership Program, Walker is the owner of a brand new home not far from Temple University with all the services that the neighborhood has to offer.

Diane, who has been with PHA since 2003 as a Housing Choice Voucher recipient, is permanently disabled following a fall at a friend's home. In 2006, she received a letter from the agency about a homeowner's workshop at the John F. Street Community Center. She became convinced that buying a home was the right thing to do after meeting with representatives from banks, realtors, and home inspection services, as well as seeing models of homes about to be built.

"Owning your home is a chance of a lifetime," Walker said. "The opportunity had come and I decided that I wanted to try it."

She added that owning a home was a good way to "plant roots" and avoid moving, something she had done frequently.

Diane began a savings plan with the help of WORC, the Women's Opportunities Resource Center. The non-profit group promotes social and economic self-sufficiency through its programs, primarily for economically disadvantaged women and their families.

In this instance, Diane worked with Camille Johnson of WORC who is a family savings account specialist. She also worked with Gilbert Vega, PHA Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, to clean up her credit record.

Diane developed a savings plan by cutting some of her expenses such as phone service, dining out, and renting movies. It is a process, but by Fall 2008, she was ready to begin looking for a home. Walker called a realtor and specified that she'd need a home with the least amount of steps to enter.

After lots of looking and even losing out on a house because someone outbid her, Diane finally succeeded in late 2009. She heard about new construction taking place near Temple. The Housing Enrichment Renaissance Board (HERB) Community Development Corporation was redeveloping a neighborhood just west of the campus and she was hooked after taking a look.

Walker moved in to her new, 4-bedroom home with a garage in late February.

"Oh, wow, a new home, a new area, all the possibilities ahead of me," she said. "All new neighbors. Everybody on the block is new."

Walker's home is part of a 54-unit development in a three-block area, which feels like suburban living to her. She plans on holding a housewarming where everyone can "feast their eyes on the new construction."

Diane encourages other PHA residents to take advantage of the Homeownership Program. She says interest rates are good and you can get a good price in the current market, whether a home is new or renovated. Finding your home won't happen overnight, but she says with hard work and planning, it will happen.

For more information about PHA's Homeownership programs, please call 215-684-0383.



There are nine 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 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

5405 Gibson Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19143

Blumberg Apartments - Mondays 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

2311 W. Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Blumberg Seniors - Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm

2311 W. Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Harrison Plaza - Mondays & Thursdays 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

1240 N. 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Hill Creek - Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

5573 Hillcreek Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19120

John F Street Center - Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Johnson Homes - Mondays and Thursdays 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

2630-D Norris Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Spring Garden - Tuesdays 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

715 Brandywine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Westpark Apartments - Fridays 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

300 N. Busti Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

White Hall - Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

4749 Tackawanna Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124

To Sign-Up Please Contact:

Jerel Brooks, Computer Technology Coordinator at **215-684-0393** or Jerel.Brooks@pha.phila.gov



PHA welcomes disabled residents to newly converted accessible homes

When Steven Quarles received the keys to his new home in North Philadelphia, he became speechless.

"I am just so happy. I never had a house of my own before," he said.

On July 15, Mr. Quarles and Marshall

Gibson moved into the first of 75 scattered site homes that PHA is renovating into fully accessible housing for residents with disabilities.

The new units are part of PHA's commitment to building quality accessible housing and helping

residents transition out of nursing homes and into homes of their own. The units are equipped with special features like chair lifts that allow residents to live independently in their communities.

In 1995, Steven was shot and paralyzed in a random drive-by shooting. Up until now, he had been living with relatives. He was thrilled with his new home and spent the weeks before moving in buying furniture for the first time.

His new neighbor, Marshall, was also excited to have an accessible home. Mr. Gibson uses a wheelchair and oxygen and it was difficult for him to get the equipment he needed into the elevators of Harrison Plaza, his former residence.

The 75 scattered sites are just the beginning of an unprecedented effort to create more accessible housing opportunities for persons



PHA resident Marshall Gibson is excited to have an accessible home. PHA is converting 75 scattered sites into housing for persons with disabilities.



Steven Quarles is thrilled with his new accessible home. "I am just so happy. I never had a house of my own before," he said.

with disabilities. PHA is also using stimulus funds to build 100 accessible apartments in 25 quad-plexes throughout the city. They include an open floor plan, common areas, a vertical lift, and living space for caretakers.

PHA's Mantua Square in West Philadelphia and Plymouth Hall, a senior building in North Philadelphia,

will also offer a large number of accessible units when they open in the coming months.

Citizens with disabilities who require an accessible home are invited to contact PHA's Accessibility Coordinator at 215-684-4379 for more information about housing opportunities.

NewCourtland LIFE Program continues strong at Germantown House

For over three years now, the NewCourtland LIFE program at Germantown House has been serving seniors in the community and the participants couldn't be happier.

LIFE stands for Living Independently for Elders. The program serves seniors who are 60 years or older, have Medicare/Medicaid, and live in the Northwest Philadelphia area.

It is a medical care program intended to assist older Americans who are lower income and may not have access to traditional care.

Theresa Lester moved into Germantown House in February 2009 and signed up for the LIFE program two months later. As a former social worker for DHS with nursing experience, Ms. Lester knows the different healthcare programs that are available for seniors. Now that she has experienced the LIFE program for herself, she is confident that it is one of the best in city.

"I am so pleased," Theresa said. "Everything I need is right here. It's so excellent for me."

Most importantly, the LIFE program helps seniors like Ms. Lester maintain their independence. It is a great alternative to nursing homes and allows Theresa to stay in her beautiful PHA apartment at Germantown House.

The center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays. Most of the participants' medical needs are addressed right in the center. Home health care and sensor technology (which remotely monitors vital signs like blood pressure, weight and blood sugar levels) are also available so a participant's family or caregivers can rest assured that their loved ones are taken care of around the clock, seven days a week.

The LIFE program's interdisciplinary team features a primary physician, social workers, and dietitians. Specialists in audiology, ophthalmology, dentistry, and podiatry are available on site on a regular basis.

"It's one-stop shopping for seniors who are nursing facility eligible but want to live in the community," said Jill Cobb, a social worker for the LIFE program. "We assist in meeting their basic needs, including medical care, to keep them living in their own homes."



PHA resident and LIFE program participant, Theresa Lester (right) enjoys a game of cards with friends. "I'm so pleased [with the program]," she said. "Everything I need is right here."



PHA resident Yvonne Brown works on a project in the LIFE program's arts and crafts room. "The program has definitely benefited me," she said.

"If I have a complaint, I see the nurse. If it's an emergency, I can see someone pretty soon," said Ms. Lester. "The staff is exemplary. They listen to me. We talk about what's going on with me. If I don't agree with something, we'll talk about it and make a change if necessary."

In addition to the focus on healthcare, the center helps to provide socialization and a fun atmosphere. An activities specialist coordinates programming and prepares a monthly calendar of events. The program offers arts and crafts, music therapy, yoga, and more. The staff frequently takes participants on trips or helps them with their shopping. This year, participants went to the Philadelphia Flower Show and received a visit from the Phanatic, the mascot of the

Philadelphia Phillies.

Yvonne Brown first learned about NewCourtland a year ago while living at PHA's Suffolk Manor in Olney. At the time, she was sick—Ms. Brown suffers from rheumatoid arthritis and has a heart condition. Now, she is getting a little bit stronger thanks to the doctors at the LIFE center and her physical therapy sessions.

"The program has definitely benefited me," said Yvonne. "Healthwise, I'm feeling a lot better."

Eager to give back and help other participants in the program, Ms. Brown serves as the LIFE center's secretary and helps to plan activities like a fashion show and a black tie event.

"I worked security for Temple for 15 years and I was depressed that I had to stop for health reasons. Coming here 3 days a week helps me," said Yvonne. "Working as the secretary gives me something to do so I can stay busy. I can't sit down for so long and it is helping me get myself back to where I was."

For more information about the NewCourtland LIFE program at Germantown House, please call 1-888-530-4913 or visit www.newcourtlandlife.org



This past summer was filled

The summer of 2010 is over, but it has left us with memories



PHA sponsored a series of pool parties with radio station Power 99 this summer. The parties ran from June 18 through August 6 at various locations throughout the city.



Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown (center) listens to PHA resident Creasie Ashe as fellow resident Valarie Johnson looks on. Brown visited PHA's Nellie Reynolds Gardens as part of her annual "Bringing City Government to the Senior Citizens of Philadelphia" program.



PHA participated in the annual Global Fusion Festival at Penn's Landing on July 17. The Homeownership Division shared information with potential buyers about new homes for sale at Martin Luther King Plaza.



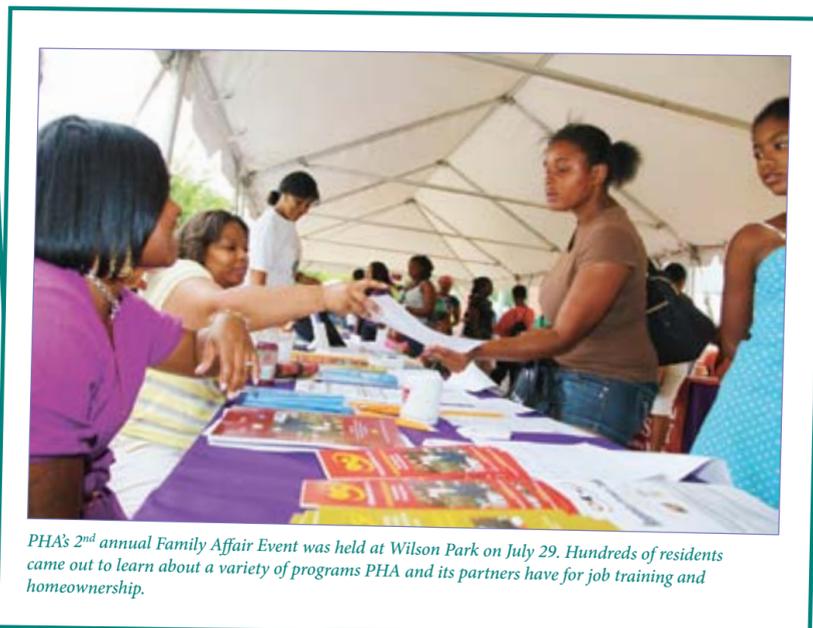
PHA staff distributed bottled water to Hill Creek residents to help them beat the heat this summer. The initiative was made possible by a generous donation from Walmart.

with memorable moments!

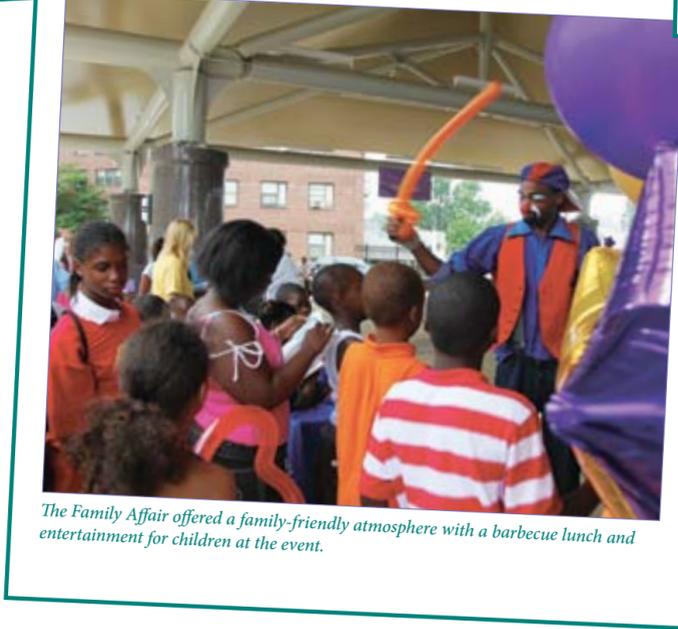
of fun-filled activities. How many did you participate in?



Jimmy Tyson (right), a resident of Nellie Reynolds Gardens, speaks with Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown during her annual "Bringing City Government to the Senior Citizens of Philadelphia" event as fellow resident Fu Li Chen (center) listens.



PHA's 2nd annual Family Affair Event was held at Wilson Park on July 29. Hundreds of residents came out to learn about a variety of programs PHA and its partners have for job training and homeownership.



The Family Affair offered a family-friendly atmosphere with a barbecue lunch and entertainment for children at the event.



PHA Police Officer Sylvania Knuckles (right) talks to kids at the Family Affair Event about the Gang Resistance Education and Training (or G.R.E.A.T.) program.



Carpenters are building bridges now and to the future

Three graduates of PHA's Pre-Apprenticeship program are flying high, literally and figuratively, as they repair and build bridges in the Philadelphia area. All three are members of the Carpenters Union and all say it's one of the best life decisions they've ever made.

Sherice Workman worked as an assembler at a window manufacturing company for three years. One day, she spotted a flyer for the Pre-Apprenticeship program while in the management office at Bartram Village. Now, she's making history as an apprentice, taking part in the rebuilding of the South Street bridge. Before that, Sherice spent over a year working on the Commodore Barry bridge that runs from Chester into South Jersey.

"I just like working with my hands. I like seeing the end result of what I'm doing," she said. "There's a certain gratification in seeing something that you actually built."

Layla Bibi, 26, had worked as a seamstress and was going to start her own business when her opportunity to get into the trades came along.

"My mother told me that ever since I was little, I've taken stuff apart and put it back together," she said. "I always had a knack for it. I always loved it."

Bibi has been working on bridges for 3 ½ years. Her first stops were the JFK Boulevard bridge and the Commodore Barry bridge. More recently, her work included the Convention Center expansion project. She became a journeywoman, a full-fledged carpenter, in June 2009.

Katrina Alston, a 37-year-old mother of two children, was going nowhere working as a cashier at a parking lot and as a data entry clerk. She's now a second-year apprentice carpenter and loving every minute of it. Until recently, Katrina worked on the South Street bridge before taking family leave.

Alston describes herself as a hands-on person. In her early 20's, she received training through the Job Corps and became a certified maintenance worker. She also gained some carpentry skills. Katrina said working on the South Street bridge was special to her.

"It's history to me because I grew up in South Philly," she said. "I was really happy that I could be a part of history."

All three women believe that carpentry offers a good career path and they urge other women to get into the field.

"If you want to be self-sustaining, if you want to get a house, if you want



Pre-Apprenticeship graduates Layla Bibi (left) and Sherice Workman stand on the South Street bridge. Not pictured: Katrina Alston. All three women worked on the major reconstruction project.

to get out of public housing, if you want to do something with yourself, I encourage other women to get into a trade," Workman said.

It's a long-term career, Bibi added, with good benefits and a great retirement plan.

"If you want to be self-sustaining... if you want to do something with yourself, I encourage other women to get into a trade."

Sherice Workman

Double your savings with PHA's Individual Development Accounts

Is your dream to own your own home? The Philadelphia Housing Authority has a new program to help residents save money and make the leap from renting to homeownership.

The first step after signing up is to open an Individual Development Account or IDA. The accounts are designed to help people with low or modest incomes save towards the purchase of a major, lifelong asset such as a home.

Participants will also meet with financial counselors, review their budgets and make savings plans. At the end, PHA will match the participant's savings, dollar for dollar, up to \$2,000 for an individual or \$4,000 for a family.

"The program emphasizes the importance of saving up while working towards a particular goal like owning your own home," said Luz Paradoa, Manager for the Community Partners program. "The matching funds are an incentive for people to develop a habit for saving."

The Urban League of Philadelphia, a

PHA Community Partner, is helping to set up the accounts for participants in the program. Participants must start out with a minimum of \$25.

PHA is also partnering with two housing counseling agencies. Affordable Housing Counseling of Pennsylvania (AHCP) and the Philadelphia Council for Community Advancement (PCCA) will provide financial education and housing counseling to program participants.

Account holders are allowed to withdraw money after they have reached their savings goal, but they must first get approval from their program sponsor. Participants must purchase a home to have their savings matched.

To sign up, you must be a PHA resident and currently employed. Elderly and disabled residents are exempt from the employment requirement.

For more information, call the Community Partners Program at 215-684-0393 or PHA's Homeownership Division at 215-684-8018.

Security upgrades to be installed at West Park



HUD recently awarded a grant to PHA for security cameras at West Park.

PHA plans to upgrade the security systems and install state-of-the-art cameras at West Park Apartments. The project is currently in the design and engineering phase.

The new cameras will be able to pan, tilt, zoom, and rotate 360 degrees. Ultimately, the system will allow staff to better monitor, report and respond to illegal activity at the development.

"The cameras will serve as a crime deterrent and give us some additional eyes and ears," said David Warren, a Program Development Specialist for the agency. "They are part of PHA's

proactive approach to keep residents and employees safe and to protect our properties."

The new cameras are made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Emergency Safety and Security Funding. PHA was awarded the maximum amount of \$250,000.

Andrea Foster, a resident leader at West Park, has been active in seeking community-based solutions to reduce crime throughout the neighborhood. She is excited to have a new security system.

"We will welcome the new system wholeheartedly," she said.

While security systems and cameras are vital in fighting crime, PHA believes resident education and engagement are equally important. To reduce crime on site and throughout the neighborhood, the agency and resident leadership aim to mobilize the community and provide resident programs, particularly for youth at West Park.

"We need to find positive opportunities for our children and grandchildren," said Ms. Foster. "If we don't, they will be drawn to criminal activity and negative things."

PHA will offer services and activities through the Community Partners Program to help deter youth from unfavorable behavior and help families to meet their goals. Family Service Coordinators also visit the site regularly.

The agency also seeks to enhance its partnerships with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies as part of its anti-crime strategy.



Boys and Girls Clubs focus on school, careers, & sports

The Boys and Girls Clubs at two PHA sites are more popular than ever. The clubs at the John F. Street Community Center and Wilson Park both have waiting lists as their fall programs get under way.

Kiana Edwards, director of the Fairmount Unit at the John F. Street Center, said over 60 children are signed up for the after-school program that serves grade schoolers. The teen program that runs between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. still has room. Fifteen teenagers are currently participating and there is room for a total of 50.

Harold Reed, the unit director at Wilson Park, reported that 66 kids were enrolled in the after-school program, which serves kids in 1st through 6th grades. One hundred and twenty three students have signed up for the teen program that includes kids in 7th through 12th grades.

Both clubs' fall programs emphasize academic achievement and career planning. They also offer sports and other forms of recreation that make for a well-rounded person.

One of the most popular programs at

the Fairmount Unit is the homework assistance program. Edwards said a whole hour is dedicated to homework, the so-called "power hour" between 4 and 5 p.m.

"Education is very important in our community," she said. "As we move forward, we want to make sure that all of our young people are very well equipped to be able to identify a career, push themselves into a professional setting, and further their education."

Edwards points out that school attendance and grades have increased as a result of the program. A computer technology program is highly popular with teens. Their program also offers training in career development, resume building, job readiness, and college preparation.

At Wilson Park, the newest offering is an indoor soccer league that is run in cooperation with the City's Parks and Recreation Department. The league is for kids in 1st through 6th grade.

Reed said the club has added two new elements to the teen program: how to find, keep and change a job and preparing to get a driver's license. Teens at Wilson Park also learn about money matters, setting goals for graduation, and launching a career.



Kids in the Boys and Girls Club at the Street Center receive dance instruction.

Denise Matza, the program director at Wilson Park, says kids learn the meaning of service to the community through the Torch Club (grade school) and the Keystone Club (teens). Club members take part in holiday food drives, neighborhood cleanups, and random acts of kindness. Recently, the club collected 570 pairs of jeans for earthquake victims in Haiti.

The Boys and Girls Club at Wilson Park, Matza said, emphasizes a "triple

play" of physical activity, nutrition and character.

Reed believes that the payoff from the programs at the club is great.

"We had some of the baddest kids come here and they've grown and they've changed," he said. "We could not do it without the partnership and help of PHA."



Members of the Torch Club at Wilson Park perform community service by taking part in food drives and neighborhood cleanups.

A thumbs up for PHA's Summer Food program for kids

Kids who took part in PHA's Summer Food program got more than just tasty meals for breakfast and lunch.

The program ran from June 21 to August 20. Almost 40,000 meals were served to children who took part in the program at 19 sites across the city. They especially liked the hot lunches they received, as well as the friendship they enjoyed. The program



Ahmeen Linder is all smiles about the hot lunches that were served at the John F. Street Center as part of the Summer Food program.

changed dramatically several years ago with a switch to a nutritious hot lunch menu that proved to be very popular with the kids. No processed meats are used in lunches, which feature vegetables and fruit. Young PHA residents and children from surrounding neighborhoods learned the fundamentals of nutrition while receiving a good breakfast and lunch.

Dominiek Johnson, age 13, who attends Harrison Elementary School, took part in the program at the John F. Street Community Center as part of the Boys and Girls Club activities there.

"I liked the meatball sandwiches (served) and I liked the fish sticks," she said. "I also like the milk and fruit cups that come with it."

Dominiek likes the hot lunches better because she finds them tastier.

Fellow club member, Jade Scott, age 9, from Kearney Elementary School, agreed, but there's one other reason she liked those hot lunches.

"When it's cold, my teeth start to hurt," she said.

This year's Summer Food program added a new twist: a junior Financial Literacy Improvement Program (FLIP).

Enrico Crispo, General Manager for Workforce Development at PHA, says people need to learn the value of money early in life.

"You have to be smart about your money," he said. "You've got to learn how to manage money as soon as you start running into money, not when you're 20 or 30."

Crispo added that financial literacy is not just an important issue for PHA residents, it's a national problem.

"It starts as early as you can think about money. That's when you should be thinking about sound money management and forming good habits young."

Michele Henderson, a PHA Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, visited the Summer Food sites to talk to kids about financial literacy and the history of money as part of the program.

Kids participated in an interactive



From left to right: Jade Scott, Boys and Girls Club Program Director Shydia Young, Natasha McNeill, and Aniyah Linder enjoy a delicious, healthy lunch thanks to PHA's Summer Food program.

discussion about the U.S. Mint and the Bureau of Engraving and Print, where money is made. They were excited to learn about the first bank in the U.S., which is located in Philadelphia.

At the end of the program, the children received a PHA piggy bank to get them started on saving.

A partnership between PHA, the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), makes the Summer Food program possible.



Resident finds success with OIC Administrative Assistant Program



PHA resident and OIC graduate Charlene Reid now works as an administrative assistant at Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia.

Last summer, Charlene Reid, a scattered sites resident in North Philadelphia, attended PHA's 1st Family Affair Event at the Workforce Development Center. There, she learned about the wealth of

Community Partners programs PHA offers including Philadelphia OIC's Administrative Assistant program.

Interested in sharpening her office skills and landing a steady job,

Charlene decided to enroll in the class.

Ms. Reid has prior experience working in offices. For 8 years, she worked in a seasonal capacity at H&R Block. During the off times, Ms. Reid decided to go back to school for her Associates Degree in Paralegal Studies, but she still had trouble finding a job in her field. OIC presented an opportunity for her to explore more options.

"It was a very interesting program. The two instructors I had were really nice," said Charlene. "They try to teach you as much as possible in 12 weeks."

The Administrative Assistant program covers reading/writing skills, recordkeeping, time management, assisting with meetings and Microsoft Office programs like Word and Excel. Every other week, tests are given to reinforce what students have learned.

OIC also emphasizes job placement and assists graduates with preparing their resumes and by conducting mock interviews. Part of the curriculum is a two-week internship.

After she finished classes at OIC, Charlene interned at Church of the Advocate in North Philadelphia and made a great impression on her employers from the start.

"They really liked the work I was doing and how I presented myself," she said. "Six weeks later, I was offered a job."

Charlene handles filing, answering phones, and other front office work. At the same time, she is learning a lot about the church's day-to-day operations. Best of all, her manager, Eleanor Farmer, is serving as her mentor. She's helping Charlene develop more skills and wants her to start doing payroll soon.

Ms. Reid loves her job at the church where she is meeting new people every day and helping the community.

At some point, Charlene would like to go back to school and study business management. She also hopes to stay with the Church of the Advocate and move up in the ranks.

"If a better position opens up, I would like to be considered, but I want to learn more in the meantime," she said.

For more information about OIC's Administrative Assistant program or other PHA Community Partners programs, please contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator or call 215-684-0393.

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(continued from page 1)

Pre-apprenticeship graduate is on the right track



Pre-Apprenticeship grad Tyreek Simmons (far left) works with an Amtrak crew at Holmesburg Junction in the Northeast.

"My mom is really good with her hands. Whenever I wanted something built, she was there for me," said Tyreek. "When she found out that I had signed up for Pre-Apprenticeship, she was happy for me. My whole family was proud."

After Tyreek graduated from the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, he took a citywide test for positions with Amtrak. Out of 157 who took the test, 42 passed and 23 were hired. Tyreek was one of them.

"It felt great," he said. "I really accomplished something I put my mind to."

Simmons is now working in Amtrak's communications department as a Communications and Signals Helper. His team is replacing copper wires with faster fiber optic cable and making sure security and the railway signaling systems work. Railway signals are crucial because they let conductors and engineers know if the line ahead is clear and it is safe to proceed.

Tyreek continued to learn and set goals after he graduated from the program and secured employment. He signed up for an electronics class, took a test to become an Electronic Technician and passed

with a great score. He keeps in touch with instructors from the Pre-Apprenticeship Program who are happy to assist Tyreek with his continuing education.

"Telecommunications is a major part of the world," Simmons said. "I want to be a part of that and advance in the field."

When Tyreek got the first opportunity to buy his own house this past year, he went for it. It was a fixer-upper in West Philadelphia that needed a lot of work but he did the repairs himself. He took all of his knowledge from the Pre-Apprenticeship program and remembered all of the things his uncle and grandfather taught him when he was younger. The tools he accumulated over the years from his used car business proved to be helpful too. He found that he had all of the equipment and skills needed to transform his home.

Tyreek is proud of what he's already accomplished, but is still looking to the future. He is full of confidence and strongly believes that hard work and dedication will get him to where he needs to be.

For more information about the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, please call 215-684-8049.

PHA star singer is driven by faith

Mr. McLendon was reluctant at first. "Me? I'm 79," he said. "But my children said, 'Try it, pop.' So I went and tried."

It wasn't easy. He stood in line all day at the Convention Center for a chance to audition. But when he got on stage to sing "He Touched Me," he astounded the judges with his voice and energy.

"They were elated," he said.

He became one of 3 finalists to make it out of Philadelphia. His talent took him to New Orleans where Sunday Best is taped. At 79 years old, Mr. McLendon was the oldest contestant to be on the show.

"I couldn't believe I was there," said Elder Goldwire. "There were stars coming in day after day, performing on stage. But I think the Lord sent me there with a purpose."

Mr. McLendon enjoyed himself immensely. He says his main concern on the show wasn't stage fright, but making sure he remembered the lyrics. He says he slipped once or twice, but he kept going and learned how to improve his performance.

He spent two weeks shooting episodes, went home for 4 days, and went back for two more weeks of taping. Sunday

Best started out with 20 contestants. Viewers called in to vote for their favorite performers. In the end, Mr. McLendon made it to the finals and placed second in the competition.

Though he didn't win, Mr. McLendon's time on Sunday Best has earned him a lot of attention around the country and here at home. In June, he was featured in the Philadelphia Inquirer and people regularly recognize him on the streets. Oftentimes, when his fans run into him, they ask him to sing a few bars. Elder Goldwire is happy to oblige, even when he's standing in the middle of a supermarket.

He also got the chance to perform in other cities around the U.S. He is traveling less now and spending more time at home with his wife and family, who all play instruments and sing too. He is working on releasing a single soon.

For Elder Goldwire, singing gospel music isn't just about having talent. It's also about being a righteous person.

"I love singing to the Lord. I don't sing to people. I sing to Him and He touches the people," said Mr. McLendon. "There is a saying: praises go up and blessings come down. That's what it's like with singing. God sends down the blessing."

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Emlen Arms
6733 Emlen Street
Tuesday, November 9th 9am - 12pm



For more information, call PHA Senior Programs at 215.684.1183.

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Philadelphia Housing Authority

Senior Calendar

October

OCTOBER FEST OCTOBER 15, 2010 - DECEMBER 15, 2010
Medicare Open Enrollment - Medicare Part D 10 am - 1 pm
At various senior sites through December 15, 2010

November

SENIORS' FALL TRIP NOVEMBER 4, 2010
Sight & Sound Theatre - Voices of Christmas 8 am - 6 pm
Lancaster, PA

ANNUAL BLACK & WHITE BALL NOVEMBER 6, 2010
Nellie Reynolds Gardens 4 pm - 8 pm

December

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR DECEMBER 3, 2010
Wilson Park 10 am - 1 pm
Emlen Arms
Cassie Holly



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

This 21 week program is free to PHA residents.



This successful PHA program prepares residents to enter the building trades and provides instruction in math, reading and construction skills. It also 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.

Former Johnson Homes resident reaches another milestone

PHA Police Lt. Crystal Bradley, who always urges residents to set goals and never settle for less, is doing just that herself.

Bradley, who grew up in Johnson Homes, received a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice this past spring from St. Joseph's University. It's part of her dream to become a college professor.

Lt. Bradley's study for her Master's focused on community policing, which promotes partnerships between police and the people they serve, to make communities safer.

"As police officers, we have to work with the community to obtain the same goals," said Bradley. "We have

to be seen in a positive light, not just when we're making an arrest."

She believes it is not enough to put a cop on every corner. Building trust and being "in sync" with the residents of a community and their needs is a much more effective means of putting a dent in crime.

Bradley, who is the first woman to reach the rank of lieutenant on the PHA police force, eventually wants to get a doctorate and teach young police officers. She believes that's one way to give back to the community and notes that her best teachers were retired officers who had real-world experience.

Crystal Bradley always tells residents that having little money does not mean they are lacking in talent or ability.

"It doesn't matter where you come from. It's what you do with the tools you're presented with," she said. "Anybody can make it. You have to set your goal and obtain it."

Lt. Bradley frequently visits the community she grew up in and encourages residents to take advantage of the programs that PHA offers. Most programs didn't even exist when she grew up at Johnson Homes.

"Just set your mind to it. Stop putting it off. You sacrifice for success," she said.

Lt. Bradley is proud that she grew up at Johnson Homes and current residents are happy to run into her when she visits there today.



PHA Police Lieutenant Crystal Bradley is a former resident of Johnson Homes. She earned her Master's this past spring.

Star football player enjoying a new challenge at college



PHA resident Diane Brown, Jerome's mom, couldn't be prouder of her son, who is named after her favorite Eagles player.

It's early in the school year, but 18-year-old Jerome Brown is enjoying the jump from participating in high school football to playing on the collegiate level.

Brown, a PHA resident, is attending Lackawanna College in Scranton on an athletic scholarship after a stellar career as a center in the Philadelphia Public League. Now, he's a backup who gets playing time late in the game.

"It's way more fast paced," he said. "The coaches expect way more from you."

Jerome relishes the challenge. He says the team practices for 2 1/2 hours, breaks for dinner, and then there's a team meeting for 2 hours. Those are longer hours than he experienced in high school, but Jerome says a lot more gets done. Time feels like it's flying.

As for school, Jerome's favorite course is psychology. He has made friends quickly and likes the Lackawanna campus which is in downtown Scranton.

PHA resident Diane Brown, Jerome's mom, couldn't be prouder of her

son who is named after her favorite Philadelphia Eagles player. Little did she know that her son would turn out to be a pretty good lineman like his namesake who died in a traffic accident just days before Jerome was born.

For Jerome Brown, it's been an uphill climb to Public League stardom and a chance at a college career that he hopes will lead to the pros. He did not make the varsity team at Northeast High School until his junior year, but he developed well and was chosen for the Public League All-Star team during his senior year.

Diane Brown said she worried about possible injury to her son, but she just wanted Jerome to be active and involved in some type of activity that keep him busy and away from the traps that many youth fall into.

"They have all that idle time," she said. "I did not want my son hanging out in the streets and getting into trouble. Football, working out, and studying steered him in the right direction. He had some positive role models."

After the All-Star game, the Browns' home phone began ringing off the hook, as colleges large and small began to call. Ultimately, Jerome chose Lackawanna College, a nationally ranked junior college program, with the aim of going to a major college football program.

As for his pro prospects, Jerome Brown is realistic.

"If I make it, I make it. If I don't, I'll always have my college degree to fall back on," he said.

Eventually, the star lineman wants to come back to Northeast High School to teach and coach. Jerome, who has some artistic skills, would like to try his hand at producing advertising, video games and comic books.

His mom just wants him to be his own man.

"I just want Jerome to be successful," she said. "I want him to be able to work and provide for himself and be independent. I don't ever want him to ever have to apply a food stamp, a welfare check, or special housing. I want him to be able to provide for himself and give back to the community."



Jerome Brown had a stellar career playing center at Northeast High School. He is currently a freshman backup at Lackawanna College in Scranton, PA.

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