

R E S I D E N T S '

# Journal

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# **Haymarket House AD**

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The front page photo depicts CHA Wentworth Gardens resident Hallie Amey (center) with (from left to right), Ald. Dorothy Tillman (3rd), Cook County Commissioner John Daley and CHA CEO Terry Peterson during a street naming ceremony in honor of Amey on January 23.

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# O u r   M i s s i o n

This publication is committed to the journalistic principles of fair representation and free speech. Above all else, this publication will strive to fairly and accurately represent all sides of the issues that the editorial staff chooses to investigate. In maintaining an unwavering guarantee of editorial independence, this publication will contribute to the American media's mission of faithfully providing balanced, truthful accounts and information.

**Residents' Journal** strives to be accessible to all communities, regardless of income, ethnicity or disability.

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# O u r   R e a d e r s h i p

In January 2001, Target Market News Service, national experts on African American media markets, conducted a readership study for **We The People Media** sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Below are findings of this study:

\* **Residents' Journal** is the unique source of critical information for Chicago public housing residents. Nearly every respondent (92 percent) said they wanted to see **Residents' Journal** printed more often.

\* **Residents' Journal** readers are actively involved in the transformation of their communities. Respondents ranked "Neighborhood News" (80 percent) and "CHA Stories" (75 percent) as their favorite sections, closely followed by "Citywide News" (61 percent) and "Health Stories" (52 percent).

\* **Residents' Journal**'s readers are active citizens. 84 percent of the

respondents voted in the last election while 67 percent attend religious services regularly.

\* **Residents' Journal**'s readers shop at large chain stores such as Walgreen's (73 percent), Jewel (70 percent) and Aldi's (67 percent). Readers also eat monthly at restaurants such as McDonald's (69 percent), Popeye's (39 percent), White Castle (34 percent) and KFC (39 percent).

\* Readers spend a large share of their income on groceries. Fifty-five (55) percent spend between \$100 and \$299 on groceries monthly; 22 percent spend between \$300 and \$499 on groceries monthly.

\* Readers are extremely interested in enhancing their skills: 52 percent are interested in computer training, 41 percent are interested in job training and 20 percent would like to receive nursing or health care training.

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# Transforming CHA Clock Ticking for HOPE VI Projects

by Mary C. Johns  
Editor-in-Chief

Public housing agencies nationwide risk losing their federal funding for redevelopment projects if their projects are not on schedule, according to the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department recently.

Will the CHA lose their HOPE VI money, too?

## HUD Takes Back HOPE VI Funds

In August 2003, HUD took back a \$6.4 million Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) grant for demolition from the Housing Authority of Portland, Oregon for not meeting the deadline for its public housing redevelopment plans.

HOPE VI grants are for the revitalization of public housing stock. The money is used for demolitions, support services for residents, renovations of old units and for the construction of new public housing units.

In November 2003, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that five public housing authorities were in danger of losing as much as \$1,000 a day of their HOPE VI grants for missed redevelopment.

HUD put the five public housing agencies that had the most delays in their HOPE VI redevelopment projects on notice. They were in Washington, D.C., Detroit, Tulsa, Okla., Biloxi, Miss., and



Mary C. Johns

The Chicago Housing Authority is currently undergoing a massive, \$1.6 billion plan to transform its long-time dilapidated public housing properties into mixed-income communities.

To date, CHA has received a total of \$257.8 million in HOPE VI federal dollars for eight of its public housing sites in which redevelopment has begun or is in the planning stages.

In the May/June 2003 issue of *Residents' Journal* ("HOPE VI on the Chopping Block"), an investigation on the threat of the elimination of the federal funding program revealed that none of the HOPE VI funds for four CHA family housing sites had been spent for construction.

Nor had any of the HOPE VI funds for the same four public housing sites been spent on community support services for CHA residents. Each of the sites received a \$35 million HOPE VI grant between 1998 and 2001.

HUD threatened to take back a HOPE VI grant from the District of Columbia Housing Authority because they failed to build replacement housing for 600 families they received money for in 1999. The public housing agency had only built two replacement housing units as of June 2003.

After five years, CHA is now moving on plans to build replacement housing for its ABLA Homes

that it received \$35 million in HOPE VI funding in 1998. To date, none of this money has been spent on construction. Yet, CHA had not been placed on notice, warning them of their funds being removed.

Even though other public housing authorities have been threatened with losing or have lost their HOPE VI funding, CHA is confident that they will not lose any money despite delays in their HOPE VI projects.

Kim Johnson, the assistant press secretary for CHA, said during a phone interview in mid-January that the public housing agency is not in danger of losing any of its HOPE VI funding for their redevelopment projects.

"Because HUD understands the lengthy process in which to get redevelopment projects finished, at this particular juncture we're okay. We have been able to close 22 mixed-income deals."

"They've not taken any money away from us," she said.

Johnson added that they are currently in line with HUD's assessments of HOPE VI project deadlines.

"I guess it depends on what you mean by 'on schedule,'" she said.

HUD's Illinois spokesperson Anne Scherriebe confirmed Johnson's statement.

"To the best of my knowledge, they are not in danger of losing any funds," she said.

## A Local Advisory Council President's Concern

Recently, the CHA Board of Commissioners approved and confirmed for a second time the extension of a "Letter of Intent of the Development of the Madden Park/Ida B. Wells/Darrow Homes for Phase IA" that was first authorized in December, 2001.

The final extension will allow the developers, Madden Wells Phase 1A Associates, LLC, "To continue to meet the Illinois Housing Development Authority's (IHDA) site control requirements" through August 2004. The developers received an allocation of low-income housing tax credits from IHDA for construction of affordable housing units at the New Madden Wells. Affordable housing is reserved for people who earn between 80 and 120 percent of the median income in the Chicago region.

The groundbreaking for construction of new public, affordable and market rate hous-



The remaining residents living in these town homes that are part of what's left of the Madden Park Homes are expected to be relocated sometime in 2005.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

ing was to begin at the site in 2003, according to Eunice Crosby, the Local Advisory Council president of Madden Park Homes, who speaks on behalf of the current and former residents at the redevelopment site. This added delay is not sitting well with her.

"I don't like what's going on, because it's nothing like when we started out. This thing has changed from the very beginning. We don't have the same developer. We don't have the same plan. Nothing is like when we started out," Crosby said.

"I even fought the issue of them not even wanting to build too many 4 bedrooms..."

"When we started out, this was a great plan. Now, I have to see it." Crosby appeared puzzled as to why the developers were given an extension and why no replacement housing was being built.

"I still don't understand why they're given an extension. We were already supposed to be breaking ground. The Darrow Homes are gone and Madden is gone, so why [aren't] you building something," Crosby said.

"And they are not supposed to bring nothing else down until they build something."

All that remains of the public housing complex are residents living in town homes situated on a stretch of land that runs along Lake Park Place just east of Cottage Grove Avenue and 39th Street.

Crosby, who lives in one of the town homes, said that she and the other families remaining at the delayed redeveloped public housing site are expected to relocate sometime in 2005.

But she doesn't like the prospect of CHA tearing down her and the others' home of many years, in which she alleges much money was personally spent on the maintenance of the town homes.

"We're supposed to be going in 2005. But my issue is, why take them down when the housing market is already null and void," she said.

"To me it's senseless. They are town homes; they're not just row houses. And for the design of the development that is coming back, everything is stuck together anyway. So it will fit, in my opinion," declared Crosby.

Under Phase 1A of the New Madden Wells mixed-income community, approximately 163 rental housing units are projected to be built. There will be 63 public housing units, 52 affordable units and 48 apartments will be market units, according to the CHA Board-approved document requesting ratification to extend the letter of intent for the development of Phase IA for the New Madden Wells.

Only 15 of the 165 HOPE VI grants awarded to public housing authorities nationally through September, 2001 have completed all planned units and only 18 grants are nearing completion (i.e., 80% or more construction completed). HUD has awarded funds for the rehabilitation or construction of more than 85,000 public and non-public housing units.

Yet, only approximately 21,000 have been completed as of April 2003. Of the \$4.5 billion awarded in HOPE VI Revitalization grants awarded through September, 2001, grantees have only obligated \$2.54 billion and expended \$2.12 billion.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development



A current view of the Madden Park Homes. This landscape remains empty of the replacement public housing units scheduled to be built in 2003.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

# Transforming CHA

## News Briefs

### Stateway Suit to be Settled for \$500K

The City of Chicago will pay \$500,000 to settle a civil rights lawsuit brought by residents of Stateway Gardens public housing development stemming from a three-year-long civil rights case, attorneys for the residents announced recently. The agreement is pending approval by a U.S. District Court Judge.

Following a February, 2001 raid at Stateway Gardens Field House in which 250 to 500 men, women and children were detained and searched, University of Chicago-based legal clinic Mandel Legal Aid submitted a civil rights lawsuit to the U.S. District Court, alleging violations of residents' constitutional rights to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Residents involved in the raid reported searches of infants, among others. Police said they were responding to a tip that gang violence was going to erupt at the basketball game that drew the residents to the field house. The game was part of the long-standing Stateway Roundball Classic, a tournament that had never seen violence during a game, according to Chicago Park District workers.

The proposed settlement will be reviewed by the judge on February 6 and a "public comment" date will be set at that time.

### CHA, City Council Approve ABLA Plan

Redevelopment of near-southwest-side ABLA Homes is moving closer to reality, following recent approval of Phase I of the plan by the Chicago Housing Authority and the city council.

The 418-unit development, named "Roosevelt Square," calls for 125 public housing rental units and 56 affordable rental units. The remaining units include 163 market-rate and 65 affordable-rate for-sale units. The project taps more than \$16 million in HOPE VI funds, as well as an additional \$22 million from other sources. L.R. Developers is the Master Developer selected by CHA for the project.

Although last-minute political maneuvers by neighborhood heavyweight Oscar D'Angelo, the so-called "mayor of Little Italy," threatened to delay the project, the \$600 million redevelopment whisked through the City Council in the end.

The total plan for the ABLA Homes redevelopment will produce 1,467 public housing units, according to the year 4 CHA Plan for Transformation report, and 3,278 units altogether. The plan will now be submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for final approval.

In related news, the CHA Board also recently approved a \$2.66 million contract to L.R. Developers for "Community and Supportive Services in the ABLA Community."

### Grievance Procedure Privitized

Residents of CHA housing with complaints about their managers will have to turn their records over to a private third party selected by the city, following recent approval of changes to the CHA lease signed by all public housing residents.

Following a sparsely attended "public comment" meeting at the Harold Washington Library, the CHA Board of Commissioners approved changes to the Resident's Grievance Procedure at their January meeting that call for a private organization to arbitrate disputes between public housing residents and their managers.

### Tutoring Program Gains \$35K

The MacArthur Foundation recently gave a \$35,000 grant to a tutoring program operating out of the Cabrini-Green family development, according to a news release that described the program as "doing good work."

The Cabrini-Green Tutoring Program connects elementary school-aged children residing in the development with adult tutors.

A statement from MacArthur described the grant as being "for organizations that under normal circumstances are not eligible for MacArthur support."

# Residents Turn up the Heat on CHA

## by Beauty Turner Assistant Editor

Residents of the Cabrini-Green development are turning up the heat on the CHA-picked private management company that replaced resident managers and is now leaving them out in the cold-literally.

In the windy city, where winter temperatures can reach rock bottom, in early January Cabrini management company H.J. Russell and the CHA scrambled to explain to residents why they have to heat up pots of hot water and turn the knobs on their gas stoves up a few notches in order to stay warm.

While some residents of the family housing development complained that the lack of heat had been going on for the last few months, others said it has been an on-going problem for years.

On January 8, the residents turned the heat a few degrees higher on CHA and their new private management company H.J. Russell by bringing in news reporters into their development for a



**Beauty Turner**

not been addressed, a claim that CHA Director of Operation Duwayne Bailey openly disputes.

"We only received two work orders from this apartment," Bailey said.

**Residents' Journal** asked Bailey what time he received those work orders, but Bailey and the H.J. Russell management team could not produce the times in which the work orders were given to the management office.

Bernice's son Ray Wood, 19, talked about the unstable and unsanitary conditions they have to endure.

"I have Crohn's disease; I need heat so that I can stay well," Wood said.

"Every morning when we wake up, we have to turn on our stoves and heat up water in order to keep warm. Something is seriously wrong with that," Woods continued.

"It's very uncomfortable to even use our bathroom. Water is leaking over our toilet from all of the moisture in the air. We have to keep on our coats in order to stay warm in our apartment. This is not right!" Wood added.

Many other residents in the same building spoke about being cold and having to use their gas stoves or the one small heater H.J. Management gave them for heat.

Marvin Edwards, a resident and head of the Resident Management Corporation replaced by H.J. Russell, said his company, ousted for "bad management" by CHA, never had these kinds of problems.

"We cared about the well-being of the residents, unlike this organization. They only care about getting a paycheck, nothing else," Edwards said.

Community activist Deidre Matthews blamed CHA for the heating problem.

"Knowing how brutal Chicago winters can become, CHA should have held H.J. Russell accountable," Matthews said. "Cabrini-Green residents deserve to have heat just like any other rent-paying resident [of Chicago] does!"

Matthews went on, "CHA needs to avoid this in the future by putting in...some more capital; you can't freeze us out, and you can't scare us out!"

While H.J. Russell engineers spoke of taking care of the heating problem by the end of the day during the walk-through, it was

We cared about the well-being of the residents, unlike this organization. They only care about getting a paycheck, nothing else.

-Former Cabrini-Green RMC head Marvin Edwards

"walk-through" concerning their heat—or should I say lack of heat—situation.

As a load of reporters descended on the Cabrini-Green high-rises, CHA officials and the H.J. Russell management team were checking apartments and sending in heaters to residents. But some residents complained that the efforts were too little, too late.

"Why does it have to take all of this in order for CHA and H.J. Russell to give us some heat?" asked one resident. "Why couldn't they just do this in the first place?"

Some residents believe that this is an on-going ploy to force them to move out of the Cabrini-Green development so that the city can take the land quicker.

Bernice Woods is a young mother of three who lives on the third floor at 1340 North Larrabee, an off-white, 16-story, concrete high-rise public housing building.

Woods complains that she has to heat up water on her stove in order to keep her and her family warm.

"We shouldn't have to live like this. I work every day, and I pay my rent on time," Bernice Woods screamed out in despair to CHA officials who were on-hand during the reporters' walk-through.

Woods talked of putting in numerous work orders that had

Cabrini is having heating problems because a playground was built over a heating system...The organization that built it did it out of charity; we didn't realize that there was a pipe underneath it.

just a matter of a few days before reports of another heating crisis reached **Residents' Journal**.

On January 12, residents from Cabrini called **RJ**, saying that CHA was shutting off the heat in seven of the high-rise buildings.

"Another pipe has burst at 660 West Division Street," confirmed CHA spokesperson Derek Hill, who blamed the problem on the age of the system.

"That's because the pipes are only guaranteed for 30 years," Hill said. "It has been over 50 years now. They are no longer any good."

Hill also blamed the heating problems on a recently constructed playground for the development.

"Cabrini is having heating problems because a playground was built over a heating system," Hill said. "The organization that built it did it out of charity; we didn't realize that there was a pipe underneath it."

"These buildings in Cabrini-Green have outlived their usefulness," Hill added. "We need to consolidate those buildings. We would like to work with the leadership if that is possible to make that happen."

"\$1.2 million [is] being spent to keep the buildings up and running," Hill said. "That money can be spent to make five times better housing."

But Cabrini Green Local Advisory Council President Carol Steele said, regardless of the conditions of the buildings, residents deserved better maintenance.

"Even if CHA thinks that the housing has outlived its usefulness, they can rehab, and besides, they are better than living in a shelter!" Steele said.



**Cabrini-Green Homes resident Ray Wood, 19, points to an open stove and a pot of boiling hot water that his family used in an effort to keep warm while the gas was shut off by CHA in mid-January.**

Photo by Beauty Turner

# Transforming CHA Is It "Doomsday" For Public Housing?

by Mary C. Johns  
Editor-in-Chief

CHA's new mixed-income communities could wind up with few—or even no—public housing units, under a "doomsday clause" in federal housing law being inserted into redevelopment plans across the city, according to lawyers for residents.

But, though members of the Central Advisory Council and lawyers for residents alike voice concern, no action is planned in the near future to fight the unit conversion option.

"We're not crazy about the concept period," said attorney to the CAC Robert Whitfield after a recent CHA Board of Commissioner's meeting.

"What we don't want is the developers to just arbitrarily on their own decide that they may not be making as much money as they think they could and then start reducing units, and [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development] regulations don't allow that," Whitfield said.

But that's exactly what will happen, predicts Madden Park Local Advisory Council President Eunice Crosby.

"Yes it bothers me. I don't think it's right because we are going to have poor people here period," Crosby

This is not something that the residents need to be concerned about.  
**-CHA spokesperson Kim Johnson**

said.

"But, over a number of years I believe that is going to happen."

Chicago Housing Authority officials deny this, saying conversion is not in the best interest of the developments and so developers won't flip units to market rate.

"They can jeopardize what they and their partners have put into the new mixed-income communities," said CHA spokesperson Kim Johnson.

Ultimately, however, developers can eliminate public rate units if they deem it necessary, though only in "worst-case scenarios," according to HUD spokesperson Anne Scherriebe.

Conversion of the public housing units into market rate units would be "The last step considered and taken...if there were a tremendous decline in the revenues that support the public housing units or if there were a tremendous increase in the expenses related to management/maintenance of the units which would render the on-going income grossly inadequate," according to a written statement by Scherriebe and exclusive to **Residents' Journal**.

As to whether the CAC is going to challenge the HUD policy allowing the owners of mixed-income communities to convert public housing units into market rates units if the need arises, Whitfield said there was nothing CAC could do at the present.

"Like I said, by no means are we happy with it. But HUD passed [the policy.] So what can we do," he said.

Whitfield said that he didn't see how anybody could challenge the clause now before it's implemented, because he wasn't aware of it violating any federal or state law, or any federal regulations or the Relocation Rights Contract.

"It's one thing to sue something that's either discriminatory based on race or sex or a violation of the

Relocation Rights Contract. This isn't on its face either one of those," he said.

The New Madden Wells mixed-income community, currently in the redevelopment stages, is one such site at which public housing units could be in danger of being "transformed" into private market rate units, according to the Tenant Selection Plan and Screening and Selection Policy recently approved by Chicago Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

According to the "Shortfall in Revenues for Public Housing Units" clause—or 'doomsday clause' as some have referred to it—that appears in the approved return lease policy for New Madden Wells, "Continuing residency and lease terms for public housing tenants may be changed in the event there is a shortfall in revenues to the Owner from the operation of the public housing units."

The changes may include increasing the rent up to market rate levels, and may include termination of public housing leases at mixed-income sites, according to the document.

The developers currently working under the Chicago Housing Authority's ongoing \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation would be allowed to do the conversions if CHA fails to provide them with the money necessary to manage or upkeep the public housing units.

HUD spokesperson Anne Scherriebe, from the Illinois regional office, stated in writing to **Residents' Journal** in January that Scherriebe added that the "Tenants Selection Plan and Screening and Selection Policy for Madden Wells" that was approved by the CHA Board of Commissioners has not yet been either reviewed or approved by HUD.

Scherriebe also said that she could not address in detail much about the conversion clause because the regulations concerning the provision still must be developed and published by HUD.

Crosby, who was part of the working group that developed the property-specific requirements for the New Madden Wells mixed-income community, added that there was very little that she could do about the clause being included in the tenants selection policy. But she agreed with Whitfield that the developers who will own and/or manage the mixed-income communities would be watched like a hawk.

"I had my say at the table. It was just three of us at the table, and you've got all of these other folks with personal opinions," said Crosby.

"But like we said at the working group, ain't nothing etched in stone."

A glimpse of the draft lease agreement for the Robert Taylor Homes residents gives the impression that the provision may also appear in other Chicago resident return site criteria.

According to that document, "The Landlord's operation of all Public Housing Authority-assisted units...is supported in part by operating subsidies which the PHA is contractually obligated to pay to the Landlord."

If the PHA is unable to meet its contractual obligation to pay the Landlord operating subsidies with respect to all PHA-assisted units, the document states that the Landlord may be legally permitted under federal law to increase the rent as high as market rate.

The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act

What we don't want is the developers to just arbitrarily on their own decide that they may not be making as much money as they think they could and then start reducing units...

**-Robert Whitfield, Legal Assistance Foundation attorney**

of 1998 for mixed-finance projects, specifically states that the owner may increase rents or convert the units as long as they maintain "the low-income character of the units to the maximum extent practicable."

CHA doesn't expect the developers to carry out their option to convert the public housing units into market rate units anytime soon, because of a lease agreement regarding the land.

"The developers are operating essentially on a 99-year ground lease. So for 99 years, those units that are designated public housing units are [at] least public housing units for that long," said CHA spokesperson Kim Johnson during a phone interview in mid-January.

Johnson also said that the residents shouldn't worry.

"This is not something that the residents need to



**Madden Park Homes Being Demolished**  
Bulldozers demolish these public housing units at the Madden Park Homes in May 2002 to make way for new replacement public and market rate housing construction originally scheduled to begin in 2003.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

be concerned about," Johnson said.

Whitfield said that the CAC will be keeping their eye on what the developers do in the future regarding the clause.

"But, we will be monitoring it very closely. One thing we can say is that those provisions the way they are, they must follow HUD's regulations. If [the developers] don't do that in implementing it, or putting [the HUD regulations] in [the clause], then we will challenge it."

"And if it's implemented, and we think it has some negative impact on our tenants, then we'll have no qualms, and we won't hesitate to seek judicial action. Our main concern is that the rights of the tenants are not being deluded, ignored or denied," said Whitfield.

# Transforming CHA Getting to Know Rockwell

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

I recently investigated Rockwell Gardens, a 17-acre public housing development on Chicago's West Side. In my quest to get to know Rockwell, I learned a lot about this family development.

Built in 1961, Rockwell Gardens housed 1,126 units of public housing before redevelopment began recently and it is just three miles from the Loop.

The clearing of the high rises is underway but so is the clearing of the drugs and gangs, according to Commander Lorenzo Davis, head of the Chicago Police Department's public housing division.

When completed, the redeveloped site will house 823 units, 264 of which will be public housing, according to Chicago Housing Authority representatives.

I spoke to two Rockwell residents from 1936 W. Washington St. about the redevelopment process and the idea of building mixed-income communities at the former sites of family public housing developments. Both are due to be relocated.

"I think it's pretty nice, relocating into new mixed-income communities," said Eugene Coger. "It will work for some of the residents."

"It will probably be a balance," Coger added. "Some Rockwell residents will fit in, and some won't!"

"It's only good if everybody that's already here receives new housing, but first they should train the current residents how to do housekeeping," said Rockwell resident Michael Barnes. "because if they don't you will have what you had in the beginning."

I called Rockwell Local Advisory Council President Mary Baldwin to ask her about the CHA redevelopment process in her neck of the woods.

Her secretary gave me a message that Baldwin would return my call, but was unable to talk to me by *RJ* press time due to a death in her family.

Before the redevelopment will be complete, officials will have to overcome more than just the dilapidated high-rises. Such issues as gangs and drugs will also have to be addressed.

The clearing of the high rises is underway but so is the clearing of the drugs and gangs, according to Commander Lorenzo Davis, head of the Chicago Police Department's public housing division.

On Tuesday, December 9, Davis and his men, along with officers from the 11th District, conducted a sting they called Operation Travelers Blues, named after the Traveling Vice Lords, a local street gang with a strong presence at Rockwell, according to Davis.

Davis said 42 gang members were identified as involved

in a profitable drug-selling business prior to the sting and that 27 of them were successfully apprehended.

"The operation went rather well in Rockwell—we arrested 27 of the 42 people that are allegedly involved, and we are looking for the rest," Davis said. "This drug operation was pulling in at least \$75,000 a day."

I later called CHA spokesperson Jennifer Chhatlani to get information on

Rockwell's redevelopment plans.

Funding for the redevelopment includes a \$35 million HOPE VI grant from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development, Chhatlani said, which has helped fund the demolition of four buildings already, with a fifth currently in the teardown process. Three buildings remain standing, she added, housing 206 families. Of the 180 families that have moved, 136 moved temporarily into the subsidized rental market with Housing Choice Vouchers; 11 more selected permanent vouchers, giving up the chance to return to the redeveloped, mixed-income community that will replace Rockwell; and 44 families moved to other developments, Chhatlani said.

## R E S I D E N T S ' J o u r n a l

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## discount thrift ad

# The True Face of Poverty

by Michael Ibrahim

From nearly every front, many Americans report that the economy was good during the nineties. Statistics indicate that unemployment was down, salaries went up and the stock market was booming. However, now studies are beginning to trickle in showing that for those already living at the extreme end of the economic income range, their situation actually worsened, leaving many Americans dangerously exposed when the economy stalled in the past couple years.

In late September, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 1.7 million people slid into poverty in the last decade. The report also showed that the Midwest was hit the hardest of any region due mostly to loss of manufacturing companies in the area.

Worsening conditions is an escalating affordable housing shortage, an ailing job market and ever increasing budget deficit, right now it is being estimated at around \$500 billion. This figure may increase dramatically, as a result of the war in Iraq with annual projected costs of about \$400 billion or more for each year.

These are the numbers that point to the specter of poverty in the United States; to better understand the impact of the present



**Michael Ibrahim**

examples of the living situations that were reported.

Reginald

Muse says he came from a nurturing family which

included a doting father. Not very long ago Muse began to experience financial and employment difficulties due primarily to medical setbacks or health problems. Muse is an African American male who is widely traveled and who graduated from the University of Chicago, yet he is only marginally aware of resources that would be available to someone as down on his luck as he is. According to Muse, "I have been struggling for what seems like forever. Living at home or with other relatives suddenly was not an option. In some cases grown children had already returned home—other siblings of mine, in my mother's case. This was also true with other relatives I turned to. Somehow, a relative knew someone and managed to find housing for me.

"Finding employment has become my sole focus in a way of speaking. I have this urgent need to be doing something, anything. Not being able to find any job which would allow me to become self-sufficient and independent of subsidies of any kind is causing me nothing but anxiety and depression. The longer the situation exists the darker things seem to me.

"I struggle every day because of health issues. Yet, I am striving for financial independence. My parents made it crystal clear that we are put on this earth to progress. Not to stagnate, merely existing from day to day in our attempts to overcome obstacles that would prevent us from being the best person we

could be. Life is always about growing by means of those activities contributing to our self-esteem. Of course, I understand that temporary set-backs often generate mild forms of depression; but the longer my situation continues the worst off I feel about myself. Programs for the disabled and a thriving economy would go along way to improve my case at least." Muse presently resides in a subsidized living space.

Robert Dillard is a man who says that he has been struggling over a very long period of time. Since he left his wife Myrtle in 1993 due to circumstances seemingly beyond his control, he has had a series of jobs, and continues to make every effort to better himself each day. Here's what Robert has to say: "I have gone from shelter to shelter and yes, I am one of those often referred to as the working poor, since I continued to try on my own to make ends meet without going over to the welfare offices or anything like that. My wife and family continue to live in Wisconsin. That's where they went after we lost our home. However, with accelerating rents and landlords becoming more persistent in their demands for higher and higher security deposits, I just don't seem to be able to better my situation.

"I am older now too. I have medical issues, such as high blood pressure, which in my case is serious or so my doctor tells me. For one thing, I seldom get the opportunity to eat better food. Eventually, I managed to stop staying at shelters and started staying at cheap hotels where many of Chicago's so-called working poor go, rather than staying at the Mission—one of the shelters most familiar to homeless people, and, also, absolutely the most notorious.

"Soon, in order to supplement my income, I began to sell *Streetwise* on weekends and at other times I had free from my regular jobs. Trying to make it on minimum-wage jobs in Chicago just doesn't seem to cut it. True, I need to seek out places to get more education for myself, but it is really hard to do anything like that when, for one thing, you are not used to doing it or looking for such places, and two,

when you do locate places that are willing to help you, the necessity for paying those high weekly rents at those "by-the-day" hotels, keeps you busy just trying to make ends meet. Those hotels are all over the North Side and a few are downtown and they're expensive.

"Then there's food which I mostly get from restaurants and some shelters or food pantries, not too many of which serve food that is nutritional for people. It is not that they don't intend to; it's that, I think as a society people have gotten so conditioned to whatever they can get as fast as they can get it until nobody really pays attention any more to how healthy the food is. And, that's



**Robert Dillard: "I just don't seem to be able to better my situation."**

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

true for people regardless of their economic level or educational background.

"The people who are really out there who are able to help people like me, what I say is that it seems to me like they are many times overworked and short-staffed. So when I come along I am just treated like a piece of paper, routinely pushed and shoved along as quickly as possible so that they can try and get services, as much as they can, for the next person. Believe me, as long as I've been here, I've truly come to understand why most people don't get the help they really need. It is because of the fact that most of these places simply try to keep you surviving which only forces you to remain at the level you are on."



**Reginald Muse: "I struggle every day because of health issues. Yet I am striving for financial independence."**

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

state of our economy, *Residents' Journal* interviewed a number of people in shelters, transitional living situations as well as a few in public housing. Here are a couple of

## right to life ad

# Altgeld Gardens Lawsuit Settlement

by Clemolyn  
“Pennie” Brinson

**A**ltgeld Gardens residents won a \$10.5 million dollar Class Action lawsuit settlement regarding environmental contamination with Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) this past summer.

But unlike most class action lawsuit winners, these residents won't be receiving their money in the form of a check, according to the attorney who represented the residents in the case. Instead, CHA will keep the money and award the plaintiffs credit toward their rent, according to Cheryl Johnson, President of the People for Community Recovery (PCR) of Altgeld Gardens, and Kim Johnson, Assistant Press Secretary with CHA.

**Residents' Journal** spoke with some of the residents involved in the case, and they said they are not happy with the decision that they won't be receiving payment in the way other successful plaintiffs do. Crystal Dalton, age 35, of 607 E. 131st St., said she heard that the amount to be awarded to each plaintiff is \$750. While a friend stood on the sidelines, Dalton said she spent about three years filling out papers, going back and forth to meetings, and answering more than 150 questions concerning the case, and she should at least receive a check for all the time she



**Clemolyn “Pennie” Brinson**

"Mr. Levy came out on his own and we had a meeting," said Dalton, "and he talked for a while. But when it became time for us to ask questions, it got out of hand. We couldn't ask too

many questions. So he left. We were trying to ask questions because they were talking about giving our money to housing for our rent, and we didn't want it like that."

Dalton's friend, who would not give her name, said, "And people came from all over the city that used to live in Altgeld Gardens for this meeting."

Levy told former residents of Altgeld Gardens, "if you don't live out here, [any more] we're going to pay off your bills," according to Dalton.

"We're not children," said Dalton. "We went through a lot and we've been a lot of places. How can somebody issue your dollars out to you . . . We're adults, we can pay our own bills, we've been paying them all these years."

Her friend, who has family that lives in Altgeld Gardens, said, "it kind of feels like slavery. We had won the Civil war and we're still working on the plantation, and you have to give all your money back to the boss just so that you can live there. They don't want you to go nowhere. They don't want you to prosper . . . You're giving the money back to the plantation owners. You don't even get it."

"And I'd like to see my money before I give it away," said Dalton's friend. "Just because you live in Altgeld Gardens, it doesn't mean that your time ain't valuable."

**Resident's Journal** spoke to Bernadette Williams, resident of Altgeld Gardens and president of the Local Advisory Council. She said, "I don't like the way the lawsuit went. People shouldn't be told the way that they have to spend their money."

Cheryl Johnson said that although most of the residents involved in the case

are not happy with the way the settlement is to be issued, she understands why it is paid out as credit. She said the residents couldn't prove their case that their health issues were a direct result of CHA negligence, and that CHA therefore violated the lease agreement by not providing a safe and healthy environment for the residents.

When asked about the plaintiffs who no longer live in Altgeld Gardens but who were affected by the environmental problem, Johnson said those people's money will go toward paying off what they owe CHA. She said regarding the environmental problem, as far as she knows, CHA did send out a team at least three times to clean up.

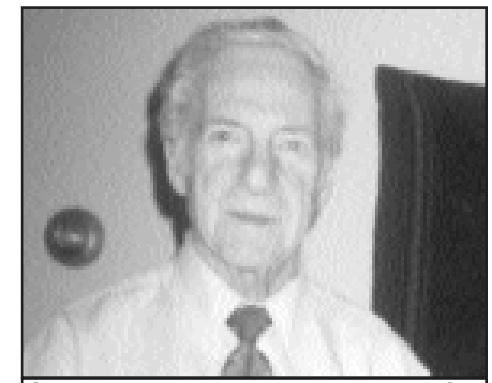
**Residents' Journal** also spoke with another Altgeld Gardens resident of 28 years, who asked to remain anonymous. He said he also filled out all the necessary paperwork for the case. When asked his opinion of the settlement, he said, "Short term, we won. Long term, we lost." He said, "The main element was environmental, and we lost. We would've won substantially on the environmental side."

**Residents' Journal** also spoke with the attorney for the plaintiffs, S. Jerome Levy. Levy was hired in the summer of 1999 and said that principally the problem was that PCBs were dumped in a storage yard in the middle of Altgeld Gardens, that they had been there for a period of about 20 years, and that PCBs can be hazardous. Levy expressed that in a settlement, usually no one is absolutely happy. He also informed **Residents' Journal** that the amount of \$750 per person might change to a higher amount.

The environmental issue that brought on the lawsuit started in the mid 1970's with transformers in Altgeld Gardens that had oil in them that contained PCBs, according to CHA's Kim Johnson. No one was aware of the PCBs until the mid 1980s, and when CHA was made aware of

the problem, it was reported to the Environmental Protection Agency, she said. The problem has since been cleaned up, Johnson added. "It took about two or three efforts to make sure it was all cleaned up," said Johnson.

When asked why the money isn't going directly to the residents, but instead is going toward rent credit, Johnson said that one of the claims of the residents was that if CHA had known about the contamination of the PCBs they would've charged less for rent. So that's why the



**S. Jerome Levy, attorney for Altgeld Garden residents in their class-action lawsuit against CHA.**

Photo by Clemolyn “Pennie” Brinson

settlement award will go toward rent.

Those plaintiffs who no longer live in CHA will have to supply information as to where their rent is paid, and their money will go to that third party, according to Johnson. There were approximately 5,000 plaintiffs in the case.

Johnson said the decision is technically not final yet because the money hasn't been distributed, but that the rent credit is to cover a 36-month period, and that the attorneys will establish a payment schedule for when and how the money will be allocated; and that half the \$10.5 million goes to the attorneys.



**Altgeld Gardens resident and litigant Crystal Dalton.**

Photo by Clemolyn “Pennie” Brinson

spent on the case.

S. Jerome Levy, the attorney representing the residents for the case, held a special meeting soon after the decision when he informed the residents of the settlement that the money would go toward paying their rent, Dalton said.

## CONDOLENCES

**RJ** sends regards to Rockwell Gardens LAC president Mary Baldwin, on the death of her brother who was killed in a car accident in December 2003.

Condolences to former **RJ** reporter Bobby Watkins, on the passing of his Aunt in December 2003.

Condolences also to **RJ** youth reporter lescha Griffin on the recent death of her mother, who was killed in an accidental shooting in early January 2004.

**public furni-  
ture**

# The Price of a Political Job

by Lorenzia Shelby

I did not have a particular interest in politics until a job search in Chicago gave me a firsthand view of the way "the game" was played here. My experience may interest the readers of *Residents' Journal*.

My first introduction to politics was long distance and began in 1952. General Dwight D. Eisenhower was campaigning to become the 34<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, and his commercials and jingles—"I like Ike!"—dominated the airwaves. Eisenhower served two terms as President of the United States. I watched the president and Vice President Richard M. Nixon on television during the Republican convention. It was one long hullabaloo, with drums banging, trumpets blasting and voices bellowing. I wasn't into politics. I was just observing white people on TV giving themselves a Grand Old Party. Later, from afar, I saw the election of John F. Kennedy and his assassination. My meager interest in politics continued through President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration and through the end of his presidency in 1968.

I expected stimulating, intellectual conversation about politics, but what I heard and saw were back-stabbing, throat-cutting, cheese-eating stoolies.

It was a dismal period of time. The first four months of the year claimed the lives of Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. That led to an upheaval to the 1968 Democratic Convention.

In the aftermath of Dr. King's death, there was rioting and looting in the black neighborhoods, there were buildings burned and businesses destroyed, and a lot of people were injured in all that madness. From the South Side to the North Side to the West Side to the East Side, it seemed that everyone was screaming and shouting about something. Some protested injustice in the war in Vietnam. Others protested race relations. The 1968 convention was held in Chicago, and it brought on a confrontation between the police and "hippies" in Grant Park that was the beginning of violence erupting all over the city, violence that was broadcast across the country and the world.

At the time of the Grant Park incident, I was part of a crew doing our landscaping duties when the police forced us to the Chicago Park District's 9th Street service yard in Grant Park. They wouldn't let us leave for fear that we would be mistaken as rioters by the police.

Why we were in Grant Park at that precise time? We were employees of the Chicago Park District. In those days, there were only two ways to become a Chicago Park District employee: you either took and passed the civil service test or you came in through politics. In 1968, I estimate that 97 percent of the employees in the 9th Street yard were political hires and the other three percent were hired through the civil service exam.

The civil service test consists of naming tools and equipment and their usage. To

come in through politics, you had to be affiliated with a Democratic organization. The City of Chicago had been monopolized by the Democratic Party for many, many years.

This is how the political process worked. The first person you approached about a job was your precinct captain. He or she would set up an appointment with the alderman. You would be given a verbal test; you will be tested on your personality, confidence, communication skills and your knowledge of the precinct where you lived. He would pick up a long piece of paper from his desk and begin to ask questions from it. It was called a poll sheet, and it listed all the precincts in his ward. He ran his forefingers down the page until he got to your precincts. He would read off an address and ask you to tell him who lived there. He didn't want you to guess; he wanted you to know. He called out four or five more addresses, and, if you answered his



Lorenzia E. Shelby

This coming Tuesday is an election day, and I would appreciate it if you would endorse candidate George Dunne."

I had rehearsed it until my little speech was nearly perfect.

Everything went fine until I knocked on Mrs. Urshire's door.

She and a few of her church members had just gotten home from church. I say a few members; it looked like she had brought the whole congregation home. She invited me in, and I walked in handing her a long sheet of paper with George Dunne and his staff's names on it. I started my sales speech, but she interrupted me before I could speak. She said, "Who is this?" and pointed at a name on the paper. I had to admit that I didn't know who that person was. There were twenty five names on that paper. I didn't know who they were nor the positions they held. She started reading names and which position they were in. I interrupted her.

I said, "Mrs. Urshire I only know two names on that paper. They are George Dunne and John Stroger. The others I never even heard of."

"You are here asking me to vote for someone," she said, "and you don't know who you are campaigning for?" She was performing, and her audience was enjoying itself at my expense. She looked at me and asked, "What is George Dunne's position?"

I said, "I don't know."

The three-flat building trembled from a monstrous roar of laughter released by her church members. I walked into Mrs. Urshire's house standing six feet, two inches tall and I walked out feeling less than two feet tall. I picked up my bag of political literature and went home. I dumped everything that was in my bag on my bed. I read everything that was in my bag, three times or more, over and over again.

The following Sunday, I went back to Mrs. Urshire's house ready for combat. I answered every question she asked me. At that moment, I knew more than she did about George Dunne and his staff.

Mrs. Urshire looked at me for a long time and said, "Mr. Shelby, I will be glad to endorse anyone that you're endorsing. Now you are ready to work your precinct." I left her house thinking, "So that is the duty of a precinct captain." I asked a chauffeur in the 9th Street yard what he thought it took to be a good precinct captain. He said that you must be able to look people straight in their eyes and tell them the biggest lie that you can create and make them believe you.

Precinct captains must be willing to help their voters any way they can. They must be aware of garbage needing to be picked up, when literature is in from the ward office and then pass it out to the voters and engage in other activities that are, all together, known as "working the precinct."

When I was at the park district, working the precinct was not the only thing that was required of you in order to keep your job. There were other obligations included in maintaining your employment. There was a monthly due to pay. You had to buy raffle tickets and spend money on other social activities, and you gave money to your precinct captain on Election Day. Those raffles and other kinds of tickets cost anywhere from five or ten dollars to two hundred dollars. If you refused to purchase the tickets, you were fired. A former employee, Obie Walker said, "This is the only job that I ever had that I had to pay for the privilege to work."

Those employees were laborers in the landscape maintenance department. Their job description included cutting grass, picking up trash and marking baseball and football fields, among other summer duties. In the winter, they shoveled snow, spread salt on sidewalks and sprayed water in below-zero weather, making ice skating rinks. They worked from 6 a.m. until 11 p.m. They could tell how cold it was by looking at the water; when it looked like blue smoke, the water was freezing. Working in those temperatures was very difficult to do. And they were the lowest paid employees in Chicago Park District.

Political employees were still obligated to the organization in this way until the Shakman decree, named for the attorney who successfully litigated the case, was established in 1979. The Shakman decree prohibits political hiring practices in Chicago.

The age old question of who runs the Chicago Park District can be answered a couple of different ways.

On the Chicago Park District website, the board of commissioners is said to run the park district. "The Mayor of the city of Chicago appoints the Chicago Park District's seven-member board. The board is the governing body of the Chicago Park District. The board has three standing committees under which business is done: administration, programs and recreation, and capital improvements. The office of the secretary serves as the coordinating staff to the board."

The reality, I discovered decades ago,

E Duke Ad

# Positive People

by Crystal Medina

## *Deidre Brewster*

You can sense warmth and happiness from former Cabrini-Green resident Deidre Brewster, a wife and mother of three, when you first meet her. This lends her an air of straightforwardness that probably makes it easier for her to be such a helpful person in her former community.

Deidre Brewster is a relocated resident of Cabrini Green waiting for more low income housing to be built. She is also an activist. What motivated her to fight for the residents in the first place was that she was concerned that Chicago was turning into a city for the rich.

"Before, there was racism; now there



**Former Cabrini resident Deidre Brewster**

Photo by Mary C. Johns

will be classism. I think there will come a time that Chicago will rent to the rich only. That's dangerous," she says.

Deidre has an authentic sign from back in the day, when there was segregation. She purchased it from a little store down South. It reads:

### **"RENT TO COLORED"**

At first, it offended her. Then she realized that she could sit back and complain about it or she could do something about it.

"I believe in making things happen," she says.

She's taken this sign to many meetings as a reminder to not let history repeat itself. Needless to say, she has also raised many eyebrows.

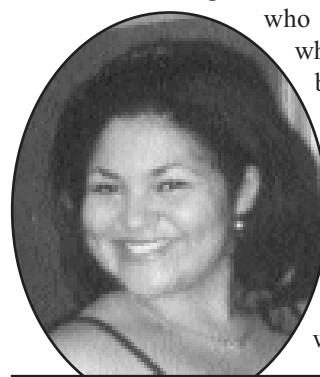
Brewster believes you have to stand up, speak out, don't be moved and stand united. Through her activism, she helps organize meetings so that the residents of Cabrini-Green can speak out about what is going on in their development. She sometimes helps expose stuff to the press, like for instance, recent problems with the heat in the buildings in the family high-rise development [see story, this issue, page 5]. They had none. She says if they (the residents and her) hadn't gone to the press, it probably wouldn't have been known.

Through her awareness of different organizations, she refers residents to job training such as learning construction and carpentry and computer training.

"Success will be up to the individual: I can lead the horse to water but I can't make him drink," Brewster says.

"Most people do take full advantage of the opportunities being given to them," she adds.

Brewster says the residents she grew



**Crystal Medina**

up with are the people who taught her what it meant to be a good neighbor and the true meaning of what a community was.

"This will always be my community, no matter

where I decide to sleep," she says.

When asked if she had any advice for the residents of public housing she said, "Homelessness has no color, no class; it could be us today, and the so called well-off person tomorrow. Let's just remember not to forsake the poor."

## *Javon Jackson*

At only seventeen years old, Javon Jackson is a very busy young man. This articulate student attends Jean Baptiste Point DuSable High School. He is head of the student council, the Local School Council student representative, chairperson

on the student advisory board and the former student board member of the Chicago Board of Education.

"I try to remain a strong asset to other young folks because I feel we are going to carry on the rest of this world," Javon said.

Not only is he very involved in school but holds a job at a roofing and construction company as a labor worker. Last, but certainly not least, he is a licensed and ordained minister of the gospel.

"I was sitting in school one day, [last year] it was about 1:30 p.m., and I heard the voice of the Lord say, 'It's your time.' I said, 'Lord, if it is you, say it again.' and I heard 'It's your time.' I talked to my minister and he put me through training," Javon explained. He now preaches at a non-denominational church on the South Side.

Sadly, his father passed away last year, and now he lives with his grandparents who have raised the majority of his 14 siblings – nine brothers and five sisters. His grandparents have been his role models, along with Dr. Gloria Archbold, former principal of DuSable High School, and the current principal, Carol Briggs.

"She...does everything for the children," Javon said in describing Principal Briggs.

He has referred to Zenobia Johnson-Black, Executive Director of the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, as a mother figure.

"When you find a young man as talented, committed, moral and focused as Javon, it's up to our community to embrace him, protect him and promote him. I hope I can play a positive role in his development," Johnson-Black said.

Javon loves computers. He is into graphics and design technology. He wants to be a medical doctor. His lifelong dream is to earn a doctorate degree (in anything) before the age of 26.

As the wise young man he is, he leaves you with, "This world is serious. We as



**Positive youth Javon Jackson**

Photo by Crystal Medina

# Obama ad

# Harold Ickes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

## *Rehab clock ticking*

**A**lthough the Chicago Housing Authority is actively pursuing the great change of housing stock from high rise to low rise to the tune of \$1.6 billion, the change has been slow in coming to the Harold Ickes Homes. In the year 2001, some vacant apartments were remodeled and some new tenants moved in. At that time CHA announced that all the apartments were to be remodeled. But, so far, that is not so. Many residents say we seem to stay on square one.

**I**n the year 2001, some vacant apartments were remodeled and some new tenants moved in. At that time CHA announced that all the apartments were to be remodeled. But, so far, that is not so. Many residents say we seem to stay on square one.



Jacqueline Thompson

the kids went outside to play as usual, to play where I could see them, where my uncle sat on the steps and could see them, right out of my windows. We live on the first

the afternoon."

Mr. Arnold, with tears still streaming from his eyes, expressed his frustration at this point by trying to reason out why the huge dumpster that proved to be the site of the fatality was allowed to be there for such a long time. Arnold explained that it is attracted many children who used it as a playground.

Mrs. Arnold continued her explanation of what happened.

**K.A.** "Five minutes or so after they left the house running to play, one child came back saying, 'Rambo is dead.'

"I ran out to where he lay by the door that swings open to the dumpster and found Rambo lying, bleeding from behind his ear. His

father rushed him over to Mercy hospital, where they pronounced him dead."

Mrs. Arnold reported that the dumpster is still very much present outside their windows and

floor or the ground floor.

"We were not worried. They did this daily. It was about 5:30 in

there are three dangerous large cushion couches discarded against the dumpster. This sort of cushion is



**Friends of four-year-old Rodney "Rambo" Bridges pay their respects.**

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

another attraction to children living in the development. Other children in the family, according to Mrs. Arnold, are reporting nightmares because of the constant visual reminder of the dumpster.

Mrs. Arnold recently went to the management office to ask for an accelerated relocation date, she said. Management told her that it would take some time because, even though she is eligible, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has taken over the job

of new housing for her family's particular circumstances.

## *The National Teachers Academy*

Recently, representatives of the National Teachers Academy led a tour at the school for seven participants from London, England.

**(Continued on Page 19)**

## *Death respects no one*

**I**n early October, two young men were shot on the ninth floor of an Ickes high-rise at 2250 S. State St., allegedly after they were involved in an altercation at a party. One victim died, and one is still alive on a life support system.

During the wee hours of one November morning, three young adults were shot at Ickes. Fortunately none of the victims were killed. But as usual, death has no respect for person, and we lost a three-year-old child in an unrelated incident.

"Rambo," whose real name is Rodney Bridges, would have been four years old on January 17, 2004 but died following a fall while playing in a large dumpster outside his family's home. In his short life span, neighbors said, he was known for his strength and intelligence. He was born to Frederick and Kathy Arnold of 44 W. 24<sup>th</sup> St. He attended Henry Booth Head Start and was described as enthusiastic and anxious to discover new things daily.

This reporter was filled in with unsolicited rumors of how he died, was taken to the hospital, etc., but I patiently waited for an opportunity to interview the parents in order to set the record straight.

**K.A.** "...[H]e would be sitting at home waiting for his older sibling to arrive so that he could go outside and play with them. He would look forward to this every day."

**R.J.** "What time did the accident occur?"

**K.A.** "On the day it happened,

# per scholas ad



# Young Philosophers



## How Gang Violence Affected My Life

by Daniela Medrano

"Light me up," Victor suggested. I sparked up my lighter and lit the firecracker with it. He laid it down on the street along with the black sawdust-like gun powder. There was a fluid and continuous racket going down on Ridgeview Street. There he stood, my adoration, my idol, role model, friend, brother, father. He was all that and more to me. I took for granted the unforgettable moments we shared. It was the Fourth of July and I had nothing better to do. I took a seat on the curb, sitting between a pitch black Pontiac and lime green Volkswagen. Victor looked up at me and with a slight grin requested another beer.

"Put some lemon and salt," he said. I remember those words clearly.

Victor was always a polite person. Not only that, but he was also the best person anyone with problems could ever go to. I don't know how he managed to have such good enthusiasm and yet be a coke addict. That didn't bother me though. He was 22 and whatever problems he had wouldn't ever be noticed. I secretly saw him as God. Everyone thought it was wrong of me to think in such a way but no one knew him like I did. Although he lacked good friends that would influence him well, he was the best. I admired him because he had the ability to say 'no' to gangs and still remain friends with everyone.

Everyone except his best friend's rival gang.

They were a well-known gang, a little up west. They were known for performing unthinkable actions with no remorse whatsoever. We started packing up the fireworks for next year. It was getting late and I was going to get one when I got home. It was already about 1:20 a.m. I had an

11 p.m. curfew. I didn't even care, though. Victor made me feel fierce and as if no one could mentally or physically destroy me.

Victor was saying goodbye to all his friends when a suspicious dark green Camaro came down the opposite one-way street and turned, simultaneously turning off their lights. I automatically felt tension from corner to corner.

"Duck it!" I heard a guy scream faintly from across the street. Everyone ducked in syncopation.

Everyone except Victor and a girl who was frantically screaming.

A girl who should have been anywhere but there.  
A girl who many have no pity for.

I t was as if the world had come to an end and Victor rushed toward the bullet like a centerfield at the World Series.

It was as if the world had come to an end and Victor rushed toward the bullet like a centerfield at the World Series.

Continuous shots were heard -- one, two, three, four, five, six. The shattered body of my life was lying before my eyes. No tears could escape my sockets. No words could escape my mouth. I had no control over my body movements. I stood still, eyes closed, not wanting to hear any police sirens, screams or any more shots. At that very moment of my life, I wished I never had one.

If I only could have returned your pages, if I only

lies. Parents are worried their child is going to get hurt by someone or something. Bullies are a number one problem in school. I get bullied a lot, but I don't do anything. I'm not the guy who goes up to people and says, "Give me your money" or, "Hey you--your momma." No, I don't do that. I'm a person who wants to be something, like a doctor or lawyer. Bullies also want to get attention from other people. Or they think they are cool because they just punched someone or screamed at someone. A lot of people come up to me and insult me, but I just ignore them.

[W]hat prevents racism is education and an open mind.  
-Julia Rooney, 33

I just want to say, bullies, if you are reading this, why won't you just get along and try not to be someone you don't want to be.

Rooney said she was bullied when she was young.

"I went to a small school and had 10 friends who fought and then got together again," she said. "I was small and I wasn't popular. Even today, I still have feelings from that."

I asked why teens turn into bullies.

"They see adults as role models and get it from them," she said. "I think they're not necessarily as mean as they would like to be seen as."

I interviewed Rachel Mandel, a 22-year-old mentor at Onward House, about racism.

She said, "It is unhealthy and people should not view others by what they look like on the outside, but on the inside."

I asked how she thinks people can stop being racist.

"Through education, being knowledgeable about other cultures and treating differences with respect," she

could have told you how I felt. If only that could have been me. God, my life had been perfect until that day, the day that only moans escaped my body.

The day you took my love from me. Along with his body went my tolerance, sympathy and understanding for these beasts, these savage animals that took the life of someone's son, friend, brother and god.

When I was hit by reality, I was able to let out one single tear. No longer was I the strong girl everyone thought I was. I was weak. I couldn't stop my own world from ending. I felt like I was an insignificant animal just like them.

When my eyes opened, so did my train of thought and it started running again, but to me there was no use.

People scattered unto alleys, houses, cars. Cars screeched onto one-way streets, leaving nothing but soaked clothes and terrified faces.

Victor, the only one out of the group of barbarians who had a life, a goal and no desire to join the street life he refused to be lured into.

Why him? Why not the girl who went past her curfew and refused to listen to her mom when she told her to leave?

Another set of barbarians with rights came to the "rescue." Pointing guns at everyone, even my other half that lay hopelessly panting for one last breath of this cruel world which he belonged to.

My first words since the event were, "He's still alive. Open the car door. Get him in there. He's going to live."

None of my words were able to be turned into actions. The "men" in uniform weren't going to permit that. We were to wait for an ambulance that would never come.

## Racism and Bullies

by Alexis Salgado

As I've grown up in this world, I've seen so many things...so many unpleasant things in this world. There's a lot of hatred with people: a lot of hatred which is called racism. Racism is when people do not like other cultures besides their own. There was a lot of racism in the 1700s and in the 1950s. Black and white people did not get along. Today there's little racism going on in the world. One of the few examples of racism is in my school, Mitchell Elementary School, where people have problems interacting. Racism includes students making racist remarks and having arguments with people of other nationalities.

Julia Rooney, a 33-year-old teacher at Association House, said what prevents racism is education and an open mind. She said kids start to notice racism around their pre-teen years or maybe around age 10 and up.

At Mitchell there are different kinds of cultures. There are black, white and Latino students and there are always fights. No matter who is fighting they get suspended and they start hating each other. I don't like it at all. I want this to end but I think the only thing that they want is attention. That's all they want--attention--and I don't like that. People shouldn't be fighting over stupid stuff. They should be supporting their friends and being there for their friends.

It doesn't matter if your skin is a different color. What matters is your personality. It's not the outer beauty, it's the inner beauty.

I just want to say to all kids, pre-teens and teens--don't waste your time on how you look. Spend your time on education and learning.

But it is harder to learn at school because of the bul-

said.

I asked if she had ever experienced racism. She said, "Not racism but discrimination."

I asked what examples of racism she has seen.

"I saw a person in the market treating a customer who was white better than a customer who was African-American," she said.

I asked what people should do in situations like this.

"They should speak up and defend themselves and their equal rights," she said.

I asked when people first become conscious of racism. She said, "Around age 10 or 11, or fifth or sixth grade."

I asked if racism is less today than in the past.

"I don't think it's better, there's still racism and discrimination," she said. "But it's to a different extent than before the civil rights movement."

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# When Teachers Go on Strike

## by Daisy Bahena

When students first heard that some teachers were thinking about going on strike for a new contract to get a raise and better health insurance premiums last fall, some students were mad, others were confused and the rest really did not care. A school strike affects students in many ways, and it is important for adults to know what we think about it. They should not make decisions without us students saying what we think if it will affect us.

Some students were mad because if the teachers went on strike, school would be canceled and most of them would not be able to see their classmates. Some would be bored at home with nothing to do and others who like going to school would be miserable. Also we would get the school time we missed during the strike made up during the summer.

Other students were confused because they did not get enough information from the teachers or the teachers did not explain well enough why they were thinking about going on strike. The rest really did not care because school would be canceled, and some students are happy when school is out.

A school strike can affect a student in

many ways. When there is a school strike, school is canceled. Don't get too excited though. Where do these students stay if their parents are at work? When a school strike happens, the time school begins and ends could change in order to make up for the lost time. What if someone gets dropped off and picked up at a certain time and the person that drops them off and picks them up is not available at the new times? What if you were that student?

Do you think teachers are being selfish by thinking about going on strike? It is not simple for teachers to go on strike. They do not get paid for that. It is also not simple for teachers in school.

Some teachers do not get enough respect from students

as they should. They have a lot of work to do, from teaching the students to grading the students' work, and they do not get paid enough or get good health insurance premiums.

I interviewed two students about what they think about teachers going on strike. I interviewed Alex Rodriguez, 15, a student at Roberto Clemente High School.

Q: How did you first hear of the possible teachers strike?

Alex: From my aunt.

Q: What do you think of school strikes?

**A  
school strike affects students in many ways and it is important for adults to know what we think.**

Alex: I think it is dumb because we get more school and less vacation in the summer.

Q: Why do you think teachers go on strike?

Alex: Because they don't get paid enough.

Q: Did the possible strike affect you?

Alex: No because I didn't pay any attention to it.

Q: Do you think teachers care about students?

Alex: Some of them do and some of them don't.

I also interviewed Elyssa Matos, a student at Mitchell Elementary School.

Q: How do you feel about school strikes?

Elyssa: I think they're stupid.

Q: Do you think there's anything good about school strikes?

Elyssa: No, it's just that the teachers want more money.

Q: Do you think the teachers like going on strike?

Elyssa: No, because they wouldn't be paid at that time unless they have a second job.

Q: Why do you think the teachers were

going to go on strike?

Elyssa: Because they wanted more money.

Q: If the strike had happened, would you want it to end quickly?

Elyssa: Yes because I don't want to go to school in the summer.

I interviewed a social studies teacher at Mitchell Elementary School, Janet Deutsch.

Q: How do you feel about strikes?

Deutsch: I feel the teachers have a right to strike, but it should be after negotiations fail.

Q: Is there anything good about school strikes?

Deutsch: You could end up with more money, a better deal and a better contract.

Q: Do teachers like going on strike?

Deutsch: Absolutely not. They hate it!

Q: Why were the teachers talking about going on strike?

Deutsch: [The proposed contract] was a long five year contract without good enough health care premiums or raises.

Q: How did you feel when the strike didn't happen?

Deutsch: Relieved!

In conclusion, I just hope they don't go on strike or think about going on strike in the future. Teachers should get paid more so they don't have to go on strike and students can get a better education.

# Domestic Violence: Danger Disguised as Pleasure

## by Megan Greenberg

"The methods of control include name calling, verbal put-downs, isolating the victim from family and friends, withholding money, physical harm or threat of physical harm and sexual assault." This is how Cheryl Murphy described domestic violence in the July/August 2003 edition of *Residents' Journal*.

Some people say that when a man or a woman puts his or her hand on me, then I'm gone. But is this always true? What if the victim claims to love this person? Or believes this person has changed? What do you do then? How do you help this person? This is an issue that many teens have to deal with every day. And if you are the victim's friend, then you are caught in the middle of everything that happens.

I have a friend who is in a domestic violence relationship and she won't listen to anything I have to say. When she first told me about her "girlfriend," I didn't judge her because my mom has always told me to respect a person for who they are on the inside and not on the outside. But when she told me who the girl was, I just shook my head. All she did was laugh and told me that the girl has changed and doesn't hit her girlfriends anymore. I didn't say anything. I just thought to myself, "Well, if that's who she wants to be with, then let her. She'll learn the hard way."

A couple of days passed and my brother called me telling me that something happened to my friend. He said that her mom came up to the school yelling and screaming at everyone. All I thought was that she hit her. And that was exactly what had happened.

Ever since their so-called "relationship" started, my friend was being abused. My friend had bruises all over her body, along with big, nasty hickies. Her kneecap was also busted open along with a couple of bruised veins. She could barely walk. Her mother told her she couldn't talk to her girlfriend any more because she was trying to take over her life.

Which was true. Every time I would call her to ask her to go somewhere with me, her girlfriend would pick up her cell phone. Then I would have to ask to speak to my friend. A couple of times I would curse the girl out because I was not going to ask to speak to my friend when it is her phone. So after her girlfriend would pass her the phone, I would ask her to go to the mall with me or to get something to eat. She would then say, "Hold on let me ask her." I always thought she was talking about her mom. But she wasn't. She was talking about her girlfriend. After I found out about this, I talked to her. She ignored me, so I let it go.

Then the situation got worse. At least every other day my friend would call me with a new story. I would try to give her advice but she would ignore me. So I finally asked her why she was with the girl and what she was getting out of the relationship. She said she loved her and that she believed that one day her girlfriend was going to change. I told her that was a lie. Her girlfriend wouldn't change, I explained, because she lets her hit her and doesn't even tell her to stop. I then told her that her mother was right. She did need to leave her alone before she starts doing other things. She didn't listen to me. So I gave up.

On the night of my friend's homecoming, her girlfriend gave her a black eye.

My friend came to my house crying. I let her in and talked about the situation. She said that the relationship between them was over and that her mom was right. That night, we had the time of our lives. At the end of the night, she thanked me for being there for her. For once, I finally felt relieved. Well, until the following Friday.

At around 6:30 p.m., I received a phone call from my friend's mom. She hadn't seen or heard from her daughter since that morning. I was speechless. I didn't know where she was so I called her cell phone. No one answered. I was surprised. So I called her mom back. It was now around seven. She told me that she had found her with her girlfriend at the park. I was speechless again so I just hung up the phone.

The next morning I received another phone call. This time it was my friend. We had a long conversation. She said that she was very sorry and apologized. I accepted her apology. That night, we just had a girls night out. Myself, her and three other girls we know. We had a lot of fun. It was just something to do to relieve everyone's stress for a day.

The following Wednesday, I went to work at Hands Without Guns and we had a group discussion on domestic violence. I told them about my story and they were very proud of me and I was proud of myself. I had never been in a situation like this before.

I thought everything had gone the way I wanted it to until that Monday. On my way home from school, my brother called me and told me that my friend did not end her relationship with her girlfriend and they were still dating. I couldn't believe it. All my hard work and dedication for nothing.

Even though my friend doesn't know that I found out, I am still here for her.

I guess what I am trying to say is that domestic violence is a very serious problem in America and it seems as though people are not paying any attention to the problem. I feel like adults are blind and can't see a situation when it is right in front of them. We need to come together as a nation and stop this problem now before it is too late. I don't want the next generation to see and go through the things I have witnessed.

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## Innocent Bystanders by Shacara Hudson

I really don't understand why people have to kill someone to prove a point. Violence is not the answer. There has been a lot of discussion on the subject of gang violence and innocent bystanders losing their lives for nothing.

Being 16 years old, I never thought that I would experience the death of someone that was like family to me of this age, let alone that I would be at the scene of his death. On June 29, 2002 my "play brother," Dashawn J. Harris, was shot down. He was sitting on a porch when someone came from the side of the porch and shot him eight times. He was announced dead on the scene.

I remember it like yesterday. I was on the next block at 69th Street and Michigan Avenue, and when I heard the gun shots, I was only thinking it was someone setting off firecrackers. But someone said Dashawn was shot in the head.

I was in shock at first. Then I realized what he said. I ran off the porch and when I hit 69th Street and Indiana Avenue, they were already putting him in the ambulance.

I fell to my knees in disbelief. I still didn't believe he was dead. People were hugging me and telling me it was going to be okay. I was in such disbelief that the ambulance was still sitting there and I was screaming and asking why haven't they pulled off, he probably could make it.

The next day the block was like zombies and nobody wanted to talk. I was just too hurt that Dashawn was gone. When his mother went to the morgue, she saw that, though he was shot all over his body,

**T**oday's violence is ridiculous, baby - these gangbangers killing everybody with the drugs.  
-Cassandra Wilson

reportedly with a sawed-off shot gun, he was never shot in his head. Everybody really missed him. They put flowers and bears and candles on the porch of his house and a giant card.

He meant so much to me. He was the one I went to talk to when I had problems. He was a very cool "big brother" to be around, the type of person you could tell anything to.

A few weeks after he was killed, his daughter was born. She never got to even experience what a good father she would have had. He didn't deserve to die the way he did. People would tell me he's in a better place and he's happy now and he wouldn't want me to be upset.

But he died so young, only 21 years old. You don't know how much you care for someone until they're gone but I never thought I would see Dashawn, a.k.a. "Dirt," leave the face of the earth, not like that anyway. The funeral was sad. People cried so hard and as his body went down, people cried even harder.

Here is a poem I wrote for those who have lost someone:

You are gone forever

And you're never coming back

I t  
s e e m s  
like only  
yesterday  
I

stretched my arms

for a hug

On your back

To think of you as being

Gone to me it seems unheard of

To me it seems foolish. But I know

It's true that your body, your soul

flies free like a graceful dove

No longer will I suffer, no longer will

I cry

No matter what, you're still alive in my eyes.

I took the time to interview some people about gang violence of the type that killed Dashawn.

Tyrone Smith, 14, said, "Well I think that people getting killed for no reason, just getting caught in the crossfire, is

wrong."

He said he is in a gang, "so I can't say too much about gang violence because sometimes I cause the violence. I never killed no one, just beat them up real bad."

I asked why he feels he has to use violence to prove a point. He said, "Well I feel that way because my friend will think I'm a punk and beat me up" if he doesn't.

So you're just using violence to protect yourself?

"Yeah, that's it," he said.

Then I interviewed Cassandra Wilkins, 45. She said, "Today's violence is ridiculous, baby-these gangbangers killing everybody with the drugs-and honey let me just be the one to tell you I always call the police."

I said, "I know that's right Ms. Wilkins. Gang violence killed my friend."

She said, "Well I'm sorry baby. These boys around here with pants sagging and oversized shirts; they think they cool."

Youth violence is on the rise nationwide. The purpose of me talking about this is to make the public aware that crime and violence in the U.S. is on the upswing. Homicide is the second leading cause of death for our nation's young people age 15 to 24, and in 1992, homicide claimed the lives of over 25,000 Americans.

Based on the 1996 Law Enforcement Survey, there are an estimated 23,000 gangs in the U.S. with 665,000 members, and that number could be even higher now.

## Teens Abandoning Their Babies: Finding Another Way

### by Serrita Douglas

I have heard of a lot of teen girls abandoning their babies, just leaving them on the street or sidewalk. A story in Teen People magazine in May 2002 told the story of a 19-year-old girl who abandoned her baby. The girl in this story was a senior in high school who got good grades. She lost her virginity to a guy she had dated only a few times. Two months later, she found out she was pregnant.

If I were to become pregnant and scared, the first thing I would do is tell my mom. I know she would tell me the right thing to do. But not everyone has someone they can talk to who would understand and listen to them. I can't even imagine abandoning a baby. There are so many places you can go for help, including crisis hotlines or a church or community center in your area. In Pennsylvania there is an organization called A Hand to Hold; in New York there is Children of Hope; and in Ohio there is Second Chance for Life. In Colorado there is a program called the Baby Rescue Program and there is a law that protects mothers from prosecution for leaving their baby with this program.

Tony Washington, 33, said she would give her child up for adoption if she was a pregnant teen.

"I could not abandon my baby because I didn't know how to provide for it," she said. "I would give it up for adoption because I wouldn't have the money to provide for its needs."

She said she thinks teens abandon their babies because they don't have any help and they don't know what to do.

"They're scared and have little hope in life," she said. "They like to run the streets and they don't know how to be responsible."

Dominique, 17, said she would keep her baby if she got pregnant. "[Abandoning it] might cross my mind, but I wouldn't be able to go through with it," she said. "I would keep it because I would love it very much." She said teens probably abandon their babies because they can't handle the pressure and the fathers aren't around. She said if she has a baby, she will "comfort it and make sure it is loved and try to afford anything it needs."

Seniqua, 17, said if she got pregnant, the first thing she would do is sit down and talk to her mother.

"Then I would talk to my boyfriend Teddy and tell him I'm pregnant," she said. "And I would keep the baby."

She said she would never abandon a baby because she has more motivation than most teens who abandon babies.

"They don't really know what they're doing," she said.

She said if she had a baby, she would find a job.

Marie Jeanty, 19, said she would keep her baby because the baby didn't ask to be here and "because God gave me the ability to have a child so I should keep the child."

"I've been pregnant twice before, and the first time I thought about adoption but I couldn't go through with it," she said. "And I'm glad I didn't because I love my son and

he and my younger son are who I live for." She also would never abandon her baby. "After I went through so many months of carrying it and delivering it, abandoning it would be a hard thing to do," she said.

She said teens abandon their babies because they can't afford to care for them and they don't feel ready for it.

"They don't want to be bothered by a baby, fearing it will get in the way of the things they want to do," she said.

She said if she had another baby she would get a job and "save my money in the bank for hard times and things like doctor

visits, taxi ride to the hospital, food

a n d  
clothes."

She said she thinks some

teens abandon their babies because of post-partum depression

"or the overwhelming feeling of having a baby." Jacque Wurtzelbacher, 55, said that when she was a teenager, if a girl got pregnant, she would have to go to an unwed mothers' home and then give it up for adoption. "I think some teens abandon their babies because they have no adults to help them," she said. "And probably most of the adults they know are against them. They are scared and confused and lost without any support."

She said there should be a lot more support programs to help teen parents and help them keep going to school.

"Our society doesn't support its adult parents, let alone teen parents," she said.

She said that when she had a baby 30

years ago, there wasn't much awareness of post-partum depression, but now there is more awareness. "Every mother should be evaluated and prepared in case she starts feeling depressed," she said. "There are things doctors can do to help her recover after childbirth."

Querina Burns, 43, said, "Considering I was faced with pregnancy at the age of 13, I chose to keep my baby as opposed to my family's wishes to abort it." She said teens abandon their babies because of "fear, the father not being supportive and the social stigma."

Donyea Moore, 15, said she would give a child up for adoption. "Teens probably abandon their babies because they can't afford the expenses and can't handle the child crying," she said.

Edwin Thompson, 52, said he would never give up or abandon a child.

"I would bring it up the way I was brought up," he said.

He said that "fortunately today, the medical community is more aware of post-partum depression and it works to assist women suffering from this illness."

In conclusion, I think instead of mothers throwing their babies in the streets, they should be taking the babies somewhere safe and warm, an organization like a church or a hospital, for example. Then a higher authority like DCFS can come in and take care of the baby's needs. All the states should make it a law that a woman can give up her baby without any legal problems, because that way fewer abandoned babies would die from hunger, heat or cold.

## Teens Have Babies; Grandparents Have Work by Sheena Rhodes

I don't believe that teenagers should have children if they can't take care of them properly. Many teenagers feel that when they have babies, their parents are obligated to take care of them because they are the grandparents. But that is not true. If they have children, they should take care of them with all means necessary. These teenagers don't realize that this is a great responsibility to take and they have to become adults whether they are ready or not.

The grandparents love their grandchildren, no question about it. But it's time for them to relax, retire and enjoy life. To bring the baby around so that he or she will know their grandparents is good. But when they have to raise them it can become a problem.

Some grandparents choose not to say anything because they love their children and they want nothing but the best for the both of them, even though it's a big inconvenience for the grandparents.

And if they don't take care of the baby, it might be neglected in some way. It might not be fed and dressed properly. That's another issue, that many teens don't know how to dress their babies. In the winter time, they wonder why the baby is always sick, when they take the babies outside and don't have scarves on them and blankets covering them.

Many babies grow up with asthma and suffer from bronchitis, and that can come from the weather when they aren't covered properly.

## Cops and Youth by Elyssa Matos

This article is about cops and their relationships with teens. I think cops should have better relationships with teens. The situation is challenging. The teens often feel like they could never please the cops. The cops often feel like the teens don't understand that they are giving them a chance. The cops and the teens have two different versions and different understandings of the same story.

These are some of the questions teens have: why do the police seem to go after teens just because of what they wear? Why do they act different when they are talking to teens as opposed to adults? How come the first thing that comes out of their mouth when something bad happens is, "Must have been a group of teens?" I think it could change. The teens that

If children are neglected at a very young age, they might feel that vibe and repeat it. If they don't feel loved as they grow up, that can cause them to have low self-esteem. I know that teenagers don't mean to neglect their babies, but they have young minds and they still haven't lived their lives and they have a very small view of the world. Hopefully, as these teenagers grow up, they realize the importance of being a responsible parent and they try to change. Some parents stay in denial and think that everyone else is responsible for their child; others become responsible parents.

Robert Morris College student Jennifer Wales, 42, said, "I don't think that teenagers should be having babies because they're not responsible enough. My daughter just had a baby girl six months ago, and I have to constantly tell her when to change the diapers. She also didn't hold the baby's neck properly and I told her that she could pop her neck, but she thinks she knows it all. The baby is trying to walk so she is messing with everything, and [my daughter] feels that since she can crawl, she doesn't have to watch her at all times."

She said teenagers are not responsible partly because they are just busy doing normal teenage things.

"It becomes the grandparents' responsibility because the teens don't know how to take care of these babies," she said. "For example, they don't respond quickly enough when the baby is in danger, like if it is trying to put its finger in an electrical socket or putting something in its mouth. The grandparents aren't obligated to take full responsibility for these babies, but they don't want to see anything happen to them."

I feel sorry for those who don't have parents to help them with their struggles and tough roads. But those who

I talked to said they would try to help change things if the cops were willing to work with them.

I interviewed a few teens about their feelings about cops. I asked how they feel about cops.

Sylvia Arzate, 13, said, "I don't like them. They think they're all that."

Alberto Ramirez, 14, said, "Some are rude and some are nice, depending on who the cop is."

"They bully everybody around," said Aracely Arzate, 12.

"I don't like some of them," said Daisy Bahena, 13. "Most of them don't respect people."

I asked if cops overreact sometimes, like when they act like any group of teens on the street is a gang.

"Yes," said Sylvia Arzate. "They act like they can do whatever they want."

"Most of the time they overreact," said Bahena.

do have parents to help don't realize how blessed they are.

Samuel Johnson, a man interviewed at the laundromat where he works, said, "I don't have any children but I see young girls struggling every day of my life trying to get from point A to point B. I feel sorry for them because they are so young and they really haven't lived their lives. If I had children, I wouldn't want to see my grandchildren go through these terrible issues because of their mom and dad."

He said he was in a situation where a young girl who was a friend of his sister's asked if she could stay at his house with her small baby because she had nowhere to go.

"I really didn't know what to say because this could have become a problem," he said. "I didn't know too much about her, but I let her stay because I felt sad for her and it worked out for the best."

A lot of people might not have cared, but Johnson was considerate.

Keisha Brown, 16, has a two-year-old she raises by herself.

"I feel that I raise my baby very well," she said. "I was happy when I found out I was pregnant. My mother didn't take care of me growing up; I live with my grandmother and grandfather. My mother wasn't there for me, and now she's not there for my baby. My mother would always make promises to me and then break them, but I grew to know that she wasn't responsible and I will do the exact opposite. I feel that I will give my baby all the love that I lacked. I wanted my baby to show my mother what a true mom is and what it means."

"Whenever they see kids on the corner or a group of kids they think they're a gang."

Ramirez agreed. "They act like they're perfect. They want to get everything done their own way. And some are racist," he said.

I asked if they'd ever gotten stopped by a cop or had an experience with one.

"One time gang members went through my back yard and they asked me where they went to," said Ramirez.

"They thought I was bad but they couldn't search me because I'm a girl," said Bahena.

I asked what cops and teens can do to work together better and prevent crime.

"If they respected us," said Bahena.

"By not bullying people and not cursing people," said Aracely Arzate.

remar ad

# Stop the Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

**R**ecently, I have reported on the stories of women who have been convicted of crimes. Women who are victims of violent crime also have stories that should be told.

Rape victims often experience trauma associated with this type of abuse that may be never ending. Finding and dealing with a normal intimate relationship, and maintaining relationships with others, including your own children, can become incredibly hard as a result of sexual assault.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice's Crime Victimization Survey, a sexual assault occurs on average once every two minutes in this country. African American women have a ten percent greater chance of being sexually assaulted than white women, according to statistics compiled by the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), a nationwide advocacy group for sexual assault victims.

I have heard stories all my life of sexual assault and have been a victim myself. One child I know was raped by her mother's brother when she was three years old. When her mother took her to the hospital for treatment, she found out that her insides were torn so bad that she would never have children. Because she



Cenabeth Cross

wasn't going to tell on her brother, the mother sent the child to Mississippi to live with another sister. The brother lost his mind after a few years and went into a mental institution until he died. The young woman came back to live with her mother once again. She lives upstairs with her eight cats. She only leaves the house to go to work. She does not stop to talk to anyone on her way out or when she returns.

**F**inding and dealing with a normal intimate relationship, and maintaining relationships with others, including your own children, can become incredibly hard as a result of sexual assault.

There are a bunch of stories I could tell, like the one where the young lady was having regular sex with her father. She had an abortion as a result. The father would send the mother to the store when he wanted the daughter. The grandmother found out and threw the father out of the house.

I recently read "Against Our Will" by Susan Brownmiller. Brownmiller reports that the typical rapist might be the boy next door, especially if the age is about 19 years old and he lives in the ghetto. The police are not always informed, because of fear or embarrassment. So there is no real way to count, statistically, how often it happens, according to Brownmiller. Most of the time, after it's reported, there is nothing done and the victim only suffers more humiliation. The police can only compile their figures based on the offenders they manage to catch. These figures are sent to Washington to be included in the Uniform Crime Reports put out by the FBI, yearly. Published in 1975, "Against Our Will" reports that in 1973 the FBI reported 51,000 cases, which was up 62 percent over a five-year period. The con-

is part of being macho. Psychologists can sometimes portray assailants as victims of neurosis and traumas from their past. Victims are also sometimes portrayed as somehow responsible for the assault.

It is important to remember that rape is an exercise in power, which gives some rapists the advantage. That edge is more than physical. Rape in wartime and during slavery are two examples of rape as a tool of domination. It can be used as an emotional advantage, too. Cases of celebrities pop up from time to time—such as the cases of the boxer Mike Tyson and sports celebrity Cobie Bryant—and often raise questions of how far people in positions of power can abuse that power.

The violent - and criminal - nature of sexual assault is revealed in the fact that a rape can easily end up being a murder.

The effects of a sexual assault can be long term and severe. Prostitution is often linked to earlier sexual assault. Some may have been raped by a relative. The trauma they experience causes them to feel differently about sex, to separate sex from emotional intimacy.

The connection can also be reversed. Young people who run away, or have been put out of the home, find this a quick way to make money in order to eat and pay rent. Some just do it for the fast money. This lifestyle increases dramatically the chance that a person can become a victim of sexual assault.



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Lesie  
Auto ad

**hitting punching slapping kicking name calling hair pulling breaking objects intimidating stalking**

**It's late at night.** You hear loud angry voices.

# Glass breaking. Children crying.

The voices get louder. You hear a sharp slap, and a few seconds later, what sounds like a body hitting the floor.

# What Would You Do... What if it was You??

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN DANGER CALL 911**

For a referral to an agency that provides shelter, counseling or legal advocacy, you can contact the City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line:

**1-877-863-6338**

**1-877-863-6339 (TTY)**

### **THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE**

For more information about domestic violence, obtaining an Order of Protection or how to get involved in your community, call the Chicago Police Department Domestic Violence Program.

312-745-6340

or your local Community Policing Office.

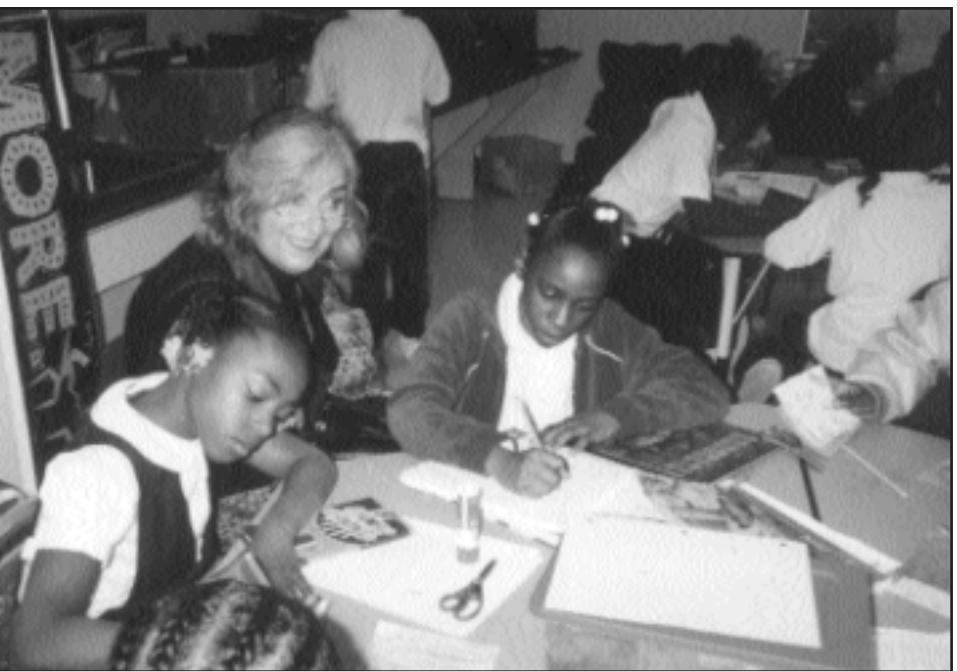


**Chicago Police Department:  
Philip J. Cline, Superintendent**



**City of Chicago**  
**Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

This project is supported by Grant #99-WF-VX-0017 awarded by VAWA, ICJIA



**Friends of National Teachers Academy, here and abroad - Holiday spirits run high for parents of students as they receive free turkeys (above, left) following a meeting with storeowners near the academy. The parents successfully convinced shopkeepers to stop selling junk food and pop before school. A visitor from London, England (right) joins fourth graders in an arts and crafts activity during a recent visit.**

Photos by Jacqueline Thompson

## Ickes News

(Continued from Page 12)

Their visit to the United States was to observe the newest education institutions for optimum learning in America.

*Residents' Journal* was invited to join the full tour with this particular group. Representatives from the school said the purpose of the tour was to showcase the day-to-day activities in the class rooms that make up the NTA educational experience for each student.

"Our teachers have a passion for teaching," declared Principal Linda Ford during the tour. "This is one of the reasons that our students are learning so much and are happy to be here."

One of the main highlights of the tour was the visit to the infants/toddlers section.

Wow! What a setup. Tour participants were instructed to cover their shoes with surgical covers or go barefoot in order to enter the infants/toddlers educational space. The room was equipped with age-appropriate furniture and toys and "teacher friendly" educational tools. Teenaged mothers have first priority to enroll their children in this program, according to school representatives, and for the first three months of enrollment, they too have to attend for two hours a day before turning over complete care to the staff.

Members of the British entourage reported that they were thoroughly engrossed in a story-teller who was part of the tour and was telling an African fairy tale that culminated in the toddlers and teachers dancing. It was a totally inspiring exhibition of children learning cultural moves at a tender age.

### *Organizing for health*

**A**t a pre-Thanksgiving meeting, fifteen parents of students of the school assembled and went to a local food mart and requested that the proprietor not sell candy, soft drinks or any junk food to students before school starts in the morning. It was a quiet meeting, and at last he agreed to post a sign up in the store to ensure no student has an opportunity to disobey the rules of the school.

When the parents and **RJ** returned to NTA, we learned that each parent's household would receive a turkey for their Thanksgiving dinner. What a surprise! Both right on time and welcome! Thank you, NTA!

## renters' ads

# Una introducción a la política

por Lorenzia  
Shelby

Yo no tenía un interés particular en la política hasta que al buscar trabajo en Chicago pude conocer directamente la forma como se “repartían las cartas” en esta ciudad. Quizá mi experiencia pueda ser interesante para los lectores de *Residents' Journal*.

La Convención del Partido Demócrata de 1968 se celebró en Chicago y provocó un enfrentamiento entre la policía y un “hippie” en Grant Park que marcó el estallido de la violencia que se extendió por toda la ciudad; una violencia que se transmitió por televisión a todo el país y al mundo entero. Mientras el país era testigo de las implicaciones de la maquinaria política de Chicago por televisión, yo las estaba viviendo en carne propia.

En los días del incidente en Grant Park, yo formaba parte de una cuadrilla que realizaba trabajos de paisajismo en ese parque. Conseguir ese empleo había sido el comienzo de mi formación política “de primera mano”. Éramos empleados del Chicago Park District. En aquellos tiempos sólo había dos maneras de llegar a ser empleado del Chicago Park District: se presentaba y se aprobaba un examen para funcionarios de la administración pública o se conseguía un puesto por influencias políticas. La mayoría de los empleados

conseguían su puesto a través de la política. La Municipalidad de Chicago había sido monopolizada por el Partido Demócrata durante muchos, pero que muchos años.

Así funcionaba el proceso político: la primera persona a la que se le solicitaba empleo era el jefe del distrito donde uno vivía. Ese jefe concertaba una cita con el concejal. El concejal leía una dirección y te preguntaba quién vivía en ella. Él no esperaba que te pusieses a adivinar; esperaba que lo supieras. Decía en voz alta cuan-

tacto. Esa persona leía la carta y te asignaba a un parque cerca de tu casa. A mí me destinaron a Grant Park. En el primer día que me presenté a trabajar no ocurrió nada digno de recordar. Al ser nuevo en política y algo ingenuo, me quedé totalmente pasmado al darme cuenta que la sección de la Calle 9 no era lo que yo había esperado. Yo contaba con una conversación estimulante e intelectual sobre política, pero lo que vi y escuché provenía de soplones mezquinos que atacaban cruelmente a traición con sus palabras a otras personas. Tuve la impre-

desde las 6 de la mañana hasta las 11 de la noche. Podían calcular cuánto frío estaba haciendo mirando el agua, pues cuando parecía un humo azul, eso indicaba que el agua se estaba congelando. Era muy difícil trabajar a esas temperaturas y eran los empleados peor pagados en el Chicago Park District.

Los empleados políticos todavía estaban obligados a participar en la organización de esta manera hasta la promulgación del decreto judicial Shakman en 1979, que recibió el nombre del abogado que presentó la demanda original con éxito. Este decreto prohíbe las prácticas de contratación por influencias políticas en Chicago.

La antigua pregunta sobre quién manda en el Chicago Park District puede responderse de distintas maneras.

En la página de Internet del Chicago Park District, se afirma que la Junta de Comisionados dirige el distrito de parques. “El Alcalde de la Ciudad de Chicago designa a la junta del Chicago Park District integrada por siete miembros. La junta es el órgano rector del Chicago Park District. La junta tiene tres comités permanentes que rigen todas sus actuaciones: administración, programas y recreación, y mejoras importantes. Los miembros de la secretaría cumplen funciones de personal de coordinación para la junta.”

Como descubrí hace muchísimos años, la realidad puede ser mucho más compleja.

No acudías a la oficina del concejal simplemente para conseguir un empleo en el Chicago Park District, acudías allí para unirte a una organización.

tro o cinco direcciones más y, si respondías sus preguntas con seguridad, te manifestaba que contabas con su aprobación y ya eras miembro de la organización del Partido Demócrata.

No acudías a la oficina del concejal simplemente para conseguir un empleo en el Chicago Park District, acudías allí para unirte a una organización.

Cuando te contrataban, te convertías en un político, en un auxiliar del jefe de distrito. El siguiente paso en el orden del día corría por cuenta del concejal. Redactaba una carta para ti dirigida al edificio administrativo del Chicago Park District y destinada a una persona de con-

sideración de que todos los miembros de la sección eran arrogantes y se jactaban de sus influencias y de lo poderosos que eran en política y de cómo podían decirle a su supervisor cuál era el trabajo que se debía hacer y lo que no se iba a hacer.

Aquellos empleados eran trabajadores del departamento de mantenimiento de paisajes. Entre las tareas de su trabajo estaba cortar hierba, recoger basura y marcar campos de béisbol y fútbol americano, aparte de las demás tareas del verano. En invierno, debían retirar la nieve con palas, esparcir sal por las aceras y rociar agua en días con temperaturas bajo cero, creando pistas de patinaje sobre hielo. Trabajaban

## CHINESE TRANSLATION

**KOREAN TRANSLATION**

**RUSSIAN TRANSLATION**

# Letters to the Editor

## Vigil for Public Housing

by Gabriel Nagy  
Latinos United

As a recent transplant to the city of Chicago, I would like to share some of my thoughts on public housing. I currently work as a Housing Advocacy Specialist for Latino rights advocacy group Latinos United and am the former head of the ministry of development for the country of Columbia.

The Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation calls for the replacement of the infamous public housing units in Cabrini Green, the Raymond Hillard Homes and the Robert Taylor Homes, to mention a few. In 1999, CHA administered more than 32,000 housing units in Chicago. Supported by federal and local resources, the Plan for Transformation will replace and rehabilitate 25,000 housing units. Most repairs will be on senior housing units.

This plan is occurring within a broader housing context. Chicago, as is true of any other major city in the world, has seen in recent years a large increase in housing needs. Household migration into the city and new household formation make up the primary populations with demand for affordable housing units in the city's region. In the coming years, Chicago will also continue to be an immigration magnet. Meanwhile, formation of new households in the US should hold its recent pace of 1.4 million a year.

Meanwhile, the value of real estate is increasing quickly. With demand growing increasingly, the US housing market, particularly in Chicago, has increased in value. Despite favorable interest rates, there still a big difference between cost of housing and income. With a positive forecast for 2004 and prob-

ably a second year of record-high housing starts, there is little doubt that the housing that is being constructed is not made to meet the needs of the lower and middle end of the housing market.

Low incomes, together with job instability and high rental costs, makes more people lose their homes and make it more difficult to find affordable enough houses to replace them.

While CHA follows a federal mandate to demolish poorly

run public housing, many more people are pushed to the streets. But there is not enough affordable housing. Under this circumstance, why isn't the city replacing public housing units on a one-to-one basis? Why is the city replacing and repairing only part of its public housing stock and at such a slow pace – and at increasing and unsustainable costs? Why is the city replacing just two-thirds of its former inventory – with a net loss of more than 10,000 units?

As the city demolishes its public housing units, more people are searching for affordable housing. As the CHA plan moves forward for the next year, more than 13,000 units have been demolished. CHA has replaced, through private developers, a little more than 3,000 units, but only one third are public units, with another one-third being sold or rented at market rate and a third "affordable" – available to residents making between 80 percent and 120 percent of the region's median income – roughly \$75,000 a

year for a family of four. CHA is placing those formally living in CHA units in the public housing units first.

How are local authorities addressing the increasing housing needs of middle and low-income households? Since the implementation of the plan, there hasn't been any real and significant gain in the affordable and public housing inventory.

Meanwhile, the severe screening processes for former residents is keeping many out of public housing. It is so demanding that many people are left out in the cold with no other opportunity but to live in the streets or in an emergency shelter. Sometimes the process threatens human dignity, treating everyone like a criminal unless you prove the contrary. Because of this policy, many are facing homelessness and will suffer this winter's severe weather and unhealthy conditions. Is this the city's policy response to Chicago's housing crisis?

It is necessary to stop the hands-off approach that depends so much upon costly private sector incentives to get more affordable units in the streets. The single most important lesson from housing experiences around the world is that we have to follow up on the impact the changes we make have on people's lives.

It's not just about how many tax credits were issued but how many people were housed. It's not how many units are demolished but how many people are placed back in adequate and safe housing. It's not just about how many units have been built but how many more individuals and families remain unhoused and yet to be taken care of. Housing policy is not just about houses. It's about people.

## A Personal Note

Dear Editor:

(This letter was addressed to Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns, who has two sons and a nephew in the armed forces.)

I was looking for a site to write letters to those who are serving their country and came across your web site. Although my husband and I never had children, I empathize with you about the well being of your sons and family in the service ("War with Iraq: A Personal Perspective," March/April 2003 issue).

I have also heard stories of those housing projects and

wondered at the absurdity of people living in those conditions, when politicians argue over \$500 coffee pots and studies and ludicrous projects all funded by American taxpayers.

You don't know me, and I had the good fortune of not having to live in one of those projects. Humanity is a precious gift from God. How we choose to treat our fellow man no matter what his ethnic or religious background defines who we are. As a widow of 12 months, may I offer my heartfelt thanks for people who will not give into circumstances beyond

their control. I thank you for your sons and other sons and daughters who chose to serve their country. Everyone had his or her own reasons, but the fact that they are over in Iraq or wherever gives me hope that someday we will see no more wars. Perhaps this won't be in my lifetime but I pray that the next generation can learn from mistakes of the past and make this world a safer place to live for all. May you have a heartfelt Thanksgiving from me to you and yours.

-J. Steen



them into perfect place. It's all about sitting back and really thinking about what can make you a better, healthier, happier person.

One of the life lessons I've learned, just recently, is not to go with the flow of life but to get in a boat and ride the waves. Not only will I be in more control, but it's so much more fun!

Sometimes, I will fall out of the boat and end up underwater. It's scary! Nerve wracking! What to do? It's all about taking control of the situation and not letting the situation control you. I feel that I have come too far to drown, so guess what I am going to do? I may have to fight, I may have to struggle, but I will get my head above water again.

Life is never easy. Think about it: if it was, how would we learn? Books can only teach us so much.

## Free Scholarships

Scholarships from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation are available for high school seniors residing or attending school in the 7th Congressional District. All eligible high school students must be planning to attend an accredited institution of higher learning. Full-time undergraduate, graduate or doctoral student with a minimum 2.5/40 GPA are also eligible.

Available scholarships include the Spouses Education Scholarship that provides \$500 to \$1,000 for tuition assistance to undergraduates. \$500 to \$1,000 Cheerios Brand Health Initiative Scholarships are available to graduates and undergraduates studying in the health field. \$3,000 Performing Arts Scholarships available to students majoring in the performing

arts. Also, \$10,000 GlaxoSmithKline Medical Science and Research Scholarships are available to medical school students intending to become doctors or Medical Researchers.

To apply for all scholarships, call the office of U. S. Rep. Danny K. Davis at (773) 533-7520. **Deadlines for applications is Friday, April 30, 2004.**

## Crystal Clear Views

### Happy New Year Everyone!

I am pleased to say that I have made it through another year and am looking forward to the blessings that the New Year will bring me. I want to encourage everyone to make this year better than the last. Some may say that is easier said than done, but it is possible. Perseverance, patience and the power within are the keys to success.

What about all of those New Year's resolutions? Stick to

them! Lose those ten pounds, make those extra dollars, buy that new car, etc.! There's nothing left to do but to do it!

Do you ever look around and wonder why is it that some people have more than others? Why is it that some people are happier than others? Believe it or not, it all comes from within. If you want something bad enough, you can go out and get it. You have to work hard for what you really want. If you want to be happier, you can rearrange some things in your life and put

following the progression of your career.

**Ronald E. Childs, Media Relations Director, Flowers Communications Group, Inc.**

### Dear Editor:

I just read my first issue of the *Residents' Journal* right before the holidays, and wanted to simply send you a note of congratulations on the quality of

the publication. I have been a journalist in Chicago for more than 20 years now, and I always believe in giving credit where it's due. Great job, good layout, great writing. Rest assured that I'll be

**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 (312) 745-2682 to discuss your ideas for submission.

# Report: Residents Steered to Poor Areas

## Publisher's Box

A new report finds that the Chicago Housing Authority is not making promised improvements to its "Plan for Transformation," the ongoing, massive effort to redevelop virtually all of the city's public housing stock.

Sudhir Venkatesh, a sociologist at Columbia University and a board member of We The People Media, discovered that the agency has largely failed to stop the flow of residents into other low-income, African American neighborhoods. In a new top-to-bottom review of the third year of the Plan for Transformation, Venkatesh found CHA has not kept its promise to care for those individuals and families who were living off the lease, the so-called squatters.

Venkatesh's findings are especially bad news for the CHA, which suffered a barrage of public criticism one year ago over its handling of the relocation process. This report also has bad news for those around the nation who think that the best way to solve problems in low-income communities is to tear them down.

It will be hard for the CHA to challenge Venkatesh's accuracy. Venkatesh, who wrote a book, "American Project," about the decade he spent in Robert Taylor Homes, has involved public housing tenants in an unprecedented way in this study. He worked very closely with his tenant team, which included *Residents' Journal* Assistant Editor Beauty Turner, and got access and understanding of residents and their lives. People told him about high electric bills and other personal information they might have withheld from a less sensitive researcher.

The Plan for Transformation calls for new mixed-income communities to be built in place of CHA's former high-rise public housing developments. The CHA has repeatedly promised that any resident of the former developments will be able to find a new home in these mixed-income communities.

Today, the CHA is almost through with the demolition phase of the Plan for Transformation. Most of the high-rises along South State Street are gone, with just a few buildings left of the once-imposing Robert Taylor Homes, Stateway Gardens and Ida B. Wells Homes, among others.

For the residents of those developments to return to the mixed-income communities, CHA officials will have to provide services to those families who have relocated. But where the CHA should be helping to keep these families together, Venkatesh finds that the agency is frequently putting up barriers and even is using policies that may tear families apart.

It is common knowledge that the CHA has been serving as a de facto homeless shelter for many years, providing shelter for many in its vacant apartments and on the sofas of legal residents. Venkatesh adds an important layer here by documenting that these squatters overwhelmingly have deep, lasting, interwoven relationships with legal tenants. Venkatesh documents squatters who have paid CHA managers, gang members and/or resident leaders to get into their apartments. Some squatters help other squatters take over vacant apartments, while others serve as a source of information and other resources for their neighbors.

Venkatesh notes that CHA's Service Connector program is charged with providing services to the squatters, though Service Connector staffs are not equipped to handle the complexity of the relationships between the squatters and the legal residents. City officials are able to help homeless people get into shelters, but don't have any permanent apartments to offer, let alone any ways to recognize the deep and lasting ties that exist between residents and squatters.

In addition to adding to the homeless problem, Venkatesh found that CHA has failed to make sure the Plan for Transformation is not stretching the scarce resources in other low-income neighborhoods. Venkatesh writes that there was "not a marked improvement" in the relocation of tenants to 'opportunity' neighborhoods using vouchers: 95 percent of the families who relocated to the private market ended up in neighborhoods that were more than 30 percent African American, while 70 percent of tenants who relocated into the private market ended up in areas where more than one-quarter of the population is poor. Under agreements with resident leaders, CHA is supposed to move tenants into 'opportunity' neighborhoods, meaning those areas that do not have high African American populations or concentrations of poverty.

Venkatesh interviewed numerous relocation counselors



by Ethan Michaeli

who admitted failing to recommend apartments in opportunity areas. All of the counselors said they were pressured by CHA's deadlines to get as many residents out of the buildings as possible before the buildings closed in the fall. Some counselors failed to show residents apartments in opportunity neighborhoods because they preferred to work with landlords with whom they had relationships. Other counselors gave up trying to help families that were hard to place.

"By August," explained one worker in CHA's Service Connector program, "we really just give up on the ones who have a lot of problems."

"It's sad really, because they are the ones who are left."

In addition to steering residents to other low-income African American neighborhoods, management officials often added burdens and missed opportunities to make relocation easier, Venkatesh notes. In one Robert Taylor Homes building, management officials refused to let tenants who were facing problems with their leases receive mail. In another building, managers' failures to maintain the building caused the Post Office to stop delivering mail.

CHA failed to fulfill other promises as well. In 2002 and 2003, articles in *Residents' Journal*, and follow-up articles in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, documented residents in Robert Taylor Homes with electric bills ranging into the tens of thousands of dollars, despite the fact that meters had not been installed in some buildings and other irregularities. Unpaid electric bills and other outstanding debts can imperil a tenant's ability to relocate.

This fall, CHA responded to this issue by announcing that it had set up a program with Commonwealth Edison under the acronym CHANCE.

But residents who tried to take advantage of CHANCE were unable to find managers or ComEd officials who knew anything about the program, Venkatesh found.

If Venkatesh's report will damage the public perception of the CHA plan, it may also lead to a legal showdown with advocates for residents. Venkatesh's discovery that public housing tenants being steered to other low-income, African American neighborhoods might prompt lawyers and advocates to try and stop the CHA plan in court.

Last year, a number of researchers and advocates worried aloud that if residents were moved into other low-income African American neighborhoods, it might overwhelm already-taxed social services in those areas.

This is a particularly important point for the lawyers who oversee the Gautreaux decree, a 30-year-old landmark federal civil rights case in which CHA was ordered to de-segregate public housing. The Gautreaux lawyers argued that CHA would be in violation of that landmark federal court order if residents were relocated into "non-opportunity" areas, meaning other low-income and/or African American neighborhoods.

The Gautreaux lawyers were incensed to action by two reports that came out last year. Back then, researcher Paul Fischer confirmed the fears of the Gautreaux lawyers when he found that 86.3 percent of the residents relocated into the private market during the previous year moved into areas that were mainly African American and poor.

Another 2003 report from Thomas Sullivan, the former

U.S. Attorney who is the independent monitor of the relocation process, found that many residents' housing situations - and lives - have not improved much as they have moved from one gang-infested neighborhood to another, and exchanged a bad government landlord for a lousy private landlord, trading "vertical ghettos" for "horizontal ghettos."

The critics were motivated by media reports and other evidence of a worsening situation in the city's low-income African American neighborhoods. Gang-related incidents have given Chicago the dubious distinction of being the city with the highest number of homicides in the nation. Homeless shelters, meanwhile, reported a surge of people who need their services, and attributed much of the surge to the closure of CHA buildings.

The reports generated a lot of bad ink for the CHA, and the Gautreaux attorneys joined with advocacy lawyers to sue the CHA. In response, the agency promised to change its ways in the next phase of relocation, mainly by putting more resources into counseling so that residents could move to "opportunity areas."

Venkatesh's report finds solid evidence that CHA has changed neither tactics nor outcome. That evidence might just inspire those attorneys to return to court. And this time, they might ask the judge for more radical remedies, including putting a halt to demolition and relocation.

Beyond the local legal ramifications, Venkatesh's study has implications for the national audience who are paying close attention to the Plan for Transformation.

In Congress and elsewhere, Democrats and Republicans blame public housing communities for fostering negative behavior among the residents. These legislators believe that public housing developments need to be destroyed before they are replaced with something better. That spirit is ever-present at

**B**y August," explained one worker in CHA's Service Connector program, "we really just gave up on the ones who have a lot of problems."

the CHA, which recently changed its logo to "Creating Viable Communities."

Venkatesh's study suggests, however, that there are hidden strengths in public housing communities. Instead of negative environments that keep their tenants from succeeding, Venkatesh paints a portrait of places where residents - legal and otherwise - pool their scant resources with their neighbors in order to survive.

For CHA to succeed in "creating viable communities," it will have to recognize that it already has viable communities which can serve as a foundation for even stronger neighborhoods.

### It's a Girls World 1st leadership Conference

#### Focusing on: Minds on the Media

This part of the conference is designed to give young women a definition of beauty and power that focuses on who they are and what they do, not on how they look. The conference celebrates media images that promote healthy behavior and body image for girls while also raising awareness and understanding of the effects ads have on them.

#### Minds on Politics

In this component of the conference, participants will hear from women who have walked the political path and can assure them that they are vitally important to our neighborhoods and indeed our nation's future.

We believe wholeheartedly that if you assist in helping clear up the chaos and confusion within the hearts and minds of those you serve, those hearts and minds will go on to serve others—a kind of soul recycling.

Peace.

For more information, contact Beverly A. Reed at 773/667-2247 or [reed15is@sbcglobal.net](mailto:reed15is@sbcglobal.net) (Please call to confirm or to arrange for pick up items for the Barely Bruised Boutique)

**Attention: ALL CHICAGO PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS**



**FREE!!!**

## **COMPUTER CLASSES**

SIGN UP NOW ...FIRST COME FIRST SERVED. HOURS M-F 9A-12P; 1P-4P; 6P-9P

The Hayes Center is now accepting students into the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Technology Program. Through the WIA YouthTech Program, young people can receive training to become a Telecommunications Technician (Voice and Data Cabling) or a Microsoft Office Specialist. Classes are now forming. You must be between the ages of 18 - 21, have a high school diploma or GED and a valid driver's license to enroll. Call Davalla Stovall today at: (312) 745-2661



Street Dedication Ceremony Honors CHA Resident Leader

FIC CEO and President Zenobia Johnson-Black (right) poses with CHA Wentworth Gardens resident and RMC President and CHA Commissioner Hallie Amey (center) before a street naming ceremony in honor of Amey on January 23. The two are joined by FIC Board member Titus Kerby.

### **OTHER CLASSES FOR ALL AGE GROUPS**

**GED PREPARATION CLASSES  
(OPEN ENROLLMENT, SIGN UP TODAY )  
“HOW-TO” WORKSHOPS  
CISCO CLASSES  
MICROSOFT OFFICE SPECIALIST  
MICROSOFT WORD, EXCEL,  
POWERPOINT AND ACCESS  
(MONTHLY CLASSES)**

**1P - 4P**

**6P - 9P**

**INTERNET ACCESS AND  
FREE EMAIL**



A Technology  
Learning Center

**CHARLES A. HAYES  
FAMILY INVESTMENT CENTER**

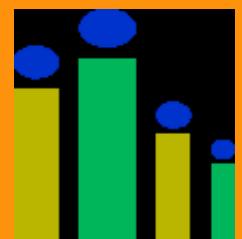
**4859 South Wabash Avenue**

**Chicago, IL 60615**

**(312) 745-2700**

**Zenobia Johnson-Black, President & CEO**

**Web Site: [www.thefic.org](http://www.thefic.org)**



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