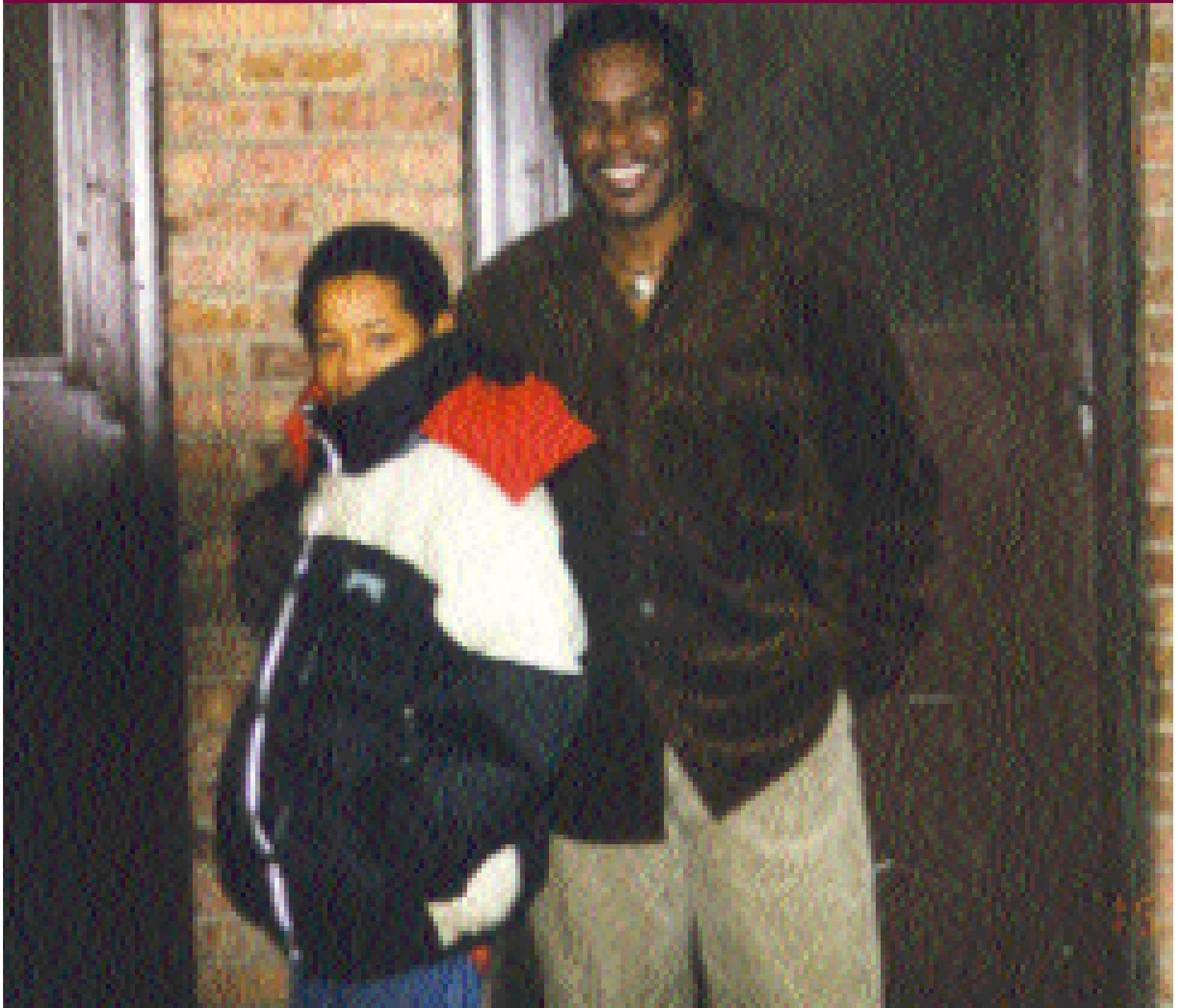


R E S I D E N T S '

# Journal

*A publication for and by the residents of the Chicago Housing Authority December 1999 /Volume 4/ Number 2*



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**FRONT PAGE PHOTO**  
A celebration of African American men, the front page photo depicts Robert Phelps Sr. and Robert Phelps Jr., residents of LeClaire Courts.  
(Photo by Andre Robinson)

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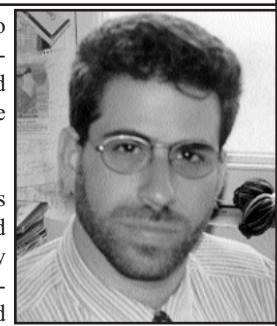
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# Editor's Box

**by Ethan Michaeli**



I was disturbed to read recently that low-income Americans have largely been ignored as our nation prepares for the new Millennium.

Most of the nation will experience little or no disruption or disturbance when the calendar flips over to Jan. 1 and computers which were programmed with two-digit dates roll over from "99" to "00." Because most of the computers which were designed in this way were programmed a generation ago, even technology experts are unsure how this will affect the millions of computers that use this system. Predictions from these experts as well as amateur technophiles have ranged from total disaster and chaos to a quiet, unnoticed transition. Banks and other financial institutions as well as utilities and government agencies have spent millions of dollars upgrading their systems and are advertising that they are "Y2K Ready." The banks don't want their customers taking out their money and hiding it in mattresses. Government agencies are trying to prevent panic and disorder. Federal agencies have gone so far as to grade themselves and boast that they have received "As."

Airlines and most other travel-related companies also are reassuring travelers and potential travelers they are safe on the nation's skyways.

With all these reassurances, I was lulled into the thought that worries about Y2K were a function of the hysteria that accompanies

tem on which so many public housing residents and other low-income Americans depend. The state government issues these checks and ensures that they reach their recipients on time. And investigations into the state's Y2K readiness have found that Illinois is among many other states which have not prepared their computer systems.

We've created a two-tiered system in this country when it comes to just about every kind of service. If you are middle class or wealthier and can pay, the system is bending over backwards to make sure you will continue to spend. If you are poor, you can expect delays, long lines and other problems with exactly the services on which you depend for food, shelter and health care. The state of Y2K readiness is yet another example of our nation's brutal lack of concern for the widening disparity in quality of life between the nation's poor and those who are middle class or wealthier. But I do not wish to merely air a complaint to *RJ*'s readers. Though frustrated, I hope to encourage *RJ* readers to find ways to fight the

## *The Invisible Americans*

any kind of mass, public change.

But then a friend called me and urged me to review the high marks that many of the federal agencies have received. He pointed out that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had received an "A" even though its public housing program is not ready for Y2K. The Department of Agriculture received an "A minus" even though its Food Stamps program is not ready. Medicaid and Medicare also are said to be unprepared for the potential Y2K bug.

Failure with any of these programs could have a critical effect on the lives of the millions of low-income Americans who live in public housing or depend on Food Stamps to stock their family's pantries or rely on Medicaid for their health care.

The Chicago Housing Authority and the City of Chicago are distributing literature indicating they have prepared their own computer systems and have prepared contingencies in case there are Y2K problems with any of their vendors, such as salt distributors or snow removers. Ironically, CHA's heating and elevator systems are too old to have used the computer chips which would be the cause of Y2K-related failure.

But the City does not control the welfare, child support and social security payment sys-

indifference of those in power. One of the best ways I can think of is to participate in the upcoming U.S. Census. By now, most people know that the Census determines how much service people will receive from the government whenever calculations are made according to population. These services include everything from money for roadways and public transit to how representatives will be elected. Most people also know that low-income Americans – particularly low-income African Americans and Latinos – have been drastically undercounted in previous Censuses.

Part of the reason why low-income Americans are neglected is because they are undercounted. But the Census can be of direct benefit to many residents who are looking for work. By calling (888) 325-7733, residents can find work making sure their neighbors are counted accurately. Residents of Robert Taylor Homes and the surrounding Grand Boulevard neighborhood can call Census official Shareef Muhammad directly at (773) 624-0103 x133. Participating in the Census will not guarantee that the majority of Americans start paying equal attention to low-income Americans. But a correct count will make it harder to ignore millions of families that depend on government to be fair and dedicated.

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# CHA In Transition

## War and Peace

by Mary C. Johns

any Chicago Housing Authority residents who were relocated from the buildings in Robert Taylor Homes and Rockwell Gardens in past months feel their new homes are in worse condition than their old apartments.

Many of the 590 families who were moved from those buildings complained about the conditions of their new units, the lack of security and broken promises made by CHA. These residents say their relocation experiences have left them mistrustful of CHA. Housing advocates say residents are right not to trust CHA and feel that CHA's new 5-year, \$1.5 billion plan does not include enough affordable housing for low-income people.

CHA officials say they understand why residents mistrust them. But CHA officials want residents to work with them because they say high-rise communities have failed and mixed-income communities are more viable.

### Relocated Residents' Comments

Priscilla Mitchell of Robert Taylor B-1 said her new apartment was improperly rehabbed. Mitchell relocated from 4844 S. State St. into 4946 S. State St. on Oct. 18.

"My apartment should have been rehabbed like the others. The others have ceiling fans and shower heads were put in. My walls weren't painted and they didn't exterminate," said Mitchell.

Mitchell thinks that moving residents from one building into the next has only created more problems.

"We're all bunched up in buildings in that one area anyway. They

procedures," said Mitchell.

"CHA said that they would get in contact with me about my Section 8 but I haven't heard from anyone." "I wanted to move thinking it would be better service," said Yoletha Woodard, a resident of Rockwell Gardens. Woodard was moved from 2417 W. Adams St. into a building at 340 S. Western Ave. on Nov. 6.

"They didn't put in new tile and I had a flood on Nov. 13," she said.

"They said we had to move because of the (lack of) heat and rats," said Kimbrelly Washington, a Robert Taylor resident relocated from 4500 S. State St. into 4555 S. State St.

"But they sent us too much heat and they moved us from one rat-infested building into another," she said.

Although new equipment was installed in her apartment, Washington said the materials and workmanship are poor quality.

"The pattern around the bottom of the wall is missing and the cabinet fell down. When you run bath water in my bathroom, the water comes through the hallway walls. They just threw the stuff up there," she said.

Washington continued to say that she was pressured into moving into her new building.

"They said I had to be out of there so I just took it.

I didn't want to move from building to building. I just wanted to move into my Section 8," she said.

Chrissinda Carter is another public housing resident with a special circumstance. Carter has a nine-month-old baby, Kaywanna Hopson, who is required to use an oxygen machine and is attached to a heart monitor.

Carter was among the last remaining residents at 4500 S. State St. But four months earlier, Carter moved from an upper-floor apartment into a lower floor due to the



**Robert Taylor Homes resident Chrissinda Carter poses with her baby, Kaywanna Hopson, while waiting for relocation. The child depends on the nearby oxygen tank and heart monitor for life support.**

Photo by Mary C. Johns

"For only this winterization, residents will receive 2 months free rent," Jackson said. "This is only a one-time offer for about 590 families."

### In the Heat of the Battle

Barbara Moore, president of 5266 S. Federal St., wasn't concerned about the free rent. She just wanted to remain in her building because of its history and the programs she and other residents had established there.

Moore said her building was in the same condition as two other Robert Taylor buildings that were rehabbed, 5201 S. Federal and 5247 S. Federal St.

Those buildings originally were scheduled for demolition but since have been rehabbed for residents relocating out

of other Robert Taylor buildings.

"Why is 5247 being rehabbed? It was in the same condition as 5266," Moore said.

"If you're going to fix one, why not fix the other?"

Moore said residents are constantly being moved by CHA officials and she didn't want to be included among them.

"The city and CHA are going crazy to shift us from one building to the next," said Moore.

Moore stayed through the Nov. 15 deadline for all residents to be out of the targeted buildings.

One of the main reasons why Moore stayed in the building was the God's Gang Program. God's Gang was established by members of St. Mary A.M.E. Church approximately 10 years ago. In 5266 S. State, God's Gang provided a library, worm farm and food pantry.

The worm farm was a particular cause for conflict between Moore and CHA CEO Jackson. Moore contends that the worm farm was educational and beneficial to children while Jackson said it was waste of money.

Moore said the *Chicago Tribune* and the Heifer Foundation sponsored the God's Gang programs and CHA didn't provide funding for them. The worm farm consisted of over 100 farm beds. Fish were also grown and studied at the worm farm.

"The schools buy the worms and castings from us (for fertilizer)," she said.

"Are we that poor that we can't teach our children about worms?" added Moore.

In late November, Jackson

announced that he found a purchase requisition for a \$100,000 air conditioner for the worm farm and said the requisition was an example of overspending at a time when funds for basic maintenance of buildings were scarce.

But Moore denied any knowledge of the purchase requisition, said the worms did not need an air conditioner, and noted that all funding for the worm farm came from sources outside CHA.

Moore said the food pantry distributes freely to CHA tenants and community residents and was visited in 1997 by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

"95 to 135 people are fed out of the pantry every week," said Moore. The library was never officially opened, according to one of the youth overseers.

Moore worked with the Coalition to Protect Public Housing and other housing advocates to encourage residents to fight relocation. The advocates, including residents of other developments, tenants rights organizations, religious groups and leftists, rallied with Moore in her battle.

During a congressional tour on Nov. 15 of 4500 S. State St., the advocates urged residents of that building to stay.

"They're trying to treat you like cattle," said Diedre Matthews, a member of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing and resident of the Cabrini-Green development.

"But just like we say to Mayor Daley, 'You brought the cows in and took them out but you're not going to do the same thing to public housing residents,'" she said.

By Dec. 20, 5266 S. State St. – the last of the nine buildings scheduled for closure – was officially closed and Moore had moved into another Robert Taylor Homes apartment.

On Dec. 21, former residents of 5266 S. State St. found the worms and fish dead, victims of cold weather. CHA CEO Jackson said he would replace the worm and fish farm.

### The Plan

Over a six-week period, CHA held various public meetings throughout the city so CHA and community residents could voice their opinions and give input on CHA's 5-year proposal to transform public housing.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) officials also held two public hearings to listen to residents of CHA and surrounding communities.

At each of the meetings, CHA CEO Jackson said drastic changes will take place in living conditions, maintenance and security under the proposal.

On hand to state their case were public housing residents, CHA administrators and present and past employees as well as aldermen and state representatives.

**(Continued on Page 20)**

**"We really need to have HUD be as flexible and as creative as possible."**  
**-Julia Stasch, Mayor Daley's Chief of Staff**

should have left us where we were," she said.

Mitchell also complained about the Chicago Police officers that are responsible for security in her building.

"The Chicago Police don't walk the floors. At least the CHA Police were walking the floors. The drug dealers are still selling drugs in front of the buildings," she said.

Mitchell said she had been relocated into 4946 S. State St. against her will.

"I had to go there," she said. "I had no other choice."

Mitchell chose to receive a Section 8 subsidized housing voucher. But Mitchell was moved to a holding unit until she completes a background check, and mandatory classes and meetings.

"We have to go through a lot of

### Special Circumstances

There are public housing residents who live under special circumstances who faced difficulties when they were relocated.

One resident is involved in the Federal Witness Protection Program and didn't want to move into another building within the same development.

According to the resident, a minor family member is a potential eyewitness to a murder that took place within the development.

The resident said that family members of the person that allegedly committed the homicide still reside in the development and the resident – for that reason – did not want to move within the development.

"I'm not going to put my life in danger for anyone," the resident said.

### Free Rent Promise

Some residents that were relocated complained they had not received two months of free rent CHA said they would receive.

The residents were told by CHA officials at meetings and in public announcements that they would receive two months of free rent after they relocated. As of mid-November, residents said they had not seen the free rent reflected on their rent statements.

But CHA CEO Phillip Jackson said all residents who have been relocated into buildings within their developments or into other CHA developments would see the free rent reflected on rent statements within the next few months, depending on when they were relocated.

# CHA In Transition Relocators or Section 8

by Beauty Turner

I did numerous interviews with various residents that were being relocated from 4500 S. State St. - one of the buildings in Robert Taylor Homes slated for demolition. I conducted the interviews on Nov. 11, four days before CHA's original deadline for residents to move out of the building. I started with building resident Eunice Holmes, who was being relocated when I interviewed her.

RJ: "Could you tell me what was your choice concerning housing?"

EH: "Section 8."

RJ: "Where are the CHA relocators taking you now? To your Section 8 apartment?"

EH: "No. To 4525 (S. State St.), apartment 701."

RJ: "If your choice was Section 8, why is CHA relocating you to 4525?"

EH: "Because I haven't found an apartment yet."

RJ: "Are you still looking for a Section 8 apartment?"

EH: "Yes, I am."

RJ: "Do you have the Section 8 papers in your hand?"

EH: "No."

RJ: "When are you expecting to get them?"

EH: "When I find a place."

RJ: "Don't you need the Section 8 papers to find a place?"

EH: "Some places you do but CHA told me that I have to find a place first."

RJ: "How many children are there in your family?"

EH: "Me and my son."

RJ: "How often are you looking for an apartment?"

EH: "Every day."

RJ: "Since you are being relocated to 4525, are you going to still look for an apartment?" EH: "Yes, I am."

RJ: "Did you get to inspect your unit before moving in?"

EH: "Yes."

RJ: "How does it look to you?"

EH: "It's OK. It's alright but it's not what I expected. But I like it."

RJ: "Are the windows in properly? Is everything working properly in your new unit?"

EH: "Yes. Except for the tiles."

I went into 4500 South State and took the elevator up to the 7th floor, where I saw the relocators moving people out. I noticed a young man entering apartment 701. I asked him if he was one of the people being relocated that day. His reply was, "You need to talk to my mom." So I introduced myself to his mother and she invited me in. Barbara Jean Coles has lived at 4500 S. State St., apartment 701, for 20 years.

RJ: "What is your CHA plan for you and your family?"

BJC: "CHA hasn't done anything with me and my family yet. My family will be the only one left on the 7th floor before the day is out and today is Nov. 11

(referring to the Nov. 15 deadline).

RJ: "Didn't CHA offer you Section 8?"

BJC: "Yes. I have been offered a Section 8 and I have been down to the Section 8 place but I cannot get a Section 8 until I get caught up on my light bill."

RJ: "How much is your light bill?"

BJC: "I don't know. At one time, I was living on the 16th floor and I haven't been in contact with anyone to find that out and if what and can be going down. The lady down in Section 8 told me I should go down to Commonwealth Edison and start a payment plan. But every time I go there, they tell me I'm not eligible for it."

RJ: "Why did they tell you that you are not eligible for the payment plan?"

BJC: "They are telling me I'm not eligible for it but I got a letter that states I am eligible for it."

RJ: "What did the building manager, Ms. Tracey Howard, say concerning your situation?"

BJC: "One day, I went over to the office. I had just come from the Public Aid

telling her I needed a place. She said, 'I have 1201 open. It's ready now.' I said, 'I have back problems. Could you please give me a lower floor?' She said, 'You either take it or else. That's the only one I have for you.' I can't go up and down stairs like that and I told her that I'm not taking that."

RJ: "Since you didn't take 1201, what is CHA going to do with you now?"

BJC: "Tracey sent a few residents up to my house who told me that if I didn't accept 1201 in 4525 or 305 in 4555, there's nothing she can do for me."

RJ: "Why didn't you take 305 in 4555? It's a lower floor."

BJC: "I don't know if it's available. Those apartments are not ready yet. Plus, I



Robert Taylor resident Sallie M. Lee inspects her newly rehabbed apartment.

Photo by Beauty Turner

SL: "Yes. But it has a few minor problems, such as the plywood in my pantry is too low and somebody could see over into my apartment from the next apartment, a big hole by the side of my pantry where rats can get through, and no bracket on the window. So how can I hang curtains? Suppose I want to walk around in my birthday suit. I can't because everybody would see me. The apartment next to mine, 210, is vacant and dark and open. Anybody could be hiding in there and rape either me or my daughter. That's not safe. I asked Mr. Nash yesterday about that. He said that it will be taken care of. It's not."

RJ: "How was your other apartment that you left?"

SL: "It was OK. It just had a constant leak for years but it was attended to, it would've been good. This apartment has nice features, such as the ceiling fan and the lamp in the smaller room. I guess it's OK. Or it will be, if I keep on them about the minor problems I mentioned."

My last interview was with Maxine Huddleston, a young woman who has seven children that resides in 4500 S. State St., apartment 810.

MH: "I'm not going anywhere until they give me something adequate concerning me and my children. CHA offered me 4525 (S. State St.), apartment 910, but that place is too small, has a rusted tub and still has boards on the windows. I want better living conditions. Now that people are leaving this building, rats are trying to get through the walls. I never had rats."

"It's a disappointing feeling to be waiting on something and then CHA gives you something that you don't want. Just going to throw you anywhere like a piece of trash. I feel that there is too much favoritism in CHA. I also feel that tenants shouldn't be presidents of the buildings. They have total control over people. My place is infested with roaches. I guess that is because everybody is moving."



CHA resident Eunice Holmes, formerly of 4500 S. State St., stands by the moving truck that delivered her belongings to a rehabbed unit in 4525 S. Federal St. Nov. 16.

Photo by Beauty Turner

office. I went over to find what's going concerning our move. I spoke to Diane, the receptionist. I was asking her (about my light bill). She said I had to ask Ms. Howard. But instead, I spoke to Mr. Nash. He took me into a room, looked into a computer and he found I was behind in rent over \$700. He started asking me about it. I told him I had lost my job. I had no income during the summer months. He asked for a letter. I brought him a letter. He filed it. CHA lost my letter and from what I know, they never went into the computer to change the rent or anything else."

RJ: "What is CHA going to do now? Did CHA tell you anything?"

BJC: "Tracey and I talked about the move on that day. Tracey was letting other people go look at their apartments. I was

have two daughters, a son and a granddaughter. I don't know if it's a two-bedroom or what. Tracey sent Mr. Nash over to show me the 12th floor. I guess she did that to show me something. Tracey offered me an apartment in 4444. But I'm afraid for my family's life. She doesn't know that building and this one don't get along." Next I interviewed Sallie M. Lee, the building president of 4500 S. State, who was also being relocated on that day.

RJ: "What was your choice, Sallie?"

SL: "To relocate (within Robert Taylor Homes)." RJ: "Why?"

SL: "I was born here and I feel more comfortable here."

RJ: "Do you like your new apartment?"

## A New Beginning?

4500 S. State St. was closed down at 5 p.m., Nov. 18. Was it the end of an era

# CHA In Transition Facing the Pain of Progress

by Jacqueline Thompson

Thursday, Nov. 18, is a long way from March 1999, when I first began to hear talk about a new school being built in the Harold L. Ickes Homes public Housing Development.

While trying to pick up the trail of the rumors, I asked many persons in position to know for sure whether or not the rumors were true. They all collaborated, even separately, that either they knew nothing or had nothing or that "it" may not even be true. Some even promised to call with any information when they had some.

Meanwhile, the tenants who lived in the 2233 S. Federal building, where part of the new school was rumored to be planned, were getting very anxious. They had recently received new kitchen cabinets and if the rumors were true, the residents wondered when they would have to vacate the building.

They were waiting for the other shoe to drop. And drop it did.

On Oct. 10, they were invited to a meeting to get the facts of the business at hand. They were given less than six weeks to move with three choices of new residency: To take an empty apartment elsewhere in Ickes for permanent occupancy, take an empty apartment in Ickes to wait for a Section 8 certification, or to move completely out of Ickes to a place of their choosing.

Realizing there must be some frustrations attached to such a narrow deadline, I asked some tenants to share their experiences with **RJ**

and some agreed. Some were too emotional to respond:

**RJ:** "How did you find out when you had to move?"

**Mrs. D:** "They called a meeting of the leaseholders who lived in the 2233 S. Federal building. At that meeting, which took place on or about Oct. 10, we were told that we had until Nov. 15 to move out. All this is without knowing where we would go. We were also urged to move before Oct. 15 and we could get two months rent free, November and December. But for sure be out by Thanksgiving Day.

**"It just wasn't fair to be uprooted like that and have strangers come in your home and just destroy your things."**

**-Harold Ickes resident Brenda Jones**

"That didn't sound too bad, however. As part of the move, we were to have movers to come into our apartments and do heavy lifting. They hired Smith Movers. I didn't really want all the work it takes to move. I felt depressed and on top of this feeling, Smith Movers broke a lot of my stuff.

"The back of my dryer was broken, my washer was damaged, and two easy chairs had legs broken. They were so unprofessional. I felt as though we could have done our own moving, given transportation.

**RJ:** "Are you happy where you are now?"

"Not really. I didn't want to stay in Harold Ickes so this is just temporary for me because I don't know when I'll get my Section 8. They gave us a little dinner supposedly to receive Section 8s but the person from HUD's Section 8 department never showed up.

"I could have cried from stress."

Next I spoke to Donald Hollins, who is also a tenant janitor.

**RJ:** "How did things go for you in the first move?"

**DH:** "I moved mostly myself, small items, you know. They (Smith Movers) moved the large items. My couch got torn up. They didn't do a good job."

**RJ:** "Are you happy where you are?"

**DH:** "Yes, I have a rehabbed apartment. It's clean, not far from my work area and I still live near my friends in familiar surroundings. I don't want a Section 8 out of here."

Speaking with Brenda Jones, a 43-year tenant, was a disturbing interview. She has lived within the boundaries since she was eight years old. She doesn't want to leave the area. However, she said the swift change she had to make caused her an extreme amount of stress and depression because she lost so many treasures.

**RJ:** "Tell me some of the things that happened?"

**BJ:** "The movers were boisterous, drinking and playing. When you argued with them to be careful, they argued

be sacrificed to create a new teaching institution.

Schools official Diane Grisby Jackson brought greeting cards from Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas and went on to explain that 1,500 new teachers a year were needed for the school system. The building in Ickes will be used to train master teachers. The list of criteria for the new school is surprising:

The school will house grades from pre-kindergarten to eighth grade. Three new teachers will be present in each class: a master teacher, a middle teacher and a teacher in training. There will be between 20 and 25 students in each classroom. A video camera will be installed for each room for the purpose of observing teaching techniques and student educational adaptability. An observation booth will be used for teachers in training and for focusing on problem solving for students at risk of failure.

The school will be a national model for other cities, Grisby Jackson said. A community center will be attached to main edifice. The facility also will include a grassy campus area, a swimming facility and a parking lot.

## Questions

The big question on the minds of many residents about the news was whether the students from Harold Ickes would have first choice to enroll in each class. Twenty to each room? First come first served? The officials at the meeting also said Daniel Hale Williams School will be renovated to become a "state of the art" school.

## The South Loop

School at Roosevelt Road and Federal Street is going to be torn down, as is the small primary school at Archer Avenue near 18th Street. My question was, where are these students going to attend? I was unable to get an answer.

LAC President Williams spoke to the sparse group of attendees at the meeting and assured them that she was poised to do everything in her power to see that our children get to attend this all-new facility because they were not previously welcome at other new schools in the area. This was a welcome declaration because I for see a rough road in enrollment. There was a struggle to get into South Loop. Haines is no longer a welcome environment for our students.

Daniel Hale Williams has had to "take in" all of our children. So this leaves the children from Burnham Park and other areas to vie for space in this new educational adventure.

## What Else is New?

It was also brought out at the meeting that a new facility for job seekers was available for Near South Siders directly across State at 23rd streets.

The officials at the meeting promised involvement with each applicant. Fred Bradley, the new resource personnel director, explained that once an applicant obtained a job, they would be still part of an on-going program to learn to manage their money, play the stock market, and to develop a savings plan.

This is one city resource that promises to be one of the best things that could have ever happened to a community. Williams said Bradley is encouraged by the interest and participation from members of the community. This is a good sign for the new millennium.



**2233 S. Federal's Last Stand: This building in the Harold Ickes development is also scheduled for closing. Holiday decorations in the 1st floor windows hide tears of frustration and disappointment.**

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

back.

"I was very depressed for a while. It just wasn't fair to be uprooted like that and have strangers come in your home and just destroy your things.

"I lost kitchen glasses, living room glasses and other expensive art pieces and the boxes were clearly labeled. They ripped my gold leather couch, which is not even paid for, and denied it.

**RJ:** "What do you think of your new apartment?"

**BJ:** "Not much. One window was boarded up. I have no screens, no peephole and I've seen a mouse and I'm afraid. They told me that I either take this place or be moved to another development. I could not do that so I settled for this one. We had to spend money on flooring and some other repairs because of the short notice and limited vacant places available."

I left her apartment feeling the pain and strain of it all.

## Flood Gates of Information

Once the Flood Gates of information had been open, a community meeting was called for Nov. 18 at 4 p.m. I was there. Henry Booth House's multi-purpose gymnasium had been made ready for the meeting complete with podium and waiting panel of experts. Housing heads, architects and officials from Chicago's Board of Education were ready to reveal all and answer all. This was finally the chance for the community at large to get the real complete story.

Gloria Williams, our Local Advisory Council president, sat with the panel.

An exhibit of the floor plans and a drawing of the exterior were prominently visible. The agenda was planned to encompass the demolition date of 55 W. Cermak and 2233 S. Federal. Both buildings are going to

# CHA In Transition

## Catholic Church to CHA: Be Careful

by Andre Robinson

**A**s you read this article, there will be 15,000 homeless people in the city of Chicago, people who will take shelter in various places throughout the city. Union Station, the Greyhound terminal, Lower Wacker Drive, the Pacific Garden Mission, abandoned buildings and empty CHA apartments will be temporary shelter for someone's mother, father, sister, brother, son or daughter. Temperatures will dive into the single digits, at times putting the homeless at risk of frozen death.

It is the best of times. It is the worst of times. Although the stock market soars, unemployment has descended to its lowest point in decades, and many Americans prosper as never before, the poorest Americans are becoming poorer. Income inequity is at an all-time high and more and more people are finding it impossible to find and keep safe, affordable places to live.

Nationwide, there is a shortage of 4.4 million affordable housing units, according to "In Search of Shelter," a report from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. In the Chicago area, 245,000 low-income renters compete for 115,000 units of affordable housing. This means 130,000 families in metropolitan Chicago lack an affordable home. These numbers cause concern for the Rev. Michael M. Boland, the administrator for Catholic Charities.

"We call on individuals in our faith communities to continue the Church's tradition of welcoming the stranger by opening their minds and their neighborhoods to people of all racial, ethnic and economic levels."

Boland is worried that the destruction of public housing developments in Chicago has made affordable housing a crisis. While he agrees that severely distressed public housing must be replaced, Boland said the Catholic Church - Catholic Charities in particular - is concerned about how the demolition of public housing units will impact the housing situation in Chicago.

Boland said affordable housing is perhaps the biggest casualty of America's boom or bust economy, which has created a thriving market in which poor families cannot compete. The strong economy has done little to help poor families find jobs that pay a living wage. Those with the lowest skills are stuck in minimum and low-wage jobs which keep them buried in poverty and unable to afford a decent place to live.

Boland noted that nearly 400,000 Illinois residents pay over one-half of their incomes toward housing, often forgoing necessities such as food, clothing, medicine, or investment in education in order to keep a roof over their heads.

What is worse, people paying this much of their income for rent are just one accident, illness or paycheck

away from becoming homeless, Boland said.

Many people assume that all poor individuals live in subsidized housing. Yet, this is not the case. The federal government's investment in affordable housing has fallen from a high of \$85 billion in 1979 to \$16 billion in 1999, Boland said.

As a projected 17,000 units of public housing will come down in Chicago over the next 10 years, the demand for affordable housing will increase as thousands of families enter the private housing market, Boland said. Although they will receive Section 8 subsidies to help cover rental costs, Boland said former public housing residents must contend not only with racial and class discrimination but also with a housing market that has little need for their Section 8 subsidies when thousands of people can afford record high rents.

Boland's organization is on the front line of the affordable housing crisis. In fiscal year 1998, 17,000 people contacted Catholic Charities seeking help with one month's rent or utility payment. The Catholic Church sees that the growing shortage of affordable housing affects the people in Chicago and in the suburbs as well.

The request for help with housing-related costs is the most frequently unmet service request from Catholic Charities' clients, Boland said. Often families go from one charitable agency to the next, desperately searching for



**A board that was used to secure this empty apartment in LeClaire Courts sits on the ground after it was removed by a squatter seeking shelter.**

Photo by Andre Robinson

low-income seniors and other frail populations in Chicago and suburbs. 480 more apartments are currently under development.

As the number of senior citizens doubles in the next 40 years, Boland said that a greater number of safe, affordable housing units will be needed for our senior population.

Catholic Charities also operates a homeless program throughout Cook and Lake Counties which provides temporary housing and immediate help for people who have nowhere else to turn. Their homeless programs include comprehensive supportive services: counseling, substance abuse recovery, career planning, educational opportunities and life skills training that help homeless families and individuals overcome obstacles to achieving stable housing and self-sufficiency.

Boland said Catholic Charities is exploring ways to expand its commitment to affordable housing by partnering with organizations and community groups to create multifamily properties, Single Room Occupancy buildings, and increased opportunities for first-time home buyers.

A program modeled after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's successful Section 202 housing program for the elderly, which includes financing for housing construction as well as operations, could increase the supply of affordable family housing by drawing more developers into the marketplace, Boland said.



**Another vacant unit in LeClaire Courts sits dormant.**

Photo by Andre Robinson

someone to help pay for the roof over their heads. When repeated attempts fail, they often become homeless.

Catholic Charities reported that throughout Cook County (including Chicago), they received 50 percent more calls from homeless people seeking shelter in 1999 than in the previous year.

Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago, recently voiced his concerns over the plight of the homeless and in particular, the relocation of CHA residents. The cardinal urged that CHA officials develop a concrete plan to relocate public housing residents. He also asked private landlords to accept Section 8 vouchers that will help former public housing residents make the transition to better housing. He called on government agencies, private companies and philanthropic institutions to explore creative ways to help meet high housing costs.

The cardinal added that more funding is needed for supportive services such as job training and education that will help poor families acquire the skills they need to obtain living wage jobs. Down payment assistance grants for home purchases would help people invest for the future, create equity and stabilize their neighborhoods through home ownership.

While CHA is in the process of tearing down their buildings, Boland noted that Catholic Charities recently has built 594 affordable apartments in nine buildings for



**Rehabilitation?: This empty apartment in LeClaire Courts, located on the West Side of Chicago, is one of many vacant units in CHA developments.**

Photo by Andre Robinson

**In the Chicago area, 245,000 low-income renters compete for 115,000 units of affordable housing. This means 130,000 families in metropolitan Chicago lack an affordable home.**

A study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development titled "Waiting in Vain," states, "The waiting list for Section 8 vouchers has a waiting time of 5 years." In a publication titled "Homelessness: The Causes and the Facts," the authors point out that "There are more than 8,000 abandoned buildings in Chicago that could be a source for low-income housing if rehabbed."

Boland and others on the front lines of the affordable housing crisis feel there must be an effective and creative partnership among non-profit community groups, churches, private developers, government at all levels and financial institutions to build and preserve affordable housing.

# CHA In Transition

## Study Finds Affordable Housing Shortage

by Arminta Clark

As the Chicago Housing Authority goes through a transformation period, a new study finds that the market will be very tight for those residents who will be looking for housing in the private market using their Housing Choice Vouchers, the new name for Section 8 certificates and vouchers.

The study was released by the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and shows that the average vacancy rate for rental units in the Chicago area is 4.2 percent. Robin Snyderman, policy and planning coordinator for MPC, said the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers the market tight with a 6 percent rate. The MPC study finds that the market is particularly tight for low-income individuals and families.

"Our region is well below what HUD considers to be a tight market," said Snyderman. "The study shows that's there's a real deficit of affordable units for people who make \$20,000 and under a year. There are a lot more people at that income level than there are affordable units to rent."

Residents who are moving out of closed CHA developments will be using the Housing Choice Vouchers to look for apartments in the private market. Snyderman said the study indicates that residents will have more purchasing power with the vouchers.

"(The study) also really demonstrated the need for the region to recognize the value of the Housing Choice Vouchers. Because with those vouchers, people have greater access to units where there's not a deficit," Snyderman said.

"If you are earning \$50,000 a year, there's not a deficit of units affordable to you. The market is tight. But there are enough units for people at that income level. If a person gets a Housing Choice Voucher, you're competing with a certain income group of people, which is better for you."

"For example, if you don't have a Housing Choice Voucher and you're earning less than \$20,000 a year, you can't afford the rent that's higher than \$500 a month. With a Housing Choice Voucher, that gives you access to more expensive rent. You're competing in a less difficult market then when you're competing for the rent in the \$500 market."

"There are more units that are available at \$700 than there are at \$500. The Housing Choice Voucher gives you a tool that you don't have in the market. Not unless you have a voucher," Snyderman said.

Snyderman said the study indicates that

competition in the rental market will get stiffer in the future if present trends continue.

"One of the things that the economic patterns demonstrated is that compared to other Midwestern regions, metropolitan Chicago is under-producing rental housing. Even in the year period the population grew by 500,000 people, we lost 52,000 rental units in the rental market," she said.

Although residents may be able to find housing if they leave CHA in the near future, Snyderman said the city and surrounding areas need new ideas to increase the number of affordable housing to accommodate a diverse renter population.

"It gives us all cause to be very strategic in our decision making," Snyderman explained. "This is not only a public housing issue. This is a rental housing issue overall. And all of the plans and decisions that we make in the housing field need to respect that we can't make decisions about public housing in isolation of the regional rental market."

Doug Dobmeyer, publisher of "Poverty Issues...Dateline Illinois," analyzed the MPC study and found the shortage of affordable

CHA families may enter the private housing market with Section 8 certificates over the next 5-10 years. The study doubts the Section 8 program will be up to the resettlement of people from CHA due to bias and pattern of housing in the area."

CHA will be implementing new ideas to encourage landlords to enter the Housing Choice Voucher Program, CHA CEO Phillip Jackson said on a recent radio talk show. On WVON Radio's "CHA TALKS," which Jackson hosts, he was asked what his administration was doing to encourage landlords to enter the Section 8 housing program?

"The Section 8 program is a difficult program," Jackson replied. "Tenants tell me, 'Landlords don't want us!' Why is that? They say, 'We live in CHA!'

"Just because you live in CHA doesn't mean people don't want you. This is the way the Section 8 program must work going forward. One bad tenant can ruin it for 25, 50 possibly up to 100 good tenants. We have to have good tenants. One bad tenant can make it bad for many others."

Jackson said he wants to implement an

uals and families making less than \$20,000 a year. Steele said the average salary of most of the residents is \$8,000 a year.

Steele said residents would be unable to afford rent in the private rental market.

"The rental market is much higher rent," said Steele. Biased views of public housing residents will make it difficult to find housing in the private market, Steele said. Steele added that she recently met with Francis Cardinal George and he also was influenced by stereotypes of public housing residents.

"Cardinal George didn't know about our community before we met with him," Steele said.

"The coalition met with him and explained to him that there are communities out here where people actually support each other.

"All the media reports that people who reside in public housing are drug dealers, teenage mothers and people who...don't work. Cardinal George then began to understand that we were families who live like anybody else - that we work, take care of our families and pay bills like everybody else."

Steele said, "That's why we are out her

**"Automatically, it is assumed that people who are residents in public housing...must be crazy to stay in public housing. If we are crazy, then why are people rushing to move to these areas?"**

**- Carol Steele, Coalition to Protect Public Housing president and Cabrini-Green resident**

housing in the metropolitan area means that low-income people are having trouble finding housing now and will continue to have trouble in the future.

"(The MPC study) shows almost 175,000 low-income people are unable to secure rental units due to costs or conditions," Dobmeyer wrote in his Nov. 17 edition.

"The research follows a recent report released by the Archdiocese of Chicago showing 130,000 people unable to afford housing. "The report also shows 122,000 people homeless during the course of the year in the metro area."

In his Nov. 22 issue, Dobmeyer disagreed with Snyderman that in the near future, housing will be available for residents moving out of CHA. Although the total number of units available to former residents with Housing Choice Vouchers may be enough to accommodate residents, discrimination against former residents will make a tight housing market even tighter.

"The study cites as many as 6,000 current

education program for residents to pay their bills on time, take care of the properties, and be good, responsible neighbors and tenants.

Jackson said better-educated tenants would attract new landlords to the Housing Choice Voucher program. But he said participation in the voucher program is a business for landlords. If landlords don't comply, they will be eliminated from the program.

"They get a steady stream of income from a Section 8 voucher. There are some bad landlords out there and they get the money and let their property go down. We are going to deal with them if they are abusing the Section 8 program," Jackson said.

"So when landlords see that there are good tenants coming out of public housing, then more would enter into the Section 8 program." Carol Steele, president of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing and a resident of Cabrini-Green, said she found the MPC study accurate in that there is a shortage of low-income housing in the Chicago area for individ-

now trying to dispel the myth about people who live in public housing. We have pictures of people's apartments showing that their homes are kept clean and decorated. Automatically, it is assumed that people who are residents in public housing are not normal and that they must be crazy to stay in public housing.

"If we are crazy, then why are people rushing to move to these areas? The only difference is that living in public housing enables a resident to get their rent adjusted if loss of employment occurs and that can't be done in the private market."

The MPC study was funded by \$800,000 from CHA, HUD and the Illinois Housing Development Authority. The research was conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute and a team they put together that include Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C., firm, and Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc., a local field research firm.

## Book Drive

by Mary C. Johns

This December, the Chicago Housing Authority and Windows of Opportunity Inc. sponsored the "Gift of Reading" holiday book drive.

The book drive was launched by CHA CEO Phillip Jackson "to promote literacy and academic achievement" and is geared towards public housing children between 3 to 18.

"In public housing, we always give our children toys," said Jackson. "We wanted to do something different this year. We wanted to give our kids something that is going to be with them longer than two or three days, that is going to help them become better people and possibly help them improve their lives so much that they won't even need public housing."

CHA sought donations of more than 100,000 new or used books for more than 33,000 youth by Dec. 20. Other individuals and organizations supported the book drive through monetary

contributions and personal time.

Those in support included Alds. Toni Preckwinkle (4), Madeline Haithcock (2) and U. S. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-7). Davis said that reading was his avenue to success and that reading could also be the avenue for hundreds and thousands of young people who live in public housing.

"People are spending too much time gleaning their information quickly from radios, television, from highly technical places where they don't really have to work for it," Davis said. "I think if you learn to read and to like it, then you can go any place in life that you want to go."

Haithcock said reading is important for young people in order to know their history.

"I don't want to be redundant but I think that our young African American children need to know their history," said Haithcock. "How can they know their history? By reading. A lot of our history is in the books."

According to Jackson, the book drive is part of the transformation of public housing.

"We're supposed to be transforming public housing and it's easy to knock down buildings and to build new buildings.

We're going to build all new houses for people but that's not going to transform people," Jackson said.

"If my people who live in public housing, if they don't start reading, the transformation is not going to happen."

Jackson also said that supplying the children with the books would help support the Chicago Public Schools.

"Our children are going to do better in the schools. Some families have three and four children so they may get 10, 12, 15 news books into that household that the kids can share. So, it's going to help CPS and CPS is very supportive of us," he said. "We're going to make sure that all of the books are placed in gift bags and distributed through the developments' management offices to the residents."

Books originally were scheduled to be delivered by Christmas but had not yet arrived in many developments at **RJ** press time.

The books were provided by various groups, including the Boys Scouts of America, Girls Scouts of America, the Chicago Boys and Girls Clubs, Meridian Entertainment, the Target Group Inc. and the Chicago Bears.

# CHA In Transition

## CHA: 5-Year Plan Good for Seniors

by Julio A. Martinez

**C**hicago Housing Authority officials said recently their \$1.5 billion, five-year plan has a lot of good news for senior citizen residents. The plan contains \$350 million to build new units and to remodel senior citizen housing, according to William Velasquez, deputy director of intergovernmental affairs.

The newly rehabbed units will be built with all conveniences and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The units will have air conditioning, Velasquez told me



**Senior Central Local Advisory Council President Martha Marshall**

Photo by Julio Martinez

during an interview at CHA headquarters.

CHA Chief Executive Officer Phillip Jackson remarked that under this plan, 24,000 units will be built or rehabbed for families and seniors. Jackson said senior citizens will have the highest priority. Jackson added that he will fight to have these units occupied by seniors only so that they can feel safer and happier in

their apartments. Jackson also reported that he had spoken with Commonwealth Edison officials so that all CHA buildings will have an electric generator so that electric power can be provided for lighting of hallways and elevators but not for apartments. Jackson reported this at a meeting that was held at 1633 W. Madison St. on Dec. 7. At the same



**CHA senior residents during a meeting on the CHA 5-year plan and Y2K at 5040 N. Kenmore this November.**

Photo by Julio Martinez

downs of elevators turned out to be expensive for two elevator mechanics. The mechanics recently were convicted of changing prices for repairs to elevators in CHA buildings. After an investigation conducted by his office with the help of the FBI, Odom said Jeffrey Havis, 31, was sentenced to 18 months in prison and to three years of supervised work and ordered to pay \$39,658 to CHA. Theodoro Pendleton was sentenced to 12

months in prison and three years probation and to pay \$19,658 to CHA. These two men will begin to serve their sentences on Jan. 4. The men were apprehended with the help of the FBI. "This sends a loud and clear message to all individuals to give a lot of thought before committing any kind of crime against the Chicago Housing Authority; that they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law because we cannot tolerate this kind of abuse against those of us

who pay taxes," said Odom.

Odom said that anyone who has knowledge of someone who is committing a criminal act on CHA property should call (800) 544-5139 or (312) 791-8500 ext. 418.

### Seniors Give Thanks

**T**he day before Thanksgiving, the City Department on Aging treated all CHA senior housing residents to a succulent meal. I personally ate more than my fill of turkey and countless other things. There were so many different plates that we were truly surprised. When it seemed we had just finished eating, CHA CEO Jackson and Willis, the new commissioner on aging, agreed to



**Senior South Local Advisory Council President Marie Billingsley.**

Photo by Julio Martinez

## Senior News

meeting, I had the chance to meet the new commissioner of the Department on Aging, Anna L. Willis, and the deputy commissioner, Carolyn Rooks Pastell. These executives will be in charge of the programs previously called the Gladys Reed senior programs.

### Caught Bilking CHA

On Dec. 6, I met CHA Inspector General Leonard Odom. Odom told me that the ups and

months in prison and three years probation and to pay \$19,658 to CHA. These two men will begin to serve their sentences on Jan. 4. The men were apprehended with the help of the FBI. "This sends a loud and clear message to all individuals to give a lot of thought before committing any kind of crime against the Chicago Housing Authority; that they will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law because we cannot tolerate this kind of abuse against those of us

do it all over again. We can tell you that sooner is better. So on Dec. 23, they stretched our belts once more. To Jackson and Willis, many senior residents expressed our warmest thanks for your most human feelings during these holidays. All the seniors in CHA wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

# CHA: el plan es muy bueno para la tercera edad

por Julio A. Martinez

**L**os funcionarios de la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) expresaron recientemente que su plan quinquenal de \$1.5 mil millones está repleto de buenas noticias para los ciudadanos de la tercera edad residentes en viviendas de la CHA. El plan contempla invertir \$350 millones en la construcción de nuevas unidades y la remodelación de las viviendas de ciudadanos de la tercera edad, según señaló William Velásquez, director adjunto para asuntos intergubernamentales.

Las unidades recién reacondicionadas tendrán todas las comodidades y cumplirán con los requisitos estipulados en la Ley sobre protección de ciudadanos incapacitados (Americans with Disabilities Act). Las unidades tendrán aire acondicionado, me informó Velásquez durante una entrevista en la sede de la CHA.

Phillip Jackson, Director Ejecutivo General de la CHA, indicó que este plan abarca la construcción o reacondicionamiento de 24,000 unidades destinadas a familias y ciudadanos de la tercera edad. Jackson afirmó que se dará la mayor prioridad a los ciudadanos de la tercera edad. Jackson agregó que él mismo luchará para que estas unidades sean ocupadas solamente por ciudadanos de la tercera edad, de tal modo que puedan sentirse más seguros y felices en sus apartamentos. Jackson también manifestó que había conversado con los funcionarios de la Commonwealth Edison para asegurarse de que todos los edificios de CHA tendrán generadores eléctricos, con lo que se les suministrará energía eléctrica para iluminar los corredores y elevadores, pero no los apartamentos.

Jackson dio esta información en una reunión celebrada en la 1633 W. Madison St. el 7 de diciembre.

En la misma reunión, tuve la oportunidad de conocer a Anna L. Willis, la nueva comisionada del Departamento de Servicios para ciudadanos de la tercera edad (Department on Aging), y a Carolyn Rooks Pastell, la comisionada adjunta. Estas dos funcionarias estarán a cargo de los programas anteriormente denominados "Programas Gladys Reed para ciudadanos de la tercera edad."

### Atrapados estafadores de la CHA

El 6 de diciembre, me reuní con Leonard Odom, Inspector General de la CHA. Odom me informó que el 'sube y baja' con los precios de reparación de los elevadores terminó resultando bien caro para dos mecánicos de elevadores que fueron condenados por manipular los precios que cobraban por su trabajo en los elevadores de los edificios de la CHA. Tras una investigación llevada a cabo por su oficina con la ayuda del FBI, Odom declaró que Jeffrey Havis, de 31 años, fue sentenciado a 18 meses de cárcel y a tres años de trabajos supervisados para el bien público y, además, se le ordenó pagar \$39,658 a la CHA.

A su vez, Theodoro Pendleton fue sentenciado a 12 meses de cárcel y a tres años de libertad condicional y se le ordenó pagar \$19,658 a la CHA. Estos dos delincuentes fueron capturados con la ayuda del FBI y comenzarán a cumplir sus sentencias el 4 de enero.

"Éste es un mensaje claro y contundente para cualquiera que pretenda cometer un delito contra la Chicago Housing Authority, porque tendrá que pensárselo muy bien ya que se le aplicará todo el peso de la ley, pues no podemos permitir esta clase de abuso contra todos nosotros que pagamos impuestos", expresó Odom.

Odom afirmó que toda persona que se dé

cuenta de que alguien está cometiendo algún delito en las propiedades de la CHA debe llamar al (800) 544-5139 o al (312) 791-8500 ext. 418.

### Ciudadanos de la tercera edad expresan su agradecimiento

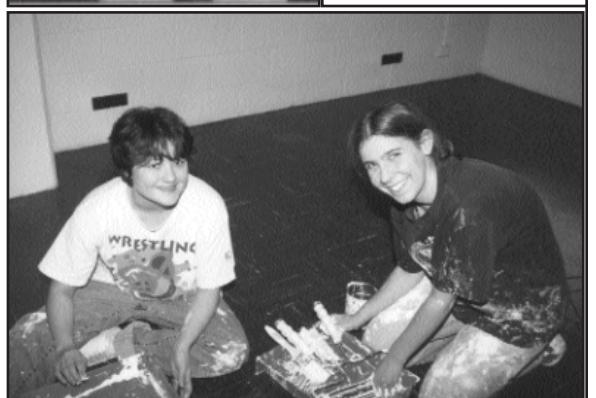
En la víspera del Día de Acción de Gracias, el Departamento de Servicios para ciudadanos de la tercera edad (Department on Aging) de la ciudad ofreció una suculenta comida para todos los ciudadanos de la tercera edad residentes en las viviendas de la CHA. Por mi parte, yo mismo comí hasta hartarme de pavo y muchas otras cosas. Verdaderamente quedamos sorprendidos con tantos platillos diferentes. Cuando parecía que habíamos terminado de comer, Jackson, el Director Ejecutivo General de la CHA, y Willis, la nueva comisionada de este departamento, prometieron ofrecer de nuevo un banquete como éste. Podemos decir que mientras más temprano, mejor. Así que el 23 de diciembre, disfrutamos de una gran comilonada una vez más. Muchos residentes de la tercera edad expresaron su más cálido agradecimiento a Jackson y Willis por su gran humanidad y hermosos sentimientos durante estos días festivos.

Todos los ciudadanos de la tercera edad residentes de la CHA les deseamos una Feliz Navidad y un Próspero Año Nuevo.



**CHA Senior resident Virginia Rucker, building president tries out the new exercise equipment that at 4640 N. Sheridan Road was purchased with funds from the CHA recycling program.**

Photo by Andre Robinson



**These Grinnell College students from Iowa volunteered their services painting CHA senior apartments at the Lake Michigan Apartments, 4227 S. Oakenwald, this November. The students earned extra credit for this undertaking.**

Photo by Arminta Clark

# CHA In Transition

## Access Report

by Thomas L  
Merriweather

In this continuing series of stories on the subject of accessibility for people with disabilities, I have covered some important issues including housing and transportation.

The Chicago Housing Authority has developed a comprehensive plan for transformation which will involve some serious measures in creating accessibility under the provisions of the 10-year-old Americans

allow me to use the fixed door-to-door service only in the winter months, from Nov. 14-March 15, when there is snow or ice on the pavement and where wheelchair-accessible busses or trains are not available for my particular trips. I addressed this issue at the September meeting of the CHA Equal Access Advisory Committee, of which I am presi-

process is said to seek the best available materials.

The City agency responsible for the maintenance of streets and sidewalks is the Department of Transportation. I have talked to officials of this department at expos sponsored by the City of Chicago or CHA. The response I have received from Transportation Department officials is that they are willing to correct deficiencies when these are known and reported. However, this process is extremely difficult because of the numerous areas of deficient and unsafe pavement.

### Access Living

On Dec. 2, I met with Elcee Redmond, Empowerment Zone team leader with Access for Living, a Chicago entity involved in addressing quality of life issues for people with disabilities. I had interviewed Access Living personnel for a previous issue of *RJ* and staff members of this organization had appeared at CHA Equal Access Advisory Committee meetings. I had contacted Access Living earlier in the year in reference to an on-site evaluation of my senior housing unit per accessibility compliance.

Elcee Redmond has been with Access Living for a period of one year and is one of the three

individuals with other mobility impairments, visual impairments (blind) and hearing impairments (deaf). The groups are organized to address specific issues of disabilities as defined by ADA mandates.

The groups have made accessible housing a key issue and have said that the CHA plan for transformation must address accessibility with more diligence than has been demonstrated in the past. Previous accessibility efforts have fallen short of practical and desired expectations, Redmond said.

The groups also have focused on education for children with disabilities in the public schools and employment for disabled individuals, especially younger, disabled adults. Another recent, prominent issue has been discrimination against disabled individuals in neighborhood services such as grocery stores and other shops. Access Living has conducted outreach efforts to businesses to help educate these entities to become ADA compliant.

But accessible housing remains the most important issue with Access Living. With CHA, it would appear that there is a lack of sensitivity or indifference among those with the responsibility of maintaining ADA standards. I reside in a CHA senior

chair users and cabinets are too high or too low for reasonable access.

Redmond also agreed that the Regional Transportation Authority's new recertification procedures are unrealistic because of the sad state of Chicago's streets and sidewalks as well as the frequent instances of busses operating on erratic schedules and the fact that many wheelchair lifts on busses are broken.

Redmond noted that stores and other shops are often lacking in reasonable accommodations for those of us in wheelchairs. Redmond said that often, simple remedies such as portable ramps or a bell system to alert stores and business personnel when a wheelchair-user requires some assistance to enter the establishment can be very helpful in solving access needs.

Redmond also stressed that Braille should be mandatory for elevator controls and for other applications to aid the visually impaired in any new or rehabilitated construction. He added that doorways should be widened, lighting should be improved and other access steps should be diligently pursued.

It is important, he said, that uncompromised attention be given to all areas of establishing access to all people with disabilities and this should be given priority in all activity relating to any plan for transformation – in CHA and otherwise.

We discussed other important areas to be addressed including modifications in the infrastructure to allow reasonable access as well as more care in the construction of streets and sidewalks, available health care facilities and consistent measures appropriate to good health care. People with disabilities should feel that the opportunities exist for those special living needs to be met in a satisfying and consistent manner.



**Edward Croft, building president of 2720 N. Sheffield, a CHA senior building, assisted in the sweeping out of all unwelcomed guests from his building this past August.**

Photo by Anita Baker

with Disabilities Act (ADA) in areas where conditions have been severely lacking or grossly inadequate.

Public hearings on the CHA plan were conducted at various locations in Chicago. I attended the Central region hearing at the Duncan YMCA, 1001 W. Roosevelt Road on Nov. 3 and the final citywide public hearing at McCormick Place on Nov. 16.

At the Central region hearing, I presented two items in testimony, including the question of accessibility, since this has been a very sensitive issue. I felt the draft plan did not always make clear the implementation of accessibility efforts.

### Transportation

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), the certifying agency for all of us who must use door-to-door service provided by Chicago Transit Authority Paratransit Operations, has developed some new procedures. The RTA will be purging the rolls of individuals who currently use this service if such clients are deemed able to use fixed route busses and rapid transit trains.

My new recertification, which became effective on Nov. 11, will

dent, and in a letter to RTA following a telephone conversation with a certifying officer on Nov. 11.

**Access Living and other groups have said the CHA plan for transformation must address accessibility with more diligence than has been demonstrated in the past.**

From the beginning of my original certification in the fall of 1993, I have had no problem per my ability to use the CTA/RTA fixed route system. I stated this in a letter to then-CTA President Robert Belcaster when CTA began to strongly promote the use of its fixed system in 1994-1995. My contention has always been that use of the fixed system was difficult because of the pitiful state of many streets and sidewalks in Chicago, with crumbling or eroded pavement and missing or inadequate curb cuts to enable those of us in wheelchairs to cross the street at intersections.

This has been an ongoing problem in our city because of the use of inferior paving materials, even though the bidding

team leaders who are department heads.

Redmond has a staff of five. The three Empowerment Zone areas are the South Side communities of Oakland, Grand Boulevard, and Back of the Yards; the West Side communities of West Garfield, North Lawndale, South Lawndale and Austin; and the communities of Pilsen and Little Village.

Of these Empowerment Zone teams, the South Side ABLE team organizes for transportation, accessible housing, personal services and employment; the West Side has Disabled Americans Working Now (DAWN); and Pilsen and Little Village have Leaders in Action. These three groups are composed of people with disabilities including wheelchair users, indi-

building with 218 units, none of which meets ADA accessibility guidelines. All sinks, counter tops and stoves are too high for wheel-



**CHA CEO Phillip Jackson (front) with CHA Senior Programs Director Donna Dixon (from left), Ald. Vi Daley (43), Edward Croft, Senior North LAC President Shirley Hammond and Chicago Police Commander Harvey Radney discuss security issues in CHA senior buildings Aug. 15.**

Photo by Anita Baker

**by Cenabeth  
Cross**

**CHA under Chicago  
Police**

I investigated the impact of the dissolution of the CHA Police Department and the shift of responsibility for security in CHA developments to the Chicago Police Department. I started my investigation at Ogden Courts, where I reside. I work during the day but I noticed the Chicago Police on the premises twice after I arrived home one day. Both times I saw CPD officers, they seemed to be on raids. I watched as they searched the garbage bins. Both times they left without anyone being arrested. The boys in Ogden Courts hang out in the lobby. They stand on each landing between floors as lookouts. This is very scary for me because the elevator is usually broken and I have to walk up 5 floors. Familiar faces disappear sometimes but they are replaced by others. They stand in the lobby asking everyone who comes in if they want "anything" - drugs. The ones who don't know me ask me too.

A couple of times, I had to be cleared by some of the ones who do know me before I could leave the premises. They put crowbars in the door handles to keep the police from entering. We don't have vertical patrols or any other type of police presence on a daily basis. I have never had the need to call them. I go into my apartment and stay there.

I interviewed the manager of our building, who told me that she sees the police when she's there and that she feels safer. I interviewed her on Dec. 9, the same day the doors were being taken off the entrances to allow police access to the building at any time. She said they had planned to lock up the back stairs but CHA officials said locking the back stairs would be a fire code violation. There are still no vertical patrols in Ogden Courts.

I also interviewed Anthony Tate, who works at the only store in our area, the New Hope Food Store, 1330 S. Washtenaw Ave. Tate has worked there since before I came to Ogden Courts 3

# Stop the Violence

years ago. Tate said the police often don't respond to their calls and even if they do, their response comes very slowly. He said the people who used to live in the now-closed Lawndale Complex come back to hang out at Ogden Courts. Some of them sleep in cars parked outside of the store all night. Once when Tate was outside sweeping, he said a police officer called him a liar and harassed him when he tried to explain that he worked there.

He said police visibility is generally very poor and people often come in, steal and run through the door.

I noticed that the store's new owners had put in an iron fence between one-half of the

store, which forces everyone to pass by the counter before they exit. Tate said, "They (the police) think everyone is a drug addict or a dealer if they live in this area. People have been getting out of their cars being searched. Women, too. Yes, we know this is an area where drugs are sold but not everyone is in drugs and I think

it's really wrong."

On Dec. 14, I went to Stateway Gardens. I came into the building where the Local Advisory Council office was located and some of drug dealers were standing around in each door where the office was located. The dealers asked me what they could sell me, "smoke or rocks." I asked them where the office was.

They pointed me to a door just behind them. I thanked them and moved out fast. I didn't see a police officer anywhere. I was able to talk on the phone and find out that LAC President Francine Washington would be at 243 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> St. at the senior citizens building. I caught up with her and conducted the following interview:

**RJ:** "Are there any Chicago Police currently stationed in Stateway?"

**FW:** "We have

always had Chicago Police. Police have always been stationed at 3937 (S. State St.). We have and continue to work with Sgt. Giles."

**RJ:** "Have there been any arrests made in Stateway?"

**FW:** "Yes. For drugs. How many, I don't know."

**RJ:** "Are there visible signs of improvement in security since Chicago Police have been there?"

**FW:** "No."

**RJ:** "Are the officers sta-

problem solve. We're not in every CHA but we are physically in Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor and Altgeld Gardens. We're planning to be in the Ida B. Wells and the Henry Horner Homes soon."

While there has been an increase in arrests, Tolliver didn't have any numbers.

"Arrests have been at every development, especially Dearborn," Tolliver said.

Tolliver said he was unable to discuss from where funding to

cover the added security would come.

"The money problems are handled above my level," Tolliver said. "We will be in the family and senior buildings, not physically but responding to

the calls for service. There will be a sergeant and 8 men at each site. There are 5 site areas where there will be 115 per site. We have some in place now and tenant officers. We want them to understand what the need is and get the tenants involved," Tolliver continued.

## Help for Addiction

**"We're attempting to get the residents to become aware of the CAPS (Community Alternative Policing Strategies) program and teach residents to strategize and problem solve."**

**-Chicago Police Commander Michael Tolliver**

the Boy Scouts. Sgt. Giles does a lot of good things. We only have 5 officers and that's not enough. If CAPS (Community Alternative Policing Strategies) were broken down, then we would need 3 for Stateway.

"The police we have, they're a joke. They come in the building with their guns out like they're afraid. If the guns aren't out, they have their hands on them and holsters unbuckled. Sometimes I'm afraid I may get shot."

I interviewed Chicago Police Commander Michael Tolliver at 770 E. 38<sup>th</sup> St. on the overall strategy of the takeover and how much progress had been made to date. His reply was that the strategy is to have a "high visibility of police officers who will be able to interact with management, the building president and the LACs. "We're attempting to get the residents to become aware of the CAPS (Community Alternative Policing Strategies) program and teach residents to strategize and

**S**tarting in July, I checked out this group that helps people get over their addictions. Sylvester Bailey works in the laundromat next door to where I work. We were comparing notes on how we got our jobs. I got mine through the Earnfare program and he got help from the Millati Islami group.

Millati Islami goes into the prisons and helps anyone who wants help with their addictions, regardless of race, gender or religion. Bailey explained that they loaned him money for shelter and got him the job in the Black-owned laundromat.

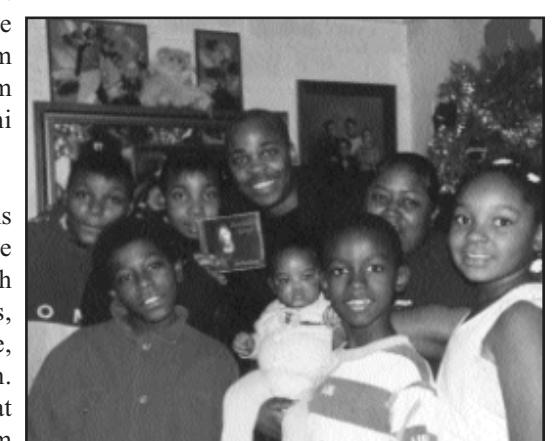
Bailey will have been there two years in April. His personal

sponsor is Mikal Bilal, who is the state chairperson and director of the Chicago chapter of Millati Islami.

"I never want to go back to the old ways again," Bailey said. Bailey was in prison in Danville, Ill., when the group came to his attention. The group travels all over to reach the people. They invited me to go on some of the meetings.

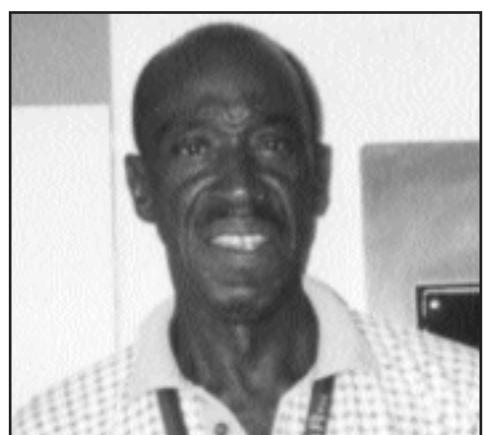
Millati Islami is a fellowship of men and women who have joined together on the "path of peace" to share their experiences, strengths and hopes while recovering from active addictions to mind- and mood-altering drugs. They look to God to guide them while recovering. They strive to become rightly-guided Muslims. Members of Millati Islami feel they can accomplish sobriety, success and peace of mind through their organization. They seek to integrate the treatment requirements of both Islam and the 12-step approach to recovery into a simultaneous program. They borrowed the idea from Narcotics and Alcoholics Anonymous programs. Regardless of the substance, they help and pray for their members. The group meets at a local YWCA on Thursday nights and Saturday afternoons. The members tell their stories, have refreshments, and hold prayer services afterwards. Most of the members meet at the Apostolic Church, 6300 S. Kenwood Ave., on Wednesdays to listen to Bishop Arthur Brazier preach.

When delivering **RJ** last month, I was approached by Rosemary Howell, who wanted to know if the newspaper had an agent who could help her. She had lost her home and job and she had a habit she wanted to kick. I gave her my work number and she called me on Nov. 10. I went next door, got the number from Bailey, and referred her to Millati Islami's West Side office under the leadership of Otis McCoy. I haven't heard from her again. Maybe no news is good news.



**Former "Public Announcement" group member Euclid Gray with CHA youths at the Madden Park housing development this November.**

**Photo by Mary C. Johns**



**Sylvester Bailey.**

**Photo by Cenabeth Cross**

# ABLA: The Early Years [1940-1960]

by Karen Owens

1938 was the year when the first brick was laid to start the beginning of the ABLA Homes. ABLA was once a racially mixed community with some buildings dating back to the 1800s.

Residents have worked within as well as outside our community in many businesses; from grocery stores to beauty salons before and after the development was built. Some of the oldest public schools were being attended when the first brick was laid: Joseph Medill, Thomas Jefferson and John Rogers. These schools were already educating future doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians and other successful careers.

The residents soon organized tenant councils to express their concerns and needs to management. Social programs that helped residents were abundant, as well as various places of worships.

The following story, which chronicles the early years of ABLA, shows that many residents were proud to call ABLA home.

## The Early Years

"I can finally take a bath every day with plenty of hot water. A place where my children can have more space to play. No more sharing the kitchen area with 7 or 8 families. I like the fact that all the units are centrally located to all the services (we) families need."

These were just some of the many sentiments expressed by some residents who moved into public housing from blighted, overcrowded, demolished areas.

ABLA consists of the Jane Addams Homes – the first public housing development in Chicago built in 1938 – Robert Brooks Homes (built in 1943), Loomis Courts (city/state housing built in 1953), and Grace Abbott Homes (built in 1955). The Robert Brooks Extension was built in 1961 and in 1963, the William Jones senior housing development was built.

Residents who moved here were appreciative to have safe, decent and sanitary surroundings to raise their families.



An aerial view of Grace Abbott Rowhouses with gardens.

Photo by Karen Owens

## Social Programs

Chicago Housing Authority monthly reports from the time show that the agency had a lot of programs aimed at helping the new dwellers adjust. CHA, along with various

community and social services, welcomed the new residents with open arms. Each unit in the development had its own Tenant Council (Jane Addams and Robert Brooks were first) who would get together to discuss common interests and services.

A 1940s gardening program which awarded prizes sponsored by the *Chicago Defender* and the Chicago Urban League. Another group promoted camping for youths and families outside Chicago. The Chicago Park District and the Brooks Tenant Council established recreational programs for youths.

A newspaper called the *Community Journal* was published by both councils. Both councils also raised funds for Halloween and Christmas parties for area residents. There were also adult education classes, junior tenant councils for youths, and Boy and Girl Scout troops manned by volunteers from tenant councils at Addams and Brooks. The Brooks Homes had its own Drum and Bugle Corps and Majorettes, which a member of the council operated.

The Infant Welfare Society set up play school for 3-6-year-olds at Jane Addams. Brooks' Tenants Council organized its residents to be screened for tuberculosis.

In the 1950s, senior residents in Jane Addams had the "Golden Agers Club" for the active seniors. The Old Town Boys and Girls Club opened an outpost at Jane Addams for the community. Youth councils held parent appreciation days. The first district health center opened within the development.

CHA had a Good Neighbor program in all developments. The agency honored tenants with one month's free rent by being a model tenant. Several ABLA residents won this honor.

In the '60s, the National Home Fashion League opened a Home Arts Center with classes and workshops for residents.

During this time, management along with other service agencies honored resident leaders with a luncheon. Resident leaders planned summer programs for residents such as family picnics, jazz concerts and festivals and tennis and camera clubs.

Even the custodial staff was honored individually for well-kept areas.

## Residents Remember

Most of the past and present residents that I interviewed were tenant council members. They were generally pleased with the neighborly atmosphere that exists at ABLA.

Joan Calhoun, a former resident of Brooks Extension, and Tyree Brewer, a former resident of Grace Abbott Homes, had strong memories about their pasts at ABLA. Calhoun remembers that the tenant council sponsored family skating parties, talent shows and basketball games between the three buildings in her council.

Brewer talked about his youthful year at Grace Abbott when he was an active member at Beacon House, a social service agency that offered various programs to community youth. Brewer said his aunt was the building president.

In 1951, Jessie M. Thomas was part of the first family to move into the Grace Abbott row houses. Thomas' late father raised nine successful children. Thomas was very much involved in her community. She was area president, former president of Medill's PTA and a member of the board of directors of the now defunct Beacon House. She loves her area and the convenience of the location.

"Great neighbors always helping neighbors" is the way one resident describes her years at ABLA from 1955-1975. She volunteered with the advisory council and the Girl Scouts and was employed at school.

Ella Crenshaw and her late husband, Johnny Crenshaw, became Grace Abbott residents in 1956. The parents of 10 children, they too were active in programs for youth.

"My years here have been positive. Management has always been responsive to any services that were needed," Crenshaw said.

"Interns and their families from the nearby hospitals lived in the building where we resided" said one long-time resident.

"The Grace Abbott high rise was racially mixed. Everyone got along, making it a very neighborly environ-



Old home of Shiloah Baptist Church, one of the many churches located near ABLA.

Photo by Karen Owens

ment."

This resident remembers that his mother was once building president. In his younger days, he took part in a number of sports.

Financial hardship brought another resident, a mother of three small children, to the Grace Abbott high rises in 1956. Active in the PTA, she also remembers the beautiful gardens around the development.

She said, "Children would play - color made no difference - while parents on benches looked on. For entertainment, my family and I would attend movies at the now closed Broadway Strand and the Joy," which were located near ABLA.

"The Tenant Councils kept residents involved and knowledgeable," recalled a Robert Brooks resident since the '60s. The councils, along with CHA, would have block parties by individual sections. Most of her family - aunts, uncles and cousins - lived throughout the development.

This resident also participated in arts and crafts, music and drama programs as well as talent shows at Fosco Park and Jane Addams Community Center.

She summed up her feelings about ABLA in those days as "safe," a place where residents could feel secure enough to leave doors open at night.

## Businesses

Economic stability is a way in which neighborhoods survive. ABLA was home to many businesses. Some were established before ABLA. One of the oldest that comes to mind is Centennial Laundry and Dry Cleaners, now Circle Center Cleaners, which has been in existence for more than 70 years.

These businesses have hired generations of families, some of whom live in the community. Weiners Department Store provided a much-needed service for ABLA residents by hiring them to work. "I could always depend on Weiners for all my children's clothing attire," said one resident.

Heard's Supermarket, Biggs & Biggs Funeral Homes, H&H Bar-B-Que House, Father and Sons, Mark IV Barber Shop and Estella's Beauty Shop were just some of the African American-owned businesses in the ABLA community.

## Places of Worship

Some of the churches around ABLA have been in existence since the 1800s, when the community contained many different ethnic groups. Still in existence are for residents are: Zion Hill Baptist Church, Holy Family Catholic Church, First Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bethel Mennonite Church and St. Stephen's Baptist Church.

A few others that serviced residents but are now closed are St. Joseph Catholic Church, Tercentenary AME Church and Shiloah Baptist Church, which is closed but still operating on the South Side. At least one former ABLA resident still continues to call Shiloah home.

## Conclusion

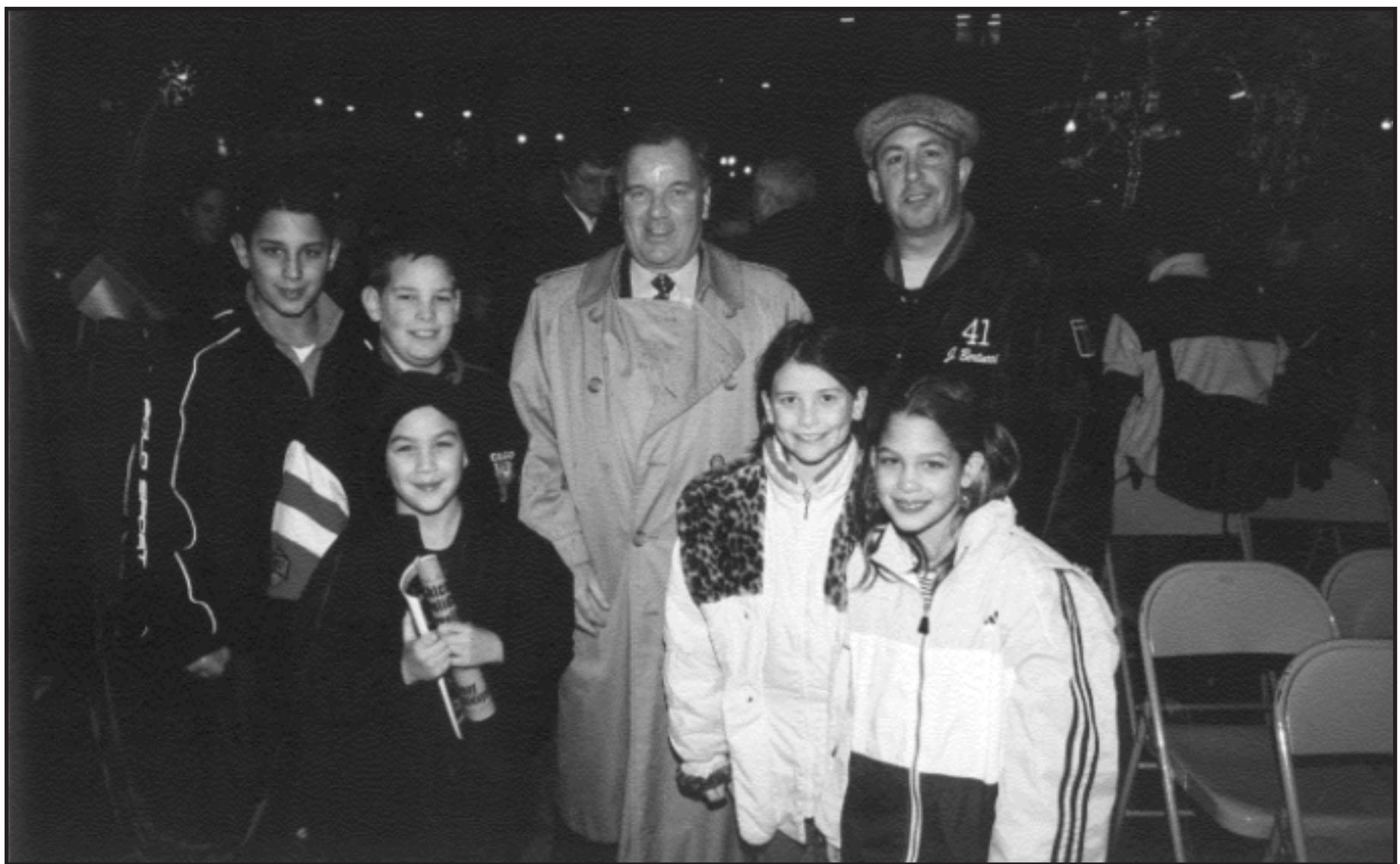
Many residents over the years have made ABLA what it is today, a viable community with a rich history.

(This article was produced in association with Dr. Sudhir Venkatesh of Columbia University)

# *Seasons' Greetings*

*Have  
A Safe and Happy New Year!!!*

To All CHA Residents and Staff



From Mayor Richard M. Daley

and

the City of Chicago





# Youth Issues



## The Long Walk Home

by Alicia DeBerry

Every day when I come home from school, I am always blocked from walking up the stairs. This is because the drug pushers are in the stairwell selling drugs to those who are addicted to them. If there is a large crowd, I have to wait until it clears before I can walk up the stairs to my apartment on the second floor.

You maybe are thinking, "If the stairs are crowded, why don't you take the elevator?"

I don't take the elevator because most of the time it is stuck because children play on it or it does not work at all. I am afraid that if I were to get on, I could get stuck.

I am very claustrophobic. When I am in a small space for too long, I just may have a nervous breakdown.

I get very angry with the drug dealers. Some of them I grew up with and went to school with. I feel that they could have done something better with their lives. I feel very sorry for the drug addicts because some of them look very sick and others I knew before they were addicts. It makes me sad to see them every day slowly dying from the drugs. I feel as if the crimes that happen are a result of the drug dealers and addicts. Every other day, I see a bulletin posted by the elevator advertising a funeral for someone who lives in one of the buildings. Sometimes I know the person on the page.

The drug addicts will rob and kill to

get money for their fix and the drug dealers will kill and maim to protect their territory from being invaded by another drug dealer from another building. There are some people who will be using wheelchairs for life because of being attacked by a drug addict or because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time while a shoot-out among drug dealers occurred.

My mother shares many of my concerns about security. I asked her if she see drugs sold openly in our development.

She said, "Yes. Drugs are being sold openly in the development because every time I walk in the building with a male acquaintance, the drug dealers will try to frisk him to see if he has any weapons."

I asked her if she believes that the drugs sold openly in front of our development are due to a lack of police patrols and security. She said, "Yes, I do. It is because we don't have any police patrols at all in the building."

My mother does not feel safe in our development. She said, "I have to watch my back wherever I go."

My family wants to move and so do I because of this security concern. My mother says that she would love to relocate. My mother has tried to move numerous times but because she does not have a secure job and is having trouble finding one, we have to stay.

"I would love to relocate but due to economic times, since I have not found a steady job, I have to keep living here," she said.

The rent in public housing is subsidized according to your income. This is a blessing for us because if we did not have that, we would be homeless.

My mother said, "I need the rent

subsidy. I can't afford to live anywhere else."

The apartments in public housing are in good working order. We have heat, running water, gas and electricity. When there is a problem, it can be fixed by calling maintenance.

"If we were to move now, we would not know how to afford gas, heat, water or light bills," my mother explained.

The only reason to leave is security. If we are not financially capable or stable to do this, public housing is our only way for shelter.

Although I do not feel safe, I still have to go to and from the apartment. I



CHA youth Santana Henderson (center) recently won first-place in a logo design contest for CHA's new recycling program. Henderson poses with RJ Editor-in-Chief Ethan Michaeli, Waste Management's Dan McDonald, the Resource Center's Ken Dunn, City Environment Department official Amy Dahl and CHA CEO Phillip Jackson

will continue to deal with cluttered halls, drug dealers and drug addicts to the best of my ability. I will also pray for myself and the drug dealers and addicts, hoping that I will not be hurt and that they will stop hurting themselves.

My advice to those who don't have outstanding situations where they have to live in the development is that they should relocate, since there is no protection.

Every time you go out, you are taking a chance on your life. Although the apartments are well established, the environment can be unsafe and even hostile.

had a bad day and takes it out on us."

What about those long hours? What person in their right mind would want to work long hours and not have time to have fun and carry on a lively social life?

"I can't have a social life because I work mornings to night on the weekend and have only about two hours to myself. When I did work on weekdays, it was hard to balance school," said Michelle Molina, 17, a pizzeria worker.

Another issue is that these jobs are boring. After-school jobs often require you to do mindless work which does not allow younger people to express their full potential and bring life and energy into their workplace. Have you ever seen a straight "A" student who is a future doctor sweeping floors at a convenience store? It's one of those thoughts that make you go "hmm."

Michelle Molina added, "My job is only exciting because it is hectic. They don't use my mind capacity to its fullest. I'm a cashier. I take care of phone deliveries, so it's pretty mindless."

So, what's the hurry? Who knows? Do we all really have to start somewhere?

## A Kwanzaa Rap

by Kareem Lewis

Seven days of celebration

Throughout the nation

A time of rejoicing and jubilation

Let's stop the hatred, this is a time of reaffirmation and rededication.

This isn't a time for separation

But a time to form seven symbols that must be adorned.

A unity cup used to toast our ancestors long ago born.

A straw mat, candle holder, fruit and ears of corn. So, we pray to heal the hearts that have been scorn. This represents our young and those not yet born. Seven candles whose colors are black, red and green

which shows we all one team

but searching for more than one dream.

Which reflect and reinforce the bond between us as a people struggling, with a yearn to be free. And last the just rewards zawadi (zawadi).

Gifts with purpose we give to enrich our young Teach them right from wrong And reward them for the important works they have done.

Always a book to reflect our priority of education. and heritage symbol for our children's edification. Letting them know that we are seeds of this nation. Guided by the seven symbols which lead us through the New Year's

Positive values to which we must all adhere. The highest values which can be ascribed to mankind.

It's so divine which buffers our soul and strengthens our minds.

Self determination and unity, Collective work and responsibility.

Cooperative economics, purpose and creativity. And the FAITH which sustains Imani (Imani).

In essence, Kwanzaa is to me

Seven days of festivity

With seven values to develop our spirituality

Embodying in seven symbols of tradition and history.

## Teenage Employment

by Crystal Medina

What is the hurry to grow up so fast? Teenagers these days are in such a hurry to get a job and for what? To get a pocket half full of money and still be unsatisfied?

The truth is, work is definitely not all it's cracked up to be - unless you truly need the money. Most teens work at fast food joints or in retail. If they are really lucky, they have gotten hooked up with something better, such as an office job. Let's not even mention telemarketing.

So, if they were so excited in the beginning, why do they end up hating it at the end? Would it be the low pay and rude bosses that think they are so above them? Or how about dealing with crabby customers.

Ruby Ortiz, 17, a cashier at Treasure Island, said, "I don't like the money or the customers because they are rude and sometimes the managers are mean because he/she has

## Security at Wentworth Gardens by Antonio Arnold

On Aug. 26, 1999, Renee Roberts went to work. Her kids - Antonio, Frankie and Johnny - were upstairs asleep. Her oldest son, Antonio, heard the dog barking and called her at work between 7:30 am and 8:15 am. Antonio asked her if she moved the radio and VCR. She said, "No." He said, "It's not here." She said, "I'll be home in a minute." When she got home, she asked, "What happened? Was there someone in the house when you woke up?"

Antonio said that he just heard the dog barking by the stairs and then came downstairs. The front door was open and the radio and VCR were gone.

Roberts picked up the phone and called the police and reported that there had been a break-in at their house. The police said that they were on their way. They came and wrote a police report and looked at the lock, which was broken.

It made Roberts feel sad that the robbers invaded her privacy: "That someone can come

in your house and take what they want made me feel scared because my kids were at home. If they woke up and went downstairs, they could have gotten killed."

On the same day, there were four other break-ins and a baby got killed. Roberts felt that CHA made a bad choice by taking out the CHA Police: "Yes, it makes a difference. The four break-ins could have been prevented." I interviewed some young residents of Wentworth Gardens to see how they felt about security in a neighborhood which a lot of them call "Murder Town." Vail, 15, said drugs were sold while CHA Police were there and are being sold after they've left. "What was going on when the CHA Police was there is the same thing going on now," he said. But Vail said he feels less safe since the CHA police left: "There is no one there to protect me. I might get hurt. It's not enough security. We need more." Tyrese, 15, said the CHA

Police didn't do anything for him. I asked him if it makes any difference that they took out CHA Police?

"No, they weren't doing nothing anyway," he said.

Tyrese doesn't feel safe with the security guards in Wentworth Gardens:

"They don't have any guns and they run when something happens."

Joshua, 14, said that his house got broken into when he was a "shorty" (about 6-7 years old) and it still affects him now. When I was talking to him, he felt sad about what happened.

"I was real little," he said. "I can't remember what happened. Momma and Father were mad. Father knew who did it and the person wouldn't tell him who it was."

Joshua said it doesn't matter that CHA took CHA Police out of the neighborhood. "I don't care. I am going to be moving within a year anyway."

He doesn't have strong feel-

ings about the security guards in Wentworth Gardens.

"I don't care," he said. "I barely see them around. They don't do anything. Most of them are old."

Jerome, 15, thinks that it does make a difference that the CHA Police were taken out of the neighborhood. "CHA Police made sure children were in school, drugs slowed down for a minute, less violence. CHA Police didn't let people hang on corners," he said.

Jerome felt safe with CHA Police in the neighborhood. Jerome said he didn't have to worry about someone trying to bother him while going to the store.

"I felt safe when CHA Police was in the neighborhood," he said.

But Jerome's mother didn't feel safe with the security. She said, "I moved into a new environment because I didn't feel safe with security they provided."

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Michael Brown, Jerry Thomas

### Participants

Antonio Arnold, Delano Braboy, Shanika Brown, Jeremy Collins, Tiffany Cook, Tiffany Davenport, Gerald Day, Alicia DeBerry, Earnisha Edmond, Monica Emmons, Duval Harden, Carly Hedges, Tabkisha Hodge, Aysa Jenkins, Nature Lawrence, Kareem Lewis, James Lockabrt, Crystal Medina, Crystal Mullen, Corey Nunn, Ramsey Pabrule, Teresa Prince, Raynard Seymore, Chiquita Taylor, Kamari Thompson, Cortez Tiner, Tequelle Tolston, Tabanni Walls, Jerome Woodridge, Quintana



Members of the CHA Youth Choir pose with CHA staff members, former Israeli Chief of Staff Eitan Haber and current Midwest Counsel General Tsipora Rimon during the Oct. 28 remembrance ceremony for former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Photo courtesy of Bridget Montgomery

R E S I D E N T S ,

# J o u r n a l



A d v e r t i s e

In Our February

# Welfare to Work: People In Transition

## CHAPD:

# From Work to Welfare?

by Wateka Kleinpeter

The dissolution of the Chicago Housing Authority Police force has impacted a lot of people: residents, CHA managers and staff, and, of course, the officers themselves.

The officers worked with residents, knew the people, knew the trouble-makers and the trouble areas. Many officers said it took them a while to learn about CHA neighborhoods and predicted it will take CPD time to develop a rapport with management staff and residents.

Some of the CHA officers may end up back on the streets as Chicago Police officers. Other former officers will join suburban police forces or specialized security units in the Park District, the airports and some colleges and universities.

If not, will those officers who are not prepared end up asking for assistance such as Food Stamps?

The former officers of the Chicago Housing Authority Police Department were eliminated in October. Included with the officers are other employees who were cut due to the downsizing of the "New CHA," which is going to be "meaner and trimmer," said CHA CEO Phillip Jackson on several occasions.

Jackson held a press conference on Sept. 29 to announce the year 2000 budget and the CHA Plan for Transformation of Public Housing. He announced that 9 high-rise buildings in Robert Taylor and 2 in Rockwell are slated to be torn down. He said that CHA's main focus would now be on housing management: More money would be spent on buildings, grounds and infrastructure. Jackson also announced that most of CHA's properties would be privately managed, administrative costs would

be cut and many employees would be cut by the end of 2000.

Included in the budget was the CHAPD. When asked repeatedly by the news media about the CHAPD, Jackson replied that they were in the 2000 budget. However, CHAPD was eliminated two weeks later and the officers given two weeks notice. Many of the 270 police officers did not show up for work after receiving the news of the dissolution of the 10-year-old police force. They were officially relieved of their duties.

The responsibility for the safety of over 100,000 public housing residents was taken over by the Chicago Police Department.

Besides being unemployed, the former officers have several issues that bother them about the dissolution of the CHAPD. One officer said that there are still outstanding court cases that he no longer will worry about.

"Why bother?" he said.

"It was no big surprise that our department was going to change, one way or the other," said a former officer for 10 years.

"But it was the way they did it. Our contract was up in December. We could have been told that our contract was not going to be extended and we would have had a few months to work and be looking at the same time."

One officer of five years said that while Mayor Richard M. Daley had criticized the department in the past, he should have realized that CHAPD was created because of a need. The officer said the Chicago Police did rarely went into many high-rise structures in CHA. The wrongdoers saw them coming and hid until they left.

He said, "We patrolled the buildings. We went farther than the lobbies."

One former officer of seven years disagreed with media portraits of the CHAPD officers, which he said painted many of them as "hoodlums and thugs." He said that he has two college degrees and no criminal background. He said that it was "cold-hearted for this lay-off to take place this time of year. Also CHA has not given us our severance packages yet" as of early November.

Another officer of seven years said that he was making a salary of \$47,000 and if he went to Riverdale or some of the suburban police districts which are now hiring, he would start off making about \$33,000.

Many former CHAPD officers have obtained information about qualifying for the Chicago Police Department exam coming up in January as well as other law enforcement opportunities, including the Cook County Sheriff's Department.

According to CHA sources, 140 of its former police officers have requested waivers to take the Chicago Police Department exam in January.

CHA hired Challenger, Gray and Christmas, an out-placement firm, to help the former police officers and employees fired due to the downsizing of CHA.

CHA CEO Jackson said several times that although CHA is cutting hundreds of employees, the agency is making efforts to find these former workers new jobs. According to the 2000 budget, the total reduction in CHA full-time employees will be over 1,600 people by June.

According to Jackson, all CHA properties will be privately managed. Currently, 60 percent of CHA developments are privately managed. The private management firms will be encouraged to hire current maintenance and other staff people who currently work for CHA at various properties.

Will the large number of people being laid off from CHA and large corporations have an effect on the job market or the unemployment rate?

The job market is good right now but it might take a down turn in the next century. There are a large number of

people who have recently become unemployed. Chances are many of them will get jobs soon or have prepared for financial emergencies by having savings or investments they can fall back on.

CHA CEO Jackson said Challenger, Gray and Christmas was hired because of their reputation for finding work for individuals who lose their jobs under these circumstances.

John Challenger, CEO of Challenger, Gray and Christmas, said, "We are not an employment agency but we are a national company that only works with people who lose their jobs, through no fault of their own, due to downsizing, corporate takeovers and mergers and acquisitions."

There are two centers where the former employees can come in and receive Challenger, Gray and Christmas' services: the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center at 4859 S. Wabash Ave. and the CHA offices at 833 W. 115<sup>th</sup> St.

Challenger said his firm has offices in several cities in the United States and Canada. On a visit to either the Hayes Center or 115<sup>th</sup> Street Center, former employees can have an existing resume evaluated or compose a new one. They have access to the Internet, daily newspapers, use of a phone and a fax machine to help in their search to regain employment. They also have mock interviews and other helpful suggestions that, according to Challenger, may give a job seeker that "competitive edge." Challenger said they know what the current job market is looking for. They encourage former employees to actively search for a job even during the holidays. He also said that they know how frustrated some individuals get when they first become unemployed.

It is very important that former employees put forth a huge effort, spending almost as much time looking for work as you did on the job, Challenger said.

He added that for now, the booming jobs are computer related. Anything in new technology such as Internet

**According to CHA sources, 140 of its former police officers have requested waivers to take the Chicago Police Department exam in January.**

use and also health care is on the rise as our population continues to grow. He said that it is always a good idea for anyone to take classes to upgrade their skills.

Challenger, Gray and Christmas held a job fair also where many companies as well as colleges and universities came with information about jobs and furthering their education.

Challenger said that his firm does nothing but out-placement and they have been in business since the 1960s. According to him, 50 percent of the former officers have been to one of the centers but only about 30 percent of the other ex-employees have come in for help so far.

CHA is not the only company currently laying off large numbers of workers. In fact, during 1999, a large number of corporate mergers took place. Large corporations such as First Chicago-NBD Bank (now Bank One) and Ameritech and TCI Cable merged, were bought out or otherwise changed ownership. These large corporate marriages often result in the loss of many jobs because of duplication. The newest merger between GD Searle and Pharmacia Upjohn has 3,500 of Searle's Skokie-based employees uncertain about their future.

The elimination of large numbers of positions means more people will be competing for the same jobs. The former CHA Police officers and employees may have to choose another occupation using other skills they already possess or they may have to get more education to change careers. If all else fails, where can a former police officer work?



These two former Chicago Housing Authority Police Officers attended the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development public hearing at St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal Church on Oct. 30.

Photo by Arminta Clark

# Altgeld Gardens Report

by Sharon Forinzy

Hello this is Sharon again I am still waiting on old and good news. Please give me information on what's going on in Altgeld Gardens. Please contact me by pager (773) 201-7678 or at the school number (773) 535-5223.

## Dissolution of CHAPD

I asked residents of Altgeld Gardens what they thought of the dissolution of the CHA Police Force:

"We need them. They know what the problems we have are and there has been a difference since they have been gone." - Martha Kindred

"(Bringing in the CHAPD) was one of the best things that they (CHA) did for us and it was the worst thing they did when they took it away. People have been getting shot more. (The CHAPD) helped me a whole lot. Also, the CHAPD knew the residents in the community and they were sure to walk the neighborhood." - Betty Stokes

"Changes have come to the Altgeld community since the police department has been taken out of the community. You can't walk down the street or stand in front of your door." - Yolanda Johnson

"I think it wasn't fair in the community. The CHAPD would stay in front of the school," said D. Jackson, the principal of Aldridge Elementary School. Now, when shooting occurs, Jackson said, "The kids have to get on the floor. You have to wait until the Chicago Police come and the CHA Police would be there instantly and quick before someone got killed. It makes a big difference. The children are scared because children can't accept the tragedies that are going on. It was a big difference before and after."

## Sympathies

Our deepest sympathies go to the families and friends of the deceased. I am so sorry but God is with you.

Families' Names:

Mrs. Williams - Sister

Mrs. Kindred - Daughter Lisa Garner

Mr. Durham - Father

This is for the man that's given the turkeys every holiday for the community. We want to thank him.

Sharon Johnson - Son

Ms. Elause (our candy lady). The children are going to miss her

Ms. Scott - Sister

Ms. May's Family - Vilenia

Tillman, Ernest Tillman

Fullilove Family - Maurice

Fullilove

The Lois Family from Block 3

Mrs. White - Brother

And if I've missed someone, please forgive me.

The Sick and Shut-In

Louis Browton

James H. Weston Sr.

Pierce Jones

Karen Lyles' niece

May God bless you and keep you

## Aldridge School News

Altgeld Elementary School is having a food give-away for needy families. We hope they have a blessed Christmas from the Christmas baskets provided by the Parent Teacher Association.

Also, the Local School Council is giving out clothes to the families who need them for the holiday at Aldridge Elementary School. We thank Mrs. Waldy for giving out clothes to the families who need them for the holidays at Aldridge Elementary School.

The pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes had breakfast with Santa on Dec. 15.

Aldridge School has a new parking lot and a new sidewalk for the children in front of the school. We had been waiting a long time.

The Combating Alcohol and Drugs through Rehabilitation and Education (CADRE) Snowflakes project at Aldridge School gave away T-shirts, food and prizes to kids and adults. Also, a spokesperson from WGCI-Radio was there. They talked about drugs, gangs and other crimes.

The Taste of Aldridge started Dec. 3. The parents had a wonderful gathering which continued every Friday until Dec. 17 at Aldridge School. We parents also participated in teacher and career services.

## Science Fair

The Science Fair was a great success. These are the winners:

T

### Primary

1<sup>st</sup> place: Room 108's Ibis Bernard and Janice Brown had a project titled "Is Air Everywhere."

### Intermediate

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Room 128's Dashuka Shedd and Arnesha Brown had a project titled "Is Vinegar a Preservative."

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Room 125's Robin Petty and Jennifer Madden had a project titled "Fatty Insulators."

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Room 126's Ronnisha Tyson and Alisha White had a project titled "Why Do Lakes Dry Up."

### Upper

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Room 223's Jeanette Figures had a project titled "The Effect of Chemicals on Water Filtration."

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Room 225's Julian Sherman had a project titled "The Effect of Friction on Inclined Planes."

3<sup>rd</sup> Place (A Tie): Room 227's Rometemia McKnight had a project titled "How does Food Coloring Effect the Temperature of Water" and Room 227's Antoinette Salis' "Matter and Phase Change."

## Thanks to YMCA

The community wants to thank the YMCA for having a tag team for the boys and girls. Also, we would like to thank you for the second-grade swimming lessons. Mr. Sander, thanks for helping us keep the kids off the street.

## Baseball News

To the baseball team of Altgeld Gardens: I would like to apologize for the mistakes I made for the softball team. Here is the corrected winners list:

Men's softball

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Competors

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Strong Arms

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Lowdown

The women's softball team

1<sup>st</sup> Place: Ladies Choice

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: 45<sup>th</sup> Street

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Lady Strong Arms

## Area Stores

The Garden Food Store is a good store. It is nice inside and if you need assistance, they will help you find what you need.

Rosebud Farm is another store located in our area. It is a middle-size store which has just about anything you would want. Some of their items cost a little more than you might want to pay but if that is the case, you can always go to the Garden Store.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and Happy New Millennium 2000 from Sharon Forinzy, the reporter of Altgeld Gardens.



Altgeld Gardens Local Advisory Council members Norma Harris (from left), Connie Hays, vice president, Bernadette Williams and Annette Reid.

Photo by Sharon Forinzy

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- *Field Operations Supervisors*

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- Be, at least, eighteen (18) years old
- Pass a written examination.
- Pass a background and reference check.

### Bring with you:

- At least two pieces of identification (one picture I.D.)  
*State I.D., Driver's License, School Photo ID,  
Voter Registration Card, or Department of Public Aid Card*
- Original or Certified Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Native American Tribal Document

# RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

## War and Peace

### (Continued from Page 4) First HUD Hearing

The first HUD hearing was held Oct. 30 at St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Near West Side.

Overseeing the meeting was HUD Assistant Secretary Harold Lucas, who announced that HUD officials were there to listen to all who wanted to voice their opinions about the proposed plan and acknowledged residents' rights to a voice in the process.

During his testimony, CHA CEO Jackson wanted to know why HUD was holding the meeting.

"We are concerned by HUD's decision to hold hearings before the plan has even been submitted to you for approval," Jackson said. "This plan is still in draft form."

Lucas rebutted by saying that even the draft plan needed clarification in order to provide residents and the public a thorough understanding of CHA's intentions.

"Everyone in this room thinks that we are working from a document from which we will use something," Lucas said.

"We want to make sure that the temperature in this matter doesn't get to a point where it burns the house down."

HUD General Counsel Gail Laster said another reason for the meeting was that the draft plan lacked important information about waivers - requests from CHA to be exempt from HUD rules.

"You need to give to us the waivers in particular that you need and you need to justify them with a legal basis with specific facts," Laster told Jackson.

During Jackson's testimony, he used the term "lease-compliant" with reference to residents who will get new or rehabbed units under the plan. But CHA residents in the crowd shouted at Jackson to explain what "lease compliant" meant.

Responding to the residents' frustrations, U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-7) formally asked Jackson to explain the term.

Jackson said, "Some of these apartments have people who are selling drugs and doing violence; who are destroying our communities. "If you do what you are not supposed to do, then you don't do what you are supposed to do, then we are going to move to terminate your lease."

Davis also asked Jackson if the new plan would allow the Central Advisory Council to negotiate the terms of residents' leases.

Jackson said the CAC would have input to the leases.

"The Central Advisory Council has been one of the loudest voices for simply enforcing the current lease," he said.

In their testimony, the CAC expressed opposition to the plan's waivers and requests.

"Upon review of the plan, we feel the CHA one-to-five year plan does not meet the mark of excellence that's needed to make the CHA com-

munities viable," said CAC Chairperson Mamie Bone.

Bone said the CAC wanted to ensure the plan contained opportunities for residents to move into home ownership, to return to their communities after redevelopment, and to live in communities with lowered concentrations of low-income families.

Bone said the draft plan wouldn't provide enough new or rehabbed units and force residents to move into low-income neighborhoods on the edges of the city.

### Second HUD Hearing

During the Nov. 29 HUD public hearing at the Illinois Institute of Technology, CHA resident leaders and housing advocates repeated many of the concerns they had voiced during previous public hearings.

CAC Chairperson Bone said that some of the CAC's prior concerns about the plan had been resolved.

Specifically, Bone said CHA agreed to incorporate into the plan a clause which guarantees that tenants can return into their communities after being relocated due to demolition. CHA also agreed to include in their plan ways for residents to manage CHA properties and for resident-owned businesses to receive opportunities to contract with CHA.

Bone also said that 40 of the recommendations that the CAC made on the Admissions and Occupancy policy have been incorporated into CHA's new plan.

Bone added the CAC is still concerned that residents' rights would be violated if all the requested waivers were granted.

Both in the first HUD meeting and at subsequent public events, Jackson said the plan calls for construction of 24,000 new and rehabbed units - the total number of occupied units currently existing. But at the second meeting, Bone said only 14,000 of those will be family units.

Lathrop Homes LAC President Juanita Stephenson appealed for waivers for all developments from the Gautreaux Decree, a federal court order that restrains CHA from building housing in communities with high concentrations of low-income African Americans.

"We want waivers like those given to ABLA and Henry Horner to rebuild on site," said Stephenson.

"It is only fair that the residents who have survived the bitter years of public housing should be allowed to enjoy the better years in their own communities."

After the meeting, Lucas said that all written and spoken testimonies and letters would be reviewed by HUD officials. Lucas said residents shouldn't expect that their every word or request be implemented in the plan.

"We're going to take the best of the residents' and everybody's stuff and we're going to incorporate it to make sure we get a good plan," said Lucas.

"Don't make the mistake that people make. They think that once they say something, that it's in the plan. That's not the way it goes. We're going to wait until we see the plan to see how many good things have been incorporated in the plan and then make our decisions."

### The Family Feud

HUD and CHA usually work hand in hand. HUD funds CHA and CHA follows HUD's rules for building, maintaining and managing public housing. But the tone at HUD's public hearings suggested all was not well with the relationship between HUD and CHA.

Mayor Richard M. Daley's chief of staff, Julia Stasch, however, said the city's requests were reasonable. Stasch said the \$1.5 billion for which the city is asking will help transform Chicago's public housing.

"The issue of the money needed to replace and rehabilitate units and the money needed for demolition and counseling and support, we really need to have HUD be as flexible and as creative as possible," Stasch said. "And so, I think that the request of them is not within the context of a dispute. It's in the context of asking them to work with us in a way that really will reflect well both locally and federally."

The original deadline for submission of the plan to HUD was Dec. 1. However, Stasch said CHA has asked HUD for an extension to submit the plan at the end of the first week in January.

# A True Circle of Friends Grows

by Jacqueline Thompson

**M**any changes have occurred within the employment structure, the social service programs and tenant occupancy of the Chicago Housing Authority. But in Harold Ickes Homes, the circle of friends who embarked on their first community outreach Thanksgiving Dinner in November 1998 were not daunted in their efforts to repeat the much-needed service.

The Local Advisory Council supplied a warm, clean, easily-accessible dining area at the Bernard Gentry Community Center. The restructuring and lay-off of over one-half of the local branch of Combatting Drugs and Alcohol through Rehabilitation and Education (CADRE) employees did not stop those members from returning to lend their manpower, special desserts and friendly support to make the magic of community commitment happen. Pam Wright and Alice Dickerson exhibited the same qual-

ity of caring and camaraderie with the persons who were guests last year even though they had felt the pressure of displacement and replacement in their jobs with CADRE. Recognizing the need for more than just food for a body's physical well being, Robert Lee and his wife, Sheree, from New Christian Valley Church, expanded their efforts to uphold the dignity of the needy by supplying 255 specially prepared dinners for any one who was without a means to be otherwise fed. The couple also shared the power of personal prayer and individual invitation to seek the Lord to be transformed and spiritually connected.

Before they were served, the dinners were visibly moved as everyone joined in collective prayer and thankfulness that the dinner was superseded by a touch of spiritual awareness so vitally needed when blessings abound. The best part of all of this is that the New Christian Valley elders and members were active in the same way at 14 CHA developments - Rockwell Gardens, Ickes, Ida B Wells, Altgeld Gardens, Cabrini-Green and the senior citizens building at 838 N. Noble Ave., to name a few.

The guests and recipients of the day's special treats at had many good things to say about this Thanksgiving Day.



**Pam Wright of CADRE and Harold Ickes Local Advisory Council member Roy Sanders hosted the Circle of Friends' "2nd Annual Thanksgiving Dinner" at the Harold Ickes development this Nov. 25.**

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson



**A family enjoys a free Thanksgiving meal at the Bernard Gentry Community Center. The meal was supplied by the Harold Ickes "Circle of Friends."**

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

"I appreciate being able to get spiritual nourishment and food too," said Linda Lawson.

"The service was very nice. You come for the food but the service was beautiful," said Carolyn Marcus.

"I'm very appreciative. Even though I missed the spiritual service, I'm happy to be able to eat," said Doris Morgan.

"Thank you all. Thank God. Richard Phelps, I don't know what I'd do without you," said Circle of Friends worker who wanted to be identified only as Louise. Alice Dickerson, who recently was laid off from CADRE, said, "It feels good to give back and to make sure that when you do something from the heart, it is done for the good of the community and you're helping the needy. Recently, I was laid off and thought I wouldn't be able to help at Thanksgiving like last year. But here I am." Ray Sanders, a hard-working resident and member of the local advisory council, said, "I wouldn't miss it for the world. There are people who truly need all of this." All in all, the community is better off for having the Circle of Friends.



City of Chicago  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

## Public Health Services



Dep. of Public Health  
Shelia Lyne, RSM Commissioner



### Comprehensive Clinics

All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated.



### Mental Health Centers

All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated.

### Comprehensive Clinics

<b>Englewood</b>	641 West 63rd Street	747-7831	<b>Back of the Yards</b>	4313 South Ashland	747-3560
<b>Lower West Side</b>	1713 South Ashland	746-5157	<b>Beverly-Morgan Park</b>	1971 West 111th Street	747-1100
<b>Roseland</b>	200 East 115th Street	747-9500	<b>Chatham-Avalon</b>	10 East 79th Street	747-0901
<b>Uptown</b>	845 West Wilson	744-1938	<b>Englewood</b>	641 West 63rd Street	747-7496
<b>West Town</b>	2418 West Division	744-0943	<b>Greater Grand/Mid-South</b>	4314 South Cottage Grove	747-0036

### Maternal/Child Clinics

<b>Grand Boulevard</b>	4410 South State	747-0005	<b>Greater Lawn</b>	4150 West 55th Street	747-1020
<b>South Chicago</b>	2938 East 89th Street	747-5285	<b>Lakeview</b>	2847 North Clark	744-0167
<b>South Lawndale</b>	3059 West 26th Street	747-0066	<b>Lawndale</b>	1201 South Campbell	746-5905

### Public Health Clinic

<b>Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV</b>	530 East 31st Street	747-0102	<b>North River</b>	5801 North Pulaski	744-1906
			<b>Northtown/Rogers Park</b>	1607 West Howard	744-7617

### Affiliated Clinics

<b>Circle Family Care</b>	4909 West Division	(773) 921-8100	<b>Northwest</b>	2354 North Milwaukee	744-0993
<b>Komed Health Clinic</b>	4230 South Greenwood	(773) 268-7600	<b>Roseland</b>	28 East 112th Pl.	747-7320
<b>Lakeview Neighborhood Health Center</b>	2849 North Clark	(773) 528-1188	<b>Southeast</b>	2938 East 89th Street	747-3121
<b>Lawndale Christian Health Center</b>	3860 West Ogden	(773) 521-5006	<b>Southwest</b>	1221 West 76th Street	747-0881
<b>Mile Square</b>	2045 West Washington	996-9000	<b>Woodlawn</b>	6337 South Woodlawn	747-0059
<b>Woodlawn Adult Health</b>	6337 South Woodlawn	(773) 747-7700	<b>Westside Holistic Health</b>	4909 West Division	(773) 921-8777

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# Letters to the Editor

## Residents Caught in the Middle

### Dear Editor:

Guess who's caught in the middle between a rock and a hard place, right in the center, right smack dab in the middle of this enormous cat fight between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Chicago Housing Authority. While they scratch and claw each other's eyes and chew and bite at each other's ears, nothing is going forward concerning the residents.

Most of all, our littlest soldiers, our children, will be the ones affected the most and hurt from their fight. Due to their fight, there will probably be no services, such as janitors, plumbers, or locksmiths, if they are needed. As you know all too well, these services barely existed in the past. Just imagine what the residents' future is going to look like. So, get ready to expect more trash and debris to scatter and blow in the Windy City in CHA areas.

The residents say to HUD and CHA: go

over to your mutual corners, take the gloves off, take a breather, time out, and take time to hear the referees, who are the residents. If you must fight about something, fight about keeping a roof over these poor babies' heads, fight for replacement housing on a one-for-one basis so not one of these families has to feel the devastating, cold, icy bite of the Chicago Winter Hawk, blowing and ravaging their frail young bodies. The residents always have been the last to hear, the last to know and always without a voice. But their voices will ring out like a mighty trumpet from the pages of this paper: What are the concerns of residents about the fight between HUD and CHA?

Murphy, who's a concerned resident of Robert Taylor "A," said: "It's only happening because somebody got their hand in the cookie jar."

Mary Jenkins, also a resident of Robert Taylor "A," said, "They are always misrepre-

senting the residents that live in these buildings. We are being treated like children, being told what to do and where to go. Mismanagement. They need to review their own offices before they can take care of our homes."

Shawn Johnson, a resident of Robert Taylor "B," said, "I don't know much about it. All I keep hearing is they're going to tear those buildings down. But this is our neighborhood, where I grew up at. It feels to me that if they do (tear down buildings), I won't have a neighborhood anymore."

Andrew Perkins, whose family resides at 5247 S. State St., said, "I think that this fight is bad. They need to come together and figure out what's best for the residents."

Larry Turner Jr., who's also a resident of Robert Taylor "A," said, "I think it is a well-organized part of a higher strategy from HUD and CHA. It's an attempt to reroute the money into a different direction."

Barbara Moore, building president of 5266 S. State St., said, "The residents are paying for all of this. America the beautiful but beautiful for whom - the rich."

Deidre Matthews, a resident of Cabrini-Green and a member of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, said, "What concerns me about CHA and HUD's fight is that the residents might get lost in the shuffle."

Beatrice Townson, mother of Kimberly Lathan in Robert Taylor "B," said, "This is real bad, to move these people around real fast when it's getting cold. My daughter is on her own. CHA has been giving her the run-around for the longest and she's 27 and has 3 small children."

Anthony Kearse said, "Personally, I think HUD and CHA should build something up before tearing something down."

- The Coalition to Protect Public Housing

## CHA Chairman on 5-Year Plan

### Dear Editor:

When the current CHA administration was appointed to the agency earlier this year, our goal was to improve public housing in Chicago and the quality of life for CHA residents. We arrived with specific ideas in mind but we also wanted input from the most important element of the plan to reshape public housing – the people of CHA themselves.

Through various town meetings and other forms of communication, the message we received from them is clear: they want to be a part of the change. They want a seat at the table. They want control over their lives.

We want the same thing: residents empowered through jobs, quality housing and services – just like in the rest of Chicago.

From day one, we have offered a framework to make this happen for the current residents of public housing and we have never wavered from this core commitment.

We have held public hearings in every family development, at senior centers and in communities all across Chicago. We heard the people of public housing and residents of surrounding communities call for meaningful change.

The result is our \$1.5 billion draft "Plan For Transformation," which is scheduled to be delivered to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Jan. 7. It includes many of the ideas and suggestions submitted by the residents and leadership.

The plan includes an investment that will produce 24,000 new or rehabbed public housing units over the next five years, enough for every current, lease-compliant resident.

The plan also includes a commitment to link CHA residents with needed services that will move them into Chicago's economic and social mainstream. Our goal is to place 3,000 residents in jobs.

We have agreed to contract with the best property managers in the field to come in and manage our buildings just like buildings anywhere else in Chicago.

At the request of residents and their elected leaders, we are providing current residents with a relocation contract, which is a signed document just like a lease that guarantees all lease-compliant residents the right to return to CHA.

We have also revised the plan to make all of our housing stock ADA compliant. We agreed to increase the number of accessible units and we committed to making all modifications prior to an applicant moving in. We further agreed that a relative acting as a live-in aide could be added to the lease and agreed to deduct from annual income the costs of caring for a child with disabilities.

At the request of residents and the Central Advisory Council, we revised the grievance procedure to make it simpler and more responsive.

sive. We also agreed to give Section 8 residents 30 days to file a grievance instead of 15 because residents asked for it.

We revised our waiver request regarding the Public Housing Assessment System, which is the evaluation process that determines if CHA is on the "troubled" list of public housing agencies. Instead of the 10-year waiver we asked for originally, we are now asking only for a five-year waiver.

The CAC asked us to waive the community service requirement for people paying ceiling rent and we agreed. The CAC also said they want to continue to represent relocation families who temporarily move into Section 8. Under the plan as it now exists, they will. We also expanded the role of residents in the redevelopment process so that they not only choose specific redevelopment proposals but also help choose the developers – and then work with them on the proposals.

Residents and the CAC asked to be included on the organization chart, so they are now shown as advisors directly to the Board of Commissioners.

Residents and advocates also asked us to strengthen our commitment to hire residents and meet our MBE/WBE goals. We are responding by establishing a business mentoring program and a \$20 million apprenticeship program to help community residents qualify

for construction jobs during the redevelopment process.

Finally, residents and civic groups asked us to increase resources for counseling residents when they move and do better at communicating options to residents. We are already doing this and will do whatever it takes to make sure that residents understand all of their options.

The residents and the public have offered many good ideas and the "plan for transformation" is better because of it.

More importantly, this spirit of partnership and cooperation that we have established in the last six months will help make this plan a reality for the people of Chicago and we can all move forward in building a better life for us all. Thank you.

- Sharon Gist Gilliam  
Chairman, Chicago Housing Authority

Residents' Journal welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters to our new address:  
4859 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60615.  
You may also call our office at (773) 285-0200 x 3372 to discuss your ideas for submission.

R E S I D E N T S ,

## Journal

**Residents' Journal is distributed free to all Chicago public housing residents and participants in the Section 8 subsidized housing program. But if you are not a public housing resident, would like to support Residents' Journal's plan to become a financially self-sufficient entity, or would like to subscribe, please fill out the attached subscription form and mail a check or money order to:**

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# Dear Resident

by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

As we stand on the brink of a new millennium, one can't help but turn sideways in the present in an effort to look both behind at the past and ahead to the future. The new millennium signifies new beginnings on many levels; new beginnings all designed to make for better living, better business...a better world. And communication is the vehicle propelling us into the new millennium. Today's advanced communications have removed the barriers that once separated people, places and things.

On the highest level, satellites, the Internet and other communication vehicles transmit signals above, below and to every corner of the Earth with ease, precision and clarity delivering the promised product.

On the lowest level, man has yet to master the art of communication. We continue to struggle, failing more often than not to communicate effectively with one another. There is no ease, there is no precision, there is no clarity.

Undoubtedly, communication is the foundation on which all relationships are built; intimate, parental, social and business. Even our relationship with the Creator is one of communication. It is through communication that we come to know, like and love one another. It is through open and honest communication that we learn to

trust and depend on one another. It is through loving communication that we develop ease, precision and clarity, delivering the promised product: the ability to talk openly, honestly and respectfully without fear of bias, ridicule or injury.

Of course, the key element of loving communication is love. And love is a product of the heart, not the mind. We are motivated by what we believe in our heart, not what we believe in our mind. Therefore, when we communicate, we must learn to do so in a way that reaches both the heart and mind.



Art is another form of communication. This mural, artist unknown, appears on the front of 862 N. Sedgwick Ave.

Photo by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

Standing sideways in the present, looking back as a public housing resident, I can remember the first time that I stepped in to 862 N. Sedgwick St. in the Frances Cabrini Extension Homes in 1957. The Green Homes, the white high-rise structures at the north end of the development, had not been built.

It was the first time that I had ever seen an elevator. The inside walls were a shiny, yellow formica. At first, I was afraid to get in to the elevator. I held on to my mother's arm tightly until we got off on the fifth floor.

I have fond memories of growing up here. It was a clean place. It was a fun place. It was a family place. Most families were two-parent families. The father worked, the mother stayed at home and the children went to school. We were all alike. And often, on a warm summer's night, we would dance in the street to the sound of Smokey Robinson, Mary Wells and the Supremes.

People from other communities came here freely. There was no fear. But after the riots following the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., things began to change. The families left with two parents had two

tions.

Surprisingly, some developments have prospered under resident management while others have seen a decline in maintenance of the physical structures and management-level services to residents.

For years, residents lived in public housing without any communication or services from HUD, CHA or their management office. There was a period of time when residents lived in public housing for years without paying rent and were not evicted.

There was no one for us to talk to and no one to hear. The only communication we received was via the television news when public housing was the topic of Mayor Jane Byrne moving into Cabrini-Green, crime or, my favorite, excessive use of water in Chicago's public housing. It was suggested that families bathe together to save water.

All of sudden, the same agencies that have ignored us for years are seeking us out to communicate with them. They are concerned about our (lease-complaint) residents' well-being.

Now, we deserve the same level of service as all Chicagoans. Did something change? Or did we always deserve the same level of services? Every time there's a change in administration, the people, the plan and the pace changes. And while CHA may communicate with the people in resident government, depending on them to inform residents in their respective developments, this does not always occur.

Resident meetings on every level with HUD or CHA are extremely difficult. The ability to communicate effectively is clouded by resident anger and distrust.

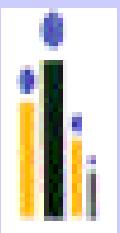
From where I stand, the future of public housing residents depends greatly on our ability to communicate with each other and those around us. The future of public housing in the City of Chicago depends on the City's ability to communicate with us. As a Black woman looking back, I remember the quietness of my childhood in the '50s; the "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud" surge of Black pride in the '60s; my peers starting families, seeking to move up and out in to what promised to be a better environment than public housing in the '70s; the plague of drugs and drug-related crime creeping into the Black community, and destroying countless lives and families in the '80s; and a race of people united by the struggle for equality, separated by opportunity for some and continued inequality for others in the '90s.

We have a young generation whose cry is "I ain't even tryin' to hear it." Who are we more afraid of than ourselves? Who treats us any worse than we treat ourselves? It's time to talk about it!

Until the new millennium,

- Pat

## The RJ Staff Expresses Our Condolences to the Family and Fans of Former Cabrini-Green Resident Curtis Mayfield



# The Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center

It's 3 p.m.  
Do you know where  
your children are?

They could be having a great time at the **Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center**  
**TeenREACH Cyber Youth Development Program!!!**



## What is the CyberYouth Development Program?

TeenREACH CyberYouth Development Program is a FREE after-school program for young people in the 7th - 10th grades. The program is located at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, 4859 S. Wabash Ave. The program runs Monday - Thursday, 2:30 p.m. - 6 p.m.

## ELIGIBILITY

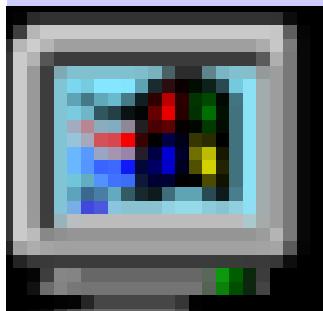
- Are between the ages of 12 - 17 yrs.
- Are in the 7th through 10th grades
- Are CHA residents
- Are from families that are TANF recipients (Public Aid)
- Live in the Greater Grand Boulevard community

## What does the Program offer?

- **FREE LUNCH**  
Adult assistance with homework as well as one-to-one and small group tutoring.
- Computer instruction that focuses on the Internet, Microsoft Word and Excel, email, and lots more.
- Computerized academic enrichment instruction that increases students academic level via our specialized educational software.
- Sports and Recreation, Arts Exploration, Lif Skills.
- Fun and educational field trips.
- Special classes and events for parents and the entire family.

Program space is available right now, so come in and join the fun!!!!

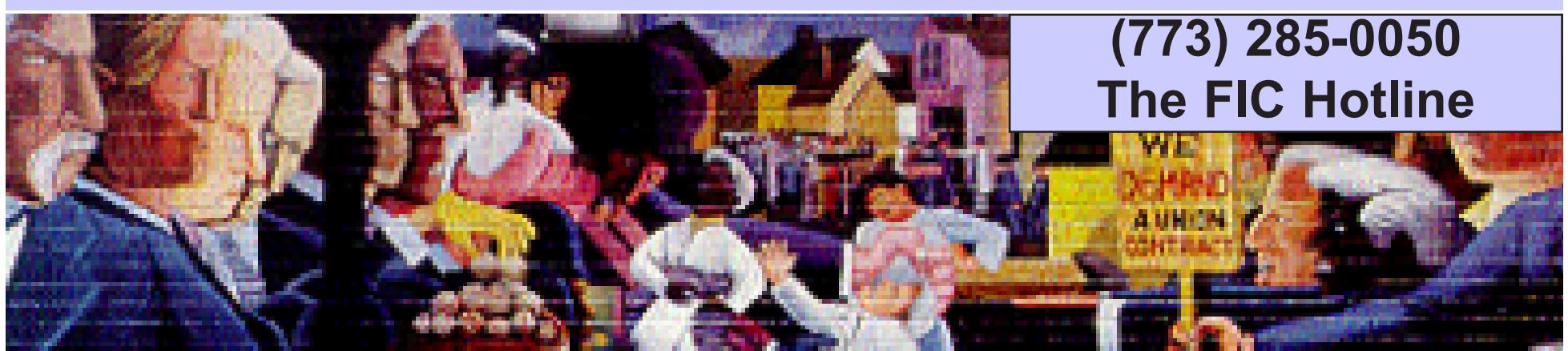
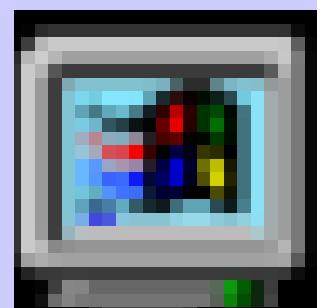
For more information contact Michaela Purdue, Program Coordinator at 773-285-0200 ext. 3504 for Class Schedule



## Call or Stop by for Class Dates & Times ARTENSA A. RANDOLPH LEARNING CENTER

Free  
G. E. D.  
Prep Classes

4859 S. Wabash Street  
Chicago, IL 60615  
(773) 285-0200



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The FIC Hotline**