

This Experience Belongs To You!

Welcome to the first issue of the PHA Experience...written for and by us...the residents of PHA properties. This is our paper...set up so that we can share the big and small events, successes and stories of our lives.

The PHA Experience...Housing Authority families understand it well. Living as a resident in the Philadelphia Housing Authority has always been an adventure. If you want to know what we think, what we do, who we are, how we react to the world around us, and how we are taking advantage of our new surround-

We've Come A Long Way With PHA

ings then you will know about that through our newspaper. Its very title tells you we are going through an Experience never before enjoyed by the residents of public housing.

Nellie Reynolds (PHA Board of Commissioners member and resident), says this newspaper is long overdue. "I think it's wonderful because it gives everyone a chance to understand the resident more." She encourages everyone to get involved

and share their opinion...especially younger people. "Learn the tricks of the trade," to speak up in a constructive way. She wants residents to know, "we're fighting for you and we're with you." And she advises her fellow residents to learn how to "disagree without being disagreeable."

The Experience was the name given this paper by one of our senior residents, 72 year old Regina Edwards. She's lived the experience!

She's enjoying the experience; she's basking in it as are many of her senior peers.

Our younger families are doing well, too. Not only are we residents whose concerns are met, but the opportunities opening to us are out of this world. We are learning what we never had the chance to experience, how it is to be part of the mainstream. We no longer are off the main road. We are part of the main road.

Our neighborhood is no longer the prison like cement blocks of the old style housing in which we found ourselves.

Our homes are now real homes. Whether we are in voucher units, in PHA developments, or are now working to buy our home, we live in neighborhoods. There is light, there are street intersections. We can look around ourselves and feel we no longer can be considered as living in those projects.

(Cont. on Page 15)

(Cont. from Page 1)

Hey, Neighbor, Look Us Over! We've Moved On to New Jobs



PRE-APPRENTICESHIP program graduates wait patiently until their names are called for their diplomas. Ceremonies took place at Abbottsford Homes.



PROFESSIONAL HEALTH CARE INSTITUTE Jeanie Bund gives awards and special trophies to valedictorians at Health Career Institute graduation. With her are Carl Greene, Sen. Vincent Hughes, and PHA Board members Nellie Reynolds and Pat Eiding.

PHA Resident Graduates Add to Growing Workforce

Within a month graduating classes have moved over 115 Philadelphia Housing residents into positions where they now find themselves part of the city's major workforce. Eighty five of them headed off to new careers in healthcare following their graduation from the Professional Healthcare Institute. The other thirty graduated from the Philadelphia Housing Authority's Pre-Apprenticeship Program, one of the most heralded programs in the nation. These pre-apprentices are now working in the various building trades unions.

Both ceremonies took place on different days at Abbottsford Homes Community Center in the city's Hunting Park neighborhood.

At the Healthcare Institute graduation, PHA Executive Director Carl Greene assured the graduates that despite the scheduled closing of MCP Hospital across the street, there are still plenty of jobs to be found in healthcare in Philadelphia and its suburbs.

The emotion filled ceremony was highlighted by two musical presentations; "Lift Every Voice and Sing" performed by the graduates and "I Believe I Can Fly" by organist Thomasina James.

State Senator Vincent Hughes, a West Philadelphia legislator, told the graduates that graduation day was the "jumping off day into the future." This sentiment was repeated by

(Cont. on Page 3)

(Cont. from Page 1)

72-Year-Old Senior Wins 'Name PHA Paper' Contest



IT WAS A HAPPY DAY for Regina Edwards when Ron Kaplan presented her with a check for \$100 for submitting the winning entry to name PHA's new resident newspaper, The PHA Experience. Shown with Regina as she accepts the prize at the Emlen Arms are Elizabeth Moore, PHA Editor Anne Martinez, Marjorie Boxer and Phyllis Edwards.

Giving "The PHA Experience" its name was an easy choice for Regina Edwards, the winner of the contest to name the new Philadelphia Housing Authority newspaper. All she did was think back about what it's been like living at the Emlen Arms, a building for seniors in the Germantown section of the city, and the rest was easy.

"I just love it here," explained Regina, "it has been a wonderful experience; I have learned so much and met so many interesting people." Reflecting upon her own experience made the choice for the name simple, The PHA Experience.

Regina, a young and energetic 72-year old has been living at Emlen

(Cont. on Page 3)

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PHA Job Training Programs Has Helped Open Doors to Good Jobs for Our Residents

(Cont. from Page 1)

members of the PHA Board, City Council members Janie Blackwell and Juan Ramos and executives from the Professional Healthcare Institute during the graduation exercises.

Sen. Hughes recognized the graduates for their hard work and then, he issued a challenge to them. "As they move forward, we want to all learn a lesson from their perseverance," Hughes said. "You're all leaders now. And as you achieve your success, you have one additional responsibility. Bring somebody else along with you, okay?"

These graduates will begin careers as nursing assistants, in medical billing or as pharmacy technicians. They successfully completed programs offered by the Professional Healthcare Institute of Philadelphia. The Institute works with PHA's Economic Self Sufficiency program that helps residents find good paying, fulfilling careers. It's an important step in the lives of residents who truly want to improve their lives.

Three graduates received special recognition for becoming state certified as pharmacy technicians: Andrea Green, Tefani Jett and Joyce Ruff.

Newly elected City Councilman Juan Ramos



PATRICK GILLESPIE, president of Building Trades Council, welcomes graduates into pre-apprenticeship program at graduation exercises. Smiling at his remarks is PHA Executive Director Carl R. Greene.



MARCHING toward stage and a bright future are these residents, among 85 who graduated from PHA's Professional Healthcare Institute's training program.



PHA BOARD MEMBERS AFL-CIO president Pat Eiding and Nellie Reynolds listen to list of graduates being read at graduation ceremonies.

reminded the graduates that many leaders come out of public housing. Ramos, his brother, City Solicitor Pedro Ramos, and PHA Executive Director Carl Greene all grew up in public housing.

PHA Commissioner Janie Blackwell told the graduates that they would affect the quality of life of the people they serve. She said that just as other people helped them, they now have an obligation to help others in a similar manner.

Ceremonies launching the 30 men and women who graduated into the building trades' pre-apprenticeship program also brought congratulations from Mr. Greene "for surviving and thriving through 21 weeks of academic and hands-on training that requires a rigorous 40 hour per week

commitment. Now they are prepared to go out and help us rebuild Philadelphia.

The Executive Director noted that during their course of study, the students were paid \$5.15 per hour. After graduation, they are assigned to a PHA construction site for six months. They work full time learning from experienced trade workers while being paid 40% of the union rate. Once graduates complete the six month stint, they are accepted into one of the building trades unions for which they trained. Greene told the graduates proudly "Sometimes as many as 30% of the workers on our new building sites are our graduates."

George Johnson, pre-apprenticeship training coordinator, told the graduates they are in demand. "When you look at all the construction PHA has underway," he said, "plus activity by private builders, you can see why these trained and motivated individuals are able to find good paying work."

The pre-apprenticeship program has earned a national reputation. It operates two sessions each year, graduating a total of 60 to 65 students. Since the program's inception in 1999, 129 graduates have become full building trade union members. Another 18 are in the laborers union. Over 84% of the program's graduates go on to full time jobs.

What is a plus for all the graduates from each pro-



SEN. VINCENT HUGHES offers challenges to new grads to do even better in their new vocations.

gram is that they also receive adult education and life skills training.

Mr. Greene noted with pride that about 30% of all graduates decide to use their training to move on to jobs in



TENANT SUPPORT SERVICES, INC. Exec. Director Asia Coney was all smiles blossoming at sight of graduates going into new jobs, a program she thought up and pushed to fruition.

other fields. He said, "We designed the programs to equip public housing residents to use their training as a foundation for other careers."



IT'S A GREAT MOMENT when residents line up to be congratulated for going through PHA training programs that end with their getting great jobs.



PART OF CROWD ATTENDING graduation ceremonies at Abbotsford begin to settle down before ceremonies.

How We Got New Name

(Cont. from Page 1)

for five years. This is the Philadelphia native's first experience (there goes that word again) with public housing and it has been nothing but good. It got even better when she was presented with a check for \$100 for her winning entry in the Name the Paper Contest.

A retired practical nurse, Ms. Edwards spent 44 years working around Philadelphia, including 15 years at the old Philadelphia General Hospital and at several nursing homes in the area. She retired 10 years ago from the Stately of Germantown home.

Not ready to just sit back and take it easy Regina is in the third and final year of her first term as president of the Tenant Council.

Having Trouble Making Good Grades? Then 'Skills for Life Program' Is for You

If you are 14 or 15 and are a resident of the Philadelphia Housing Authority and having trouble keeping up in school, then you've got a friend in your own back yard to help you catch up.

That friend is Philadelphia Housing Authority's "Skills for Life" program. That program was initiated by the Authority because it recognizes the need to help young students understand how a sound education can make one successful.

To make sure no student is left behind, this program targets 14 and 15 year old residents of public and assisted housing who score below the academic standards. It aims to help students who need improvement in English, Science and Math.

Here's how it works. You make an inquiry about the program and you get to meet a counselor who learns what your basic skills are and what your career interests may be.

In addition to getting tutoring in the basics in English, Math, Reading and Science, students learn to identify their basic occupational skills and their interests. They also get career track information and what they need to prepare for possible college careers.

This academic support helps students not only in school, but to acquire skills that are necessary in life and in the workplace. This program shows youngsters how to make sound decisions and resolve conflicts.

Skills for Life reaches out throughout the community. It has member locations at Cunningham Community Center, 1018 Wallace; Germantown Settlement, 48 E. Penn St.; The Lighthouse Youth Services, 141 W. Somerset St.; United Communities at Bok Beacon, 8th and Mifflin; Crusaders for Christ, 1201 S. 47th St.; Southwest Community Service at 6424 Woodland Avenue; and Diversified Community Services at Vare Beacon, 2101 S. 24th St.

To find out how well Skills for Life can fit into your life, you can check in with some of those who are using the program.

First is Richard Brown. He's on the track to success thanks in part to participating in the program. He has attended Crusaders for Christ where



Richard Brown

he learned skills that help him contend with everyday life situations. His biggest goal is attending Drexel University and majoring in computer graphics and design.

Jennifer Colon started a new beginning at age 17. She was born in a forgotten part of

Philadelphia, cut class, fought in and out of school. Today she stands out in the community as a leader who cares. She is on her way to becoming a suc-



Jennifer Colon

cessful business management graduate while pursuing a career in music.

Paris Jackson matured over the three years he participated in the Skills for Life Program. During that time he competed in various activities including its poetry contest. Paris proved to be a competent writer and prize winning poet. He is now pursuing his education at



Paris Jackson

Community College.

The Skills for Life youth development program at Ger-

mantown Settlement gave Lakeshia Godwin opportunities to grow. She attends the Philadelphia Freedom School where she put her vocal and acting talents on display. She is also a minister at her church. She is now pursuing a career in social psychology at



Lakeshia Godwin

Indiana University.

While growing up in Lid-donfield Homes, Kamica Bronson was able to maintain her grades and be a significant participant in PHA's Skills for Life year round project at the Lighthouse community center. She completed the program and is now a student at Kutz-town University.

Cyisha Washington has



Kamica Bronson

been a model student since the beginning of the program. She has participated in all the activities. And though she faced many obstacles she overcame them thanks to the support of her family and the



Cyisha Washington

PHA staff. She is now attending Lincoln University and majoring in psychology.

Waties R. Alston III knows PHA very well. He was born and raised in the Fairhill Development. Waties works in the Skills for Life Program because he treasures the opportunity to help students



Waties R. Alston III

with homework. He now attends Delaware State University and eventually wants to earn his Ph.D from

Temple University.

Raynisha Odum signed up for Skills for Life for its many benefits including a summer job and extra spending money. But she received much more. The program sharpened her communication and social skills and inspired her to motivate others. She



Raynisha Odum

has now embarked on a new challenge, maintaining her grades at Temple University.

PHA provides more than half a million dollars in matching funds annually to supplement the award the program gets from Philadelphia Youth.

The support staff includes individuals well known throughout the Authority. They are: Virginus Bragg, Coordinator for economic Development, Patrick Ameen Akbar, program manager, Laura Shubilla, president of Philadelphia Youth Network, and Jeff Thomkins, assistant Director of Youth Development initiatives.



**I am proud to be working
for you in my council
capacity and as
a member of the
Housing Authority Board**

Councilwoman

Jannie L. Blackwell

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PHA Senior Programs

Special Committee Meetings and Special Events Schedules
2004 (Dates subject to change)

January 28, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble. Location: Abbotsford Homes. Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

January 30, 2004 Event: Super Bowl Friday Location: Wilson Park Time: 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

February 4, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Location: Abbotsford Homes Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

February 11, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Location: Abbotsford Homes Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

February 18, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Location: Abbotsford Homes Time: 0:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

February 25, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Location: Abbotsford Homes Time: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

February 27, 2004 Event: Casino Day Location: Liddonfield Senior Center Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

March 3, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

March 10, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

March 12, 2004 Meeting: Senior Advisory Quarterly Meeting Bentley Hall 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

March 17, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

March 19, 2004 Canvass: Senior Programs Community Canvass Day 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

March 24, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

March 26, 2004 Event: Poetry & Jazz Jam Session Emlen Arms 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

March 31, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

April 7, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

April 14, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

April 16, 2004 Event: Volunteer Luncheon Wilson Park 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

April 21, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

April 28, 2004 Meeting: PHA Senior Performance Ensemble Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

April 29, 2004 Events: Spring Fling - Play Abbotsford Homes 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

April 30, 2004 Events: Spring Fling - Play Abbotsford Homes 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

May 1, 2004 Events: Spring Fling - Play Abbotsford Homes 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

May 25, 2004 Trip: Sight & Sound/Lunch Lancaster, PA 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

June 11, 2004 Meeting: Senior Advisory Quarterly Meeting Holmcrest 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

June 18, 2004 Canvass: Senior Programs Community Canvass Day 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

June 24, 2004 Event: Senior Summit Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

June 25, 2004 Event: Senior Summit Abbotsford Homes 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

July 2, 2004 Trip: Constitution Center 525 Arch Street 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

August 27, 2004 Trip: PHA Senior Day 04 Atlantic City

September 10, 2004 Canvass: Senior Programs Community Canvass Day 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

September 17, 2004 Trip: Shady Brook Farm Hay (ride) tentative

October 15, 2004 Trip: Huntington Theatre

November 19, 2004 Event: Senior Black & White Ball (formal) Wilson Park 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

December 3, 2004 Event: Senior Programs Christmas Bazaar Location T.B.D.

December 11, 2004 Event: Senior Holiday Party Blumberg 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

December 17, 2004 Canvass: Senior Programs Community Canvass Day 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Your Safety Starts with You!

Whether you live at a Conventional PHA development, a Scattered Site or in a private property in the Housing Choice Voucher Program, you have something in common. You want to feel safe and secure.

Philadelphia Police can't be everywhere and they depend on the public to help them catch the bad guys. Basically, they're asking you to take charge of your own community. There are several ways you can help.

The most obvious way is by calling 911 when you witness a crime. Some residents at Conventional sites have the mistaken notion that they should call PHA police when they see a crime. The fact is Philadelphia police protect all citizens of the city, including those on PHA sites.

PHA recently entered into an agreement with Operation Town Watch. The group's director, Anthony Murphy

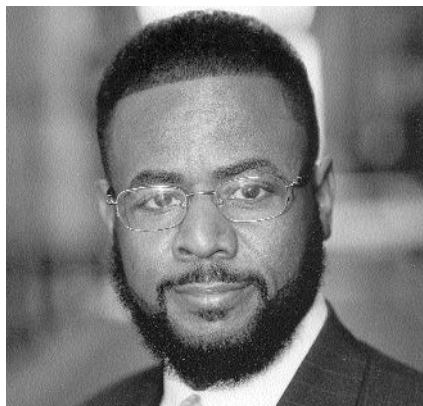
hopes to organize town watch chapters at all PHA developments. Town watch consists of members of the community who volunteer to be trained to watch for crime. Members typically put in a couple hours a week, relaying information to police. Town watch can be a stabilizing force for the community because people feel better when they know someone cares enough to be out there. If you live at a PHA site and

would like more information about Town watch, call the PHA police at 215-684-4840.

Finally, if you have information about criminal activity but don't want to talk directly with police you call an anonymous tip line at the Citizens Crime Commission. If your tip leads to an arrest and conviction you may be in for a reward. That number is 215-546-TIPS.

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A collaboration of the City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Housing Authority, Tenant Support Services, Inc., Johnson Homes and Tasker Homes Tenant Councils, and Point Breeze Performing Arts Center

How PHA Helps You Resolve Your Neighborhood Conflicts

by Patricia Crawford

There's bound to be little ruckus in and around Philadelphia Housing Authority developments, scattered sites, and section 8s. That's because they house over 70,000 residents.

But even then, according to Officer Anthony B. Mayer, the Support Services Division's Conflict Resolution unit receives "only about 100 to 120 disputes they need to look into."

"Most of these are between residents" he notes. "We get to hear them from site managers, or the neighbors or the residents themselves."

Mayer, who has been a conflict resolution officer since 1997, is joined by fellow staffer Ronda Miles, who took on that assignment a year later. Together they visit the parties in dispute.

According to Mayer, "We listen to each side, ask them to make suggestions as to how they would like to see the

existing problem resolved, and then we make a finding, which we deliver to both parties."

One of the steps taken to insure both parties live up to their agreements is a "stay away" order, according to Officer Miles. She says "It's equivalent to a court order issued when families take their disputes to Family Court. It runs the length of a year."

Both officers exhibit a great deal of patience in their approach, but both carrying a big stick. That stick is the resident's lease. There are two sections in that list 18-H and 18-I, which in essence insure residents can have a peaceful existence and which lay the responsibility for the behavior on family members and visitors on the leasee.

"We can bring that lease into play if the people who create the problem don't behave," adds Miles. "If they fail to honor their agreements

with us, and we check them periodically and without notice to see that they are complying, we notify the managers to take them to Landlord Tenant Court for eviction."

The range of disputes runs from a fight with a spouse over bills, disagreements with co-workers, or an argument with neighbors over any imaginable subject. Both officers have prepared brochures which they distribute calling attention to the fact that conflicts can be resolved.

The best three steps in doing so are to "Let the other person know you heard what they are saying. Ask that person to give you more information and then take the initiative to solve the problem by being the 'first to sacrifice'."

If you need help or want more information about the program call 215-684-5548, 5549.

... Congratulates

The Philadelphia Housing Authority on their Inaugural Issue of "The PHA Experience" Geri-PERK is proud to Support You & Sends our Best of Wishes for a Long, Successful Future!!!

Geri-Perk is a comprehensive Health and Social services program designed specifically for seniors. Enrollment in the program is "free" and each member has the right to choose providers for their care. A Geri-Perk representative will assist the senior with receiving the services they need by working with a variety of health professionals throughout the Philadelphia area.

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- Fruit and vegetable deliveries

Assistance with:

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- Meals on Wheels
- SLMB
- TAG
- Paratransit
- Nursing Home placement
- Insurance Issues



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on WHAT AM 1340
and
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Residents Celebrate the Holidays



WEST PHILLY CELEBRATED in style at the Christmas Party at Calvary Church



Commissioner Nellie Reynolds got things off to a festive start at the tree lighting ceremony and party

OPPORTUNITY...OPPORTUNITY



PHA PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

OPEN HOUSE

WHEN: THE BEGINNING OF APRIL 2004
EXACT DATES HAVE NOT BEEN SCHEDULED AS OF YET
TIME:

WHERE: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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A Message From The Executive Director

The publication of this initial edition of the PHA Experience makes me very proud. This is a newspaper devoted to our 78,000 customers. Each page is about you and for you - and we hope with each passing edition more pages will be written by you. Although PHA manages properties of all shapes and sizes in all sections of the city, our clients share common concerns and common joys. By reading about your neighbors' accomplishments you may be inspired. By reading about how they have overcome problems you may find a solution to your own situation. By reading about services that PHA offers you may find a class, workshop or family service you never knew existed.

I want to extend a special thank you to our Asset Managers who in addition to their regular duties played a large role in coordinating the content for the paper. They are out working with residents every day and want to make sure that your story gets told

and that you receive the respect you deserve.

I also want to thank Asia Coney, president of the Resident Advisory Board and my partner in all that we plan and do for our clients. Like many of our initiatives affecting residents at PHA, this newspaper would not have been possible without Asia pushing for it.

Customer satisfaction is the highest priority of the Philadelphia Housing Authority and we work very hard every day to make sure that you live in well managed and well maintained properties. The PHA Experience, your newspaper, is a little icing on the cake. We hope you enjoy it and find the information useful.

Please write to the editors to let them know how they're doing and whether there is information you think they forgot to include. You can help make sure that this paper becomes an example for other housing agencies to follow.

*Warmest regards,
Carl R. Greene*

The Service Providers at Blumberg are Always Here to Help



THE ONE STOP SHOP PROVIDERS are always ready to help. These pretty ladies are Sherell Smallwood, LaRhonda Harmon and Sonya Worthy



IRENE McDONALD, is an associate service apprentice with the TSSI Program



CHRISTINE JOHNSON from FSS PHA is always available to help.



RAMSEY EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (REDI) is ready to serve you with the help of Rebecca Powell

Santa Had TSSI, PHA Helpers



PHA AND TSSI staffers raised funds for their toys for tots drive at a Christmas gala which purchased hundreds of toys for children of needy residents who were invited to Receive them just before Christmas. Seen here are Santa Claus and PHA Executive Director Carl Greene with one family which got to pick their choices from Santa's bag.



THERE WERE plenty of toys to go around for every age and here are some of the children who joined Santa Claus to get their share before Santa went off to deliver rest of them to neediest families among PHA's 76,000 residents. Many businesses and Labor Unions helped fund the Toys campaign launched by TSSI.

Getting Cyber Oriented!



PHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Carl R. Greene checks over work at new computer lab made available to young and old at Johnson Homes. Another innovation for you!

Looking Over New Homes



MAYOR JOHN F. STREET and Radio personality Mary Mason welcome Richard Allen resident Bill Cosby back to his "roots". Cosby attended inauguration ceremonies of new Richard Allen homes.

Our Facilities Staff Works Hard



IT WAS WINDY, raining at Wilson Park dedication ceremonies., winds threatening to blow away Ceremonies tent. Yet Dan Quimby, third from left, and his men, used themselves to take the brunt of the heavy winds saving tent from blowing apart. Ceremonies went on without a hitch.

How to Get Your Personal Experience Into Your Paper

Each of our residents, all of whom are our readers, are invited to tell us about you or your family's "Experience" as a tenant of the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

It's simple and easy. Reach out to your Resident Council or your Asset Managers and tell them about it. We'll send out a photographer to take your picture and follow up with an additional interview and you'll probably be reading about yourself in the next issue of the PHA Experience.

If you like to learn more about the newspaper business, you can also ask about the opportunities to attend journalism classes which the Experience staff will conduct.

It's a golden opportunity, so reach out. It's easier than you think! Call 215-684-8645 or e-mail: newsletter@pha.phila.gov.



The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), the nation's leading review organization for health plans, has awarded Health Partners' Medical Assistance plan its highest accreditation status of "Excellent." NCQA is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to measuring the quality of America's health care.



"Earning 'Excellent' Accreditation reflects a health plan's ability to work with their members and their physicians to improve the quality of clinical care. It shows that they are building the kinds of partnerships that are critical to delivering great care and great service."

– Margaret E. O'Kane, NCQA President

NCQA grants Excellent Accreditation only to the top health plans in the nation. Of the 189 Medical Assistance plans in the U.S., only 26 have achieved Excellent status from NCQA*...and we're proud to be one of them!

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* As of Aug. 31, 2003

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Lillie of the Garden Beautifies Neighborhood

by Jan Pasek

Maybe it had something to do with her first name, but from the time she was a child in South Carolina, Lillie Singleton has been gardening. She has a deep love for her hobby and says it makes a lot of people in the community happy while making her West Philadelphia neighborhood a more pleasing place to live.

Lillie Singleton is a PHA Scattered Sites resident. She takes that idea to a glorious extreme. Residents of her neighborhood come to visit,

eat and talk. So do out-of-towners visiting the site of what had been vacant lots at 19 and 21 North Peach Street, until Singleton worked her magic on the properties. One visitor told Singleton the garden was so beautiful, that she hoped Singleton lived to be 100 years old. Neighbors say they want her in the neighborhood forever because she and her garden are such an asset. A merchant at the nearby corner of Market and Peach Streets built two, long flower boxes just so he could have

some of Singleton's handiwork adorn his building.

Many people who learned how to garden from Singleton when they were children have returned as adults to thank her. She kept them out of trouble and turned some of them into lifetime gardeners. They've come back to thank her for sharing her passion and her skill.

Lillie Singleton moved to her current home at 27 North Peach Street in 1994. Three years later, the city tore down two abandoned houses just a few doors away. Those lots are where Lillie's lush garden now resides. She began by planting many varieties of plants, flowers, herbs and vegetables. More recently, Singleton has installed a "fish and flower" pond.

Singleton has won awards in the past and she's competing again this year for an award from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. She's also a master gardener, having completed a course through Penn State's extension service.

Winning prizes is nice, Singleton says, but just having the garden is much more important. She says it's a good way to make friends and create an extended family, it teaches children respect and gives them a sense of pride, and it also teaches kids to help themselves.

"My joy is just doing the garden and making all the people in the community happy," she says. "This garden has brought joy to this community."



EVERYTIME LILLE SINGLETON looks out her Peach Street Scattered Site residence, she shivers and turns back to look at this picture from last summer. She's turned two vacant lots near her property into attractive garden. She's one resident who gives back to her neighborhood with beautiful flowers.



PHA RESIDENT Lillie Singleton's green thumb produces winning flowers and herbs such as these.

Elder Health Offers PHA Seniors Savings

PHA residents on Medicare are eligible to take advantage of a supplemental benefit health plan called SmartChoice Plus, being offered by Elder Health Pennsylvania HMO, Inc.

The supplemental plan includes a prescription benefit of \$750 per year with a nominal premium of \$50 per month. It is designed specifically to meet the healthcare

needs of seniors. It provides them important benefits such as prescription drug coverage, which pays for medications necessary to keep these individuals living healthier lives.

Both SmartChoice and SmartChoice Plus save members approximately 25% of the out of pocket costs typically associated with original Medicare fee for service.

Elder Health is a rapidly growing health plan designed to exclusively serve the special needs of Medicare beneficiaries. It reports membership applications continue to grow rapidly due to the popularity of its Medicare + Choice health plans.

For information, PHA seniors can call 800-291-0396.

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Service Programs Bring Hope for Mill Creek Residents

page 14

by Charles Lanier

It was a real celebration to mark the beginning of a group of new programs to help empower Mill Creek HOPE VI Development Residents.

A kick-off party for the residents of the PHA HOPE VI Program for Mill Creek was held at the West Park Apartments Community Center, December 11th 2003 sponsored by APM (Asociacion De Puertorriquenos en Marcha, Inc.), REDI (Ramsey Educational Development Institute, Inc.), and The Enterprise Center. Residents and children enjoyed fun, food and games at this festive affair.

Playing host to the many residents and young people in attendance David Estrada, Case Management Coordinator for APM, stated that this kick-off event was the beginning of a partnership of the three agencies and PHA to provide Community Social Services to the residents of

Mill Creek HOPE VI Development. Staff members from REDI and The Enterprise Center were also on hand to help host the celebration.

The new program will offer residents a variety of support services and programs to promote self-sufficiency and community service. Services and Programs will include: education and job development, business development and entrepreneurial programs, housing and budget counseling, and other supportive services. All are free to the residents.

While the residents of the Mill Creek will be the focus, program services are open to all PHA residents. APM and partners will be located at the West Park Apartments, in the first floor offices of the 400 Busti Building and may be reached at 215-222-1746. Program and Services began the first of the year.



1. HOSTS OF KICKOFF PARTY to introduce new service programs for residents in the Mill Creek HOPE VI development were on hand to ensure a good time was had by all. 2, 3 & 4: CHILDREN AND ADULTS all had a good time and are looking forward to the new services being offered to help them improve the quality of their lives.



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Sister to Sister Sponsors Women's Heart Health Fair

On February 20, 2004, Sister to Sister and other partners will once again sponsor high-energy health fairs in Boston, Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. All events are free and feature heart-health screenings educational exhibits, fitness and cooking demonstrations, giveaways and prizes.

Although heart disease is usually thought of as a man's disease, it is a bigger threat to women, killing 500,000 women each year. Because a woman's heart is different, the Sister to Sister: Everyone Has a Heart Foundation, Inc., created an annual two-month promotional effort that provides women with opportunities to get screened for early

detection of heart disease and learn how to prevent it.

We seek your assistance with spreading the word and transporting PHA residents to this critically important event. The Woman's Heart Day Health Fair will take place on Friday, February 20, 2004 from 8:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. It is our goal to have 4,000 women attend the event and participate in the screenings. All activities are free.

Our Mission: To increase awareness of heart disease as the number one killer of women, provide screening opportunities for the early detection of heart disease, and encourage healthy lifestyles among women of all ages, races, and socioeconomic

backgrounds.

The Sister to Sister - Everyone Has A Heart Foundation® is a non-profit organization that was founded to increase awareness about women's heart disease and to encourage healthy lifestyles. It is the only organization whose focus is on screening women for heart disease. Sister to Sister began the Woman's Heart Day campaign in 2001 and in January 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Tommy Thompson, declared the third Friday in February as National Woman's Heart Day.

Woman's Heart Day campaign objectives are to:

Establish Woman's Heart DaySM as a nationwide two-month campaign during Jan-

uary and February, culminating with the health fair on the third Friday in February.

Provide access for all women to free heart health screenings.

Collect and publish data about the clinical results of women screened during the campaign.

Engage national and local employers in promoting the campaign among their employees and providing financial and in-kind support for the campaign.

Raise public awareness about the campaign through local and national media.

Encourage every woman you know to attend the free Woman's Heart Day Health Fair.

It's too important to miss!

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PHA Resident Cable Channel is On the Air

Here's a convenient way for cable TV subscribers to learn about the latest services and announcements about PHA. Wilco Cable Company has designated special channels on its system for the housing authority to use to keep the community informed. This service is part of

the basic cable package for customers at PHA developments. (Sorry, if you live at a Scattered Site or in a voucher property you can't access the channel.) You can check it out on either channel 66 or 80, depending on which part of the city you're in.



ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY SEVEN families received toys for each child and a turkey for Christmas Dinner thanks to the combined efforts of Philadelphia Housing Authority and Tenant Support Services, Inc. employees who raised funds at earlier benefit. TSSI, under Ex. Dir. Asia Coney, handled deliveries. TSSI staffers include Arneatha Powell, Carla Bennett, Linda Staley, Tabitha Wanamaker and, in center, Jeanette Jacobs.



GREGORY STITH, whose Top of Clock security firm, donated turkeys to needy families, is seen here with PHA Police Chief Richard Zappile.

Philadelphia Housing Authority Family Self Sufficiency-North

OFFERING THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

EDUCATION:

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EMPLOYMENT:

JOB READINESS CLASSES
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CAREER DEVELOPMENT
EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

HEALTH:

BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH
FAMILY HEALTH CARE CENTER
GROUP FAMILY THERAPY
NARCOTIC ANONYMOUS (NA) MEETINGS

LIFE SKILLS:

BUDGETING AND HOME OWNERSHIP COUNSELING

SOCIAL SERVICES:

COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
& SOCIAL SERVICES (CRDSS)
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT (PHA)

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM
YOUTH ART PROGRAM
SUMMER YOUTH CAMP

215-684-4416

Mobile Computer Lab Comes to Kids

There are four police officers, Anthony Mayer, Rhonda Miles, Barbara Barron and Jerome Darby that have what might be the nicest job. They

get to drive the Mobile Computer Lab to the different day-care facilities and help the teachers teach the children how to use computers. The

computers are loaded with educational software that teaches the kids the alphabet, phonics, math and more. The children benefit from the opportunity of learning to navigate their way on the computers on the lab at an early age. The officers involved are under the supervision of Sgt. Pauline Randolph and Commander Raymond Hartfield.

The mobile computer lab will be at the following locations on the following dates:

February

Allen

Mon., Feb 2, 9, 16 & 23

Spring Garden

Tues., Feb 3, 10, 17 & 24

Bartram

Wed., Feb 4, 11, 18 & 25

Paschall

Thurs., Feb 5, 12, 19 & 26

Wilson Park

Fri., Feb 6, 13, 20 & 27

March

Allen

Mon., Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29

Spring Garden

Tues., Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30

Bartram

Wed., Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24 & 31

Paschall

Thurs., Mar. 4, 11, 18 & 25

Wilson Park

Fri., Mar. 5, 12, 19 & 26

The time for all dates is 9:30am to 11:30am daily.

This Experience Belongs to us

(Cont. from Page 1)

You'll read of our graduations from the various PHA work programs and how we have moved from those programs into becoming major earners. You will read of our own efforts to improve our neighborhoods and our communities. And you'll learn how to reach us and read about yourself

As part of the ongoing

plans to improve the housing and opportunities for PHA residents, Carl Greene, PHA Executive Director, applauds the launch of this newspaper. "We are looking forward to building an even stronger partnership with our customers and the surrounding communities."

So now, read on and enjoy, the Experience is all yours!

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#PP9657, GREEN, AUTO, AIR, POWER WINDOWS, ALLOYS, HONDA CERTIFIED!

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'99 HONDA ACCORD LX SDN

#PP9481, AUTO, AIR, POWER WINDOWS & LOCKS, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$11,986

'00 HONDA ACCORD EX V6 SDN

#PP9682, BLACK, V-6, AUTO, AIR, SUNROOF, LEATHER, ALLOYS, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$15,986

'02 HONDA ACCORD SE SDN

#1P9657, BLACK, AUTO, AIR, SUNROOF, ALLOYS, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$16,775

'01 HONDA PRELUDE CPE

#1P9629, SILVER, AUTO, AIR, SUNROOF, ALLOY WHEELS, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$17,873

'02 HONDA ACCORD EX V6 SDN

#P9646, SILVER, AUTO, AIR, SUNROOF, LEATHER, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$17,998

'00 HONDA CIVIC LX SDN

#1P9636, BEIGE, AIR, PWR WINDOWS & LOCKS, AM/FM CASSETTE, HONDA CERTIFIED!

\$10,541

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You've Got Good Friends in Tenant Support Services, Inc.

page 16

You often hear the TSSI people have been around. And well they should. Without them life as a PHA resident wouldn't be as exciting and loaded with opportunities as it is now.

There is no family left behind with TSSI. It's responsible for the good cheer that comes around the holidays. It's distributed food, and shared with you toys from its Toys for Tots Drive.

TSSI brings you those exciting Clean Sweep and Community Days programs, when residents of the Authority join with their neighbors in sprucing up the neighborhoods.

Then of course there are the job opportunities. They include initiatives put together by TSSI in cooperation with the Philadelphia Housing Authority. These are known as the Pre Apprenticeship Trades program and Nursing Assistance Training Program.

TSSI was established in 1987 to promote the welfare of public housing residents through innovative support services and skills development programs. It's founder and present executive director Asia Coney will tell you its main purpose is to advanced the educational, economic, and social service opportuni-

ties for residents and families who live in public housing.

It supports over 76,000 in housing developments, scattered sites, and Section 8 Housing Choice, as well as all other citizens throughout in the City of Philadelphia.

Under Asia Coney's leadership TSSI supplies technical assistance to Resident Councils, provides resources to resident owned business, and reduces the digital divide through resident technology and empowerment programs.

She has enabled TSSI, to form strategic partnerships with the Philadelphia Housing Authority, educational institutions, nonprofit agencies, and private companies to deliver comprehensive solutions that meet the community's needs and achieve TSSI's goal of promoting the welfare of public housing residents. Together, TSSI and its partners have assisted many residents involved in these activities to advance toward economic self sufficiency.

If you want more information about TSSI or its programs, call 215-684-1016.



THE NEWS you are reading in this first issue of the Philadelphia Housing Authority was gathered from you by these Regional Coordinators. From left to right, they are : Troy Robinson, Carla Fleming, Patrick Ameen Akbar, Rosalyn Williams, Jerome Pettigrew and Patricia Clifford.

73 Graduate Home Buying Course

In a highly successful example of public private cooperation, Fleet Mortgage and the Philadelphia Housing Authority honored 73 Philadelphia residents for completing an eight-week course in financial self sufficiency.

Completing the course is the first step toward homeownership. Graduates can now begin the process of applying for affordable mortgages provided through Fleet and other lenders.

"Helping low and moderate income Philadelphia resi-

dents make the important transition from renting their homes to owning them is an important mission of PHA. It helps us enhance the stability and quality of life in all of our city's neighborhoods."

Charles Klaus, regional manager of Fleet Mortgage Services, said "Fleet is pleased to couple our expertise in home mortgages and other financial products with our strong corporate commitment to delivering financial literacy for all members of the communities we serve. We all suc-

ceed when individuals and businesses and public agencies like PHA succeed."

Participants in the eight-week program learn budgeting savings, understanding credit, improving credit, types of mortgage loans, agreement of sale, home inspections and homeowners insurance/settlement. When the course is completed, they can apply for a conventional mortgage or an FHA mortgage. Last year 42 completed the Homebuyers' Club PHA-Fleet course.



ASIA CONEY, third from left, joins three residents at Wilson Park dedication of new homes. They were singing and dancing to one of songs played at ceremony. Coney's vision made TSSI a possibility, opening self sufficiency programs for all residents.

The PHA Experience • January 2004

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2003 FORD **FOCUS**
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2003 FORD **TAURUS**
\$11,950*

6 Cylinder, Automatic, A/C, P/Steering, P/Brakes, 20,721 Miles, 51k4250R3P, VIN#43W257682

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- AM/FM Stereo
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FINAL PRICE **\$3,695**

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- 4 Speed Automatic
- Power Windows & Door Locks
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FINAL PRICE **\$15,455**

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\$189
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Mirrors, AM/FM Stereo,
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per mo

2004 DODGE INTREPID SE

Auto, Power Windows, Locks &
Mirrors, AM/FM Stereo, Air, Cruise,
Alloys, 2004/01/2004 210 Miles



\$199
per mo

2002 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN

Auto, Air, Power Windows, Locks, Air, Cruise,
2002/2003/2004 120 Miles



\$239
per mo

2002 DODGE DAKOTA

Auto, 12 Air, Air, Old Gal, Power
Windows, Stereo, 6 Cyls, 15.5 Miles
Alloys, 2002/2004/03 120 Miles



\$309
per mo

2003 DODGE NEON SE

Auto, Air, Power Windows, Power
Mirrors, AM/FM Stereo,
2002/2003/2004 170 Miles



\$115
per mo

2003 DODGE STRATUS COUPE

Auto, Air, Power Windows, Locks &
Mirrors, CD, Spoiler, Tilt, Cruise,
Alloys, 2003/02/2004 170 Miles



\$199
per mo

2001 DODGE CARGO VAN

Auto, Power Windows & Locks, Air,
Cruise, Power Mirrors, 1500
2001/2002/03 170 Miles



\$149
per mo

1998 HONDA ACCORD LX

Auto, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
2001/2002/03/04
Cruise, 2001/02/03/04
100 Miles



\$129
per mo

2003 DODGE INTREPID SE

Auto, Power Windows, Tilt, Cruise,
Air, Cruise, 1600/2003/04, 150
2003/04/05 100 Miles



\$169
per mo

1999 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY LX

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
2001/2002/03, 170 Miles
Power Windows & Door Locks
12 Taps & Multi-Use, 2002/2003



\$129
per mo

2001 DODGE RAM 1500

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
Cruise, 12 Taps, 10 Cyls, 170 Miles
Auto, 2001/2002/03, 100 Miles



\$259
per mo

2002 MITSUBISHI GALANT ES

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
Cruise, 2001/02/03/04
2002/2003/04 170 Miles



\$129
per mo

2004 DODGE STRATUS SE

Auto, Power Windows, Locks &
Mirrors, 2003/04/05, 150 Miles
2003/04/05/06 170 Miles



\$179
per mo

2002 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
Cruise, 12 Taps, 10 Cyls, 170 Miles
Auto, 2001/2002/03, 100 Miles



\$219
per mo

2003 DODGE DURANGO SXT

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
Cruise, 12 Taps, 10 Cyls, 170 Miles
Auto, 2001/2002/03, 100 Miles



\$289
per mo

2002 TOYOTA CAMRY

Auto, Air, Power, Tilt, 170 Miles
Cruise, 12 Taps, 10 Cyls, 170 Miles
Auto, 2001/2002/03, 100 Miles



\$219
per mo

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Know Antibiotics: Don't Use Them If You Don't Need Them

page 18

by **B. Nabrit-Stephens MD, MBA, FAAP, Vice President, Medical Affairs, Keystone Mercy Health Plan**

Antibiotics can work wonders. They easily treat bacterial infections that were dangerous and even deadly in the past. Unfortunately, overusing antibiotics like penicillin may reverse their ability to help fight illness. When that happens, they may become useless against bacteria.

Overuse of antibiotics reduces their effectiveness

In this case, the antibiotics may become useless against bacteria. In addition, taking antibiotics when not needed,

such as for a viral infection (flu or a common cold), can put you at risk for an unnecessary potentially adverse drug reaction and the possibility of developing a resistant bacterial infection in the future.

Even though scientists have increased the development of new antibiotics, it takes at least 10 years and hundreds of millions of dollars to create a new antibiotic.

So what can you do to avoid unnecessary use of antibiotics? Try these other methods of protection.

Don't demand or expect antibiotics from your doctor every time you are sick.

Antibiotics can't help colds and other viral infections. Viruses, not bacteria, cause colds and the flu.

Don't think antibiotics are a quick fix for all infections

If your doctor wants to wait a few days, follow his or her advice. If you get worse, be sure to call the doctor back immediately.

Finish the full course of antibiotics. Even if you feel better, don't stop taking your medicine. Stopping could leave behind the most harmful bacteria, and this can make you sick again.

Know the antibiotic. Don't assume that antibiotics are the answer. The more often a drug is used, the more likely bacteria will develop a resistance to it. Go to your doctor and ask for the best treatment for your illness. Smart use of antibiotics is the key to decreasing, or even reversing, the spread of antibiotic resistance.

Ask your doctor if the flu vaccine is right for you. Some people, on rare occasions, develop a bacterial infection after that have had the flu, especially those people who have other serious illnesses, such as lung or heart disease.

PHA Helps Kids get Head Start

As another example of how residents are the true focus of the authority, PHA re-dedicated six Head Start Day Care centers at the site on Green Street. The re-dedication took place on a beautiful sunny October? October day, in the Spring Garden section of Philadelphia. Singing songs, the children were the highlight of the unveiling.

The agency makes the investment in Head Start to ensure that children have the skills they need when they start Kindergarten. This is a giant step in preparing young people for the 21st century learning skills that will last a lifetime.

Head Start was initiated at PHA 25 years ago, providing comprehensive services for three, four and five year olds and their families in a day care setting. These services include: medical and dental care, educa-

tional evaluations, social services, nutrition services and parent participation activities.

The celebration marked another beginning for the lives of our most vulnerable and most precious children. This

type of program is unusual in public housing. But working to better the lives of residents is the primary mission at PHA.



THAT'S COMMISSIONER NELLIE REYNOLDS on the left and Dawn Ramsey, Asst. General Manager of Housing Operations on the right with the kids from Headstart in Spring Garden

The PHA Experience



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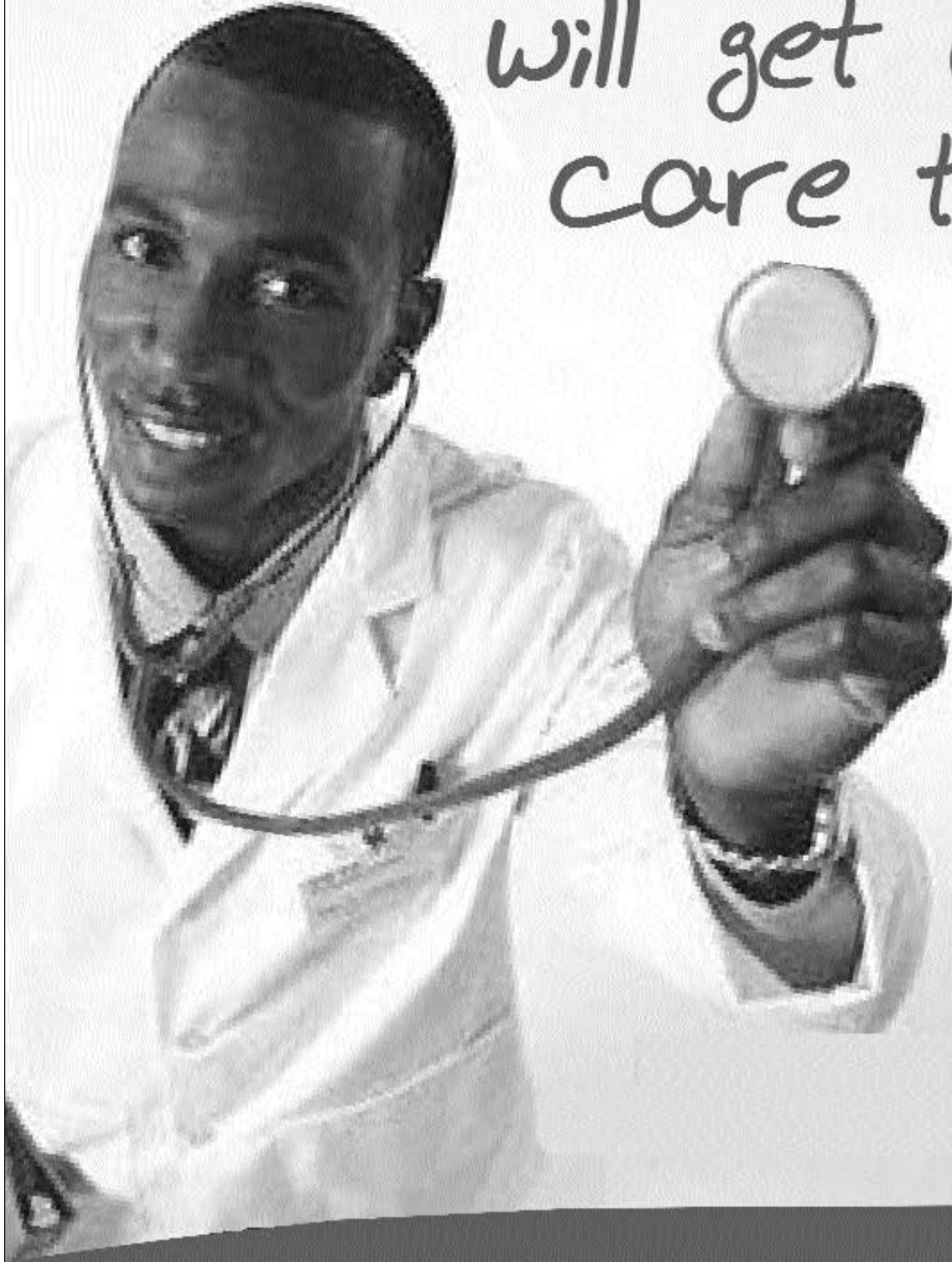
Philadelphia Housing Authority

Building Beyond Expectations

2004 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING SCHEDULE

JANUARY			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	1/7/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	1/15/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
FEBRUARY			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	2/11/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	2/19/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
MARCH			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	3/10/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	3/18/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
APRIL			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	4/14/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	4/22/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
MAY			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	5/12/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	5/20/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
JUNE			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	6/9/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	6/17/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
JULY			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	7/14/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	7/22/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
AUGUST			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	8/11/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	8/19/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	9/8/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	9/16/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
OCTOBER			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	10/13/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	10/21/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
NOVEMBER			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	11/10/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	11/18/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY
DECEMBER			
PRE - BOARD MEETING	12/8/04	6:00 PM	WEDNESDAY
BOARD MEETING	12/16/04	3:00 PM	THURSDAY

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