

The PHA Experience

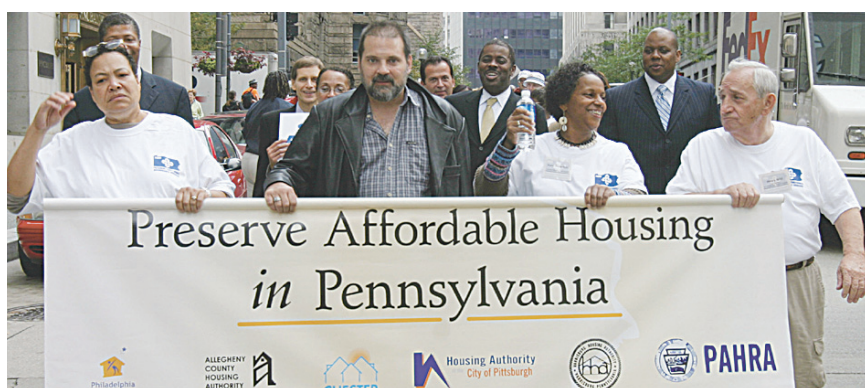


Vol. II No. 7 (Issue 11)

A Community Newspaper for and about Residents

October 2006

PA Housing Residents Rally for Funding



Public Housing residents lead a march through downtown Pittsburgh to demonstrate planned federal funding cuts. Residents from Philadelphia and several other cities throughout the state attended.

"What do we want? Full Funding. When do we want it? Now!"

That was the chant at a conference and march near Pittsburgh as more than 400 residents of public housing and public officials gathered voicing their objections to dramatic funding cuts. More than 100 of the attendees were PHA residents, led by Resident Advisory Board President Asia Coney. They traveled to Pittsburgh to join

the conference and state their concerns.

Coney reminded residents that they have traveled too far to turn back. "When you think about conditions in public housing down through the years and how hard we fought to get the kind of housing and services we have today, you know this a battle we must fight. We have to keep writing letters to elected officials, keep marching and keep voting."

The federal government is beginning its sixth consecutive year of cuts to Pennsylvania's public housing program, a pattern PHA Executive Director Carl Greene calls "a war on the poor." Greene is especially critical of the fact that even as the federal government cuts funding to Pennsylvania and other Northeastern states, it is increasing public housing funding to

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New Bulbs Are Saving a Watt of Energy

Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFL's) may not look like much but they have the potential to save PHA big dollars. This past year PHA installed CFL's in all public areas at residential sites.

After monitoring bills, it was clear that these bulbs really do save energy and lower electric bills. It works like this. A regular incandescent light bulb loses about 75% of its energy through heat loss. The CFL's stay cool to the touch and therefore use much less energy to light the room.

In the second part of this test program, PHA has been working at all senior sites, replacing all incandescent bulbs with the energy efficient bulbs. The projected savings for this installation is \$91,000 per year. The CFL bulbs do cost more, but last about 10 times longer.

As energy costs spiral upward, PHA is looking for

every way possible to save energy. Programmable thermostats have been installed at Whitehall and some units at Queen Lane. Installers met with residents to find out their schedule and programmed the new thermostats accordingly. While residents are asleep or away from home the thermostats automatically reset themselves to save energy.

Residents who live at PHA sites have probably noticed the bright posters with simple energy conservation tips. Every little bit counts. Joining the energy conservation campaign by following these tips means a lot. You can help PHA reduce energy bills and preserve the high quality housing and services PHA customers have become accustomed to. The campaign slogan is Conserve Energy - Preserve Public Housing. Do your part and help PHA help you.



Wilson Park resident Bessie Haywood seen here with Carl Greene, helped kick off of the "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign, a joint energy saving initiative between HUD, the EPA and PHA.



Shelita Gaskins will complete her bachelor's degree in Dec '07. Next stop - law school.

Resident Says "Get an Education!"

Shelita Gaskins is a woman with a message-get an education. "I would like to tell my story to young people," says this single mother, who is now a paralegal on the road to becoming a lawyer. "I would like to show them that they can succeed. Education is so important."

Shelita received a Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) in 2000. She wanted to return to school and improve herself, but felt that her first obligation was to be a mom. When her daughter began kindergarten this year, she realized that her time had come.

An ad on television for the PJA School inspired Gaskins to enroll in a program to become a paralegal. She really enjoyed the

18-month program, which included a seminar on "What Not to Wear" to teach the students how to dress for an interview. Shelita found studying law so interesting that she decided to continue her studies at Chestnut Hill College; the school has an agreement with PJA and will accept all of Shelita's credits.

"In another 18 months I'll have a bachelor's in criminal law," Gaskins points out. After that "I'll go to law school," she adds.

Shelita has had the drive to help other people for a long time. When she was a child, she remembers giving things away to homeless people. Before she went back to school, she worked at

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KEYS2HEALTH SERIES

At Keystone Mercy, we believe that education is the key to better health. Therefore, we have prepared the Keys2Health Educational Series to help you manage your family's health care needs.



#2 Diabetes

- A chronic disease that is caused by excessive levels of glucose (sugar) in the bloodstream.

You or someone you know may be one of the 100,000 individuals in the Philadelphia area suffering from diabetes. These Keys2Health tips may be helpful in managing this condition:

- Follow a healthy meal plan that's low in fat and high in fiber
- Exercise regularly
- Get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Together with a

5-10% loss of body weight, can produce a 58% reduction in diabetes

- Take medications and check your sugar levels, as prescribed by your doctor

KEYSTONE MERCY

A Program of Keystone First and Mercy Health Plan

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

CALL YOUR DOCTOR FOR REGULAR CHECK-UPS.

PHA Introduces Automated Phone System

Everybody hates being on hold. PHA knows that. If you want information about your utility check, your place on the housing waiting list or a PHA program, you should be able to get it right away.

Starting November 1, you can receive almost any information about PHA services quickly and easily through our new automated phone system, by calling PHA's main number 215-684-4000. When you first enter PHA's new Interactive Voice Response System (IVR), you will be asked for your client number. Entering your client number speeds up the process and helps you get your information faster.

By now, you should have received a magnet with your personal client number on it

along with PHA's phone number. Keep the magnet on your refrigerator so you can find it when you need to call. PHA also sent business cards with the agency's phone number and your client number to keep in your wallet so you can call from wherever you are. To protect your privacy, PHA will not be asking for your social security number, so keep that client number handy.

If you have a question that the automated system cannot answer, or if you are not able to use the system, agents will be on hand to help you. Even then, the new system will get you to the correct person faster, and having your client number will speed the way.

PHA hopes you'll find the new IVR system easy and efficient. It will give you more time to do the things you really want to do and let you spend less time on the phone with PHA. To reach PHA Call 215-684-4000 and give your Client Number.

Community Partners Program Advances

Residents who rely on PHA's Community Partners Program to improve their job and life skills now have some new and exciting choices.

The PHA Board of Commissioners recently approved 13 new contracts with nine partners. Leighanne Tancredi, manager of the program, says 22 agencies competed to offer their services.

"We considered the needs of the residents and the things they requested and the changes in the Philadelphia job market," Leighanne says. "There was heavy competition (to serve our residents). These non-profits were very interested in becoming one of PHA's Community Partners."

PHA Executive Director Carl Greene was gratified by the response and he says it shows how far the program has

come since it began just over two years ago.

"These organizations understand PHA's commitment to helping our clients succeed," Greene says. "I think they want to be part of a program that is making a measurable difference in people's lives. They also know that they are partnering with an organization in PHA where success is the only acceptable outcome."

The Community Partners program is an outgrowth of the seven-year time limit that PHA has placed on participants in the Housing Choice Voucher program. Greene says it would not be fair to tell residents that PHA expects them to become independent without providing them with the tools and skills to do so.

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PHA's IVR team, led by Doreen Wilburn (third from left) and Faisal Hassan, has been working hard to bring interactive voice technology to PHA.

The IVR system can give you information about:

- Admissions
- Area office locations
- Family Self-Sufficiency
- Home Ownership
- HCV Program
- Pre-Apprenticeship, Computer Programs
- Rent balance
- Senior programs
- Utility check status



PHA Pre-Apprenticeship Program Open Houses

WHEN: October 25, 26, November 8, 9, 22, 23, December 6, 7
12:00pm to 6:00pm

WHERE: Workforce Development Center
1905 Vare Avenue (right off of the expressway)

Here is your chance to become a skilled union member. Don't miss this opportunity!

Students are instructed in electrical, carpentry, roofing and painting trades. Union entrance exams available to participants.

Program is **math intensive**. Students learn Algebra, Geometry and Basic Math for union exams.

Qualified applicants must take aptitude & drug tests prior to admission.

**For info call:
215.684.8049 or 215.684.8053**

The next session will start in January 19, 2007.

This 21-week session will end in June 2007.

Classes are Monday thru Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Applications will be accepted during Open Houses beginning in October 2006.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

1. Resident of the Philadelphia Housing Authority
 - Section 8/Housing Choice
 - Conventional Housing
 - Scattered Site
2. Positive attitude
3. Physically capable of lifting up to 60lbs
4. 18yrs. of age or older, or 18 before the end of the cycle
5. A high school diploma or GED is required. (If applicants have neither one, before they can be accepted into the program they must have taken steps toward obtaining one.)

Disabled Families Can Enjoy American Dream

Sonovia Thomas is disabled, as are two of her 11 children. The Housing Choice Voucher assistance she has received for the past two years has made her life easier. But after attending a Homeowners Workshop for families with a disabled member, she has a new gleam in her eye and the hope of some day owning a home of her own.

"I feel like somebody is going to help me," she said as she filled out an application for PHA's Homeowners Program.

"It gives you the chills that we have the chance to do this," says 81-year old Maria Kruz. "It is really amazing."

Maria's children are grown, but she has two small dogs who provide companionship. She has been an HCV resident for 15 years, and she says that it is difficult to find a landlord who will rent to someone with pets.

"With this program I have the chance to own a home. It makes me feel so good," she adds. "I am so grateful to PHA."

Over a thousand HCV residents attended workshops this fall offered specifically to HCV families with a disabled member. Speakers explained step-by-step how current HCV residents could purchase their own homes by first getting a good credit rating, then getting pre-approved by a lender and finally going with a realtor to find their new home.

"The intention of this program is for you to find



"It gives you the chills that we have the chance to do this," Maria Kruz, 81, tells Darlene Bivins at PHA's Homeowners Workshop for disabled families.

your dream home," PHA's Malvin Reyes told the crowd. He added, "you need to do some homework before you pick out your house. You need to write down everything you want. This isn't about just wanting to get out of a bad neighborhood or a bad house. This is about owning your own home."

Reyes cautioned the group that it might take several years to clean up their credit and achieve their goal. He urged disabled residents to speak with the housing counselors from PHA partnering agencies, on hand at the workshop with brochures and information for prospective homeowners.

PHA assists HCV residents by allowing them to use their voucher towards their monthly mortgage payment. If there is a disabled family member and the head of the household is not able to work, that

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Free Flu Shots For Seniors

There's good news for PHA seniors this flu season-Philadelphia has plenty of vaccine on the way. And PHA is partnering with the Philadelphia Health Department to provide free flu shots at senior sites throughout the city.

All seniors are encouraged to take advantage of this free program, especially with this year's threat of bird flu. While catching the flu is uncomfortable for people of all ages, it can be especially dangerous for the elderly.

"Many seniors have other ailments, such as heart problems," points out Charmaine Morton, PHA's director of senior programming. "If they get the flu, those ailments will flare up."

If someone receives the shot, usually if they do catch the flu, it is less severe and does not last as

(Cont. Page 10)

The schedule for this year's flu shots is:

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|--------------------|
| Oct. 18th | 2:15- 2 pm | Liddonfield |
| Oct. 23rd | 10 am - noon | Wilson Park |
| Oct. 24th | 9 am - 11am | Emlen Arms |
| Oct. 24th | 10 am - noon | Blumberg Sr. Bldg. |
| Oct. 25th | 10 am - noon | Bentley Hall |
| Oct. 30th | 10 am - noon | Johnson Homes |

For more information about the flu shots, call the senior programs office at 215-684-1183.

PHA Senior Programs Special Committee Meetings and Special Events

OCTOBER 2006

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| Oct. 20. Aetna Get to know me Presentation Location: Collegeview Time: 11:00 a.m. —3:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 20. Birthday Celebration Location: Suffolk Manor Time: 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 23. Aetna Get to know me Presentation Location: Bentley Hall Time: 11:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 24. Fire Safety Location: Gladys B. Jacobs Time: 10:00 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Oct. 24. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 25. Heart Smart Location: Emlen Arms Time: 10:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 26. SOWN Location: Liddonfield Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Oct.26. Men's Cancer Workshop Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 26. Diabetes & Arthritis |

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| Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Oct. 26. Halloween Party Location: Liddonfield Time: 11:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Oct. 31. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Oct. 31. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |

NOVEMBER 2006

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| Nov. 1. Temple Legal Clinic Location: Suffolk Manor Time: 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Nov. 4. Black & White Bell Location: Yesha Fellowship Hall Time: 7:00 p.m.—11:00 p.m. |
| Nov. 6. Asthma Workshop Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 9. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 13. Asthma Workshop |

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| Location: Bentley Hall Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 13. Asthma Workshop Location: Point Breeze Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 16. Aetna Fall Party Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 17. Birthday Celebration Location: Suffolk Manor Time: 10:00 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Nov. 22. Temple Legal Clinic Location: Suffolk Manor Time: 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. |

DECEMBER 2006

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| Dec. 4. Diabetes Presentation Location: Bentley Hall Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 4. Diabetes Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 5. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. |
| Dec. 6. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 6. Winter Dance Location: Wilson Park |

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| Time: 5:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 6. Germs & You Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:00 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 7. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 11. Diabetes Demo Location: Point Breeze Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 12. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. |
| Dec. 13. Pre-Holiday Party Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 13. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. |
| Dec. 14. Graduate Hospital Workshop Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 14. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 19. Computer Class |

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| Wilson Park Location: Wilson Park Time: 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. |
| Dec. 20. Computer Class Wilson Park Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 20. Diabetes Presentation Location: Point Breeze Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 21. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |
| Dec. 22. Holiday Celebration Location: Wilson Park Time: 2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 26. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. |
| Dec. 27. Computer Class Location: Wilson Park Time: 1:00 p.m.—2:00 p.m. |
| Dec. 28. Diabetes & Arthritis Foundation Presentation Location: Wilson Park Time: 10:30 a.m.—12:00 m. |

West Park Teenager Leads by Example

It's a good thing Ronald Jones of West Park Plaza is so young; if he were any older he wouldn't be able to keep up with all the activities that he participates in. Ronald Jones is 13 years old and one busy kid. Between his excellent grades and his extra curricular activities it's no wonder his grandmother is so proud of him.

Ronald received a certificate from the Green City Youth Project for planting different greenery around the city and understanding the importance of caring about plants. He is a participant in his school's Beautification Program. Every year before school starts volunteers

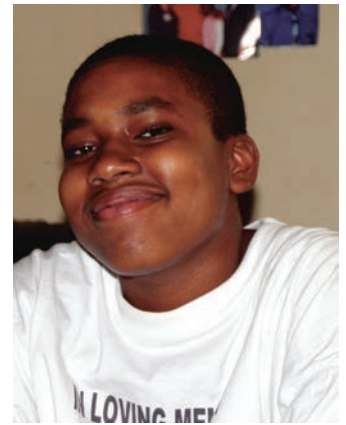
plant flowers and trees around the school to make the building look more appealing and friendly.

In addition, Ronald is a Praise Dancer at New St. John Baptist Church. Three times a month he and several students dance as part of the youth program.

That's not all. Ronald is also on the youth committee for his church to raise money for trips and other community activities. Most recently they raised money by washing cars. When not at church, school or with his friends, Ronald helps out at West Park. He likes to walk around and ask anyone if they need help; he's no

stranger to opening doors for people and being polite and friendly.

Ronald is in 8th grade at Sulzberger Middle School. For fun he likes to play basketball and football – when he can work it into his schedule.



Energetic youth Ronald Jones lives at WestPark Plaza.

MET Workshop Opens a New World for Teens

Until this summer, Deleita Hopson's world began and ended on the streets of West Phischool and stay in my neighborhood," she recalls. But the Workready Summer Employment 2006 Program opened her eyes to a wider vision. This program was offered through PHA Community Partnership with MET (Management and Environmental Technologies.) "They showed me there is a lot more out there than just your neighborhood.



Deleita Hopson, age 16, sets new goal to attend college thanks to MET workshop.

There is a whole world," says the 16-year old junior at University City High School.

Deleita's world has expanded to include a dream of attending Spellman College in Atlanta, where she wants to study computer programming.

But before the summer, she hadn't even thought about college. At the Workready Program, teens learn about the many career options open to them. They find out what college can offer them and how to get on the right track once they get there.

The program also helps young people develop the skills they need to get to college, especially computer skills. Deleita says she had worked on a computer before, but not as much as she did this summer. "I learned to type and how to use PowerPoints. PowerPoints are really cool." This

fall, she plans on taking MET's International Computers License workshop, which will give her the opportunity to obtain a computer certification.

Thanks to the Workready Workshop, Delita's schoolwork has also improved. She has a new outlook on life and a specific goal now and is working harder than before. "My work has to be really tight this year," she says, adding that her teachers have already remarked on her new attitude and achievement.

"I told a lot of my friends about the workshop, and they are going to sign up for the MET program this year. You really get a lot of information about what you can do with your life."

For more information about MET's many programs to promote family self-sufficiency, call 215-717-2727.

G.R.E.A.T. Summer Food Service Program

by Cpt. Daniel Richmond

The Gang Resistance Education and Training (GREAT) team hopes everyone had a safe, happy and peaceful summer. The GREAT Unit worked with the summer food program providing seminars for young people about how to avoid gangs, violence and drugs.

The food service program is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Each day this summer at various developments throughout the city, young people were provided breakfast and lunch at designated sites. Once there, they had the opportunity to enhance their social skills and attend an educational workshop. The workshop reinforced the life skills training they experienced during the school year.

The program included information on the differences between a gang and a youth club. Also, attendees were provided ideas to make their neighborhood and school a safer place to live. Campers learned why families are special in addition to the benefits of establishing strong family relationships. There was a consensus that gangs could never replace the family unit. Young people were given advice about the importance of attending school everyday, learning to focus, and setting goals that are achievable.

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A Message from the Executive Director

I want to bring you up to date on our battle to restore the funding the federal government has proposed slashing from public housing agencies. As you know, Washington has issued new operating rules for housing authorities and slashed appropriations. In addition funds are shifting from the Northeast to the South and Southwest. That combination, if left unchanged, would make it impossible to provide the current level of service and programs.

The Pennsylvania congressional delegation sent a letter asking that the funding be restored to Alphonso Jackson, secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban



Carl R. Greene

Development. This request was a tremendous act of unity across party lines; nineteen of the twenty-one members of the delegation signed the letter. The letter was the result of two statewide housing summits, one in Philadelphia and another in Pittsburg. Hundreds of residents joined us at these events and then sent letters to their elected officials.

The fact that Pennsylvania is scheduled to lose millions of housing dollars while Texas and Florida gain millions isn't sitting well with our Pennsylvania legislators. Thanks to you, we were able to bring this unjustified shift of funds to lawmakers' attention. And yes, we have made great progress in that regard. But the fight for full

funding is not over. Final decisions won't come until November or December. We are working as hard as we can to make sure we are able to continue to provide the quality service you deserve.

If you care about the future of public housing in Philadelphia, I urge you to continue to make your feelings known to your elected officials.



The Residents' Newspaper

Published by: The Philadelphia Housing Authority

Editor: Anne Martinez

Executive Editor: Kirk Dorn
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Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinators

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PHA has assembled a team of six professionals to help residents get the training they need to reach economic self-sufficiency. The Economic Self-Sufficiency coordi-

nators will meet with you to help you make a plan and recommend one of PHA's nine Community Partners who offer job training and other skills necessary to land a job.

Leighanne Tancredi, who manages the Community Partners Program, says almost 3,400 residents have signed off on plans. Coordinators continue to take

appointments to meet with residents who need to develop and sign off on self-sufficiency plans.

Leighanne says each Community Partner will administer a test to see whether residents have the skills necessary to enter and train in their programs. If a resident lacks certain skills, they will be referred to another program to gain the necessary skills to move forward.

The team of coordinators meets regularly to determine how they can improve service to you. "The most heartbreaking thing is that many residents don't recognize the opportunity they have," Tancredi says. "PHA is offering free training to help residents get more skills to get a better job and develop a career."

Leighanne realizes that some residents are afraid to take the first step to get training or don't know where to find childcare. But that's exactly why the coordinators are available, to help residents overcome these barriers.

(PHA has 5 offices where residents can meet with Economic Self-Sufficiency coordinators. The offices are open from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. If you're interested, please contact the coordinator that serves your zip code; see page 10.)

Community Partners Advance

(Cont. from Page 3)

Agencies that provide job training through Community Partners help residents to find a job after they complete their training. Those agencies follow up with clients every three months to see how they're doing.

The program now has four new partners: New Wave Resources, Philadelphia Community College, Creative Urban Educational Systems and the Enterprise Center.

The five existing partners that have new contracts are: Professional Healthcare Institute (PHI), JEVS, MET Case Management, Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI), and Opportunities Industrialization Corp. Inc. (OIC).

Tancredi says it's great to continue working with the existing partners.

"They're familiar with our clients. They understand how PHA works. They are looking forward to coming back and continuing their work with PHA residents," she says.

Leighanne says they worked hard on determining new offerings in the Community Partners Program to reflect changes in the Philadelphia area job market. She believes that a 16-week course that leads to a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) will probably be the most popular new course. There are numerous job opportunities for



Graduation class for new community partner Creative Urban Educational Systems. They offer courses in two areas of great professional demand: medical billing and medical assistant training.

someone who obtains a CDL and many residents have requested this training.

Another exciting addition is a year-long program run by the Enterprise Center that will teach residents how to start their own business.

Greene says this program fits in with the aim of the Community Partners Program.

"The whole idea of the community partners program is promoting self-sufficiency. For most participants that means educational and job training opportunities. But for some the ultimate self-sufficiency is owning their own business, and we want to provide the tools for those who want to travel that path."

Since it began, the Community Partners Program has helped many residents go from zero income to earning over ten dollars an hour. Tancredi says besides helping residents become self-sufficient, it's also a good first step toward homeownership.

The program, like others run by PHA, has a cloud over it in the form of federal funding cuts. But Greene says he's trying to reverse those cuts so that PHA's customers can continue to get the skills and training that are critical to their success.

G.R.E.A.T. Summer Food Program

(Cont. from Page 5)

Younger attendees were exposed to GREAT safety tips. Some of these tips include knowledge of their phone number and address in an event of an emergency.

Also, GREAT officers advised students not to pick-up any stray guns, drugs or other drug equipment they may see in vacant lots or alleys. They were taught what to do if a stranger attempts to trick them into getting into his/her car. Finally, young participants were advised to stay away from fallen electrical wires, to use their seatbelts in cars and wear their helmets while riding bicycles.

Parents were given a family guide called "Keeping Your Teens Drug-

Free", prepared by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The guide provided valuable information regarding teens including: marijuana and other drugs, signs and symptoms of drug use, setting rules and boundaries for teens, and how to avoid risky behaviors and situations. This guide can be obtained by calling (800) 788-2800 or on-line at www.TheAntiDrug.com.

It has been a busy summer here at PHA. We were able to collaborate with agencies within PHA as well as community groups, businesses and faith based organizations to combat gangs, violence and other destructive behaviors. Have a wonderful school year and make a personal commitment to resolve conflicts peacefully.

The PHA Experience • Fall 2006

www.pha.phila.gov



Community College of Philadelphia will provide courses in job readiness including administrative assistant and financial services.

Self-Sufficiency Coordinators You Should Know



Crystal Marshall
Northeast Philadelphia Office

Crystal Marshall says she always wanted a career where she could help people, and that social work was her interest. Before signing on with PHA last July, Crystal worked for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare for seven years. There, she worked in the career development unit.

Crystal says she enjoys seeing people get results from training and vocational programs. The most inspiring story for her

involves a resident who took the initiative and got into the PHI (Professional Healthcare Institute) pharmacy tech program immediately rather than go on a waiting list. She says many people are afraid of the unknown and don't have that sort of drive.

"People tend to be comfortable in their present situation and venturing into new areas such as employment can be frightening," Marshall says. "If you've never had a job...just going out for job training and looking for a job can be a frightening experience."

Crystal, who works in PHA's Frankford office, encourages residents not to limit themselves and to try new things. She says, "taking on greater challenges means greater rewards."

You can reach Crystal Marshall at 215-684-2414.



Edwina Young
Germantown Office

Edwina Young probably knows more about the challenges that PHA residents face than her fellow ESS coordinators. That's because she's also a conventional housing resident who had to overcome a few barriers herself.

Edwina was working for Wachovia as an international document advisor (stopping illegal business traffic) when the company moved her department to Hong Kong. She had a high school diploma, but lacked computer skills.

Edwina enrolled in training at the Blumberg Computer Center in April 2004 and developed skills in PowerPoint, Excel and Access. But before she received her certificate that October, Young had begun training other students as part of her community service work.

Subsequently, she learned of and landed a job as an intake worker in the HCV program. Then, Young did some fill-in work as an Economic Self-Sufficiency coordinator. When a full-time position as a coordinator opened, she jumped at the opportunity and now works at PHA's Germantown office.

Edwina says she likes helping people, especially in light of her background. She says there is a path for everyone and she reminds them: "You don't have to settle for less. There's always another step that you can take to get ahead."

You can reach Edwina Young at 215-684-3065.



Jenneane Tillar
South Philadelphia Office

Jenneane Tillar came to PHA three years ago after working for the Salvation Army as a case manager. She has spent her career working in the social service field, including stints with the Salvation Army and the city's Office of Emergency Shelter and Services (OESS). Currently, she is stationed at PHA's South Philly office as a Self-sufficiency Coordinator.

Jenneane is a certified addiction counselor with an associates degree in Health & Human Services from Community College of

Philadelphia. She says it takes some courage on the part of residents to take the first steps toward self-sufficiency. The reasons they don't are many and varied.

Tillar tries to prod residents gently, reminding them that life will improve once they get a skill and develop a career. She says once a resident takes the first step toward career building, they are excited, grateful and ready to learn even more.

Jenneane's favorite story is about a former client who was reluctant to enter a training program because she was going through a divorce.

However, she did enter and complete the program, found employment, bought her own home and became independent. Jenneane says the woman "left me a wonderful voice mail thanking me for helping her realize her potential."

"Everybody is looking to build a career if they don't have one," Tillar says. "It's just a matter of getting the word out and getting the clients here."

You can reach Jenneane Tillar at 215-684-3051.



Saeema Saunders
West Philadelphia Office

Saeema Saunders, is the Self-Sufficiency Coordinator at the HCV West Philly office. She is dedicated to helping people in need through the social service field.

Saeema graduated from Bloomsburg University where she majored in sociology and criminal justice. She has been with PHA's Economic Self-Sufficiency program since 2003. Before that, she worked in Montgomery County's aging and adult services program for several years.

"I want to see people be successful, leave the Housing Choice Voucher program and fare well," Saunders says.

She believes that people should pursue education and training in something they'd like to do.

"Although we might not offer what you're interested in, we can help you find a place that will offer it," Saunders says.

Her favorite story involves a former resident who obtained her GED and eventually went into business, opening a small clothing store in Overbrook.

Saeema urges all HCV recipients to take advantage of the training programs, especially because of the seven-year limit. Just as she enjoys her work, she'd like you to enjoy your career, too.

You can reach Saeema Saunders at 215-684-1359.



Ursula G. Alvarado
North Philadelphia Office

Ursula G. Alvarado likes to help people who want to help themselves. She worked for several social service organizations before coming to work at PHA in December 2002. She now works at PHA's North Philly office as a Self-Sufficiency Coordinator.

Ursula likes to encourage clients to take their career plans a step higher than they normally would. She believes that they can really help themselves by first taking training

in the Community Partners Program, then going on to Community College of Philadelphia to further improve their job prospects. (By the way, she's a Temple grad.)

Alvarado says it's important for residents to choose training or studies in an area that they like or are interested in. Her reward is seeing or hearing about clients who are excited after they've received their certificates, and are ready to get a job.

You can reach Ursula G. Alvarado at 215-684-3126.



Michele Henderson
Northeast Philadelphia Office

Michele Henderson has held a variety of jobs with PHA dating back to 1993 before coming to work in the Community Partners Program last June. She is a Self-Sufficiency Coordinator at the Frankford office. Michele is a graduate of Penn State with a degree in psychology.

"I like to empower people. That's what drew me into the social services," she says.

Despite her short time in the program, Michele has already had a memorable experience. She says one resident really wanted to get into one of the medical training programs offered by the Professional Healthcare Institute (PHI). The resident went down for testing on her own, without waiting, and entered the class much sooner than expected.

Michele's message to residents is that she's always available. She also emphasizes that residents are never alone, that she and other ESS coordinators will work with them and come up with goals together.

You can reach Michele Henderson at 215-684-1559.

PHA Community Partners Education/Job Training Programs

Administrative Assistant Job Readiness Program

This program (132 hours) prepares students to serve as administrative assistants by providing training in the areas of life skills, customer service, computer use, workplace etiquette, filing, job searching and interviewing.

Location: Center City

Provider:

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

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)

Eight-week course (102 hrs classroom and 48 hrs clinical) offers hands-on experience resulting in a certificate, and excellent opportunities for employment at hospital or nursing care facilities.

Location: Northwest Philadelphia

Provider: Professional Healthcare Institute
1333 West Cheltenham Avenue
Melrose Park, PA 19027



Commercial Drivers License

This 16-week course (130 hours) trains participants to drive commercial vehicles

such as trucks, buses, and ambulances.

Upon successful completion, students can obtain one of two types of commercial drivers licenses, Class A (Tractor Trailer) or Class B (small trucks and buses).

Location: Center City

Provider: New Wave Resources, Inc
1321 Arch Street, 6th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107



Custodian/Housekeeping Training

This 16-week program provides janitorial/housekeeping training with an emphasis on handling hazardous materials. Students pursue jobs as janitors, building maintenance personnel, hotel housekeeping, environmental services, custodial work, health care facilities maintenance, floor care specialists, and carpet cleaners.

Location: Center City

Provider: New Wave Resources, Inc
1321 Arch Street, 6th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Customer Service

This 16-week course provides training for careers in hotels, restaurants, food service at

schools, financial services, airlines, personal care facilities, and retail.

Location: Center City

Provider: New Wave Resources, Inc
1321 Arch Street, 6th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Financial Services Job Readiness Program

This program (120 hours) is designed to prepare students for jobs in the financial services industry with a focus on customer service and clerical skills development. The program includes life skills, math skills, accounting skills, customer service, computer skills, workplace etiquette, job search and interviewing skills.

Location: Center City

Provider:

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

Home Maintenance Repair Program

This certificate program targeted for future homeowners consists of 12 three-hour sessions (held on Saturday's). Training by highly credentialed instructors includes: painting, plumbing, electrical wiring and carpentry. Must be registered in the Homeownership Program (See Homebuyer Ad on page 12.)

Location: Northeast

Provider: Orleans Technical Institute
1330 Rhawn Street
Philadelphia, PA 19111

PHA Self-Sufficiency Contacts

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Community Partners
642 N. Broad St.
215-684-3125 (Fax #215-684-4966)

Team A

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Team B

West Philadelphia Office
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Saema Saunders - ESS Coordinator
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Team C

Northwest Germantown Office
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Team D

North Philadelphia Office
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Ursula G. Alvarado - ESS Coordinator
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Team E

Northeast Philadelphia Office
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Michelle Henderson-Crystal Marshall-ESS Coordinators
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Computer Technology

Monet Williams
Blumberg Development & Johnson Homes
1516 Judson Way (23rd and Jefferson St.)
215-684-4628 (Fax #215-684-8080)

FSS Staff

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Camille Johnson -

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Blumberg Development
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Gilbert Vega -

ESS Coordinator for FSS
Blumberg Development
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215-684-2057 (Fax #215-684-8080)

Christeen Johnson -

FSS Intake Worker
Blumberg Development
1516 Judson Way, 2nd Floor (23rd and Jefferson St.)
215-684-3124 (Fax #215-684-8080)

Audrey Hickmon -

FSS Coordinator/Case Manager
1516 Judson Way, 2nd Floor (23rd and Jefferson St.)

Stop the Violence Through Skills for Life

The boys in the basement of Bok Technical High School don't see a way out.

"If someone comes after you with a gun, you'd better have a gun of your own," they tell Julia Williams, the group leader of PHA's Skills for Life program that meets five days a week after school.

Today, "Get Real About Violence" is the discussion topic, and everyone has a lot to say. "There is nothing you can do about it. They can come to you at school. They can come to your house," says 16-year-old Wesley Gillard.

"There is something you are doing," responds Program Manager Patrick Ameen-Akbar. "You are here. The three hours you are here is the prime time for violence."

Williams, a state-certified Youth Development Practitioner, has given eulogies at the funerals of over 100 children who have died through violence. She believes that through the Skills for Life Program,



Skills for Life participants and facilitators at Bok Technical High School.

these boys and girls can have a chance for a better tomorrow.

"You don't have to answer violence with violence," she tells them. "We have each other. We can make a difference."

Making a difference in teenagers' lives is the key to the Skills for Life Program. To stay in the program, the teens must commit to attend the program, to attend school every day and to keep a B average. Williams and the school's youth leader, former teacher Christopher Partin help participants with their homework, teach them computer skills, offer creative outlets such as mural arts, and prepare them for future careers.

The program's success is clear. Adrian Harper-Miller and Sharyana Odom, two of last year's Bok High School graduates, are now attending college (see box for a complete list of Skills for Life graduates).

For the teens, the program offers a way to succeed in life despite the violence around them. For Parton and Williams, Skills for Life is a way to save the children and give back to the community.

"Someone was there to help me when I was young," says Partin. "Now I'm here for them."

Free Flu Shots

(Cont. from Page 4)

long. The pneumonia shot will also be available free of charge. Ms. Morton points out that it is important for seniors to continue to eat well during the flu season to keep strong, to fight off the flu or pneumonia.

In addition, because October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the Linda Creed Foundation will provide information on breast cancer for both men and women during the flu shot clinics. Breast cancer for men is on the rise, and it is important for men to know what to look for.

2006 SKILLS FOR LIFE GRADUATES College Destinations

| | | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Nakeah Ashford | Thompson Institute | Adrian Miller Harper | Penn State-Abington |
| Takiah Ashford | Thompson Institute | Marcus Moment | PHA Pre Apprenticeship Program |
| Samuel Best | Airport Security Officer | Sharmaya Odum | Undecided |
| Marcel Boddie | Lincoln University | Thurman Perkins IV | Lincoln Tech |
| Konjul Brown | Cabrini College | Sade Phillips | Thompson Institute |
| Natasha Calloway | Community College of Philadelphia | Melissa Porter | Undecided |
| Jeanna Cooks | North Carolina University | Sharnise Sanders | Temple University |
| Indira Cue | Aunt Annie's Pretzel | Nicole Shaw | Millersville University |
| Athena Fowler | Community College of Philadelphia | Jason Simkins | Community College of Philadelphia |
| Terry Gadson | Cheyney University | Tamara Singleton | Indiana University of Pennsylvania |
| Sharnae Gates | Temple University | Joseph Stibbins | Undecided |
| Robert Griffin | Undecided | Latamela Swint | Lincoln University |
| Noami Leach | Penn State University-Schuylkill | Melissa Thomas | Culinary Art Institute |
| Earl Lewis | Delaware State University | Sheila Thompson | Community College of Philadelphia |
| | | Curtis Wallace Jr. | United Parcel Service |

Helping Herself and Helping Others

Sharmain Wilberson is a woman on the move. Today she is working to complete her master's degree in education, but she already has her next goals in sight: buying a home and opening a day care center.

It wasn't always this way. Ten years ago, Sharmain was in a homeless shelter, overcoming a drug addiction. "I had been to college several times," she recalls, "but I always quit."

But soon after Sharmain got an opportunity to move into Oxford Village with her small son, she started classes at the Community College of Philadelphia. This time, "I was clean," and that made all the difference.

"I didn't know what I wanted to study, but I wanted to know what damage the drugs had caused to my brain, and what I had done to myself."

So Sharmain took a class in behavioral science, and ended up with an associate's degree in the subject along with a desire to help others. To advance in her

career, she then realized that she needed a bachelor's degree. So Sharmain returned to school, graduating from Alvernia College with a degree in Health and Community Service.

While Sharmain was in school, she was elected president of Oxford Village's resident council. She served as council president for four years. This experience convinced her that she really wanted to work with children. Sharmain accepted a job at Community Education Partners (CEP), a private educational organization that works with disruptive children, teaching them to be productive students before they return to the public school classroom.

When it came time to go to graduate school, Sharmain realized that she wanted to study education rather than continue in behavioral science. CEP is paying her tuition at Arcadia University.

"I feel like there is nothing I can't do," she says proudly. She tries to transfer that confidence to her



Sharmain Wilberson, once a drug addict, smiles at the positive changes in her life now that she is clean.

12-year-old son. "I work with my son. I'm his cheerleader. I'm his friend."

Sharmain has also completed a PHA program where she learned how to operate a day care center. While being interviewed for this article, Sharmain found out that she could participate in PHA's home-ownership classes. Once she has her degree and her own home, owning a day care center is the next goal on her list.

"I can do whatever I set my mind on," she says. And so can you!

Fire Safety - Learn Tips to Save Lives

What would you do if your house caught on fire? Do you have a plan to quickly get your family safely out of the house? PHA doesn't want you to wait until you actually have a fire to prepare your family's escape plan. In addition, they want to help you prevent fires in the first place. Throughout October, National Fire Safety Month, PHA is holding fire prevention presentations at mid-rise and high-rise buildings. About a week after the presentations, fire drills will be held at these sites.

PHA's pamphlet on fire safety and prevention is also available for residents, as well as a Philadelphia Fire Department home escape plan template that can help you plan an emergency route to use in case of fire. It is very important to plan; don't wait until a fire breaks out to decide how to escape from your home.

If a fire does occur, the following tips can save your life. When the fire alarm sounds:

- Stay calm and begin evacuation.
- Feel doors before opening. Do not open doors



that are hot or if smoke is seeping in. Seal cracks around door with a towel. Use fire escape if possible or call 911.

- If doors are cool, open cautiously. If hallway is clear, close the door behind you and proceed to the fire exit.
- Do not use elevators.
- If caught in smoke or heat, stay low where the air is better.
- Identify a location to meet family members outside of your building. Notify the fire department if anyone is missing.

To crack down on arson crimes, PHA is participat-

ing in the "We Tip" program. If you see someone commit arson on PHA property, you can call 1-800-47-ARSON (27766) and report the crime anonymously. "We Tip" forwards the information to the appropriate law enforcement agency and tracks the case. Informants can receive a reward of up to \$1,000 if a conviction is made based on the tip.

PHA's Core Fire Prevention Team is coordinating all of these activities. Team members Anthony Roman and John Chepelevich are retired Philadelphia firefighters and have first-hand experience in fighting and investigating fires.

Fire Prevention Presentations will be held on:

October 17th at: Parkview Apartments

October 24th at: Gladys B. Jacobs

Richard Allen II

Richard Allen III

Resident Council members can coordinates

dates with their Asset Managers or can call

Mr. Roman or Mr. Chepelevich at 215-684-3011.

EDSI Stays with Job Searchers Throughout the Hunt

Carmichael Lewis wanted a job. PHA's Community Partner EDSI (Educational Data Systems, Inc.) helped him find one. And for that, the current USAir employee is very grateful.

The EDSI job counselors, "help you find out your strong points and your weaknesses," explains Carmichael. "They stay with you and help you along with the process. EDSI helps clients, says Lewis, by training them how to look for a job, helping them with their resume' and preparing them for interviews. Once you find a job, they give you a \$25.00 incentive bonus.

"They also provide tokens for the interviews and to get to their office," he adds.

Lewis was eager to find a job after being out of work for two years. During much of that time, he helped his sister and her husband sell things they

bought at auction. "I knew that was not what I wanted to do," says Carmichael. "It was a very uncertain way of making a living."

EDSI helped him find something quickly. "A person has to be willing and want to get out there and work," he says. "If not, they will fall back on their old patterns. EDSI will stay on them to get out and work. I would recommend it."

If you get a job, and you really don't like it, EDSI will not encourage you to leave your job, but will help you find another one that may be more suited to your skills. Lewis has suffered several physical injuries at his current job and EDSI is now helping him find less physically demanding work.

To receive help from EDSI, contact Melanie DiBlasi at 215-564-0015.



Carmichael Lewis found a job with the help of Educational Data Systems Inc. (EDSI).



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

PHA/MTE/Family Services Program Homebuyers Club Workshops

(Please plan to attend both sessions when registering.)

Workshop 1
Sponsored by Countrywide Home Loans

Workshop 2
Sponsored by Citizen's Bank

Workshop 3
Sponsored by Wachovia Mortgage Corp.

Workshops: 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

**FSS Center
North 1516 Judson Way, Suite 206
23rd & Jefferson Street**

Call to register:
Mr. Gilbert Vega at 215.684.2057 or
Ms. Christeen Johnson at 215.684.3124

Workshops: 9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

**Strawbridge Building
8th & Market – 13th Floor
Community Area**

Call to register:
Mr. Gilbert Vega at 215.684.2057 or
Ms. Christeen Johnson at 215.684.3124

Workshops: 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

**FSS Center
North 1516 Judson Way, Suite 206
23rd & Jefferson Street**

Call to register:
Mr. Gilbert Vega at 215.684.2057 or
Ms. Christeen Johnson at 215.684.3124

**Wednesday
November 8, 2006**

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.

**Wednesday
November 15, 2006**

Credit Repair

Learn how to establish, maintain and repair credit.

**Thursday
November 9, 2006**

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.

**Thursday
November 16, 2006**

Credit Repair

Learn how to establish, maintain and repair credit.

**Tuesday
November 14, 2006**

First Time Homeownership Orientation

Learn how to use your Housing Voucher (Section 8) to purchase a home.

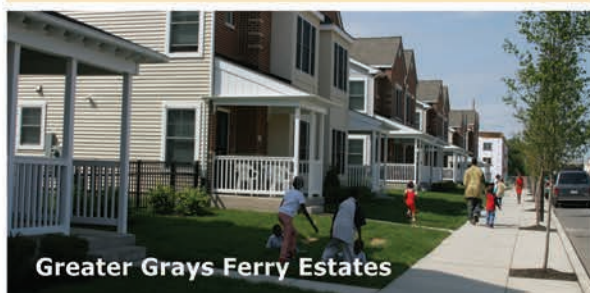
Budgeting & Money Management

Learn how to define income and expenses.

**Tuesday
November 21, 2006**

Credit Repair

Learn how to establish, maintain and repair credit.



Katrina Survivor in a Philly Home



Jo Quasney, known as Ms. Jo, lives at Emlen Arms. She's happy with her new home and new job at PHA.

Labor Day weekend 2005 PHA staff members worked around the clock to accommodate the Katrina survivors who made their way to Philadelphia. Hundreds of thousands fled New Orleans in search of shelter. When the city of Philadelphia welcomed displaced New Orleans' residents, PHA was in the forefront of the effort to supply housing.

One year later, some Katrina survivors have returned to New Orleans, but many have decided to stay in Philadelphia. One brave woman named Jo Quasney has had an amazing journey.

They call her Ms. Jo. She lived in New Orleans in a section called Old Metairie. Last year she was enjoying life at home when Katrina hit and the levees broke three blocks away. She and her cat escaped the rushing water through a hole in the roof. Three days later the water receded and she was able to get away from her washed out property. She started out for the Superdome on foot and then headed for Baton Rouge. When she found nowhere to stay she thought of Philadelphia where she attended college 35 years ago. Ms. Jo made it, her cat didn't.

Once arriving in Philadelphia, Ms. Jo was directed to the Wanamaker School building, a temporary shelter for Katrina victims. "The people there were awesome. They guided me through all

the agencies: Red Cross, FEMA, welfare, social security and others. PHA's staff was caring and compassionate. They provided everything that I needed, even meals. They worked to make each of us whole. As they drove us around the city looking at various PHA sites for a place to live, the first place we came to was Emlen Arms."

"It was beautiful, the high ceilings, moldings and hardwood floors; it was like someone putting their arms around me. You looked out the front window and saw the trees and could even see Center City. And they allowed us to have a pet. It felt like home and I wanted to sign up right away." On Oct. 1 Ms. Jo moved into her new home at Emlen Arms complete with furniture. For the first time in many weeks she would sleep in a comfortable bed in a place she could call home.

Ms. Jo's next priority was finding



Local Best Buddies Chapters take to the streets during the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Be Best Buddy to a Friend

By Mia M. Graves

Best Buddies is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. They do this by providing one-on-one friendships. The Participants visit each other twice a month and contact each other weekly. The newly made friendships help

increase the participants' self esteem and confidence; and of course everyone knows that the volunteers always get back more than give.

Best Buddies offers numerous programs that allow people of all ages to participate. The current programs in Pennsylvania are offered to school age students, including middle school, high school and college. These programs pair students with young people about the same age. Another program called E-buddies is Internet based, allowing participants to make friends through e-mail. Best Buddies Citizens allows people with intellectual disabilities to pair up with those individuals who are in the corporate and civic community.

"Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born," said Anais Nin. As a result of the Best Buddies programs, individuals with intellectual disabilities obtain an increased sense of self-worth, which could lead to securing successful jobs, learning how to ride public transportation, living independently, raising a family, and making lifelong friendships.

Best Buddies was founded in 1994 and serves more than 4,500 individuals with more than 70 chapters worldwide.

If you are interested in becoming involved, making contributions or you would like more information, please contact Leslie Gordon at 215-569-0069.



In collaboration with PHA, over 200 Comcast employees volunteered to plant trees at PHA's Lucien E. Blackwell Homes as a part of a program to beautify the emerging West Philadelphia neighborhood.

Home Maintenance Classes Gives Confidence

Charlotte Love isn't planning to remodel her house by herself. But after taking the 12-week Home Maintenance Program for PHA residents conducted by JEVS (a PHA Community Partner), she has learned a lot about home repair.

"The course gave me confidence in my own ability," says Charlotte, who rents a house through the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV). "It's good to know how to do these things. And if someone comes in my house to do a repair, I'll know what he's doing," she adds.

Charlotte received a notice in the mail from PHA informing her about the 12-week course held at the Orleans School in the Northeast.

She said she especially enjoyed learning how to take the toilet apart, piece-by-piece, and putting it back together again. She also learned how to change a washer in the sink, repair a hole in a screen, and cut off a piece of pipe and solder it back together.

"I came home all excited from what we learned," she said. And she appreciated the tool kit all the students received.

While the plumbing seemed like something she could handle, Charlotte found the electrical part of the course, "real interesting. I wouldn't be able to do it myself, but it was real interesting."

Charlotte plans to share what she learned with her 14-year old son, so they can handle whatever repairs come up together.

The classes are free for any PHA homeowner or renter. For more information, call Dennis Zimmer at 215-728-4725.



Charlotte Love is proud of the certificate she earned after completing PHA's Home Maintenance Program.

PA Housing Residents Rally to Keep Funding

page 14

(Cont. from Page 1)

Florida and Texas. He asked the rally, "Are poor people in Texas more deserving than poor people in Pennsylvania?"

Allegheny County Housing Authority Executive Director Frank

Aggazio noted that as if the 22% cut were not enough in addition, "HUD is not allowing for increases in utility costs, making the real effect of the cuts closer to 39%."

The message was not lost on residents. One resident leader from

Pittsburgh, Olivia Doswell, worries about program cuts. "What are we going to do without security, lunch programs for young children and after-school tutoring?"

Several politicians were invited to the event, but only Senator Rick Santorum accepted, just as he had done at a similar summit in Philadelphia. He told rally participants that he is working to restore the lost funding and to challenge the shift of money away from

Pennsylvania. But he noted that time is running short and with campaign season underway, Congress will probably not make final decisions until after the November elections.

Having completed events in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, organizers made plans for a rally at the state capitol in Harrisburg in mid-October. Any resident interested in participating should contact their resident council president or TSSI.

PHA AND TEAMCHILDREN

Ending the Digital Divide

Computers For Every Family Low-Cost, Refurbished

The Philadelphia Housing Authority and TeamChildren are expanding their partnership to help every family receive a low-cost, refurbished computer to use in the comfort and safety of their homes.

Teamchildren has now helped over 6,000 computers find new homes, helping more than 30,000 children gain the tools and opportunities to succeed in today's global, digital economy.

We believe that every child should be given the opportunity to compete effectively in school and at work.

Computers do make a difference...

Here is what is required from you

- * Write a letter explaining why you can not afford a new computer and how having one will help your children/family. They love great letters.
- * Volunteer for two hours-you will be asked to help answer the phone, stuff envelopes, test monitors and lots of other great tasks.
- * Pay an administrative fee from \$50 - \$225
- * Keep them informed as to how the computer is helping
- * If you do not have a car, PHA may provide transportation to help you pick up your computer.

Call www.TeamChildren.com and ask for an application

610.666.1795

\$50 - \$225



Resident has Law School Dreams

(Cont. from Page 1)

Porter's Day Care Center with troubled children.

Gaskins' dream about opening a foster home originally attracted her to study law. She wanted to provide a service where siblings from broken homes could stay together instead of being divided among different families. Now that Shelita has become interested in criminal law, her foster home plan is taking a back seat.

Today Gaskins is upbeat and confident about her future. She attributes part of her success to the opportunity to participate in PHA's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. "Right now my rent is low and I get a utility stipend," she explains. "I so appreciate it. By the time my voucher

expires in 2010, I'll either be finished school or close enough."

Although Shelita took out loans to pay for the first part of her education, she knows she can work as a paralegal to support herself while she's in law school. But, as usual, while she works to improve her own life, she is thinking about helping others by telling them her story. "People should definitely get an education," she insists.

The PJA School that Shelita attended offers diplomas and associate degrees. The school is affiliated with Chestnut Hill College and Immaculata University. For more information call 610-789-6700, or visit www.pjaschool.com.

Disabled Families-American Dream

(Cont. from Page 4)

mortgage assistance can continue for 30 years; if the head of the household does work, assistance lasts for 15 years. Families with a disabled member must have an annual income above \$6,624 to qualify for the program. PHA also has programs to assist buyers with closing costs.

However, Reyes stressed, in order for residents to get this help from PHA, they must work with a housing coun-

selor, attend the homeownership workshops and complete the steps outlined by PHA at the workshop.

That doesn't deter Darlene Bivins. "I feel so excited," Darlene said after the workshop. "I'm ready to take the next step. I want to be making money by buying my own house instead of paying the landlord every month." Thirty-one families with disabled family members have already succeeded in homeownership.

Katrina Survivor

(Cont. from Page 13)

the other seniors who live in the building. Recently her volunteer position turned into a job opportunity, and she took it.

"It is a wonderful feeling working for PHA. I feel I have come full circle. This is a new beginning. I am being productive again as a senior. Mr. (Carl) Greene's vision is what

makes up PHA, all kinds of people with all kinds of ability. I can't do everything you do, and you can't do everything I do, but by putting all of our talent together, anything can be done." Ms. Jo now works in the senior nutrition program, a position she plans to keep until she retires. Congratulations and welcome home Ms. Jo!

The PHA Experience • Fall 2006

www.pha.phila.gov

NOTICE TO SENIORS AND THE DISABLED

What would you say if we told you - you don't have to pay your credit card bills immediately? Most of our clients say, "Thank you." If your only income is from social security, disability payments, pensions or veteran's benefits - federal law states that your income can't be taken away to repay debt. You don't have to pay, and you don't have to endure frustrating calls and letters from collection agencies. You can live worry free as thousands of our clients do.

- DCSD shelters you from harassment
- DCSD protects your income
- DCSD is not a bankruptcy

Stop creditors from breaking the law - trying to collect debts you can't pay. An alternative for seniors and the disabled who don't need a bankruptcy and can't afford one.

Call Debt Counsel for Seniors and the Disabled at 1-800-992-3275 EXT. 1304

Debt Counsel for Seniors & the Disabled

DCSD

Founded in 1998
Jerome S. Lamet
Founder and Supervising Attorney
Former Bankruptcy Trustee

www.debtcounsel.net



Chef Cyndy's Cooking With Kids

Back-to-School Recipe for Kids

Hey, hey, hey. It's Chef Cyndy in the house. In this issue we're going to prepare a recipe that every child and parent likes. When children follow recipes, they learn new words and practice their reading. Preparing a dish or drink gives them experience with learning measurements, counting, listening to directions, and telling time.

As children slice, dice, pour, roll out dough, tear up lettuce, they develop muscle movement and eye-hand coordination. Involving your children in preparing a meal from shopping for ingredients to setting the table also builds self-esteem.

ADA has suggested when your children are helping you in the kitchen it's a great opportunity to teach them to wash their hands before, during and after meal preparation. Good sanitation skills promote healthy children.

Strawberry Quik a la mode

Nestle Nesquik comes in strawberry or chocolate. Try it hot or cold, with ice cream, shakes, fruit, pancakes, whatever you can think of.

- 8 oz. cup of 1% low-fat milk.
- 2 tablespoons of Nesquik.
- 1 scoop of frozen yogurt (vanilla).

Add 2 tbs. of Nesquik in 8oz. cup of milk. Stir. Top it off with a scoop of frozen vanilla yogurt. Now you have over 50% of your daily requirement of calcium, which helps build strong bones!

Another way to involve your children in meal preparation is to make it safe and fun. My children are full of laughter, and so am I. I role-play a character name, Mrs. Butter from France is coming to prepare a special meal. You would have to see our setup! The whole house gets a kick out of Mrs. Butter. So until next time, enjoy this old favorite drink during the Back to School season.

Get Your Personal Experience into Your Paper

Tell us about your "Experience" as a client of the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Simply give us a call and tell us your story! Our paper reaches all residents including: Traditional Sites, Scattered Sites, and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. This is a golden opportunity, so reach out. It's easier than you think! Call Anne Martinez at 215-684-8645 or e-mail anne.martinez@pha.phila.gov.



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Please call for information (215) 222-8763



1st Annual Philadelphia Housing Authority Alumni Association Day

Date: Saturday, October 28, 2006

Location: 1905 Vare Avenue
(Vare Avenue & New Hope Sts.)

Time: 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

Join us for a day of Fun, Food, Games and more...
All graduates of PHA training and employment programs are welcome.



Philadelphia Housing Authority and PECO proudly sponsor

1st ENERGY CONSERVATION FAIR

Date: November 15, 2006

Time: 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Location: John F. Street Community Center
1100 N. Poplar Street



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