

The PHA Experience



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

Issue 23

A Community Newspaper for and About Residents

March 2010

2010 Census: PHA residents stand up and get counted

The 2010 census is right around the corner and PHA residents should play a vital role to ensure that everyone in their community is counted. The census is very important to PHA and its residents because funding for key programs and services is usually based on population. Census data impacts funding for schools, roads, hospitals, social service centers, and services for the elderly. To ensure that all PHA households are accurately counted in the 2010 census, PHA is teaming up with TSSI, the U.S. Census Bureau and the City of Philadelphia to launch its own census outreach plan.



When your census form arrives in the mail, fill it out and send it in so everyone in your household will be counted. Participation is vital to ensure that communities get their fair share of federal funding.

In November 2009, Mayor Nutter named PHA Executive Director Carl Greene as an honorary co-chair of "Philly Counts," a campaign to raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of the census in Philadelphia.

"I am honored to be part of this impressive group of public and private-sector leaders and eager to get started

on the critically important work ahead," said Mr. Greene. "I plan to focus my efforts on better communication with

hard to reach audiences, who are often undercounted and thus underserved."

As a result, PHA is setting up Questionnaire Assistance Centers at 25 PHA developments and management offices for residents who have questions or need help with filling out the form. These centers will be open from mid-March through the end of April.

The census is also providing economic opportunities for PHA residents this year. Testing for census jobs was conducted at several PHA sites in mid-February. Residents who passed the test had a chance to be hired for as many as 100 part-time positions as census canvassers. The canvassers will be providing an important service for the community and each will have the opportunity to earn a good hourly wage until the census application period is completed.

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Homelessness a distant memory for Pre-Apprenticeship graduate

Sam Scott has always been a hard worker. He got his working papers when he was 15 and never had a problem finding work. But in 2004, Sam's child support payments were concerning him and taking a huge portion of his paycheck.

"Working two jobs wasn't enough. I couldn't keep up," he explained. "I ended up being homeless. After that, I could feel everything going downhill." Sam suffered from depression, started drinking and ended up in shelter system. It was there that he learned about an alcohol rehabilitation program and signed up for a number of mental health programs to get himself back on track.

"It was hard being in the shelter, it was very hard," Sam recalled. "That was the first time I've ever been homeless."

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Sam Scott works with Pre-Apprenticeship instructor Gerald Murtha in the plumbing shop at the Workforce Development Center.

PHA tackles two blizzards in one week

Two major storms blanketed Philadelphia with more than 44 inches of snow in February, shattering the city's seasonal record of 65.5 inches set back in 1995-1996. But PHA was ready...

Armed with an emergency operations plan (as well as shovels, snow blowers, and buckets of salt) 90 to 100 PHA workers were deployed each day, clearing snow and ice to make way for emergency vehicles and ensure resident safety.

On Wednesday, February 10, PHA established a temporary command center at the Passyunk office building. There, a team of facility engineers and emergency operations personnel gathered to brief PHA Executive Director Carl Greene and senior staff before deploying staff and resources. The City was divided into six zones



Maintenance workers shovel out the sidewalk in front of Bentley Hall on February 10. The 2009-2010 winter season shattered all previous snow records in Philadelphia.

where facility engineers and senior staff members monitored conditions and reported back.

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Sign-up for:
**FREE HELP
WITH
YOUR
FINANCES.**

CLASSES STARTING NOW. CALL TO REGISTER!

PHA FINANCIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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

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

Saturday classes available at John F. Street Center, 1100 Poplar Street and evening classes available at 642 N. Broad Street.



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FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE CALL
215.684.0393
or see your manager



PHA parents go back to school with SDP's Parent University

Did you know that your child's level of success in school might depend on how involved you are when he or she comes home? It's true. Studies show that a child's home life significantly affects how they perform in school. That's why PHA is partnering with the School District of Philadelphia to bring Parent University classes to five PHA developments.

"We believe parents are our partners," says Karreen Simpson of the School District's Office of Parent, Family, and Community Services. "By investing in parents and empowering them through Parent University, we're improving their children's character and chances for academic success."

Parent University is currently operating in Blumberg Apartments; Harrison Plaza; Bartram Village; Westpark Apartments; and Fairhill Apartments. Luz Paradoa, Manager of PHA's Community Partners program is excited about the program's potential.

"Parent University offers information that residents want. We held a meeting with resident leaders at the five sites so they could look through the curriculum and make suggestions

about all of the things they want brought to their sites," said Paradoa. "It is something they want to be a part of and that they are interested in."

Classes and workshops are free for parents whose children are enrolled in a district school. Ten-week refresher courses in reading and math help parents keep up with current teaching methods to better assist their children with homework. Classes in technology teach parents how to navigate the Family Net system so they can look up the School District's policies and procedures and keep track of their child's performance in school. Participants are tested at the beginning and end of the courses to see what kind of progress they have made.

Residents at Blumberg Apartments are thrilled about the new classes for parents and are quickly spreading the word among neighbors and friends.

Jean Perry learned about Parent University from going to community meetings and brought her neighbor Arlene Robinson to a class. Ms. Perry is raising her 15-year-old granddaughter and says the parenting workshop is very important to her.

"Everything is new at 72 years old when you're a mom again," said Jean. "There are so many new things happening with the children. Everything has changed since I was raising kids. I hope this will continue for the grandparents who are parents all over again."

Fellow resident Mariame Yansane is also attending Parent University to learn more about parenting and how to connect with her daughter.

"There's a cultural difference between us," said Mariam. "I'm from Africa so the upbringing and the mindset are totally different. This class will help me better understand my daughter."

Blumberg resident Ricky Mclean has two children, ages 9 and 14.

"They were my motivation for signing up," he said. "I want to be able to help them out with school through the achievement classes."

In fact, Ricky has already called Parent University to sign up for other classes. He plans to join an associate's degree program that the School District is offering.



Retired teacher Sandy Moore conducts a Parent University class at Blumberg Apartments called "The Power of Parenting (Interpersonal, Communications & Conflict Resolution)."

The School District began with three classes on parenting skills last year and quickly expanded that number to ten. Today, Parent University offers 25 classes at approximately 17 different sites. Locations include neighborhood schools and local community centers as well as PHA developments. The School District is also ramping up efforts to reach as many parents as possible by offering classes in a variety of different languages and locations. The English as a Second

Language classes have drawn a lot of interest and are highly subscribed.

At the end of the year, parents who participate can take part in a graduation of their very own at the school district headquarters.

For more information, visit the School District's Parent University website at www.philasd.org/parentuniversity.

Looking for quality adult day services? Then Ridge Avenue is the place to be...

At Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services, our certified, caring staff offers clients a daytime program of recreational activities, social services, meals, and quality nursing care in a new, state-of-the-art facility.

Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services is certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging to provide free and discounted health services for qualified seniors.

If you or your loved one is not pre-qualified for state benefits, our staff is happy to assist you in the application process.

We Provide:

Meals

- Breakfast • Hot Lunch • Snacks

Activities

- Interactive Programs • Therapeutic Activities
- Fitness and Exercise • Health and Wellness Education
- Cultural Participation • Socializing and Networking

Transportation

- Provided to and from the center

Medication Management

- Worry-free medication assistance



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MOVING FORWARD

COMMUNITY PARTNERS TRAINING PROGRAMS



● **GED and Adult Basic Education**

Center for Literacy
636 S. 48th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143

● **Automotive and Driving Related Training Services**

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

● **Job Placement/Job Coaching and Career Advancement**

Educational Data Systems, Inc. (EDSI)
100 S. Broad Street, Suite 1210
Philadelphia, PA 19110

● **Self-Employment Program/Entrepreneurship**

Enterprise Center
4548 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19139



Philadelphia Housing Authority
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Carl R. Greene, Executive Director

● **Home Maintenance Repair**

● **Human Services**

JEVS Human Services, Orleans Technical Institute (JEVS-OTI)
2770 Red Lion Road
Philadelphia, PA 19114

● **Personal and Financial Development / Case Management**

Management Environmental Technologies, Inc. (MET)
3801 Market Street, Suite 202
Philadelphia, PA 19104

● **Telecommunications Technician Program**

● **Administrative Assistant Training**

● **Hospitality Industry Training**

Philadelphia OIC, Inc.
1231 N. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19122

● **Call Center Training**

Urban League of Philadelphia
121 S. Broad Street, 9th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107

● **Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)**

● **Medical Billing**

● **Pharmacy Technician**

Professional Healthcare Institute
1333 Cheltenham Ave
Melrose Park, PA 19027

● **Commercial Driver's License (CDL)**

● **Forklift Operator Training**

Smith & Solomon: Commercial Driving
5301 Tacony Street
Philadelphia, PA 19137

To register, please
contact your Economic
Self-Sufficiency
coordinator
(see page 12) or call
215-684-0393.



RAB leaders gather to discuss MTW Year 10

Undeterred by the weather reports of impending snow, the Resident Advisory Board held a successful and informative retreat for its members on February 8 through 10 at the Embassy Suites near the airport.

Members of RAB meet regularly throughout the year but in light of PHA's new initiatives for MTW Year 10, RAB president Asia Coney felt that resident leadership should meet as a group and get better informed on some of the plans in the pipeline.

Senior staff members took the opportunity to brief RAB on a number of issues related to public housing operations, the Housing Choice Voucher program, development and construction, 504 accessibility, technology, and social service programs. According to Ms. Coney, the resident leaders were engaged and interested in the information that PHA presented, especially concerning development and programming.

The event went so well that Ms. Coney and Carolyn Carter, PHA's Assistant Executive Director, Operations, are already discussing plans to repeat the event next year to coincide with the beginning of MTW Year 11.

"One of the highlights for me was seeing light bulbs go off in people's heads," said Coney. "Some of the leadership have come up to me after the presentations to say that they have a better understanding of their roles in working with PHA to do recruitment and get the information out to residents at their sites."

The next step is looking at how to translate this valuable information to the resident population. RAB dedicated an afternoon session on the second day to discuss strategies for taking information back to the community.



RAB President Asia Coney, PHA Assistant Executive Director, Operations, Carolyn Carter and PHA Commissioner Nellie Reynolds listen to presentations by PHA staff during the RAB retreat.



Members of the Resident Advisory Board found the three-day retreat to be successful and informative. A major focus was new initiatives for Moving to Work Year 10.

A message from the Executive Director



Recently, many PHA households received an informational pamphlet titled "Asbestos in the Home." I felt it was important that our residents better understand what asbestos is, where it might be found, and what you and your family should do if you see it in your home.

The first thing you need to know is that asbestos is a common building material found in many structures built before 1980. It is typically confined to insulation on basement pipes or safely concealed behind walls. Unless damaged or exposed, it poses no danger to you or your family.

"Our goal is simple... to keep you and your family safe."

Regardless, PHA takes asbestos issues very seriously. If you see damaged or exposed asbestos in your home, please call 215-684-4000. Our maintenance team is fully trained on how to identify asbestos, how to work around it safely, and when to report it to the experts. Our goal is simple... to keep you and your family safe.

There was a time not long ago when conditions in public housing were deplorable. That is no longer the case. While PHA was building and rehabbing more than 7,000 homes and apartments in the last decade, we were working equally hard to protect our residents and employees from a number of environmental hazards, including

asbestos, mold and lead paint. And today, our environmental record is among the best in the country.

At PHA, we're proud of the fact that our properties are environmentally sound. The property managers and maintenance workers at PHA are committed to providing you a quality home.

Thank you,

Carl R. Greene



SES program brings learning and fun to Westpark kids



Monroe Griffin, a Supplemental Educational Services instructor, works with Westpark students on a math exercise.

According to the School District of Philadelphia, approximately 46,000 students need help in math and reading. The Westpark Resident Council is helping to address this need by hosting the Supplemental Educational Services Program again this year, offering after-school tutoring in math and reading. Westpark Apartments is the only PHA development to house this kind of program on site.

The program is Mondays through Thursdays from 4-6 p.m. It started in January and will run until March 31. At this time, 21 students from kindergarten through 6th grade are enrolled. The instructors, Monroe Griffin and Ineatha Brice, are with an organization called The Right Prep, which also operates 2 other SES programs in the Philadelphia region.

Mr. Griffin is from West Philly himself. He attended Martha Washington School and feels a personal connection to the community. He sees the program as an opportunity to give back. He describes his students as bright, intelligent kids with potential and many challenges.

One of the goals of the program to increase students' scores on the PSSA, an important standardized test that Pennsylvania students take. Students are given a pre-assessment test to determine their strengths and weaknesses and

a post-assessment test to see how they have improved since joining the program. Instructors work with students individually and also assign cooperative group work. Class sizes are small—no more than 8 students per teacher.

The program is incentive-based with the instructors encouraging the students to improve their behavior by offering rewards. The SES program emphasizes character building and manners. Each day, the children strive to be named the Student of the Day by doing their work, following directions, and listening.

Most of all, the program is fun. The students are enthusiastic about the mental math activities and other educational games.

“The kids want to come. Even though the program starts at 4, they come right after school and start their homework,” said Mr. Griffin.

Dyone Pickett is a sixth grader and currently the oldest student attending the program. His goal is to go to college. The SES program has already made a positive impact on his schoolwork.

“My teacher said that I should be reading more,” said Dyone. “Since joining the SES program, my reading levels have been going up and up.”



Students come to the after-school tutoring program to boost their math and reading skills.

www.PHA.PHILA.gov

Neighborhood Network Computer Labs

There are ten Neighborhood Network Computer Labs offering eight-week computer classes on an ongoing basis.

These classes cover basic computer concepts in Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel. **SIGN-UP TODAY!**

Classes Locations:

Bartram Village - *Fridays 3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.*
5405 Gibson Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19143

Blumberg Apartments - *Mondays 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*
2311 W. Jefferson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Harrison Plaza - *Mondays & Thursdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
1240 N. 10th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Hill Creek - *Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
5573 Hillcreek Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19120

John F Street Center - *Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.*
1100 Poplar Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Johnson Homes - *Mondays 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*
2630-D Norris Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19122

Spring Garden - *Tuesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
715 Brandywine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Westpark Apartments - *Tuesdays 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*
300 N. Busti Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

White Hall - *Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
4749 Tackawanna Street, Philadelphia, PA 19124

Wilson Park - *Fridays 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.*
2500 Jackson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145

Wilson Park Seniors - *Fridays 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
2500 Jackson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19145

To Sign-Up Please Contact:

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



Philadelphia Housing Authority
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Ridge Avenue Eldercare brings quality adult day services to North Philadelphia

James Robinson has been a resident at Nellie Reynolds Gardens since the state-of-the-art PHA senior facility opened in November 2008.

"It's a fine place to live," he says. "It's very nice and everything's at hand. Everything you want is right in here."

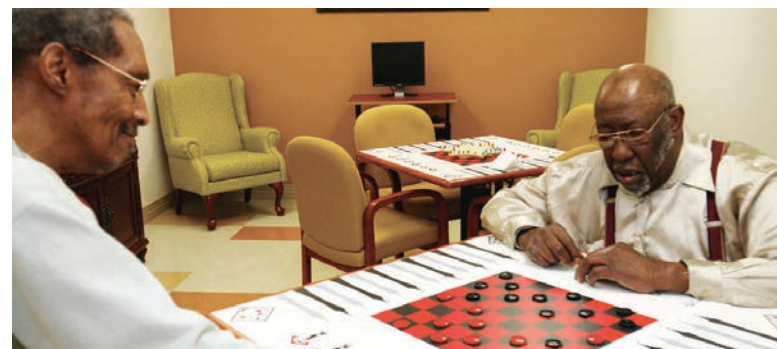
That is especially true now that Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services has

opened its doors at Nellie Reynolds. Before, Mr. Robinson spent most of his time reading by himself in his apartment. Now, he's participating in a host of recreational activities and social services the program has to offer and enjoying every minute. Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services is part of PHA's commitment to helping independent seniors age in place. It offers participants a safe,

supportive environment with an engaging and stimulating daytime schedule so they can stay active. The program is targeted for residents of Johnson Homes and the surrounding community and is open to the public. Adult children now have a great option for their older loved ones while they are at work.

Activities at the center include gentle exercise programs and games. Participants can also express themselves artistically through needle art and watercolors. The library offers health news, bible study and nutrition programs. An on-site hair salon is also available at an additional cost.

Mr. Robinson regularly faces off against his neighbor and fellow Ridge Avenue participant James Jackson in games of checkers. They also bowl and enjoy video games on the Center's Nintendo Wii console. Their friendly rivalry is legendary among the staff and participants.



James Robinson contemplates his next move in a heated game of checkers against fellow Ridge Avenue participant and neighbor James Jackson.

Mr. Robinson praised the caring, professional staff at Ridge Avenue.

"The workers are good, they're good to us," he says. "Nice and patient."

Food service includes a continental breakfast, a hot lunch, with a morning and afternoon snack. A dietician evaluates the dietary need for each client and an on-site nurse helps manage the clients' medication needs.

The site will serve over 100 customers catering to various participant schedules. The facility is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with

transportation available to and from the center.

With so many great services, the center has already received many applications. While the program accepts private paying customers, others may apply for partial or full funding through the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA). Their guidelines state that an individual must be sixty years old with an income under \$24,000 per year.

If you want to learn more about Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services or fill out an application, contact Kelly Williams at 215-684-2464.



James Robinson and Deidre Johnson, transportation coordinator for Ridge Avenue Eldercare Services, are all smiles about the new facility at Nellie Reynolds Gardens.

PHA executive director, local business owner attend President Obama's stimulus event

PHA Executive Director Carl Greene and local business owner, Mark Washington traveled to Washington D.C. on February 17 to participate in a White House event celebrating the first anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Philadelphia Housing Authority was selected to attend because of its quick and effective administration of \$126.9 million in HUD stimulus funds that are creating thousands of jobs and improving affordable housing throughout Philadelphia. PHA has already awarded more than \$118 million of its stimulus funds to local contractors who are building and renovating more than 900 PHA properties and making public housing safer and more energy efficient.

"I am very proud of PHA's stimulus progress and honored to join President Obama for today's event in Washington," said Mr. Greene. "The President's stimulus plan is giving public housing authorities

across the country an unprecedented opportunity to put Americans back to work, provide much needed affordable housing and rebuild our urban centers. Today, PHA's stimulus funds are well at work in neighborhoods throughout the city, creating more than 3,000 local jobs and building or renovating more than 900 homes."

Joining Executive Director Greene on the trip was Mark Washington, owner of City Mechanical, a Philadelphia-based, minority-owned business that is performing plumbing and HVAC work on PHA's scattered-site renovation project. The \$1.6 million contract is employing 19 union plumbers and steamfitters over a two-year period and creating much needed affordable housing for low-income Philadelphians. City Mechanical is also upgrading mechanical systems in some of PHA's older developments. This \$1.5 million contract involves replacing old boilers, pumps and expansion

tanks to make PHA's facilities more energy efficient.

"It was an honor to visit the White House with Mr. Greene and see firsthand how the stimulus program is helping businesses like mine across the country," said Mr. Washington. "Without the PHA stimulus projects, I would have been laying off workers and closing offices. Instead, I was able to add staff and grow my business."

PHA's largest stimulus funded project is the renovation of 340 vacant, scattered-site row houses, a \$31 million initiative that is creating more than 500 jobs. To date, more than 155 families have already moved into these newly renovated, energy efficient homes.

Other significant PHA projects funded by the stimulus include the redevelopment of Mantua Square, a \$37 million project that is bringing 101 new housing units to West



PHA Executive Director Carl Greene and business owner Mark Washington attended a White House event in February marking the first anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Philadelphia; the demolition and redevelopment of Paschall Village, a \$38 million initiative that will create 101 new, energy efficient homes in Southwest Philadelphia; and

the demolition and redevelopment of Plymouth Hall, a \$13.7 million project that will create 53 new senior apartments.



This winter was filled with



In honor of the Martin Luther King Day of Service, PHA held events at a number of sites including a health fair at Johnson Homes.



Wilson Park offered a number of workshops in honor of MLK Day including "Stop the Madness, Stop the Violence," a workshop for youth.



Youth volunteers took part in the MLK Day event at Johnson Homes.



Blumberg families and seniors came together on MLK Day to work on art projects. The MLK Day events were organized by PHA's new Family Service Coordinators. Learn more about them on page 12!

memorable moments!



On February 3, HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims (at left) came to Philadelphia to see firsthand how PHA is using stimulus funds to create jobs and expand public housing.



Deputy Secretary Sims stopped for a photo with PHA Pre-Apprenticeship students and instructors at the future site of Mantua Square, where 101 units are currently under construction.



In February, PHA hosted free tax workshops at the Wilson Park Community Center. The workshops were co-sponsored by One Economy.



Residents and members of the public worked with IRS-trained tax professionals in the Wilson Park computer lab to file their taxes online for free. For more information about the program, go to www.myfreetaxes.com

Community Partner Programs Awareness and Recruitment Day

Friday, March 26th, 2010
ABBOTTSFORD COMMUNITY ROOM
3226 McMichael Street
10 AM – 2 PM

Saturday, June 5th, 2010
JOHN F. STREET CENTER
1100 Poplar Street
10 AM – 2 PM

Thursday, July 29th, 2010
WILSON PARK
2500 Jackson Street
10 AM – 2 PM

Come learn about the many educational and rewarding programs offered by PHA and its partners, and register for classes.

Please call 215-684-0393 for more information.



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Smith & Solomon puts residents behind the wheel

One of PHA's newest Community Partners, Smith & Solomon offers free training classes to teach residents how to earn their commercial driver's license. After a week in the classroom, students receive behind-the-wheel training in all the skills they need to pass the CDL test.

Joseph Gray, an HCV resident from Germantown, always wanted to drive a truck so he signed up for the program a few months ago. He found out about the training opportunity through PHA and now spends most of his time practicing his new driving skills.

"The instructors really want you to get it," says Joseph. "They work really hard to make sure that participants finish. You don't leave the program until you get your CDL."

Murina Bailey, an HCV resident from South Philadelphia, also likes driving so she is excited to be making it a career choice. Pedro Gonzalez, one of the instructors at Smith & Solomon calls Murina his most improved student.

"The course is fun," Murina says. "Parallel parking was difficult at first, but you get used to it."

The computers at the training facility serve as a backup, reinforcing what the instructors teach. If the students fail any portion of the exam, they can

review the material on the computer. After their second week of classes, students hone their driving skills in a practice lot. Smith & Solomon administers tests to make sure students are prepared for the CDL tests at the DMV.

Getting a commercial driver's license is just the first step. Smith & Solomon offers its students unlimited job placement assistance. A placement specialist works with over 300 employers like Werner Enterprises and Roehl Transport to find graduates employment. As a result, 85% of Smith & Solomon graduates find jobs after graduation.

"It's not like sitting in an office and punching a time clock," says Michael Baker, Smith & Solomon's Director of Sales and Marketing. "People who are attracted to this job really like the independence and being on the road."

There are many options for commercial drivers including local, regional and "over the road" driving, which involves coast-to-coast trips. Smith & Solomon helps find the best match for their graduates.

Smith & Solomon also offers training in forklift driving. Participants can complete this course in just one day. Four hours are spent in the classroom learning safety procedures. Upon finishing the 8-hour training, graduates



Smith & Solomon instructor Pedro Gonzalez goes through the pre-trip checklist with PHA residents Joseph Gray and Murina Bailey in the practice yard. Smith & Solomon prepares students for the Commercial Driver's License test and careers in the trucking industry.

are issued a forklift operator certificate in compliance with OSHA standards. The operators' card is a great first step in securing warehouse jobs.

The CDL course takes approximately four to six weeks to complete. Interested applicants must have a driver's license and be able to pass

a drug test. For more information, contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator or call 215-684-0393.

Urban League offers customer service training



Students in the Urban League of Philadelphia's customer service training course brush up on their math and communication skills.

On a Friday afternoon in late January, high above the hustle and bustle of the Center City, ten students, all PHA residents, were learning how to survive and thrive in the workforce. The innovative nine-week Community Partners' program, sponsored by the Urban League of Philadelphia, helps students gear up for today's professional, fast-paced workplace. A heavy emphasis on computer skills is supplemented with math and communication classes. Students learn the basics of Microsoft Word and Excel and take part in customer service, resume writing and other general communication training.

The students vary in age, background and motivation. A current student and scattered site

resident, Evelyn Menago, has had previous job experience but is taking part in the class to refresh her skills. "I hope to refresh my skills so I am able to secure a position at a good company and advance my career," Evelyn says.

The goal of the program is to take currently unemployed PHA residents, provide them with skills and give them the confidence to succeed in the workplace. Once the curriculum is complete, The Urban League brings in potential employers to conduct interviews with the graduates. The first class had a 100% graduation rate.

"It feels good... The program was a good choice," said Howard Jennings Jr., whose mother and wife were at his graduation ceremony. Mr.

Jennings was one of the first eight to graduate the program and has landed a sales position with Sony.

For more information about the customer service training program with the Urban League of Philadelphia, contact your Economic Self-Sufficiency Coordinator or call 215-684-0393.

"I hope to refresh my skills so I am able to secure a position at a good company and advance my career," Evelyn says.



Meet PHA's new Family Service Coordinators



From left to right: PHA Family Service Coordinators Stephanie Hamlin, Koyia Osby, and Colette Dunlap.

Are you looking for someone to help jumpstart your career? Then meet PHA's three new Family Service Coordinators. They help residents become active in their communities as well as find and land good careers.

Koyia Osby works at Johnson Homes and Raymond Rosen. Stephanie Hamlin serves Bartram Village and Wilson Park. Colette Dunlap is stationed at Abbottsford Homes and Blumberg Apartments. All three began working at PHA a few months ago and each one of them have already made big impacts on the residents they serve.

Koyia was drawn to the coordinator position at PHA because she likes counseling, especially as an advocate for residents. She enjoys interacting with service agencies throughout Philadelphia while helping residents realize their dreams. After putting a journalism career aside, Koyia earned a social services degree from Temple University. She then developed a broad base of experience working for organizations such as the Center for Literacy, Welfare to Work, and Greater Philadelphia Health Action before joining PHA.

Stephanie spent the past 21 years doing social work after earning her bachelor's degree from West Chester University. During that time, she worked in foster care providing services to children in homes for the

Department of Health Services and Methodist Family Services. Stephanie joined PHA because she was looking for a change. She enjoys listening and can hardly wait to hear your story.

Colette wants to get to know the entire community and speaks regularly at church and high school meetings. At these events, she connects with residents who need her help. Colette previously served as an early intervention teacher, working with homeless single women. She holds a master's degree in clinical psychology. She is passionate about her work and really enjoys making a difference.

These three Family Service Coordinators help residents put their goals on paper and get started on the road to success. Koyia, Stephanie and Colette have office hours between 9:00am and 5:00pm, but are also willing to meet with residents on evening or weekends if necessary. They encourage you to call their office to schedule an appointment but are also available for walk-in meetings.

So pick up the phone and give them a call. You will be glad you did.

Contact info:

Colette Dunlap

ABBOTTSFORD
3226 McMichael Street
215-684-1180
Mon. & Thurs.

BLUMBERG
2311 W. Jefferson Street
215-684-2685
Tues, Wed, Fri.

Stephanie Hamlin

BARTRAM
5404 Gibson Drive
215-684-2163
Tues. & Thurs.

WILSON PARK
2500 Jackson Street
215-684-0015
Mon, Wed, Fri.

Koyia Osby

JOHNSON HOMES
2500 Norris Street
215-684-4715
Tues. & Thurs.

RAYMOND ROSEN
2301 Edgley Street
215-685-5553
Mon, Wed, Fri.

PHA Self-Sufficiency Contacts

Luz Paradoa

Manager, Community Partners Program
Admissions Office
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Fire Department educates residents about EMS

In February 2009, the Philadelphia Fire Department launched their Community First Emergency Medical Services Awareness Initiative to educate the Philadelphia community about emergency medical services (EMS) and other health-related resources.

One of the program's main goals is to reduce the number of non-emergency calls that are made to the 911 system. In 2009, Fire Department Medic Units responded to approximately 266,000 medical incidents but a significant number of these calls were non-emergencies. Unnecessary calls seriously compromise the effectiveness of the Emergency Medical Services systems.

To address this issue, Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers implemented the Community First Awareness Initiative to educate the public and reduce the number of non-emergency calls so the Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services teams can effectively deliver emergency services.

Aaron Boyd, a paramedic at the Philadelphia Fire Department has gone all over the city to promote proper use of the 911 system to residents of Philadelphia. He also shares information about minor first-aid measures and the availability of alternative health-related resources.

Paramedic Boyd has spoken at health fairs, bazaars, faith-based events, town hall meetings and other community outreach events. In September 2009, he made a presentation about the Community First initiative at PHA's Nellie Reynolds Gardens.

"The workshops have received a very positive reaction from the community," says Paramedic Boyd. "Facilitators say the crowd is attentive and very receptive to the much-needed information that they weren't previously aware of."

For more information about the Community First Awareness program and how you can bring a speaker to your site, please call Paramedic Boyd at 215-686-1300.



Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers implemented the Community First Awareness Initiative to educate the public about Emergency Medical Services and reduce the number of non-emergency calls to the 911 system.

Common Public Misconceptions about Emergency Medical Services and the 911 System

When EMS transports me, I will get treated faster.

NO. All emergency departments evaluate patients by their injuries/illnesses. Transportation by a Philadelphia Fire Department Medic Unit will not guarantee you will be seen faster in the emergency department. The hospital staff must treat the most severe cases first. It does not matter whether you walk-in, come by private auto or Philadelphia Fire Department Emergency Medical Services.

Philadelphia Fire Department EMS will transport me to the hospital I choose.

NO. EMS transports you to the closest appropriate hospital that is capable of treating your serious life-threatening condition.

EMS units provide transportation to medical appointments at hospitals.

NO. EMS units transport patients only to the Emergency Department. Transportation to dialysis centers or doctor's offices is prohibited.

EMS units provide routine services, which do not require transportation to the hospital.

NO. EMS does not come to your house to just check your blood pressure or your blood sugar level. They do not provide pain medication, Band-Aids, oxygen tanks or doctor's notes. A paramedic cannot administer your medications or medications not authorized by the medical director. EMS cannot fill your prescriptions or provide transportation to get your prescriptions filled.

Residents play important role in Census

(continued from page 1)

The census questionnaire asks for very basic things like name, age, date of birth, race, and if you own or rent your home. It also asks for a phone number in case the Census Bureau has any questions about a response. The census does not ask for social security numbers, citizenship status, or income information. Responses are confidential and protected by federal law. Information about where people live and how many people live there are not shared with agencies like Immigration, DPW or the IRS.

"The new questionnaire is easy, safe and important," says Yvette Nunez, Media Specialist for the U.S. Census Bureau. "And PHA residents shouldn't be worried about the information they share with us. The Census Bureau doesn't share its data with anyone." Census forms will be mailed out to every residence during the third week of March, around the 15th. The Census Bureau asks that responses be mailed back in the postage paid envelopes by April 1, 2010—Census Day.

For more information about the Census, please visit www.census.gov





Former homeless resident finds success

(continued from page 1)

I always had a job, always had a roof over my head." Sam's family wanted to take him in, but he felt that this was something he had to face on his own and get resolved.

After staying at various shelters, Sam's counselor at the Behavioral Health Services Initiative, Conrad Branch, got him involved with a transitional housing program, where he lived for about a year. After that, Mr. Branch asked Sam if he would

be interested in joining the Blueprint Program to End Homelessness, a partnership between PHA and the city to house homeless families and individuals. Sam jumped at the chance for an interview.

Six months after orientation, Sam moved into his new home in the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia, and hasn't looked back.

"It's quiet and clean and I get along with the landlord," he says. "I didn't

think it was ever going to happen. I thought I would be homeless forever until I got involved with PHA. If it weren't for the Blueprint program, I would probably still be homeless."

Getting a place of his own was just the first step to Sam's recovery, though...

At his orientation, PHA staffers told Sam about a number of training programs available to residents and the Pre-Apprenticeship Program was one of them. A month later, Sam

joined the program, graduating in less than six months.

After graduation, Sam had no trouble passing the union exam and he's now a member of the Plumbers' Union/Local 690, working on obtaining his journeyman's card. The Pre-Apprenticeship Program also led Sam to a job as a plumber apprentice at PHA. He works on scattered site properties in North Philadelphia, a job he loves.

Once Sam gets his journeyman's card, he hopes to make enough money to purchase a home.

"That's my goal right now," he says. "2 to 3 bedrooms with a porch, a little yard, a little space."

In fact, Sam is already attending homeownership counseling courses through PHA and is happy to share his success story with friends and coworkers.

Philadelphia Housing Authority SENIOR PROGRAM EVENTS

(Dates are subject to change)

MARCH

26th Spring Fling Celebration
Wilson Park

APRIL

1st Spring Fling Senior Social & Fashion Show
Location TBD

22nd Earth Day Observation Day
Wilson Park; Emlen Arms; Holmecrest

MAY

7th Rainbow Tea
Nellie Reynolds Gardens Café

JUNE

11th PHA Senior Properties Flower Show Contest
Wilson Park; Emlen Arms; Cassie Holley; Holmecrest; TBD



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

This 21 week program is free to PHA residents.



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

Interested applicants can apply in person Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the PHA Workforce Development Center, 1905 Vare Avenue, 19145.

For more information, please call 215-684-8049.

Strawberry Mansion homeowner realizes mother's dream



Regina Massey has been a PHA resident for over 30 years. She grew up in North Philly's Fairhill Apartments and moved with her mother to a scattered site home in Strawberry Mansion in 1996.

In 2005, Regina lost her mother to complications stemming from a car accident. As a result, she became the head of household and was faced with newfound responsibility. Massey began thinking about purchasing the home that she had lived in with her mother for 13 years. Under the 5H Scattered Site Homeownership

Program, PHA offers scattered site residents the opportunity to purchase the home they live in.

"My mom lived here and it was sentimental to me. I didn't want to have to leave," Regina said. But buying a home can be a trying ordeal. Poor credit history, lack of income, and the ability to perform household repairs are common obstacles for most buyers. But Regina was not deterred. She got her credit and finances in order and completed the purchase of her home in March 2009.

"There's nothing like owning your own home," says Regina. When you put your sweat and money into a house, you feel connected to it."

For more information about the scattered site homeownership program, please call PHA's Homeownership department at 215-684-0383.

Regina Massey in the living room of her scattered site home that she purchased from PHA.

Resident poet finds inspiration in her church



Yolanda Harrell, a resident poet, proudly displays a copy of her first book of poetry in the living room of her home.

Morton Homes resident Yolanda Harrell has been writing most of her life. When she was 12, she broke her hip in an accident and could not go outside. Writing short stories, she says, was a release.

In 2001, shortly after she had her second son, Yolanda began to attend Judah House of Prayer in West Philadelphia because she was struggling with personal issues and wanted a change in her life. The members of the church became her support system.

"I never experienced anything like it. It was new and refreshing," Yolanda says. "I was very excited and they were very welcoming. They showed me a lot of love and kindness."

Yolanda's church was a place full of

emotion. It also nurtured her creativity. Her oldest son's godmother who first invited her to the church told the pastor about Yolanda's writing. He asked her to write for different events at the church like Founder Appreciation Month, Christmas, and Easter.

"My pastor told me that my knack for writing was a gift," Yolanda said. "The whole church would inspire and encourage me to keep writing." After an usher in her church suggested that she write a book, Yolanda compiled her work and submitted it to Publish America, an online publisher, which agreed to publish it.

The book is called *Rapetry: Poetry with the Rhythm of Rap* and it is now available through www.publishamerica.com. Yolanda describes it as a spiritual

book. Some of the poems are based on her pastor's sermons while others focus on her ethnic heritage.

Putting together the book was a learning experience for Yolanda. She is already working on a second book. Her experience with the first led her to go back and give a little more thought to editing and revision. And her classes at Community College of Philadelphia are also influencing her writing process.

A cosmetologist by trade, Yolanda earned a certificate for business planning and entrepreneurship at the Enterprise Center, one of PHA's Community Partners. She is currently studying business and creative writing at CCP. She is also co-writing stories with her son.

"At this point, I'm not sure what direction God wants me to go in," Yolanda said of her future plans.

"I hope that whatever it is, I am successful and that it is a blessing to someone else's life."

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

The PHA Experience would like to share your story with our readers. To get your story into the Experience, call Nancy Loi at 215-684-8645 or send an email to nancy.loi@pha.phila.gov

PHA tackles two blizzards in one week

(continued from page 1)

Eugene Sallard was one of the maintenance workers out tackling the snow at Blumberg Apartments, Bentley Hall, and Raymond Rosen. Eugene says the snow days are demanding but very rewarding and he doesn't remember a winter with this much snow.

"We're really working together well as team this year, trying to be as efficient and effective as we can to clear roads, lots and sidewalks," said Eugene. "One crew helped another and before long, our sites were cleared and the job got done."



90 to 100 workers were deployed each day with shovels, snow blowers, and buckets of salt to clear out snow and ice in six geographic zones throughout the city.

Geneva Beander, the resident council president of Bentley Hall, just made it home from the Resident

Advisory Board retreat before the brunt of Wednesday's storm. She says the trip back was fine and that

she is happy to see the maintenance crews working hard outside her North Philadelphia senior development.

"They're doing a fine job. On Sunday, they came out with snow blowers and the salt trucks were out three or four times. There's a lot of snow out there but we don't have any complaints."

The blizzards of 2010 will be remembered for many years but equally memorable is how PHA worked as a team to plan and execute an effective response to an historic one-two punch from Mother Nature.

Prison Runs

If you need to visit a loved one in prison, please contact **J&H Transport, LLC.**

Traveling to 25 State correctional institutions
For Reservations
please call
(215) 989-9436



The 2010 Census: Get Counted



When your census form arrives in the mail, fill it out and send it in.

Your participation is vital to ensure that our community gets its fair share of federal funds for schools, hospitals, roads, and **HOUSING**.

Remember to include **EVERYONE** who lives in your home. The information goes only to the Census Bureau and is not shared with PHA.

Filling out the form is easy, important and safe.

United States[®]
Census
2010



Philadelphia Housing Authority
Building Beyond Expectations

The 2010 Census: *It's in our hands.*