

R E S I D E N T S '

Journal

A publication for and by the residents of the Chicago Housing Authority Fall 1997 / Volume 2/ Number 1



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Andrew Cuomo: Front and Center

by Andre Robinson

During a recent visit to the Operation PUSH headquarters in Chicago, new U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Andrew Cuomo offered little concrete about his plans for public housing communities.

In a breakfast speech, radio broadcast and press conference on Sept. 6, Cuomo talked about his concerns for public housing issues but used words that the residents of CHA have been listening to since May 1995, when HUD took over the agency. That's when residents first started being bombarded with words about what HUD's plans for CHA were.

Like others before him, Cuomo said HUD now wishes to involve CHA residents in the redevelopment of CHA.

"It's not for us to do. It's for the people in the communities to do," he said at the breakfast.

"It's for you to build your community as you see fit. That's what empowerment is all about."

Cuomo seemed to say that redevelopment in many communities was going well. But he apparently is not aware that many residents in these communities are very suspicious that redevelopment really means land grab. I wasn't put at ease when he said,

"Let's not say we're going to get out of the housing business. Let's say we have to get into the housing business and do it right. That's going to be the story of Cabrini, Horner, ABLA and other redevelopments."

Cuomo said 87 percent of new jobs are in the suburbs and 97 percent of new businesses are in the suburbs. Well, I don't think that is any surprise to the vast majority of public housing residents that are unemployed. Plus, when residents do go out on a job interview, they often are not hired. Cuomo did not provide specifics about developing new training or job placement programs:

"We just reformed welfare. Amen. But it's not making them work, it's about letting them work."

Cuomo made another statement that the way public housing was set up, it was doomed to fail because of poverty in public housing along with crime:

"A good idea gone bad - that's what public housing is. You should have known it was bad before you put that first brick down," Cuomo said at the Operation PUSH breakfast and radio address.

"The mentality was 'Let's pack them in there because the more you can get in there, the better. Let's build public housing and let's put it all in one place and put it far away and then let's build a wall between us and them.'



"Let's not say we're going to get out of the housing business. Let's say we have to get into the housing business and do it right. That's going to be the story of Cabrini, Horner, ABLA and other redevelopments." -

HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo

Photo by John Brooks

"Of course it failed. It was doomed to fail."

Later at a press conference at Operation PUSH, Cuomo said public housing was "a good idea implemented by amoral leadership."

"The housing was a good idea but the leadership was perverted."

But is it the buildings that are causing the problems in public housing or is it the way the buildings are run? Almost all of the residents of public housing are low-income and once a resident of public housing achieves a steady income in the mid range, you can bet that within a year, that person will have moved out. There is no incentive for someone to stay in public housing once their income increases. Why live in an area where your neighbor's rent is 90 percent lower than yours and



"What we really want to do is end low-income areas. Isolation and poverty cause the anxiety" - the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Founder of Operation PUSH

Photo by John Brooks

some may be selling drugs out of their unit or violating lease regulations by having illegal tenants or participating in other criminal activities?

The problems that go on in CHA are often fueled by people who come from other areas of Chicago and the suburbs. These people would not allow the type of activity in their communities that they support in public housing. CHA raises rent when income increases but living conditions are still deplorable. During the press conference, I asked Cuomo how he could convince the people who have been chased away from public housing by these conditions to stay there. He told me:

"We're going to improve the community and make it a community that they want to live in."

We heard the same lines from former CHA Chairman Vince Lane, former HUD Secretaries

Jack Kemp and Henry Cisneros as well as President Bill Clinton. But you can tear down the building and the community will still exist along with the problems that are there. You can preach about how putting someone to work will help the community but what good does it do when that someone of good moral standards

moves out and another resident who may have an anti-social background moves in? Then we are back where we started.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, founder of Operation PUSH, was more specific on how to create communities that house both low- and middle-income residents. The way to create these neighborhoods is keep middle-income families from leaving poor areas because they don't want to be part of those communities.

"What we really want to do is end low-income areas. Isolation and poverty cause the anxiety," Jackson said.

It can be tough living in the shadow of a famous father, especially when your father was well respected by most and held high marks among fellow politicians. When your father is former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, people will have high expectations of the offspring. Which puts Andrew Cuomo in an interesting situation: Does he become his father or break away and make a name for himself. Though I am not going to compare him to his father or his predecessor, former HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, and I am also taking into consideration that he's been on the job for less than a year, I found his statements to be predictable.

I would advise Cuomo to get down to some serious business. The people of public housing know what has to be done. So let's do it.

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Credits

Editor-in-Chief
Ethan Michaeli

Editorial Assistant
Cynthia Morris

RJ Correspondents

Don Adams, Anita Baker, Earl Battles, John Brooks, Cenabeth Cross, Izora Davis, Sharon Fornizy, Benjamin Harris, Mary Johns, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Janelle Jones, Kasey Jones, Patricia Marshall, Julio Martinez, Thomas L. Merriweather, Alan Minerbrook, Melvina Nunn, Andre Robinson, Annie R. Smith, Stacy Springfield

RJ Photographers

Don Adams, John Brooks, Sharon Fornizy, Mary Johns, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Julio Martinez, Thomas Merriweather, Annie R. Smith

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Our Mission

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. The Chicago Housing Authority will not censor this publication in any way and is committed to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the Freedom of the Press. The views expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of the Chicago Housing Authority or its staff. All editorial decisions are made by the staff of Residents' Journal in conjunction with the editor-in-chief.

Editor's Box

by Ethan Michaeli

were with a lifetime of knowledge and experience in their own neighborhoods. I started with a high expectation of the residents' skills and abilities. But the resident staff of **RJ** has surpassed my expectations and broadened my intellectual horizons. In addition to their professionalism, however, each of the writers and photographers at RJ has demonstrated to me that compassion for one's readers is the most important ingredient in making a successful journalist.



Everyone who has contributed to **RJ** has expressed their love for their neighbors and their devotion to the truth. Although journalists are generally a cynical lot, working at **RJ** has infused me with a new optimism about my profession and the impact it can

A Look to the Future

journalists, government officials, policy makers and activists who have lent us their patronage are making sure that the literary voices of public housing residents grow louder and stronger all the time.

This success has not gone unnoticed. Advertisers and subscribers are supporting the paper with generosity and optimism. We have received coverage from our fellow print journalists at the Chicago Defender, Neighborhood Works and the Chicago Jewish News. Broadcast Media sources from our friends at WGCI Radio, WVON Radio and Channel 2 WBBM-TV also have provided us with their copious support. The National Association of Housing and Urban Development Officials (NAHRO) recognized us as one of the best public housing initiatives of the year. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention the support that we have received from the CHA officials from the executive level to the employees who spend every day in the developments. CHA workers have gone out of their way to help make sure the paper gets to its readers; they have helped us with their technical and program expertise; they have used their contacts to help **RJ**; and, most of all, they have accepted our comments and criticism with interest, humor and good sense.

When I came to this position just over a year ago, **RJ** was just a dream - a dream that many doubted could become reality. But I had the benefit of working for years as the CHA beat reporter for the Chicago Defender. From that experience, I knew that CHA housed people with stories, perspectives, wit and wisdom. I also knew that residents were best qualified to tell their own stories, equipped as they

have. For that, let me say to all of those who have contributed to **RJ**: Thank You!

Now it is time to look forward, to think about where **RJ** will go on its trek to become a financially self-sufficient, permanent fixture in the national media. Our first step will be to expand the RJ staff, adding reporters from developments where we have had coverage previously. Ultimately, we will have a corps of reporters and photographers from communities throughout Chicago. We will begin publishing articles in several languages, including Russian and Mandarin Chinese, in order to make **RJ** accessible and attractive to these communities. We also will continue to expand into the communities that are around CHA. The section on "Our America" in this issue proves that there are no borders between CHA communities and the rest of the city. "Our America" was written by a young man who still lives in public housing and another who grew up around the corner. I am thrilled that this book was published this year; for **RJ**, it has helped us realize that we must continually expand into the entire Chicagoland area.

Let me conclude by mentioning that **RJ** will make a substantial commitment to the future in the coming year. By the future, I mean the children of CHA, the next generation of leaders and thinkers.

We are planning new training programs for the young people of the developments, programs that will help them explore their intellects and the world. We will be glad to help them portray their development on our pages. We hope that you will enjoy their contributions as you have enjoyed ours.

I was totally unprepared when I walked into the office of Alex Polikoff, the attorney who oversees the landmark Civil Rights housing case known as the Gautreaux Decree. First, when I pulled out my notes, I found out I had picked up the wrong notebook.

I suddenly couldn't remember the questions that were so important when I wrote my notes. I pulled out my camera and Polikoff made it clear that he preferred I didn't take any photographs. I agreed and told him that I already had a photograph of him on file.

Misinformed and mislead was how I felt. I had listened to different sides and stories about the Gautreaux Decree. And not one of those stories painted a picture of Gautreaux quite like Polikoff did. Strange as it may seem, I felt violated. I looked around the room and found not one hole to crawl in. But I faced up to my ignorance, swallowed my pride, shut up and listened.

Polikoff handed me a booklet explaining who Dorothy Gautreaux was. He gave me recent photo-copied articles from the Chicago Tribune about the Chicago Housing Authority and the new breed of subsidy housing that we are faced with, Section 8.

My concern was about Dorothy Gautreaux and the Gautreaux Decree. Dorothy only lived 41 years but she accomplished a great deal within her time frame. Had Ms. Gautreaux not sued the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and CHA, then someone else would have. Her name became the name of the decree but she was one of many who filed the suit in 1966. She died in 1968, long before the suit was finally settled.

Residents' View on Public Housing

Ms. Gautreaux lived in Altgeld-Murray Homes and she asked the same questions that all public housing residents ask. I can safely say that as Dorothy looked at the public housing stock in the city, she said to herself as I say to myself upon occasion:

"If these complexes had been built in a white neighborhood, would they be more in tune with the times, more configured with the neighborhood and totally geared to aesthetically give one a feeling of pride?"

Nothing is wrong with building houses for the poor in poor neighborhoods. But when you mix poor design with poor material and place it in a poor neighborhood with poor people, you tell me how many people can rise from such rubble.

Ms. Gautreaux knew that if public housing was built in white neighborhoods, the design, structure and grade of material would be number one. Quality stock. Nothing but the best. She knew that it would be built to fit the scope of the community, not making a community fit into its structure, which is what has taken place within our developments.

It is true that public housing was only being constructed in the poorest of African American neighborhoods. The process of choosing which neighborhood received public housing became totally political in Chicago. Aldermen had the final say in where housing was to be placed. Knowing that the majority of aldermen did not live in Black neighborhoods and knowing that they didn't want Black people in their neighborhoods, it was easy for them to place African Americans in existing African American neighborhoods. And there was never an objection until the target was Lake Shore Drive.

The lakefront has always been consid-

A Decree But to What Degree?

by Annie R. Smith

ered Chicago's prime real estate. A few public housing buildings have been placed along Lake Shore Drive but for the most part, it has been preserved for upper-income development.

When the Gautreaux case was first filed, many people in Chicago were con-

The Gautreaux decree, as Polikoff explained it to me, says that CHA can only build housing units in neighborhoods that are more than 30 percent African American if it builds the same number of units in non-African American units in a one-for-one ratio.

**Ms. Gautreaux lived in Altgeld-Murray Homes and she asked the same questions that all public housing residents ask:
"If these complexes had been built in a white neighborhood, would they be more in tune with the times, more configured with the neighborhood and totally geared to aesthetically give one a feeling of pride?"**

cerned that public housing residents would be placed in upper-income neighborhoods. Even the first federal judge appointed to the Gautreaux case, Judge Richard B. Austin, shared this concern. When he was first told about the case, Austin quipped, "Where do you want to put them (CHA residents) - on Lake Shore Drive?"

Polikoff explains

Polikoff, who administers the Gautreaux Decree as the executive director of Business and Professional Persons in the Public Interest, explained the legalities of the Gautreaux Decree concerning HUD and CHA.

Beginning in 1976, after the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was ordered to use its money to place African Americans in non-African American neighborhoods throughout the Chicagoland area, mainly in the suburbs.

CHA, meanwhile, must build scattered site units only in certain areas of the city.

This one-for-one housing ratio means that if CHA were to build 71 units in my neighborhood, Darrow Homes on the south lakefront, they would also have to build 71 units in certain areas that are less than 30 percent African American.

Changes have taken place since the ratification of the decree. The original case order was a 3 to 1 housing ratio, meaning that three houses had to be built in predominantly white neighborhoods to every one in a Black neighborhood.

HUD Finally Fulfills Court Order

HUD's part of the Gautreaux Decree is now over. Started in 1976, the program was run by the Leadership Council of Metropolitan Open Communities to give African American families a chance to live in decent and affordable housing outside of the parameters of public housing.

The Leadership Council Section 8 program was funded by HUD. The families who benefited from the program were

moved to homes in mainly white suburbs. Last year in October, the mark of 7,100 families served -the original number sought by this part of the decree - was reached.

HUD is out of the red it has *finally* fulfilled its obligations to the public housing residents in Chicago.

I know the majority of families who moved to the suburbs through the Leadership Council's program are happy with their new surroundings. I know they made the best of a bad situation. Their lives are happier now for whatever reason.

But you can't convince me that they didn't face discrimination along the way. Is it really necessary to move from the 'hood to become a productive citizen? The answer is no. No wonder the developments are in such a mess. Somebody told them the only way for them to get ahead in life is to move away. Somebody told them they had to move into another neighborhood and embrace another people.

But I do understand their plight. They want better schools and better homes.

CHA's turn

Now it's CHA's turn to fulfill their duties in constructing housing for its residents. As I was told by Polikoff, CHA failed for many years to build any public housing.

Even though CHA was first ordered to build scattered site units in non-African American neighborhoods in 1969, CHA never actually built any new public housing units. Finally, in 1987, Polikoff went back to court and won an order to allow the Habitat Company, a private development firm, to build scattered site housing. Habitat has built almost 2,000 units since that time.

The Darrow Homes Story

At Darrow Homes, \$11 million is being put toward redevelopment on site. Where there once were 480 units in the four Darrow high-rises, now we want to place just 100 houses and duplexes on the same site. Even going through that, Polikoff had total control on deciding our future.

On March 29, 1996, Darrow residents first met with Polikoff about our plan. He rejected it because CHA would not be building at a one-for-one ratio in a non-African American neighborhood.

In the spring of this year, we (the Darrow residents) met with Polikoff again to discuss the construction of the new units. One of the four Darrow buildings had already been torn down and one more was on the chopping block. In the end, all four buildings will be gone.

Polikoff sat with us and asked the CHA officials who were helping us how they would make a one-for-one ratio with the new Darrow town homes. The CHA officials said that they were building units in two places on the North Side. Finally, Polikoff agreed.

How to Change Gautreaux

I think that the one-to-one ratio in the decree is unfair. After all these years, couldn't the courts come up with a better approach to the problem? I find this solution selfish and unrealistic. How do we as residents approach changing the decree? To what degree will we feel comfortable? Should we abolish it or put in a new amendment? The choice is ours.

If CHA is to construct housing, it should be put into existing developments. Residents don't (**Continued on Page 11**) (**Continued From Page <None>**) want



Without a ramp, this sidewalk on the Near North Side becomes a cliff for individuals who use wheelchairs. Photo by Tom Merriweather

I moved into a Chicago Housing Authority senior housing development on March 30, 1996. I had never resided in CHA housing prior to my move last year and the move was the result of my becoming disabled and needing to use a wheelchair in April of 1993. I was age 60 when this occurred and was 63 when I made the transition from regular private housing to CHA housing; I was no longer able to be employed and being in a fixed income status made me unable to afford the private housing lifestyle I had been accustomed to prior to my disability.



This closet in a CHA senior apartment is out of reach for those who use wheelchairs for mobility. Photo by Tom Merriweather

I received a referral to senior housing in early March 1996 and the building I was sent to only had vacancies on the 14th floor, which the manager of the building believed to be unsatisfactory because of my wheelchair situation. I was advised that when an apartment on a lower floor became available (and some were vacant but not ready for occupancy), I would be able to move into one of these. As it stands, an apartment on a lower floor could not become available on a timely basis and I was referred a few weeks later to my current development where a vacancy did exist on the second floor.

The purpose for a lower-floor occupancy for persons who use wheelchairs is that in the event of a fire, it is easier to remove such residents from the premises if they are on lower floors. But routine problems of elevators frequently being out of order are not being addressed on a timely, consistent basis. At the time of the writing of this story, there were breakdowns of both elevators in my Eckhart Park Greenview building twice over a period of less than 24 hours. Residents who are able to walk were forced to use the stairs, which are located at one end of

Access Report

by Thomas Merriweather

the building and therefore inconvenient for a large number of residents who are unable to walk.

On July 24, 1997, at Navy Pier in Chicago, Access Chicago, the first exposition sponsored by the Mayor's Office on People With Disabilities, was conducted between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. While attending this exposition, I was able to visit several of the exhibit booths and obtain much useful information, including certain requirements for accessibility of CHA buildings. According to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, all CHA buildings and residences are to be accessible to occupants who may be in wheelchairs or use other means to transport themselves. This applies to closet spaces and other storage areas in the apartments. It should also apply to other facilities in the housing developments and an example might be mailboxes, etc.

In a previous story, I revealed that in the area between the two buildings of the Eckhart Park development, there are no ramps to accommodate residents in wheelchairs who may be traveling between the buildings. At a residents meeting on Sept. 26, the development manager announced that improvements this fall will include the replacement of those missing ramps along with such other improvements as the installation of handicapped accessible doors for the entrances into the buildings.

Other ongoing problems of inaccessibility have been the lack of availability of appropriate vehicles to transport disabled individuals to various activities as sponsored by CHA, the City of Chicago or other agencies.

As cited in an earlier story, I discovered that the availability of accessible vehicles to transport wheelchair-using residents is limited and only available when requests for such vehicles is made by a sufficient number of disabled residents. I also discovered that CHA has only a single accessible bus available to residents and that this is only used to transport residents who use wheelchairs from one development to any other development for a particular activity.

In my first story for *RJ* in the winter issue, I related some unfortunate incidents I had experienced in using CTA Paratransit Operations and as I write this story, I continue to experience these less than satisfactory incidents.

In preparing for this story, I talked to two residents who use wheelchairs in my Greenview Avenue building on this subject of accessibility. The first resident expressed general satisfaction in her five years as a resident of the development but has had no need to use other than medical transportation since she only travels for this purpose. When asked about CTA Paratransit Operations, she said she has never used the service but that all she has heard about it is on the negative side.

The other resident, an occupant of more than 15 years, complained about not being able to ever reach a CTA Paratransit carrier during her attempts to call in order to schedule trips. The resident said that a busy signal was all that could be received on those failed attempts and that a telephone with the automatic redialing feature



The missing ramps between the buildings in CHA's Eckhart Park development make mobility difficult for residents with disabilities. Photo by Tom Merriweather

was not available to her.

I explained her the procedure I have been following for over 2 years which involves dialing the direct number to the carrier I use and pressing the automatic redial button back and forth with the dial tone button until I am finally able to get through to an operator to request my trips. I explained that this procedure sometimes will require up to about 40 minutes but that I will eventually reach an operator and then schedule my trips for the next day.

CTA Paratransit Operations does maintain a 1-800 number which should eliminate the need to call a carrier directly and receive a busy signal and even when such calls are made when the service opens at 5 am weekdays and 6 am weekends. I recently tried to use this number and all I received was a busy signal. Some obvious improvement is needed here and in the entire system.



These mailboxes are out of reach for those who use wheelchairs for mobility. Photo by Tom Merriweather.

A Look at

Inner-City Truths: A Book Review by Annie R. Smith

While attempting to read "Our America" for the fourth time, it was getting to be a bother. I had taken the wrong approach. I took the writings personally. So this time I focused on exactly what the authors were talking about.

In general, "Our America" refers to the people who got caught up in the system. In general, the book brought about truths that are not unknown but not talked about beyond the places it describes.

Written by teenagers LeAlan Jones, who lives around the corner from the Ida B. Wells development, and Lloyd Newman, who lives in Wells, with the help of journalist David Isay, give a vivid description of how lives get damaged by institutionalized living.

The photographs depict a grim and dismal yet real life truth about living conditions. To see children playing in grocery carts and other abstract items is not uncommon. They play in mud, on dirty mattresses or where ever, and they play hard. That's just not public housing children, that's all children.

The most touching and sad part about the whole book is when Lloyd Newman's mother's death is described by his sister, Sophia. I attended Doolittle East School with Lynn. I didn't know she had died. I



cried when I read how tragic the circumstances were surrounding her death.

The death of Eric Morse, the five-year-old boy that was dropped 14 stories by two other little boys. LeAlan never knowing his father. Chilli, Lloyd's father, and other accounts of a dysfunctional society make this book interestingly readable. For teen-agers, Lloyd and LeAlan did a fantastic job in showing just how much America needs to embrace all of its children.

"Our America" reads, "Regardless of how you ignore the problems, they won't go away and if you let them fester, sooner than you think they will be in your backyard."

This book is a must read for all young America. It's for readers who have never ventured into public housing but wonder what life is like.

It's for readers who live in the developments but refuse to address the internal problems that have become a way of life. This book is a wake up call to do something because it's all of our problem, it's all of "Our America."

**"Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago" by LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman With David Isay.
Photographs by John Brooks**

A Senior's View of 'Our America'

(The following is a letter that was sent to Mayor Richard M. Daley)

Dear Honorable Mayor Richard M. Daley,
Enclosed is a view of some concerns in our neighborhood.

Personally, I would like to commend you on your

areas of beautification all over the city. King Drive and Drexel Boulevard are becoming beautiful. Also, the new homes popping up city-wide are also nice. But it takes a village to keep up all of the ideas of city planners and I am sure some of your ideas, particularly McCormick Place, is also something beautiful, especially the fountain.

Your commitment with Paul Vallas on school reform is also good but enclosed you shall see a view of "Our America" from a senior citizen's eyes.

Recently, two young men documented a story concerning "Our America," one of which was my grandson. It later was made into a book which is being sold all over the United States.

However, I would like to give you a view of what we live in and what we have to go through every day to survive. It is Hell! Every morning, I take three children to Donoghue Elementary School, where I have been volunteering for 21 years. I have seen the neighborhood fall as I drive through Ellis Avenue. Drug dealers literally come up

to my car "hollering." Little children living in the Madden Park complex near the school must come to school and live in this situation. Some who go to Phillips High School cannot cross Cottage Grove Ave. because of gang wars.

Personally, I feel very sorry for these young people. I currently serve as Local School Council chairperson at Donoghue and some concerned parents bring these situations to LSC meetings. Our school enrollment is dropping because of these problems. We invite Ald. Toni Preckwinkle (4), CAPS and Crime Prevention, etc. to all of our meetings, looking and hoping for a solution.

I personally would like for you or a representative to attend our next meeting. Over the news, I hear about your concerns for the Jenner School in Cabrini and we at Donoghue are also asking for help. Our children come and go to school also under the threat of gunfire. They go to bed listening to gunfire. Some young person is being killed or hurt (mostly innocent people) and you do not put this on the news because of the frequency, I suppose, but this area is in a very grave situation. If you are a city official and are involved in law enforcement and don't do something soon, I have grave concerns for our young people and us as senior citizens.

'Our America'

When Will It End?

by Janelle Jones

In the Bible, it states that the world will one day end in fire. With this prediction I concur. It will not be a forest fire, nor will it be a fire such as the one that Mrs. O'Leary's cow started. Not even the fire that a bomb or any natural disaster can cause.

The fire of which I'm speaking of is GUN FIRE! So many of our young people are gone because of this fire. The average death in these past few years has not been from old age or any incurable disease. It is the simple destruction of our youth, our future in general.

I live in a low rent, high-rise public housing development. It's bad enough to live there as it is without waking up to the sounds of shooting. Granted it's not like this every day, which is marvelous. But when it starts, it seems to come without much warning. I do not stay in the house: I go outside, away from my development. It's hard to go anywhere if they are shooting out there.

Now it has become so bad that I can't even ride the bus to my grandmother's house as I usually do because they're shooting over there. Can't go pick up my son from school without dodging bullets going and coming! At any given time, my life or my son's could have ended. Just like that: poof, gone.

No one could have cared less. To them I am nothing, insignificant. All this for what? What are you gaining but

a chance to get a nice, uncomfortable bed in the big house

The police can't do anything to solve it. Hell, they can't even compete with it. Glocks, sawed-off shotguns. What will the police use? Their looks? Just wearing that uniform will get you shot at.

Who will win this war? You? Me? The kids? The thugs? Who? No matter how many protest, no matter how many petitions are signed, there is nothing to be done.

Not everyone is working together. Some will start, then it's soon forgotten again.

Where I live, taking away lives is a way of life. Everyone gets sad when a friend is killed. Whether the death was intentional or not, retaliation occurs. Nothing good ever comes out of this, just another couple of deaths and then they call for peace.

Innocent lives are at stake. These young men all grew up together, they all know each other but they are blinded by their gang affliction. This is sad.

These people act as if we are in Beirut. The wars that we fight overseas have nothing on the wars that are going on in our cities. We face these things every day. It's in our backyards and there is nothing that any of us can do. It seems hopeless. There is really no

escape for most.

The media only gets out a third of the story. There is so much that never gets reported and what does is often distorted. Never what really happened, just the story that they want to tell.

Once in a while, someone will end up hurt very badly. As soon as it hits the airways, here comes someone that will feel pity and try to save them. By this I mean, get them out of the area in which they live in. Take them some place that will make them feel safe again.

What about the rest of the people? What will become of them? You see,

the solution is not simply to move them away - that only helps resolve the problems for that one person, not the community itself where the help is desperately needed. Everyone suffers when situations such as these arise. The mothers, fathers, the children. You can't just help one without lending a hand to all.

That's where the misery comes in. When one cries for help, it's only a whisper. Yet when the masses shout, all will be heard, hopefully, instead of being pushed aside as we are. Passed over, forgotten about until yet another death.

When will it end?



GIRL SKATING AND PUSHING BUGGY

(Photo at bottom opposite page)
Kids seem to find the strangest ways of having fun. Like the song "Santa Comes Straight to the Ghetto." I guess Santa brings jewel buggies for little ghetto kids. I guess what I'm trying to say is that there is not always enough money to buy toys. It just goes to show you that kids have great imaginations.

CABRINI BEING TORN DOWN

(Photo at immediate left and opposite page, top left)
A lot of people that used to live in the building were sad to see it go. You see, you have to understand that even though Cabrini-Green was to some "a living hell," it was still home to many.

All Photos on Pages 6-7 by John Brooks

by Anita L. Baker

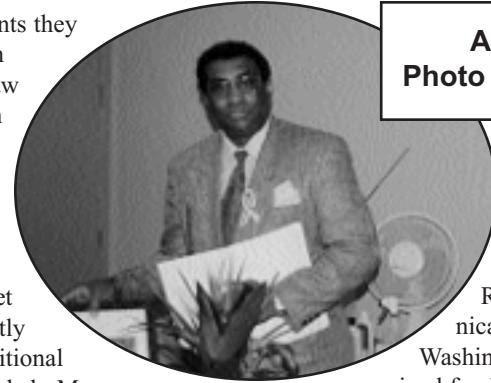
Public housing legend Mrs. Artensa Randolph passed away on Aug. 19, 1997. I have compiled a list of tributes and interviews to her. Let's start with a passage from her memorial book:

Mrs. Artensa Randolph was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas on October 1,

the Central Advisory council. She was re-elected to each position in all subsequent elections. Devoted to improving the quality of life for public housing residents, Mrs. Randolph had the distinction of becoming the first CHA resident appointed to the CHA Board of Commissioners by the late Mayor Harold Washington. Mrs.

also the incidents they had with her in their lives. I saw Mrs. Randolph as a teacher and she was a teacher. "We wrote a book that we are trying to get published shortly with some additional things to be added. Mrs.

Anthony Todd
Photo by Anita L. Baker



authority. But after years of experience with the Chicago Housing Authority's budgetary process, Mrs. Randolph requested technical assistance from Washington, D.C., Housing and received funding to oversee this bud-

The Life of Artensa Randolph

1915. Mrs. Randolph was a product of the old, southern Black work force, beginning her early employment picking cotton on the plantations in Pine Bluff. She moved to Chicago in 1937, in search of an improved quality of life and initially found employment in the stockyards. Eventually, she achieved her career goal as a community Representative for the Chicago Board of Education, a position from which she retired after 20 years of service. This position afforded her many opportunities to know the people and the communities of Chicago.

In 1962, Mrs. Randolph moved into the Chicago Housing authority's (CHA) Washington Park Homes where she lived for the past 35 years. Upon her arrival she quickly became involved in the tenant's rights movement, which, much like the civil rights movement of earlier years, was organized primarily to address the inequities faced by residents of public housing. Mrs. Randolph was at the vanguard, uniting residents to address the sharp decline in public housing upkeep and maintenance and pushing for



Randolph was re-appointed to the CHA Board of Commissioners by Mayors Eugene Sawyer and Richard M. Daley. After the Department of Housing and Urban Development became receiver of the CHA in 1995, Mrs. Randolph was appointed to the Executive Advisory Committee by Mayor Daley.

Mrs. Randolph was devoted to her family. She was a mother who truly loved her family. There are many who can tell stories of Mrs. Randolph's love for her family and friends. In fact, she had so many godchildren many did not know exactly who were all the biological offspring. Every child in the development was a member of her extended family.

I interviewed Anthony Todd, a long-time friend to Mrs. Randolph:

"I listen to people say how well they knew Mrs. Randolph and what wonderful things she had done,

Randolph was indeed a teacher and what she was trying to teach was that we as a group can accomplish more than any one individual.

"I know that Mrs. Randolph was not a saint because there are no saints on this earth. I thought of Mrs. Randolph as a wonderful person, yes with some power but she did not abuse it. Mrs. Randolph insisted that everything go before the board and she did understand that power can corrupt.

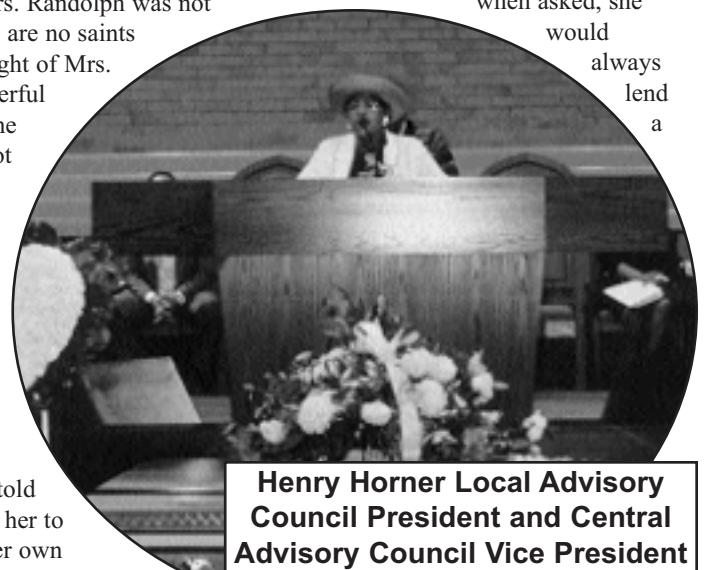
"When HUD arrived here in Chicago, they approached her and told her that they wanted her to be responsible for her own budget and separate it from the Chicago Housing Authority's operating budget. Most people would have been flattered by this, maybe even

power struck, and would have abused this

get and provide the technical assistance Mrs. Randolph was requesting.

"What struck me about this perception was that you hear and read things. I read about the president and a director going to prison as a result of misappropriation of funds. You hear about people throughout the housing authorities nationwide discharged and prosecuted for misappropriation of funds. You never heard Mrs. Randolph's name connected with this. She mentioned years ago that as a result of her listening to other people, she had budgetary problems because she was not knowledgeable of budgetary financial matters at that time. We all learn from trial and error. Here's a woman who has associated with the presidents and was at the Mayor(s) of Chicago's beck and call, but always had time for the residents of the Chicago Housing Authority.

"Mrs. Randolph would say, 'I'm never going to forget where I came from, not because I'm in a wheelchair but because I have seen people pass (die) and have seen people fall on hard times.' And when asked, she would always lend a



Henry Horner Local Advisory Council President and Central Advisory Council Vice President Mamie Bone eulogizes Mrs. Randolph

helping hand. This she learned from an early age.

"In a book that was by a friend, it had a recipe in it from Mrs. Randolph of cornbread and buttermilk. This is what we ate when we were coming up and I don't care what anyone says, it was good then and still good today. She was not ashamed of her roots. This is why she was a teacher. To read the poem "A Lesson from the Geese."

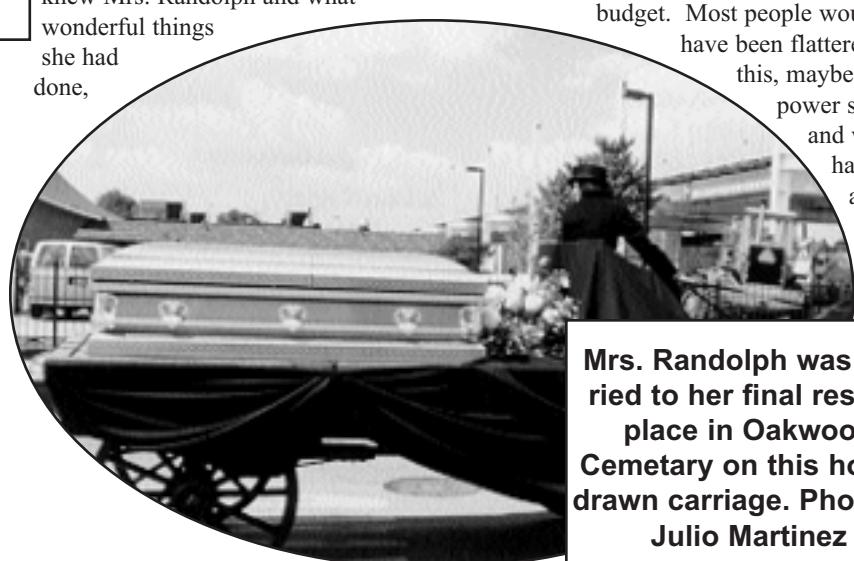
"When we were in the caravan to lay Mrs. Randolph's body to rest, Georgia Ann started yelling, 'Look up, look up.' And over the car was a v-shape of geese flying. Of course (Continued on page 9)



Mrs. Randolph's daughter, Gwendolyn Bohannon, and CHA Manager Mabel Latham. Photo by Anita L. Baker

affordable and decent housing; a movement which continues today. Mrs. Randolph determination helped change the face of Chicago public housing. Through her efforts, modernization funds for CHA were suspended until appropriate recognition was given to the resident organizations and until a Memorandum of Accord, outlining the residents' partnership with CHA was signed.

In 1964, Mrs. Randolph was elected President of the Washington Park Homes Local Advisory Council. In 1976, she was elected President of



Mrs. Randolph was carried to her final resting place in Oakwood Cemetery on this horse-drawn carriage. Photo by Julio Martinez

Residents Fight Vacate Orders

by Benjamin Harris

Under threat of being forced to leave their homes, residents in Stateway Gardens and Rockwell Gardens are fighting the City of Chicago's efforts to condemn their buildings.

There are many buildings in CHA developments which are in need of immediate and serious repairs, so much so that the City of Chicago recently filed building code violation suits against buildings in several developments in circuit court and won. The city complained that some of the residential housing units were in such a horrendous state of repairs that the residents' health, welfare and safety were in danger. The city cases were based upon the official building inspection reports that were submitted by the inspectors of the city Building Department.

In each of these cases, the city's recommendations to the court were to vacate all of the residents and condemn the buildings as unsafe for human habitation. The residential housing complexes that are affected by the court's decision and orders are Stateway Gardens and Rockwell Gardens.

Residents in these developments certainly recognize the poor condition of their buildings. But they are seeking to plan their relocation in an orderly way.

As of the printing of this story, Stateway Gardens

Stateway Gardens Local Advisory Council, said there are only two problems and two solutions to the living conditions at Stateway Gardens: "The Chicago Housing Authority and the residents who live in Stateway Gardens."

Oliver-Harris continued, "The new management team at CHA must eradicate the incompetent maintenance management program of the past and must hold its maintenance department accountable." She added that the residents can change their "horrible living conditions only with caring, attention, self discipline and neighborly concern."

The executive members of the Stateway Gardens LAC were not immediately available for comment on this issue.

At Rockwell Gardens, the city's efforts to vacate one building have left residents there "confused and upset," according to Local Advisory Council President Mary Baldwin.

Baldwin said Rockwell residents are planning to vacate and eventually demolish buildings at 2501 W. Monroe St. and 117 S. Rockwell Ave. Both buildings are plagued by bad conditions and very low occupancy rates; less than one-half of the units are occupied. But Baldwin said the residents' efforts to plan an orderly evacuation from the building were thwarted by the city's efforts to shut the buildings down.

Where the residents chose to evacuate 117 S. Rockwell first, Baldwin said the city received a vacate order for 2501 W. Monroe first. Currently, the court has ordered residents of that building to move out by early November.

Instead of time to choose another CHA building, a scattered site apartment or a Section 8 certificate, the residents found themselves facing eviction notices.

"That was not part of the plan to have residents be evicted so fast. It was unfair," she said.

Baldwin said she and the Rockwell Gardens LAC's attorneys would be in court this month in an

"I just don't know what I would do if I had to move now. I just prayed and thank God."
- Stateway Gardens resident Evea Washington

has been removed from the court's ordered vacate list because of the immediate response of CHA.

Evea Washington, who has been a resident of Stateway Gardens for over 10 years and lives in one of the buildings that were to be vacated, had mixed reactions about the reversal of the court's order.

She said with tears in her eyes, "I'm not happy because of the conditions of my building or the way some of the residents treat the building, nor am I happy about the way CHA maintained the buildings over the years. But I'm relieved because of the strain the court's vacate order would have put on my family.

"I just don't know what I would do if I had to move now. I just prayed and thank God."

Dorothy Oliver-Harris, who is a member of

(Continued from page 8) during this time we perceived this as a sign that Artensa was letting us know that she was all right and a job well done.

Mrs. Randolph attended her last retreat in May 1997. I'm so very glad that she enjoyed this retreat. She said, 'This was the best retreat.' Mrs. Randolph truly enjoyed working with the seniors and disabled residents. Recently, when everyone went away, as a result of the changes, the mayor seemed to have looked the other way. Coming from where she came from, she had accomplished a lot. I don't think that there are many people who can do this. There are many people who would have turned to drugs and alcohol or fallen from the wayside and said, 'I can't do it because the society won't let me do it.' Mrs. Randolph never said anything. She

just kept going. She would beat you up sometimes but she would tell you what she felt. Mrs. Randolph would not do anything against the policies and procedures. 'You must do it the right way,' Mrs. Randolph said. 'I'm not going to tell you anything wrong. Did you take it by way of the Local Advisory Council. That's what you have to do.'

"When working with the late Mayor Harold Washington, she never had to tell me anything else. I learned what the policies and procedures were. There was a dedication in naming the clinic. It is the Artensa Randolph Health Care Clinic located at 3216 S. Wentworth Ave. The reason for naming this after Mrs. Randolph is that she is a Black icon and can wear out a wheelchair in less than a year's time because the wheelchair could



Residents of Stateway Gardens recently won their effort to stop the vacate order for two buildings in that South Side community (shown above)

effort to win an extension on the vacate order.

"I will be working as hard as I can to make sure the residents have time to make a real choice."

Joseph Shuldiner, executive director of CHA, expressed deep concern for the vacate orders situation during an interview which was held in his office on Oct. 1.

"The problems sadden me greatly," he said. "When we took over management, some of the housing complexes were already in court for building code violations, as far back as 1991."

"The solutions to these housing maintenance problems are not as easy as some would believe. First, where would you relocate the residents? That is our biggest concern: Second, a determination must be made as to whether it is more cost effective to rehabilitate the housing units or demolish the housing units. And third, by utilizing the combined efforts of the concerned residents, would that encourage a philosophical change in the attitudes of all the residents about how they care and maintain their communities?"

When Shuldiner and his team of federal officials took over CHA in May 1995, they faced a host of problems, ranging from crime infestation, poverty-burdened residents, housing units that are in various stages of needed repair, with some in critical need of repair, a lack of needed financial resources that are needed for renovation and maintenance upkeep of the housing units, complicated governmental restrictions, and, of course, politics.

With a solemn expression on his face, Shuldiner said the rehabilitation of these communities must start with the residents.

not keep up with her. She was very active.

To share her last words, "I'm tired and I'm sick and I'm tired of being sick, I'm cold."

I also interviewed Mamie Bone, president of the Henry Horner Homes Local Advisory Council and acting president of the Central Advisory Council:

"Mrs. Randolph leaves a legacy behind. Now we must carry on this legacy hoping that the Central Advisory Council continues her legacy of always willing to help others."

"Mrs. Randolph was a great lady. She's been in the movement for many years, in all walks of life. Public housing residents respected Mrs. Randolph for what she was doing in the Chicago

Housing Authority, trying to make the Chicago Housing Authority a safe, decent and sanitary place to live. Her legacy will remain in the Chicago Housing Authority eternally.

"Mrs. Randolph was a unique person. She will always remain in our mind as the founding chairperson of the Central Advisory Council. No one will ever be able to take Mrs. Artensa Randolph's place and I appeal to the residents to keep her dreams a reality."

**PLEASE DON'T FORGET:
THE ARTENSA RANDOLPH SCHOLARSHIP FUND
C/O CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
243 EAST 32ND ST.
CHICAGO, IL 60616**

by Mary C. Johns

Because of the brutal attack that nine-year-old Cabrini-Green resident Girl X suffered, Chicago Public Schools officials decided to hold a march recently to raise money to help students and staff members that have been affected by violence.

of the park. Some volunteers, like the ones from Robert Morris College's Soaring Eagles club, served the thirsty walkers water as they walked with their banners in hand, while others (traffic marshals) guided the enthusiastic walkers on the right path to their final destination. Upon arrival, the walkers were encouraged by Avis Lavelle, a Board of Trustees member, saying, "A job well done, we made it!" There were booths stationed within the park for

year and said how pleased they were with the outcome of the walk and what the walk meant to them. CPS Chief Paul Vallas was among the speakers and received a \$5,000 check presented to him by Anil Shama, president of the Association of Indians in America, and his associates, who also invited the walkers to join them at their booth after the rally for some Indian food, music, free T-shirts and caps in celebration of their 50th Independence Day.

Schools March for Victims

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Foundation held its first walkathon in Grant Park on Aug. 16 to raise money for the Crisis Support Fund.

THE WALK AND THE PARTICIPANTS

The walkathon was basically a 2 ½ mile walk around the perimeter of Grant Park that began at 9 a.m. Because it was early Saturday, I didn't expect as many people as there were. To my amazement, there were many participants representing many schools across the city. In fact, some participants were also there representing the Chicago Board of Education itself, with its many departments. Here are just a few of the many participants: Englewood Technical Preparatory Academy, Cockrell CPC, CVS High School, Kenwood Academy, Nettlehorst Elementary, Parkside Academy, the Montefiore Special School, The Arab American Council-Alnmajireen Mosque & School, Parents As Teachers First, and the Park Eddy Foundation. That's just a few! On route, the Percy L. Julian High School's marching band greeted the walkers with some fabulous sounds.

THE VOLUNTEERS

There were volunteers stationed in various parts



The Chicago Cheerleaders practice their moves. Photo by Mary C. Johns

many purposes. Some were serving the hungry walkers lunches. In other booths, the volunteers were handing out raffled T-shirts, caps, backpacks and tickets to certain restaurants. There was also a registration and a booth for a local TV station.

THE RALLY

After the walk, a rally was held. Two high school students and a second grader as well as other selected people read poems, talked about the coming school

After all the speeches and congratulations, Mary Nell of 950 AM, a hip hop/rap radio station, announced the entertainment of the day, the Chicago Cheerleaders, the Percy L. Julian High School Marching Band and others. The event ended at 12 p.m.

THE CRISIS SUPPORT FUND

The Crisis Support Fund is part of the Children First Fund. It was created after "Girl X" was brutally raped in January 1997. The Fund is designed to provide emergency financial support to Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students and staff who are victims of crime and violence in their time of need.

THE CHILDREN FIRST FUND

The Chicago Public Schools Foundation is an independent non-profit corporation that was first established in July 1996. Within its corporation is the Children First Fund. The Fund's primary objectives are "to supplement, assist and aid the Chicago Public School district in its pursuit of excellence by providing funds for identified needs and programs."

For further information about the Crisis Support Fund or about the Children First Fund, call the "Children First Fund" hot line at: 773-535-8672.

Juwani Howard Returns Home

by Kasey Jones

Washington Wizards star Juwan Howard arrived in our development at approximately 1:35 p.m. on Sept. 12. Lowden Homes Resident Management Organization President Delores Triplett opened the ceremony with brief intro-

ductions of the basketball star as well as the members of the Resident Management Organization board. When Juwan, who is known to former and longtime residents as "Nookie," took the microphone, he spoke about giving back to the community as a tribute to his late grandmother, Mrs. Jane

Howard, who in turn I must say was a much admired woman. He spoke about playing ball on the courts in the first and third grade and smiled as he said, "Now you finally have a real basketball court." Those of us who have been here for a while remember the games they played on milk crates and know the court is heaven-sent. Juwan has grown to be a mature young man and success has not

changed him a bit. I saw no display of arrogance and he did smile and say it made him feel good to see so many familiar faces. Juwan was recognized for this great donation by several speakers. He received many plaques but he still seemed at his most honored point when resident Tyrone Noel promised him that if he came back to the development at the same time

next year, the court would still look the same. It was very pleasing to hear from CHA Economic Development Director Ron Carter that Juwan had stimulated something nationwide and a total of \$1.3 million dollars is being raised to build more playgrounds in CHA developments. Juwan ended the ceremony by cutting the ribbon, signing autographs and placing the stone engraved with his



Young fans watch Juwan Howard dedicate a basketball court in Lowden Homes.



Washington Wizards star Juwan Howard pauses to chat with his former neighbors during a Sept. 12 visit to Lowden Homes.

name and the date he donated the court into the ground. He then decided to bless the basketball court. He shot the ball and was successful on his fifth attempt. Nookie hugged and signed more autographs, took pictures and was on his way.

This community appreciates and thanks Juwan for all he's done for the community.

A Decree But to What Degree

to move and the ones who wanted to move are gone or going. The rest of us want to make a change in our community. The public housing stock in the city is poor, unsightly, congested and infested but it's where we call home. It's where we live and grow and interrelate with one another. It's where our children go to school and where families come home. Somehow history has repeated itself. Before the construction of public housing, we were living in the worst of tenements. Now, 50 years later, the same is true. Sure I would love to see cleaner surroundings; a greater respect for our women; a safer place for our children and our young men employed. We can only work towards a better tomorrow and keep the faith.

A New Direction

There is a new direction in public housing called Strategic Planning. It is the best implementation the federal government has ever offered the residents towards the betterment of public housing.

Under the new federal laws, any development that has 10 percent or more of its units vacant must come up with a plan or be

torn down. The plan has to be developed of the residents, for the residents and by the residents. The residents are really in charge.

Now it's the residents' turn and we either put up or shut up. I know all of us will not be as successful as others but none of us will ever sink as low as the government did when it had total control over our community. The strategic planning procedures are going into effect as you read this article, so what role will the Gautreaux Decree play when the plan is finished? How will it benefit public housing residents when it becomes a fact that not a single resident wants to move into an integrated community or out of their own community.

The Gautreaux residents of old had a point to make and they made it. They entered the neighborhoods that were closed to us. But the minds of public housing residents changed with time.

The only way to approach change effectively is by the numbers. If 80,000 signatures were presented to Judge Aspen, what would his ruling be then? Would he rule in favor of the majority or would he wait for an answer from Polikoff, the host of the Gautreaux Decree?

Change is Inevitable

Alex Polikoff plays an important role in ratifying and modifying the Decree. I'm sure there are at least 6,000 public housing resident families out there who thank him dearly. I know he sleeps good at night knowing he has done a good deed to improve lives. But when I asked about changing the Decree so it would fit the times, he said, "It changes all the time." Then he began to explain about the ratio of houses. I asked if there was a Gautreaux college fund set up for those children who moved out of public housing and into scattered

sites. Polikoff looked at me with a question on his face and replied, "No, not that I know of."

A scholarship fund would really give true meaning to Gautreaux Decree.

I misjudged the relationship between Alex Polikoff and Dorothy Gautreaux. It seems the main concern of the Decree as it stands is the number of houses to be constructed for us residents. It's all about the Habitat Company - the development firm that is in charge of building scattered site units - keeping their contract. It's all about Polikoff keeping an outdated dream alive. It's all about Judge Marvin Aspen, the federal

judge who oversees the Gautreaux case, continuing to play out the judicial role of upholding the law no matter how it has outlived its usefulness. All the advances that were made in public housing have been acknowledged.

Thank you, Polikoff, Habitat and Judge Aspen. But just like you listened to the residents over 30 years ago, now things have come to a full circle. It's time to listen again.

The fact remains: Public housing is being changed by a new generation of residents. They will fight with the same tenacity that Dorothy and her entourage fought with.

Domestic Violence AD



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Stop the Violence II

In the quest to write about the violence in the streets and in the housing complexes of Chicago, I still find myself writing again about police brutality. Police brutality is nothing new, of course, but now anyone can find evidence of it in the media.

Ald. Robert Shaw (9) said recently, "We are sitting on a power keg." He announced that he and other aldermen are planning to bring the problem of police brutality against minorities to President Bill Clinton's attention.

The Chicago Police Department is understaffed and under court order; they are not allowed at this time to do any hiring at all, according to news reports. The courts put a moratorium on hiring new police officers because the Police Union and the City are fighting a legal battle over testing and promotion procedures. The city wants to maximize diversity in the department and wants the freedom to hire minorities on the force. The Police Union wants all hiring and promotions to be based on tests - tests on which minorities often score lower than white officers.

Another serious problem on the city police force is the shortage of field lieutenants and sergeants.

The lieutenants and sergeants preside over and supervise street arrests. They are the ones who make sure the arrests and the procedures of the arrests are carried out properly. The force is short 84 lieutenants and 53 sergeants, according to news reports.

Meanwhile, many citizens are complaining that the police assigned to the streets are beating and robbing citizens. Jeremiah Mearday, 18, allegedly was beaten with flashlights in the street in front of witnesses. Mearday suffered a broken jaw and other injuries and was hospitalized for a few days. Leron Betts was one of the witnesses and he said in a television interview that Mearday was handcuffed and the two policemen were holding him on the ground as they beat him. His case is being handled by the police department's Office of Professional Standards.

The police have said that they tried to arrest Mearday because he was standing on the corner with two known gang members.

Ryan Norris, a 19-year-old church deacon, was stopped for a traffic violation Friday, Sept. 26, according to television news reports. When he attempted to call his father on his car phone, Norris said the police allegedly snatched him out of his car and forced him into the squad car where they began to beat him. He also wound up with a broken jaw. His father, the Rev. Julius Norris, said he is filing suit against the department. This case is being handled by the department's Internal Affairs unit.

On Sept. 30, two off duty cops allegedly held up two men in front of Tito's Haciendo in the Pilsen neighborhood - my neighborhood - in broad daylight, according to television news reports. They robbed the men of \$50 or \$60 at gunpoint. They were positively identified in a line up. There were witnesses to this crime also.

Another demonstration was held on Sept. 24 at City Hall to protest the handling of the case of Jorge Guillen. Guillen, a mentally ill man, was killed by police in his home in front of his wife and children on Oct. 3, 1995. The protesters said they wanted prosecutors to charge the three officers with murder for Guillen's death. They said a crime has been covered up. In my story this summer, I wrote

by Cenabeth Cross

about previous marches about Guillen's death. The demonstration was sponsored by Neighbors Against Police Brutality.

On Oct. 1, an inmate was beaten with an aluminum baseball bat, according to various news reports. This happened in a police lock-up on the West Side at 3115 S. Harrison. Police Superintendent Matt Rodriguez said Lloyd Amos, the guard who beat the man, will be fired for his actions. The victim suffered a broken arm and two broken legs.

Eric Holder, a six-year veteran on the police force, was beaten this summer by 11 police officers as he tried to break up a disturbance in front of his girlfriend's home, according to various news reports. The police arrived and allegedly began to beat Holder, even though he was shouting that he was an officer and showing his badge, as reported by the television news.

Johnny Cochran, O.J. Simpson's attorney, was interviewed on "The View," a talk show on Channel 7 daytime. Cochran said police behave like a secret society; they don't tell on each other. There may be a few good ones in the bunch, Cochran said, but if they keep secret the misdeeds of other officers, they're in the same barrel as the other rotten apples.

Incarceration doesn't rehabilitate. My youngest brother, after serving 6 years in the Menard state prison, came home and had to be put in a mental institution, where he is today.

All of this police brutality seems to have a racial motive. Racism even has a history in the mayor's family. The late Mayor Richard J. Daley, called "The Boss," made it clear how he felt about the Blacks. He would place strict curfews on Black neighborhoods and during the '68 riots, issued a 'shoot to kill' order for anyone found out at the wrong time. Back in the '60s, Blacks had little input in the law making and enforcement.

The current mayor, Richard M. Daley, grew up in Bridgeport, where 13-year-old Lenard Clark was attacked. In the '60s, Blacks weren't allowed in Bridgeport unless we were going to the International Amphitheatre. Police officers made sure all the Black people left the area immediately after any event in that area.

This background makes it hard for me to believe that the current mayor really understands the problem.

On Sept. 25, the current mayor spoke at a anti-violence rally at 5000 S. Wood Ave. The subject was gang bangers. Daley said he wants everyone to help stop violence in our communities. As he sweated profusely, he said the rally was more important than going to the Rolling Stones concert which was going on the same night. But Daley

seemed uncomfortable at the event. He made a few more remarks and he was gone.

Many of the people at the rally were carrying banners and signs with the CAPS logos on them. CAPS means Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy. CAPS is a partnership of the community and other city agencies working together to fight crime and improve the quality of life in Chicago neighborhoods.

Community members are more than just eyes and ears of the police. With CAPS, you get involved in actually solving the crime problems in your neighborhood. Chicago is divided into 279 police beats, small geographic areas in which police officers are assigned. These beats are organized into 25 police districts. Teams of officers patrol your beat 24 hours a day. The same officers are assigned to the same beat on the same shift for a year; this way you get to know them and they get to know you. Beat teams are supported by teams of rapid response officers. They answer many of the emergency calls in the district, allowing beat teams to remain on the beat working with the community.

At a CAPS meeting in the Austin District, some gang members expressed their fears concerning the beatings and said the police sometimes plant drugs on them when they are arrested. They said the police beat them sometimes and release them. They said they are aware that once they have a police record, their future is shot economically, even with an education. Life after you get a police record is bleak.

Children think the gang is a family or a replacement for the one you don't have. Some are "jumped in" - they are beaten and forced to join. Some of the females have sex with the entire gang. Usually getting out means death.

A woman who appeared on the Geraldo Show, Betty Cook, said her daughter was tortured, beaten, raped and shot in the head twice before they put her on the railroad tracks, where a train dismembered her body. When you get in trouble, you're on your own, unless you really do have a family and they help you.

Incarceration doesn't rehabilitate. My youngest brother, after serving 6 years in the Menard state prison, came home and had to be put in a mental institution, where he is today. The jails are overcrowded as it is. They are allowing inmates with a lesser crime to serve their time at home connected to an electronic box.

I know a young man named Michael who was convicted of selling marijuana. Because his mother lives in Eckhart Park, a CHA senior citizens development, he has to stay at his brother-in law's home. Michael has an anklet around his leg that is connected to a computerized box that sends a signal to the main office if you go anywhere more than 100 feet away from it.

If the box sends this message, Michael will have to go back to jail to finish the remainder of his sentence.

On Oct. 8, WGCI radio station reported that the monitoring systems aren't working as they had planned. The boxes aren't registering to the home office as they should. The electronic box can't stop crime if it is defective. We have to start thinking of different ways to stop crime and violence and help our kids stay out of jail. We have to get involved.



Pay Back

A multi-ethnic group of residents from a senior citizens building at 2111 N. Halsted (right) pay careful attention as Senior North Local Advisory Council President Shirley Hammond (left) presents a \$500 check to the building.

Hammond recently presented checks to all of her constituent buildings as dividends on the janitorial company owned collectively by Senior North residents.



Journal

All CHA/Section 8 Residents Are Welcome

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CHA and Latinos: Interview with Joe Shuldiner

by Julio Martinez

From A recent interview with Joseph Shuldiner, executive director of the Chicago Housing Authority:

Question: Mr. Shuldiner, Why has CHA excluded Latinos from the agency?

Answer: Of course when you look at the upper management I think you're wrong since [the takeover] we had Ana Vargas, who has since left [as Deputy Executive Director of Finance and Administration], Andy Rodriguez, who is the head of Redevelopment, and Raphael Leon, who is president of Chicago Housing Metropolitan Corporation. So when 8 upper management people met, 3 of them were Latinos, which is a much higher percentage than the Hispanic population in public housing in Chicago. So you know I think the issue of service of course is a different one. I think the core of Latinos and combinations of these people have not been reached-out to and not been served by public housing. So this wrong over the years has made them very low users of public housing.

The Department of Resident Management & Opportunities (RM&O) congratulates the RMCs, RMOs and ROs that have worked so diligently this year to turn their visions for their communities into reality.

Chicago Housing Authority
Joseph Shuldiner,
Executive Director

Please place CHA Logo Here

Office of Community Relations & Involvement

Ed Moses, Deputy Executive Director

Ron Carter, Director of Economic Development

Residents driven by a desire to succeed are invited to contact Sharon Gipson, Senior Manager of the Department of Resident Management & Opportunities, at (312) 432-1062. Let us help you realize your dreams!

As you know, there is a lawsuit about that by Latinos United. And we basically, as a result of the lawsuit, are working with a variety of Latino groups to do more outreach.

With all the stuff we send to the residents, we now translate it into Spanish for residents. I

know there is a lot of things to be done but I think we are trying to reach out.

I can't speak about the board that was used before the executive advisory committee, which includes a Latino. We also have to work to see more improvement and success in the Section 8 program. And I think that is also more by desire since I think Latinos are more interested in Section 8 than public housing itself.

Question: Does this have something to do with the Latinos United suing the CHA?

Answer: Well, the suit was already here when we got here. So we never had the chance to show what we would have done without the lawsuit.

Question: I know that you have 104,000 applications back. You guys did a wonderful job with so many applications how many have you sent out by now?

Answer: 104,000 applications were submitted [for the re-opening of the Section 8 waiting list] and 82,000 were found to be complete. And the computer randomly selected 35,000. So only 35,000 of those families are on the waiting list. The rest are not and at this time the first 1,000 are being notified to come in.

I don't know exactly how many can participate later or a couple of months from now. But we now understand that apart from that there is now a separated remedial waiting list for Latinos. So some of the Latino organizations are doing a separate outreach to Latino communities and the Latinos that potentially were excluded from applying in the past. That list is open

until the end of the year. That's a fair window of 6 months that goes until the end of the year. So for Latino families that meet certain criteria, they can continue to apply and be part of a remedial list.

Question: Do you think that scattered sites and Section 8 should have their own board?

Answer: Section 8 do in some sense because generally the C.H.A.C. is their own organization, so we don't try to tell them how to do it. In the [Northeast scattered sites] their presidents are not just actually presidents of their development, they are presidents of the Lathrop area. So if you are president of Lathrop, that also includes scattered sites of that area, and to me if the C.A.C decided they wanted representation separately, that's exactly what they can do.

Some changes are a little more difficult [such as Section 8] because the people are nowhere near each other. They don't necessarily have a lot in common; they have different housing. You know [Section 8] is not owned by us. It will be of much greater difficulty to organize CHA scattered sites or Section 8 residents because they're all over the place. Sometimes you go to a development and there is a development so you say "Let's have an election." There are 17,000 families all over Chicago [in Section 8]. If someone wanted to organize them, they could have their own organization.

There are other organizations that include both. The New Jersey state organization basically exists for public assisted housing but they also actually represent people in Section 8. The issue again is how you outreach to people, because they're not conveniently located in developments. It's not like you go to Taylor and you have 3,500 families. You go to this block and you don't even know who the Section 8 people are and its not clear to me how much of this information we are supposed to make public. What we have to do is we have to send notices to the residents saying here is the person who wants to organize and the tenant has to make contact with them. We will not normally give the name and the addresses within the program because of privacy issues.



Billiken Fun
One of the many thousands of participants at this year's Bud Billiken Day Parade. Chicago Housing Authority residents always play a large role in the parade, both as spectators and as marchers in various organizations.

Photo by John Brooks

Happy 60th, Lathrop Homes

by Earl Battles



Hakimah Qualls, 14, and her mother, Judy Givens, pose in the Cotter Boys and Girls Club. Photo by Earl Battles



RJ's own Earl Battles poses with Lathrop youths during the Fun Day Back to School Party Aug. 31. Photo by James Rayfield

you on a 'follow the yellow-brick road' trip through the entire history of CHA's 60 years while doing a piece on the 60 years of Lathrop Homes. I can, as well, say that knowing your past can help one make good plans for the future.

But sometimes the lessons of the past don't provide answers to issues of the day. Most of the time, we have to learn from our own mistakes.

Instead of a history of buildings, I want to write about a history of an attitude - what we today call the 'Project Mentality.'

During the construction of Lathrop Homes, the builders and the first residents had a certain idea of what they thought they were creating. They built a low-rise community to house low-income people.

Over the years, the residents added their own



Lathrop kids including Amanda Connery (above left) were major participants in this year's 4-H club activities at the State Fair, which drew Gov. Jim Edgar and wife Brenda Edgar. Lathrop 4-H kids not pictured are Jahmal Thomas, Loretta Harris, Michael Harris and Tenesha Coleman. Photo by Bobby Watkins

The score equals 60. How that adds to years of wear and tear makes one feel very old. But age is something to be proud of, especially when you have outlived old friends and have made new friends. Sixty shows integrity.

I'm not talking about myself, thank you. I'm talking about the Lathrop Homes development and the Chicago Housing Authority, which both turned 60 years old this year.

Most reporters and writers who would do a chronological (let's count the years) story and would find this as an opportunity to teach you a history lesson. Not this writer! I can easily lead

institutions. Lathrop residents started their own neighborhood church out of the apartments of tenants that grew into its own building. They started a Boys and Girls Club that grew out of the basements of Lathrop into its own building. These creations show that residents added their ideas to what they felt CHA should have provided in building these communities.

But the residents of Lathrop and CHA also built something together: a 'Project Mentality.' The project mentality, of course, exists in every CHA development and it has as many different meanings as there are CHA residents.

Project mentality can be defined in terms of

Entrevista con el Sr. Joseph Shuldiner

por Julio Martinez

Entrevista con el Sr. Joseph Shuldiner, Director Ejecutivo de la CHA:

Pregunta: Sr. Shuldiner ¿Por qué la CHA ha excluido a los Latinos de la agencia?

Respuesta: Si usted considera a los administradores de alto nivel, creo que usted está equivocado, ya que desde (que hay nueva administración) tuvimos a Ana Vargas, quien ahora ya se ha ido (como Directora Ejecutiva de Finanzas y Administración), Andy Rodriguez, quien es el jefe de Desarrollo, y Raphael Leon, quien es Presidente de la Corporación

Metropolitana de Vivienda de Chicago. De modo que cuando 8 administradores de alto nivel se reunían, 3 de ellos eran Latinos, y ello es un porcentaje mucho más alto que el de la población Hispana en las viviendas públicas de Chicago. De modo que yo pienso que el tema de servicio es diferente. Yo creo que el grupo de Latinos y las combinaciones de estas gentes no ha sido apropiadamente informadas y por lo tanto no han sido atendidas por la vivienda pública. Este error sobre los años los ha convertido en personas que utilizan muy poco la vivienda pública.

Como usted sabe, hay una demanda de Latinos United a la CHA sobre este asunto. Y nosotros básicamente, como consecuencia de dicha demanda estamos trabajando con varios grupos Latinos para informar bien a sus comunidades. Actualmente todo el material escrito que se manda a los residentes es traducido al español. Yo sé que hay muchas cosas por hacer pero estamos intentado hacer llegar la información a los Latinos. Yo no puedo hablar sobre la directiva que estuvo antes del actual Comité Consultor Ejecutivo, el cual incluye a un Latino. También tenemos que trabajar para ver más mejoras y éxitos en el programa Sección 8. Y creo que es más por deseo ya que cero que los Latinos están más interesados en la Sección 8 que en la vivienda pública en sí.

Pregunta: ¿Tiene esto algo que ver con la demanda de Latinos United en contra de la CHA?

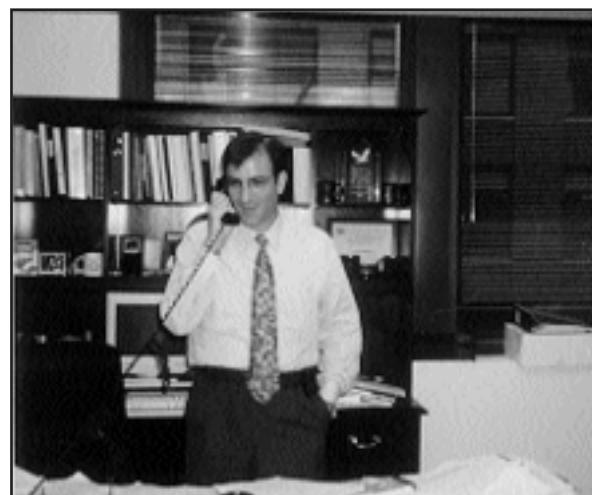
Respuesta: Bueno, la demanda ya estaba aquí cuando nosotros llegamos. De tal manera que nosotros no

tuvimos la oportunidad de mostrar lo que hubieramos hecho sin la demanda.

Pregunta: Yo sé que ustedes ya han recibido 104,000 solicitudes. Han hecho un trabajo excelente con tantas solicitudes ¿Cuántos solicitantes han sido llamados para ser entrevistados hasta la fecha?

Respuesta: 104,000 solicitudes fueron sometidas (para la reapertura de la lista de espera de la Sección 8) y 82,000 de ellas estaban completas. Y la computadora escogió 35,000 al azar. De modo que en la lista de espera actual sólo hay 35,000 familias. En este momento 1,000 familias están siendo notificadas para que se presenten.

Yo no sé exactamente cuantas pueden participar en los siguientes meses, pero entendemos aparte hay una lista de espera remedial para los Latinos. Algunas



Joseph Shuldiner, Director Ejecutivo de la CHA. Photo por Julio Martinez

organizaciones Latinas están haciendo una campaña por separado para alcanzar a las comunidades Latinas y a personas que fueron excluidas para solicitar en el pasado. Esa lista estará abierta por 6 meses hasta finales de año. De modo que las familias Latinas que cumplan con ciertos requisitos, pueden meter su solicitud y ser parte de la lista remedial.

Pregunta: ¿Piensa usted que las viviendas disper-

sas y la Sección 8 deberían de tener su propia directiva?

Respuesta: La Sección 8 en cierto sentido la tiene, ya que generalmente el C.H.A.C. es su propia organización, nosotros no tratamos de decirles como hacer las cosas. En las viviendas dispersas del Noreste, sus presidentes no solamente son presidentes de sus complejos habitacionales, ellos son presidentes del área de Lathrop, que también incluye viviendas dispersas de esa área, y si el C.A.C. decide que quieren una representación por separado, ellos pueden hacerlo.

Algunos cambios son un poco más difíciles (como la Sección 8) porque las familias no están cerca la una de la otra. Ellos no necesariamente comparten un mismo lote, sino que se localizan en diferentes viviendas. Como usted sabe la Sección 8 no es propiedad de nosotros. Sería mucho más difícil organizar las viviendas dispersas de la CHA o los residentes de la Sección 8 porque están por todos lados. Algunas veces en los complejos multifamiliares tu puedes decir "Vamos a Organizar una elección" pero en la Sección 8, hay 17,000 familias por todo Chicago, si alguien quiere organizarlos sería muy difícil, pero si ellos quieren, ellos pueden tener su propia organización.

Hay otras organizaciones que incluyen a ambas. Por ejemplo una organización del estado de Nueva Jersey existe básicamente para viviendas que reciben asistencia pública pero también representa a gente de la Sección 8. El problema es otra vez, como llegar a la gente, porque no están convenientemente localizados en los complejos multifamiliares. No es como ir a Taylor y ahí tu tienes a 3,500 familias. En el caso de la Sección 8, tu vas a una cuadra y ni siquiera sabes quienes son las personas de la Sección 8 y no está muy claro para mí que tanta información estamos supuestos a hacer del dominio público. Lo que nosotros tenemos que hacer es enviar avisos a los residentes diciéndoles que hay una persona que quiere organizar y hacer que ellos se pongan en contacto con dicha persona. Normalmente nosotros no damos los nombres y domicilios de las personas del Programa 8 por cuestión de privacidad.

El pasado mes de Julio, se solicitaron personas y familias para la lista de espera del Programa Sección 8. Las solicitudes para viviendas de la Sección 8 estuvieron disponibles en las bibliotecas de la ciudad y en oficinas de agencias comunitarias.

Durante la primera quincena de Julio fueron recogidas 104,000 solicitudes de las cuales aproximadamente 20,000 fueron rechazadas por estar incompletas o duplicadas. La exitosa campaña se planificó pensando en seleccionar 25,000 solicitudes por medio de un sorteo.

Fue tanto el entusiasmo por los resultados obtenidos que La Autoridad de Vivienda de Chicago (CHA) decidió aumentar 10,000 solicitudes a la lista de espera original que iba ser de 25,000 y ahora será de 35,000. De esta nueva lista

Se Reciben 104,000 Solicitantes Para Viviendas del Programa Sección 8 Se Construyen más Viviendas Dispersas por Julio Martinez

de solicitantes, 2,000 de ellos han sido llamados para una entrevista preliminar.

Este programa ofrece a los solicitantes la oportunidad de escoger la comunidad donde creen que su

familia vivirá en un ambiente seguro, donde sus hijos tendrán una enseñanza adecuada y donde los padres de familia tendrán oportunidades de tener mejores empleos.

Anteriormente el programa de la

Sección 8 había estado mal administrado y tenía muchos problemas. Hace dos años el Programa fue entregado a CHAC, Inc., la agencia de vivienda nacionalmente reconocida por su responsabilidad y su profesionalismo, y el programa fue estabilizado. Como resultado de ello muchos dueños de edificios están buscando formar parte del programa.

Vivienda Dispersa

La empresa Habitat Company ha construido más de 1,300 viviendas dispersas. Estas viviendas fueron diseñadas con el propósito de que sean bien aceptadas en las comunidades donde son construidas. Las casas son de un diseño bonito, muy cómodas, de una altura que combina con los alrededores y están rodeadas de una reja para que personas ajenas a las viviendas no entren sin permiso.

Flannery Homes News

by Alan Minerbrook

A tenants meeting of both high-rise buildings, 1507 and 1531 N. Clybourn Ave., took place Aug. 9th at 2 p.m. The meeting was held by the site manager, Maria Reyes, and she discussed a number of topics.

Recertification of all tenants is scheduled for November 1997 for the new leases for 1998.

She mentioned that 10 people were arrested at 1531 N. Clybourn over the summer. The ten persons were guests of one of the tenants and that tenant has been charged with violating the One Strike rule and will be evicted, Reyes said. All 10 persons are permanently barred from the building and CHA has placed all their names on the exclusion list. One Strike is in force!

Fourteen day notices also are being enforced, Reyes said. A two-month rent arrears automatically brings a 14-day eviction notice. A tenant is served a 10-day notice to appear in court with all rents plus \$265 legal fees. CHA asks the court for money and possession of the apartment.

If tenants are going out of town, Reyes said they should let the manager know in advance. A \$25 fee is charged for a lock-out - a change of locks to get into the apartment. The managers also charge \$25 for a new magnetic key card for the entrance.

The windows in both buildings are being inspected by the original window installer and CHA janitors are being trained to repair defective windows. Blinds are being replaced in small lots to allow the cost to fit into the building management budget.



Orchard Park town homes under construction. Photo by Alan Minerbrook.

Elevator defects in the two buildings are being referred to CHA.

Rosemary Colon, the assistant building manager, suggested that residents bombard CHA with complaints about the elevators.

Forty units per year are scheduled for re-painting each year. Management is replacing stove-top burners and ovens gradually.

HUD Policy Changes

A few months ago, the building managers announced that all non-elderly residents of Flannery Homes would have to move out. But now apparently things have changed.

At a subsequent meeting, residents were told that Supplemental Security Income recipients, persons with disabilities and senior citizens will share the two high-rise buildings. Non-elderly SSI recipients will not be forced to move unless they violate One Strike or other lease provisions. Those who violate CHA leases will be evicted and will never be allowed to rent a CHA unit again.

HUD's new directive for rents is that 30 percent of tenants income must be directed for rent.

manager Rosemary Colon.

Laundry Rooms

The contractor who ran the laundry rooms, Family Pride, is being replaced by a new company. New equipment is being installed and new laundry cards for machines will be issued. The machines will not use tokens any more. Residents must ask questions about these new cards.

One Strike Again

A tenant was evicted Sept. 11th from 1531 N. Clybourn was due to resident complaints. One Strike applies again!



Hortense "Vicki" Mason pauses as she boards an elevator.

friendly."

They both feel "safe and unrestricted" at Orchard Park and feel they have made a wise investment in their home. They find the amenities of their home very comfortable and nice.

I spoke at length with Casey Charlton, who shares a unit at 1537 N. Clybourn with Chris Feurer. Charlton described the Orchard Park townhouses as a good investment in inner city living. They enjoy the restaurants, shopping and entertainment facilities with easy access to their home. They are both former residents of Wilmette and enjoy living in the city.

At first, Charlton said she was a little nervous about living so close to Cabrini-Green. But now, she says she is comfortable even alone in the house late at night.

"We've experienced no problems of any kind," she said.

They feel very secure and at ease in their town house within the great community of Orchard Park and are happy as residents.

Former Cabrini-Green residents Geraldine Knight and her son, 20-year-old Aaron, are very much at home in Orchard Park. They enjoy its spacious double bedroom with all of its lawns and amenities.

They both feel a positive transition from their former 17th-floor apartment at 1160 N. Sedgwick Ave., where Knight lived since the age of 8. She won through a tenant lottery and said she wouldn't change anything at all.

Annie Willingham of 1537 N. Clybourn moved into her new Orchard Park Home in February 1997. She was a resident of 1150 N. Sedgwick in Cabrini-Green for 47 years. She said her Orchard Park home was a gift and an answer to her prayers. She is happy and feels "very, very comfortable in Orchard Park and wouldn't think of moving again."

She hopes all of her old neighbors at Cabrini-Green will likewise join her eventually in the new environment of Orchard Park. She is presently changing her voting address and expects to join her Flannery Home neighbors in being active in Orchard's environment.

An overview of Flannery Homes. Photo by Irving Leeuw.

Managers Come and Go

On Sept. 12, another tenant meeting was held at 1507 N. Clybourn. At that meeting, Reyes said she had been appointed senior manager and property manager for Henry Horner. The new Flannery Towers site manager, David Kane, was introduced to the tenants. Rosemary Colon will remain assistant site manager.

Kane said he planned to make Flannery clean and decent. He described a background of 25 years of law enforcement and 10 years of private management. He said he believed in team tenancy. Kane started a tenant patrol to beef up security in both buildings.

"I walk the floors of both buildings every day," Kane said. "And I ask, 'What can be done to improve security?'"

Kane said he believed in open communication.

But as of Sept. 26, Kane was removed as building manager of Flannery. He has been replaced by a new manager, who has not yet been introduced to residents and who is presently in training for the building manager position, according to assistant

Heating began again in both buildings September 15, 1997.

Interviews with Orchard Park Residents

Orchard Park is a development of town homes built on vacant land around Flannery Homes. According to the documents released by the developer, the Chicago Dwellings Association, three quarters of the 54 town homes will be sold at market rate while one-quarter will be used as apartments for CHA residents relocated from Cabrini-Green.

Today, 15 of the town homes have been built and two of these are occupied by former residents of Cabrini-Green, who won the units through a lottery.

I interviewed both individual purchasers and low-rise renters of Orchard Park.

I interviewed Rafael Ramirez and his wife, Janette. They are both employed as teachers in Chicago-area schools. Ramirez teaches at Morton East High School. They moved here directly from Cordero, Spain, and are first-time home owners. Rafael said he and his wife were used to urban living in Spain and are happy to be in the middle of the city. They also like the convenience of living within Chicago for easy access to their jobs.

They find the neighbors in Orchard Park "sociable, outgoing and very

Under great stress from welfare reform changes in child care rules, working mothers in the Westhaven/Henry Horner Homes area are taking matters in their own hands.

Westhaven/Horner has nearly 2,500 welfare recipients. That large number for one neighborhood, coupled with the intense rate of children now being found ineligible for Supplemental Security Benefits, shows the critical need for child care in the Westhaven/Horner area as well as the city.

A task force appointed by Mayor Richard M. Daley and Cook County Board President John Stroger reports that nearly 12,415 children will require publicly funded day care in the first year of reform. By the year 2000, the report finds a total of about 45,000 children will need child care.

Westhaven/Horner families have approximately 757 infants and toddlers under the age of two, 1,711 children between the ages of two and five, and 282 between the ages of two and a half and five. The Daycare Action Council reports that only seven licensed care providers exist in the 60612 area code, which encompasses Westhaven, offering care to a total of 61 children during day-time hours only. Of these 61 slots, only 23 are open to infants and toddlers. There are 31 child care centers in the 60612 area but almost none offer child care to infants and toddlers who aren't usually 2.9 months of age. And most only serve as Head Start and Pre-K centers that provide primarily half-day services.

Child care at Westhaven/Horner as well as the city is a critical issue because it involves a parent that has to go out and find work or a teenage parent who will need child care in order to continue their education and eventually find work.

I will give you two examples of this need for more attention to child care and if possible a solution: In August of last year, I decided to pick up the phone and seek child care for my kids, who were then four, two and one. As I dialed, I began to feel anxious because I didn't know what was going to be the outcome of this call. Someone in an unconcerned voice picked up and immediately, I began to tell this lady

Mothers Tackle Child Care Woes

by Stacy Springfield

about my child care issues. As quick as I could get it out my mouth, I was told that only one of my kids was eligible - the four year old.

That day I called many places and I heard all sorts of reasons that would keep me from obtaining this very-much-needed child care. Things like - "We have room but there is a lengthy waiting list"; "The child has to be potty trained"; and (the one that really made me mad) "You have to be in

Many were inadequately prepared with few toys and no set plan for how to care for children.

"Some were dirty and had vagrants in and out of the building," she said. Like many newly working mothers, Stewart has encountered problems with establishing regular child care. Bureaucratic delays meant that her child care provider was not paid for three months.

"Because of that, my child care

"If I had to pay for it off of the salary I was being paid, I would only be working to pay the child care provider" - Shareefa Stewart

school or working to be eligible." I thought in order to work or go to school that I had to achieve child care first.

That day I slammed the phone down in total disgust as well as tears. Many mothers will go through this same disgust, like Shareefa Stewart, a first-time mother and laborer with a six-month-old son. Although Stewart supports the idea of welfare reform, she thinks potential working mothers need more child care support.

Stewart was unable to find a child care provider in her neighborhood.

was almost discontinued" Stewart emphasized.

The chaos over her child care situation caused her undue stress at her new job. If she had to pay the child care out of pocket, she wouldn't have been left with money for anything else. "If I had to pay for it off of the salary I was being paid, I would only be working to pay the child care provider," Stewart said

The best kind of support, Stewart said, would be payment to a child care provider before the mother enters the workforce so she can comfortably

search for a job.

"There should at least be an emergency child care fund instead of the initial red tape and waiting two months for the provider to be paid," Stewart said.

Stewart has suffered all the more because of the recent changes in child care; Recipients must now pay on a sliding scale. Stewart's child care payments went from \$1.08 per week to \$20 a week.

"A parent does not need the stress of trying to look for work and worry about child care when most on AFDC are single mothers," she said.

Westhaven/Horner residents have long understood the need for child care and decided to do something about it.

I am involved in a child care network being developed called Mothers Helping Other Mothers (MHOM). Our 16 committee members have been meeting since spring. We've got the attention of the necessary game players - the city, state, Henry Horner Local Advisory Council and the Central West Community Organization headed by Earnest Gates. The network would consist of trained child care providers receiving their licenses through various child care programs like C-Train, a organization specializing in child care training, and the state Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The committee was focused on providing adequate, safe child care but did not know all of the guidelines. We were helped by officials from North Avenue Day Care and the Salvation Army.

We have decided to use three forms of background checks and to require a complete physical, tuberculosis test and various classes to take in Cardio Pulmonary Recitation and first aid. Because every provider is different, the client will be matched with the provider of his or her standards.

Through working with Public Aid, the provider would have to wait 60 days to receive payment. But we at the MHOM Network are seeking to pay our providers within two weeks of starting. Maybe communities everywhere can band together with such an idea. After all, the MHOM program could be a start to the solution to the problem of child care and welfare reform.



The ongoing construction of units in the Westhaven community includes these replacement units for Henry Horner Homes residents.
Photos by Don Adams

8,000 to Get Jobs Help

by Mary C. Johns

ight thousand adults involved in the new federal welfare program will participate in a new state program that will help people find and keep jobs.

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THE ILLINOIS JOB ADVANTAGE

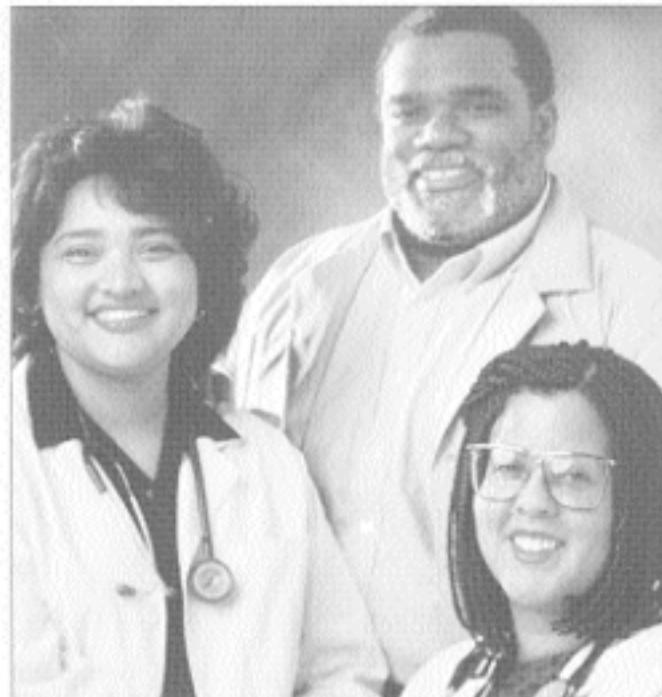
On Tuesday, Sept. 16, 1997, a press conference was held at the Illinois Department of Human Services, 2100 S. Michigan Ave., at which Gov. Jim Edgar announced a \$32 million job preparation and training program.

TARGET: INNER CITY CHICAGO

The state will target 12 inner city areas that are in the greatest need of job education, training and placement services. The governor said that it made good sense to see that people have the proper skills in order to perform well on the job. He added that people couldn't be moved from welfare to work without these kinds of investments.

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Journal

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by Anita Baker

The late Walter Russell was a dear and good friend of Marie Billingsley, the president of the Senior South Local Advisory Council. When Billingsley moved into 6401 S. Yale Ave. in 1982, Russell asked her to work with him. They worked together since that time.

"I did not just start to be president," Billingsley explained during my recent interview with her.

Billingsley came up from the ranks. First, she was a member of a local advisory committee, then the chairperson for modernization, then vice president to the late Walter Russell. After Mr. Russell retired as building president, Billingsley then was elected build-

ing president of Senior Housing Local Advisory.

Mr. Russell and Billingsley worked well together

"He was so kind to the seniors," Billingsley recalled about Russell.

"I really enjoyed working with the late Walter Russell. He was a very intelligent man. Walter will truly be missed by many."

The late Mrs. Artensa Randolph and Billingsley were also good friends. "I called her Randi," Billingsley said.

"We worked very closely together. She and I enjoyed each other's company. When I had problems, I could always go to Randi with my problems and she would always help me to solve them. She was a very good person. She did so much for all residents, not only seniors. Artensa would always say with a smile, 'I'm a senior too.'

"Randi and I shared many moments. Some were bad and some were good. Randi was a good joke teller and I truly will miss Randi.

"I did not start a couple of years ago. I started many years ago. We have never provided transportation for any resident to attend various meetings and other functions. Residents receive a stipend which is an equivalent to transportation costs and I have always given reimbursements to the building presidents.

"I would also like to see more seniors involved in the victim witness programs because I was one of the first victim witness advocates for the senior. I was

trained by the City of Chicago's Police Department. I think that the building presidents certainly should invite the victim witness advocates into their buildings because they are coming to help and provide safety information to them."

Billingsley also discussed the year that has passed since the three senior Local Advisory Council presidents:

"With the split of the senior buildings Local Advisory Councils, the only thing I see that is better is we have more control over budget matters such as controlling expenditures and now we are able to help the seniors more than before. To me, the old way was OK but they wanted to separate the various senior housing buildings and this is what happened.

"Regardless of the split, I continue to give my

ers.

"Mr. Shuldiner spoke about things to come as the authority moves forward. This was very informative to the seniors. Mr. Moses also helped with the retreat. I also hope in the future other staff will also help and participate.

"I started a janitorial service and it's going very well. Thanks goes out to the Economic Development Division for starting this residential program. The residents are grateful and the buildings are looking very good. I can't speak for the other areas but I know that I have several qualified, dependable seniors and the other seniors do a good job.

"I would like to see more residents participate in more authority-wide activities. I think they should be informed of everything that is going on in their build-

Chatting with Marie Billingsley



Marie Billingsley, President of the Senior South Local Advisory Council. Photo by Anita L. Baker

ings. This is a hard job for a few residents to maintain. In order to correct the problems of our living conditions, we must first be willing to help as individuals in solving the problem because we as residents must live here.

"It is nice to hear that you have people that admire you and this is what make the job I do for the Seniors as well as the residents all worth while. Because I certainly try to do the right thing by the seniors and the residents because I am a senior also. Therefore, I take them to heart.

"I guess that's why I was appointed to the City of Chicago Mayor Daley's advisory board. With this appointment, I feel I can help the seniors and residents more. The mayor inducted me into the Senior Hall of Fame and I am on several boards because a person should participate in as many productive activities as possible to help better their community by networking with other areas and leaders. I try to get as many seniors as possible to keep them from being idol and to stay alert. Life would be better served when you are active in bettering your community.

"I'm hoping to get more ideas from the seniors and what they would like to do in their building, something new."

Keep your eyes on Residents' Journal.

Section 8 Update by Julio Martinez

views from this new list.

The program offers applicants the opportunity to choose a community to live where they believe their family would be in a safer environment, where their children

In the two weeks of July in which the waiting list was open, 104,000 applications were received, of which 20,000 were rejected because they were incomplete or duplicates.

would receive a better education and where parents may find improved job opportunities.

In the past the Section 8 program was poorly managed and encountered many problems. Two years ago, the program was turned over to CHAC, Inc., a nationally recognized housing management firm known for its dependability and professionalism and as a result the program was stabilized.

An added benefit is that landlords are now seeking to become part of the program.

Scattered Sites

The Habitat Company has constructed more than 1,300 new scattered site housing units. These units are intended to blend in with the communities in which they are built.

The units are attractive, spacious, similar in height to surrounding buildings and have wrought iron fences to discourage unwanted visitors.

The CHA was so impressed by the response that they decided to increase the original number of applicants for the waiting list by 10,000 to bring the number from 25,000 to 35,000.

Already 2,000 persons have been called for preliminary inter-

Altgeld Gardens News

by Sharon Fornizy

Hey! New and old things have been happening at Altgeld Gardens-Murray Homes. They had an old time picnic at Carver Park. There was eating and drinking in the park, entertainment, seeing new and old friends and we spent the evening camping out.

Altgeld Gardens Parade

The Altgeld Gardens parade was great. When it first started, everyone got their chairs and found them a place to sit and got ready to watch the parade. They got the cheerleaders ready to do the cheers. When it started, the cheerleaders did some of their cheers, then some of them were dancing and flipping. People were just watching and talking about their children with pride. After the parade, everyone went to the park to eat, drink and let the kids play. They gave out prizes to the people and there were also rides for the children. The parade was fun and nice to watch. I can't wait to see the parade next year.

CHA'S Maintenance Workers

The CHA Department of Building Maintenance has some wonderful women working for them. Two of these special people are Elease Tolar and Jautany Dean. Their duties include making sure that the CHA residents care and maintain their apartments. I feel that both women are doing a fabulous job. Good luck and keep up the good work.

Personal Information

My name is Sharon Forinzy, better known as "The Road Runner." I am your roving reporter for *RJ*.

This is a special notice to let you know that eventually, I will get around to including everyone in our paper. It's just that there are so many positive things going on in



Youthnet participants
Photo by Sharon Fornizy

Altgeld-Murray Gardens that it's impossible for me to include it all in one or two editions. But hold on, I'll get to you soon.

Please feel free to contact me at the following numbers:

Pager number (312) 910-5114, or at the LAC office (773) 647-3513

Toxic Gas Leak

On Aug. 4, we experienced a toxic gas leak. It caused a great deal of discomfort to many. Some suffered headaches, eye irritations, nausea and rashes. If you experience any of these conditions, you should see a doctor immediately.

Youthnet Fun Day

On Saturday, Sept. 6, the Greater

Roseland Youthnet sponsored a "Youthnet Fun Day," which was hosted by the Greater Roseland YMCA located at 4 E. 111th St. Over 200 youth participated in activities including arts and crafts, swimming instruction, basketball, flag football and exercise activities which were conducted by staff members from the YMCA. Additional staff members from Metropolitan Family Services were all on hand to provide assistance. There were many volunteers present that included parents and 15 volunteers from R. R. Donnelly & Sons, making the day's activities successful and full of fun. Special Thanks to James Sanders, YMCA's Senior Vice President for the Youthnet Administration Office. Here is thank you note from some of the participants:

"Dear Mr. Sanders,

We want to thank you for the wonderful time at the YMCA, for summer camp. We enjoyed Mrs. Forinzy and



Fatima Khan (left) and
Deborah Jackson (right)
Photo by Sharon Fornizy

Mrs. Stokes, and the trips that we attended. We hope to come back next year.

Love,
From table #5"

Youth Service Coordinators

On Sept. 13, Betty Stokes and I took Altgeld Gardens on a field trip. The field trip was at the Field Museum. We had a nice time and did a lot of things with the kids. The kids were so happy. They saw Mayor Richard M. Daley and shook his hand and were on the 4:30 p.m. news. They were so excited. These are some of the things they did: They listened to story teller Antonio Sacre tell Latin American Folk tales and the

"Often Hilarious Family Stories of Grandmother Mimi, Aunt Nina and Magician Uncle Tito." They heard Shanta's "Travel Around the World through the Magic of Songs and Story Telling," Florence Dunham's talk, "Learn About Native American Culture Through the Words and Song of Traditional and Contemporary American Indian Stories." Also, the kids got T-shirts. We would really like to thank Mr. Sanders from the 111th Street YMCA for letting our kids play a big part of the activities.

Aldridge School News

We the parents of Aldridge Elementary School would like to send out a special "Thank You" to Ms. Jackson and Ms. Khan for caring enough to stand up for us. We really appreciate it and will not let you down.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) of Aldridge would like to congratulate all the students, teachers and staff. Strive to be

number one and keep up the good work. The Aldridge PTA is looking for responsible parents to join the organization. The PTA not only helps the school setting but also the community. Some of our activities include: a bake sale, assembling Christmas baskets, sock hops and an Easter Egg hunt. The PTA needs you!!! Please come and join us.

During July, the Girl Scouts meetings were held at the Aldridge School on Wednesdays from 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Lizette, who was the coordinator, and Ms. Williams, the clerk, assisted her.

We made different types of arts and crafts and the children were very excited. At the close of the program, they received certificates. We are looking forward to a successful fall year.

A Great Summer Program

We had a beautiful summer program under the great supervision of myself and Betty Stokes at the 111th St. YMCA for the Aldgeld-Murray kids. The kids really enjoyed themselves. We would like to thank Mr. Sanders for letting us participate in the summer program also we would like to thank Altgeld-Murray Local Advisory Council President Esther Wheeler for letting us participate in this summer program.

An Apology

I apologize to Barbara Chandler, the executive director of Altgeld-Gardens, for the mistake I made on her title in the July issue.

AMAP makes awards, seeks recruits

On Oct. 3, from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m., an awards presentation was made in conjunction with the Altgeld Murray Alternative Program (AMAP) steppers set presentation for a 16-inch softball tournament.

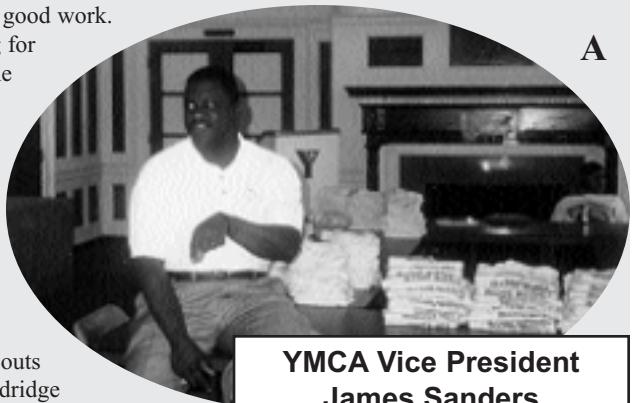
The AMAP resident initiative coordinator was coordinated a successful 16-inch softball tournament which has become a family-oriented event which has offered most of our seniors and residents a safe atmosphere to be spectators of positive events. This tournament start has an ideal for the local residents but has exploded to involve many from outside as well.

AMAP, in conjunction with the CHA Sports and Recreation department, has implemented Youth Flag Football enrollment as of Sept. 25. All 11-15 year-olds are eligible.

The recruitment for Altgeld-Murray alternative youth choir is open. The A.M.A.P. youth choir will start recruiting for its choir, both boys & girls ages 7-18. For more information, contact: Finolli Hoger at (773) 568-2716.

A.M.A.P. is seeking young women for a basketball tournament under Altgeld-Murray alternative program resident initiative coordinator Timothy Hooper.

These were the 1st and 2nd place winners of Altgeld basketball: 1st place: Elamino, 2nd place: the South Side Wrecking Crew.



YMCA Vice President
James Sanders
Photo by Sharon Fornizy

Personal Acknowledgment

Our deepest sympathies and prayers go to the families of Sonja R. Major and Tina McGill from me and the community of Altgeld.

Steppers Night

We also have steppers night given by the LAC at the community building. Come out and have fun with us. You can find more information by calling the LAC at: (312) 674-3513.

Thank you,
Sharon Fornizy

Upcoming Events

Sharon J. Roberts from the Chicago Housing Authority's Resident Organization Department, will host following upcoming events at Altgeld:

Oct-Halloween Initiation
Nov.-Thanksgiving Food Basket
Dec.-Christmas Food Baskets & Toy Give-away.

A Great Basketball Week

Once again another great week of basketball. Terry Cummings, forever the Carver basketball star, who now plays for the Seattle Sonics, held his tenth-year basketball camp during the week of Aug. 18-22.

Many children participated. Boys as well as girls ages 8-18 played a role. Mr. Thomas, forever the Carver teacher, Johnnie Evans, coach of the Carver middle team, and Tanya Williams, clerk, ran the camp very well. There was a banquet held as well at the Beverly Woods Restaurant on the last day of the camp. CHA Economic Development Director Ron Carter, a former player of the LA Lakers, also attended. Shirts and hats were distributed to every participant along with the Carver High principal and staff who opened their doors and welcomed us by letting us use their gym. We are looking forward to seeing all those next year who would like to become apart.

Vic Inc.
Tanya Williams
Secretary

Betty Stokes and RJ's own 'Roving Reporter,' Sharon Fornizy



Letters to the Editor

A Blessing for Tenant Patrol

Dear Editor:

Israel would suffer persecution and be scattered among the nations because of disobedience, but because God is merciful, he would send a savior to bring his son back to him.

William Jones' tenant patrol endured gracefully but ill fate sent it under. Some time ago, under strong leadership of former Local Advisory Council President Ethel Tripplet, who is now development president, and Dorothy Fulton, vice-president and tenant patrol captain, its operation was

restored. The members celebrated their one year anniversary on Sept. 10.

Tenant patrol in that year has been a shining star for the tenants at William Jones. On several occasions, because of high observation, hit and run drivers have been apprehended. Fast response has gotten back a stolen car. "We don't allow hookers in the development," they said. "And prostitution gets cold confrontations." Because of the concerns of all members, incidents are kept under control. The captain allows the co-captain, David Campbell, and the sec-

retary, myself, to donate extra hours sometimes.

To commemorate the one year anniversary, I will serve them cake and ice cream in the tenant patrol office. I also promised to submit an article to Residents' Journal for all to share. If you're holding a copy of the Residents' Journal right now, you are sharing in our blessing.

To all of our tenant patrol members, especially the seniors...Peace!

- Jaret Chandler

Section 8 Concerns

Dear Editor:

My name is Jerry Dean Owens. I'm a Section 8 certificate holder. I have four sons but only one that lives with me: Martell, age 16. My last apartment on the Section 8 program was a total disaster due to my grown homeless sons, an abusive husband, and mental stress. I temporarily lost my sanity of thought for myself and my minor son.

I tried to keep things together but my life fell apart. I gave up hope. Into my life came turmoil and death.

I'm now back to God and myself. I'm in need of finding out how I can get my Section 8 renewed.

We are homeless. We are living from hand to mouth. My son is becoming lost to the streets. I need to put my son into a stable home or I'll lose him to

the streets, jail or death. I can't take it again. Will you please help me come back for myself and for my son? I need to know what steps to take.

Thank You,

- Jerry Dean Owens

Volunteerism in Public Housing

Dear Editor:

There is much importance when one has to take a critical journey inwards toward the hallow care of self and examine one's own conscience as to what one is and what one must be.

The true test of pride is for one to step forward with enthusiasm and take one's place in an exhibition inside the arena of volunteerism. We in the public housing, a society engulfed by a larger society, must come to understand that the betterment of our lives depends upon our self determination to reflect or share some of our learned knowledge in the service of volunteerism.

Our Country's president, Bill Clinton, has candidly explained that volunteerism is a workable tool for our society to achieve knowledgeable prosperity.

It's imperative for public housing resurgent parents as mentors to pollinate our children's thoughts with vitality, whereas to try and get them to talk about themselves and their preparation for the future. They are the key which will unlock their heritage and their integrated pattern of behavior that includes thought, speech and action.

Resurgent parents must encourage our children at a young age not to set unrealistic goals but keep goals simple by wanting to complete school. In essence, our children's development must be nurtured with behavior change so they may openly share their experiences with other family members, who often have a vital insight of how to orchestrate a new line of communication skills whenever our children want to relate more efficiently as to reflect or establish a

logical connection between positive and negative behavior.

Parents must give first-hand, objective information about the prevalence of gang violence and straight answers on the calamity of chemical dependency. It's much easier for our children to learn here with us rather than out on the street or either in some sort of institution. But resurgent parents take the initiative as volunteers to show that they are very concerned about the future of our children. We want our young people to become winners!

- Edward Turner

PS: Your last edition exhibiting the positive progress of our young people was quite inspirational. Continue the excellent work.

Inspector General's Cash Prize Poster Contest

by Leonard Odom
CHA Inspector General

I want to use this column to thank the residents of CHA for helping the Inspector General's office make CHA a safer, better place and announce a poster contest with a cash prize exclusively for CHA residents. But more on the poster contest later. First, I want to tell you about the mission of the Inspector General's Office: The Inspector General is CHA's internal investigations unit, dedicated to making sure that the government money which flows into the agency doesn't float into people's pockets and instead reaches the residents. We are independent of the CHA Police Department and that we can investigate all CHA employees, including CHA Police officers and high-ranking CHA officials. We are dedicated to stopping cheating, waste and abuse at CHA. Over the past years, we have stopped money from going where it shouldn't and retrieved money from people who shouldn't have received it. In 1997, we recaptured almost \$20 million.

I should note that the Inspector General's office has rarely caught residents stealing from CHA. Indeed, this office is forming a very good bond with residents.

Residents are really pitching in because they understand that whatever savings they contribute, whatever property is recovered, is more for them.

Residents have been a great ally in our effort to root out those who take advantage of CHA. Recently, residents of Cabrini-Green helped us catch a ring of individuals who were using sites in the development to make illegal overseas phone calls. The men tapped into unused phone jacks in guard booths and made phone calls to Africa, Europe and other places that were valued at \$150,000. The group of phone thieves used high-tech equipment to move around the development, making calls at different times and using their sophisticated techniques to elude us. We even brought in the FBI to help with the case. But residents ultimately tipped us off to the thieves' location and were able to break up the ring and bring the men to the justice system. As it turned out, one of the men was a former CHA security officer. At the Inspector General's office, we have to maintain that neither the police nor anybody else is above the law. We recently stopped a CHA employee from stealing building materials that could have been used to fix up the developments.

We caught this CHA employee with \$40,000 worth of unauthorized materials on a truck. He allegedly had been delivering the stuff to a hardware store on the South Side. We found an additional \$200,000 worth of CHA building materials in the store.

We've brought in top law enforcement officers with decades of experience to help with this fight. Just recently, we welcomed Hilton Green to our team. Hilton comes to us with 24 years of crime-fighting experience under his belt. Most recently, he served as director of the special investigations division for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Hilton has investigated corrupt politicians at every level of government and has worked closely with the FBI and other law enforcement groups. We also have brought in two retired Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and two former federal police officers. If you ask any of these individuals, they will tell you that they are excited to come work for CHA and make sure that government money is spent on the people. Together, we have much to stop waste, fraud and abuse at the CHA. But we still have a lot of work to do. That's why I

would like to announce a poster contest for the Inspector General's toll-free hotline - **1-800-544-7139**. We will award the first prize of \$500 to the CHA resident who comes up with a poster that best advertises the Inspector General's hotline and helps residents know that they can call us with their tips and information. We will also provide a \$200 prize to the second place winner and a \$100 prize to the third-place winner. We've come up with a few slogans you might want to include in your poster design, such as "The House Needs Inspection," "Drop a Dime on Crime" or "The Hotline to Crime." But feel free to use your own ideas. The winner's poster will be published as a full-page ad here in Residents' Journal and it also will go up on posters throughout CHA. Sorry, only CHA residents are eligible for this contest.

Your entries should be placed on 16" x 20" pieces of paper and mailed or hand-delivered to the Residents' Journal Office, 1531 N. Clybourn, Suite #1106, Chicago IL 60622. The deadline for the contest is Nov. 30, 1997. Please call (312) 674-4218 with any questions.

So help us make CHA a better place.

From: Patricia Johnson-Gordon

Columnist

Residents' Journal

To: All Residents

Chicago Housing Authority

Dear Resident:

Please forgive me for not greeting you in the manner to which I hope you have become accustomed. That was done in the article that I originally wrote for this issue of *RJ*. But after much observation and many recent experiences, I feel the need to address a more important issue - "Us." Us being you, I, me, we - Black Women. I recently had an opportunity to watch a television show on one of the Public Broadcasting channels about how Black women are and have been perceived by people throughout history. Of course, the show confirmed what I have always believed about Black women. We are some of the most beautiful women on Earth. We take beauty through every vein of shape, color, form and fashion. From one end of the spectrum to the other. Admittedly, at times we are even awed by each other's beauty. The show went on to bring out how men of all races describe us as "most desirable."

And how plantation mistresses were threatened by our presence, which accounts for the "Mammy" type of slave being present in their homes. And again, admittedly, at times we feel threatened by each other. But that's another talk show. And now that I have lauded the strength of our beauty, it is time to take on, head first, our greatest weakness. So, after much thought and reflection and polling many Black women, without disagreement from any, I proceed ...

Generally, I have observed, as a rule, that Black women have very little or no respect for each other. I have also observed that Black men have a great deal of respect for each other. Perhaps this is the result of no one else, historically, having had respect for them in America. I have noticed that Black men do not pass each other without speaking, are willing to help each other for the most part and gather often in small groups in barber shops, bars, on corners and various other places on a regular basis in support of each other. This is probably what accounts for the success of last year's Million Man March. On the other hand, Black women hardly speak to each other in passing, are not as willing to help each other and for the most part gather only as part of a club or organization.

Most importantly, I think that we have translated that disrespect to our children. Whenever I hear someone ask the question, "What's wrong with these children?" I always answer, "Us." Men included. Children are the product of "our" society - that society singularly being our home and collectively being our communities. Disrespect in children, once fostered, seems to become a constant state, as is the case with some adults. Their disrespect is directed toward everyone and everything. A child's disrespectful posture is usually preceded by the statement, "My mother said ..." I also believe that our disrespect is a translation of our dissatisfaction with our individual and collective situations.

Unfortunately, today, just as the white male is the nucleus of his community, like it or not, Black women are the nucleus of ours. And if we want our families and communities to thrive, we must become most respectful of each other, pass that respect on to our children and work together to achieve success. We are as strong as we are beautiful. We can build communities where our children can become strong Black men and women in every sense. If we do not, we will continue to "cry out" as our children, grandchildren and future generations to come are laid to waste at the hands of our communities. For ultimately, if one of us is a little bad off, we're all a little bad off.

The following is an excerpt from the "Last Will and Testament of Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955), to which we are all heirs. I leave you love. Love builds. It is positive and helpful. "Love thy neighbor" is a precept which could transform the world if it were universally practiced. I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. As long as Negroes are hemmed into racial blocs by prejudice and pressure, it will be necessary for them to band together for economic betterment. I leave you finally a responsibility to our young people. The world around us really belongs to youth, for youth will take over its future management. We have a powerful potential in our youth and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends - 1997. At least 42 years have passed and we still face the same issues. Individually, there are many Negroes (Blacks) who have made great strides. But collectively, it would seem that we have not taken a step since Dr. King took his last. If we're not trying, we have to try. If we're trying, we have to try harder. And if we're trying hard, we have to succeed.

I would like to take this opportunity to commemorate the 1st anniversary of the Million Man March in memory of Marion "Nzinga" Stamps. Nzinga is an African name that means "Warrior Queen." Today Nzinga continues to "wage war" and support the Black man through her many achievements. Ladies, we were born queens. We must become warriors. Like Nzinga I believe wholeheartedly in supporting the Black man. The Million Woman March does not strike me as support.

Enough said.



Photo by Patricia Johnson-Gordon.
Melody by Marion "Nzinga" Stamps

