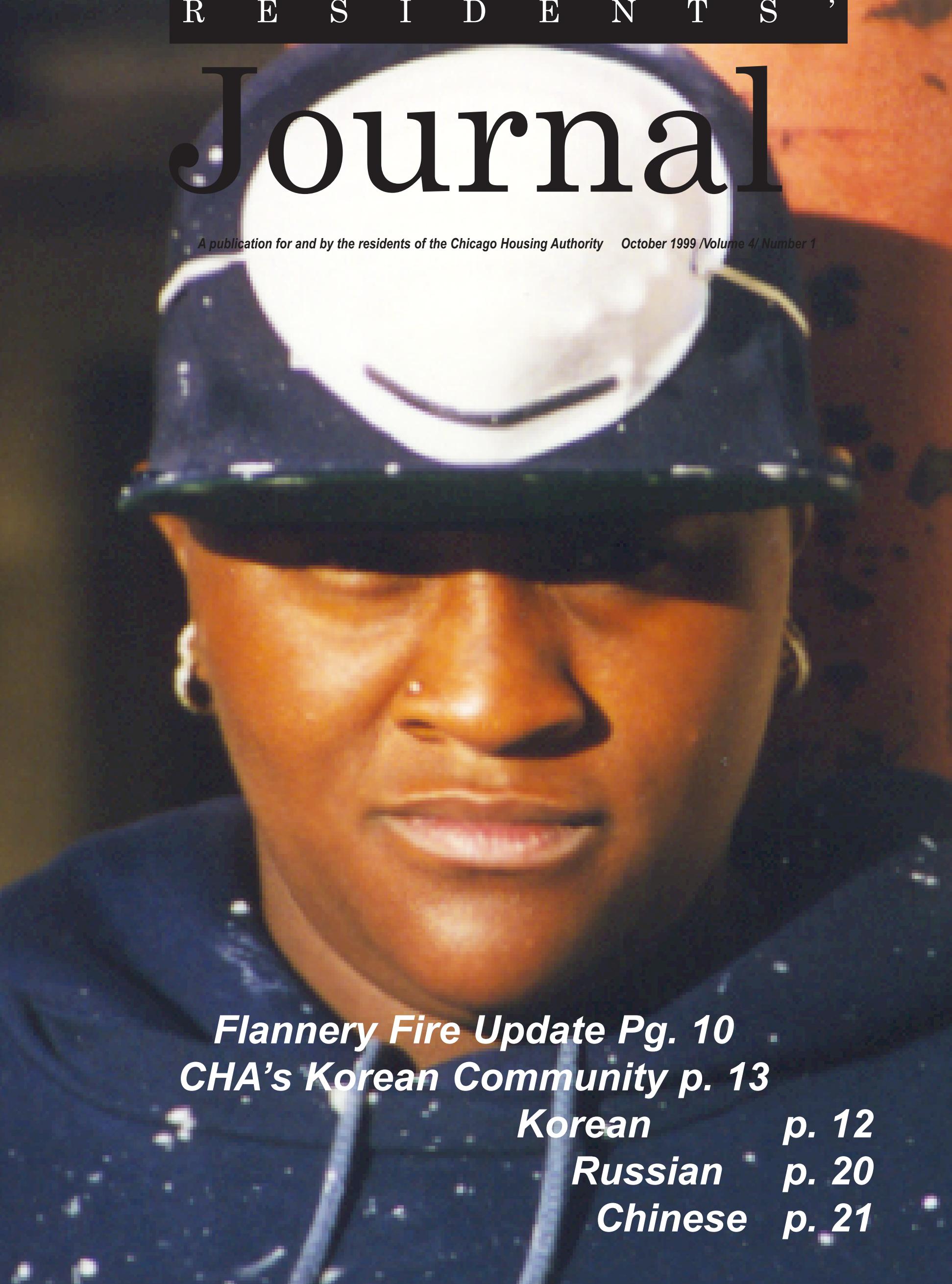


R E S I D E N T S ,

# Journal

*A publication for and by the residents of the Chicago Housing Authority   October 1999 /Volume 4/ Number 1*



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*Residents' Journal is available in alternative formats, such as braille or large type, upon request.*

## O u r M i s s i o n

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

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

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.

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## E d i t o r ' s B o x

**by Ethan Michaeli**

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If you are a participant in the Section 8 program or are a resident of public housing who will be moving into a Section 8 apartment, don't forget that you are entitled to a free subscription to **RJ**. Call our office at (312) 285-0500 x3372 to put your name on our subscription list today.

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For business owners, social service operators, politicians and others who recognize that CHA is composed of ethically and economically diverse communities, **RJ** needs your support as an advertiser. Advertisements are an excellent means of reaching CHA residents - a population that no other publication can claim as a readership. Advertising in **RJ** also contradicts the conventional wisdom that public housing residents are an unattractive advertising market. Indeed, advertising

## RJ's Next Phase

as a staff for this tremendous opportunity.

But most of all, we will be seeking the outside funding that will make **RJ** a permanent institution in the media world.

For both of these tasks, we will be seeking the help and support of all of those we have touched over the past years. As a staff, we feel that **RJ** makes a unique and important contribution to the cultural life in the city with a significant impact throughout the nation. We hope that all of those who agree with us join with us as we move forward into the next millennium.

You can help us in a variety of ways. If you are a public housing resident, keep reading **RJ**, talking about our articles and photographs with your neighbors and using **RJ** as a resource for your information needs. Most of all, call us, write us, fax us and e-mail us with your suggestions and ideas. When you tell us what you like, what you don't like and what you want to see in **RJ**, that's what makes us a

reflects the real value of the tens of thousands of families and seniors that live in public housing communities around the city.

In the future, we will build on these concepts by reaching deeper into Chicago's communities and building on the common interests and problems of residents across the city.

Beginning with residents in subsidized buildings and participants in the Section 8 subsidized housing program, we ultimately will increase our circulation throughout the city's neighborhoods.

At a time when we are radically re-weaving our nation's social safety net, we as a society often find ourselves moving forward without understanding the effects of these changes.

**RJ** aims to point out where the net is sagging, where people are falling through and where holes threaten to let people drop through. That has been our mission for the past three years. It will continue to be our mission as we grow, expand and evolve.

Residents' Journal sends our condolences to U.S.  
Rep. Bobby Rush

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# A New Day In CHA?

## Robert Taylor Homes & Rockwell Gardens Dilemma

by Mary C. Johns

Residents of Robert Taylor Homes and Rockwell Gardens developments are dismayed by CHA's plans to close 9 high-rise buildings at Robert Taylor and 2 at Rockwell by Nov. 15. Many residents fear that this decision will lead to major displacement of women and children. Residents are being relocated from 4331 S. Federal; 4352 S. State St.; 4500 S. State St.; 4844 S. State St.; 4848 S. State St.; 5100 S. State St.; 5201 S. Federal; 5247 S. Federal; and 5266 S. State St. in Robert Taylor Homes; and 2417 W. Adams St. and 2517 W. Adams.

These building closures are the first step in CHA's new 5-year plan. The plan calls for demolition of 17,000 public housing units, including all 32 high-rises along the State Street corridor, seven high-rises in Rockwell Gardens, eight buildings in Cabrini-Green and four buildings in Washington Park.

### Clash of the Titans

Ald. Dorothy Tillman (3) organized a meeting Sept. 27 at St. Mary's AME Church, 5251 S. Dearborn Ave., to address the concerns of Robert Taylor residents. Tillman invited CHA officials to speak to the hundreds of residents who filled the pews and balconies.

Many residents said during the meeting they felt insecure about being relocated with Section 8 vouchers and certificates. These residents said it is hard to find decent housing within the city to use the Section 8s.

If they moved to the suburbs, the residents said they and their families would face problems in getting to and from work and school without reliable public transportation since many do not have cars.

The residents were concerned about where the money would come from for their move and the time frame in which they are required to move. Others asked what will happen to those that are denied Section 8 vouchers because of outstanding utility bills.

"We've got to move by Nov. 15 and we don't even have a voucher yet," shouted one woman to CHA CEO Phillip Jackson during the meeting.

"And why would you wait until the heart of winter, then tell us to leave?" she added

In answer to her question, Jackson said he took over as CEO on June 1, 1999, and that since that time, his staff was evaluating the buildings' conditions.

"Instead of me coming in and saying, 'Everybody

out,' we analyzed the situation and looked at reports," Jackson said.

Another woman shouted back at Jackson, "You act as if it's so easy to get a Section 8. But it's almost like a mission impossible."

Another woman asked, "Where are we going to go from the boondocks to public school? How are we going to get to work from the boondocks?"

Jackson said that CHA would work with the Section 8 recipients and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) on some form of bussing.

He continued by saying that CHA was not forcing the residents to move out but that Congress and HUD already made the decision that Robert Taylor high-rises were to be torn down.

Jackson added that there are 1,700 vacant units in Robert Taylor. CHA could make ready enough units for all residents being relocated if the residents wanted to stay within the development.

One man said residents wouldn't be moved from the buildings easily: "You won't take us away from our buildings. We'll stop you from coming in."

Jackson left the meeting before adjournment.

### After the Meeting

As Jackson made his way out the front door, residents instantly swarmed him. Questions were coming from every which way. But Jackson didn't provide too many answers due to the Chicago policemen who were on hand. They quickly broke up the crowd and escorted Jackson to a waiting car.

certificates and vouchers.

Jackson said that it was not Section 8 policy to deny Section 8s to those residents and that he was willing to help the residents in that position.

"We will be meeting with Commonwealth Edison shortly asking that the residents that are making a move, to forgive those past debts so that they can make the move," Jackson said.

CHA Chief of Operations Jack O'Connell interjected that the Section 8 wouldn't be of much use to residents if they couldn't get utility service.

"They'll never get their hook-up if they're in arrears on payment," he said.

"So we wouldn't want to put a resident out into a Section 8 apartment or allow them to go to a Section 8 if they are not going to be able to get the utility services."

The building closures and relocations are necessary,



**A CHA resident shows concern during the Sept. 27 meeting at St. Mary's AME Church, 5251 S. Dearborn Ave.**

Photo by Mary C. Johns

**"The plan is going to happen. If not us, this team, if not this opportunity, then who's going to do it? Those high-rises are going to come down with us or without us."**

**-CHA CEO Phillip Jackson**

*Residents' Journal* spoke to Ald. Tillman and residents immediately after the meeting.

"I think it's sad because Phil should leave himself out from being a buster. He's not running anything," said Tillman.

"He came here for subterfuge. But we're going to deal with it. We're not through."

"They keep fooling the residents and the residents have got to stand up."

Residents interviewed said they still had many unanswered questions.

West Side resident Michael Jihad said, "It was a farce."

### Relocation Issues

During an Oct. 7 interview, *Residents' Journal* asked Jackson about a number of issues related to relocation of residents, particularly with respect to problems with Section 8 vouchers and certificates.

Jackson was asked if Section 8 policy prevented residents with outstanding utility bills from receiving

CHA officials said, because millions of dollars are wasted every year on heating and maintaining buildings with many vacancies. David Agazzi, CHA's chief financial officer, said relocating a family cost the agency between \$4,500 and \$10,000 per unit, depending on conditions of the units and cost of utility hook-ups. But this cost was still smaller than maintaining the existing buildings.

Jackson also discussed the concerns of many residents that they will be displaced by CHA's five-year plan. Jackson said a lot of the concepts that are in the plan came from the Central Advisory Council and Local Advisory Councils.

"A lot of the stuff that's in the plan, the CAC and LACs have been asking for, for the past 20 years," said Jackson.

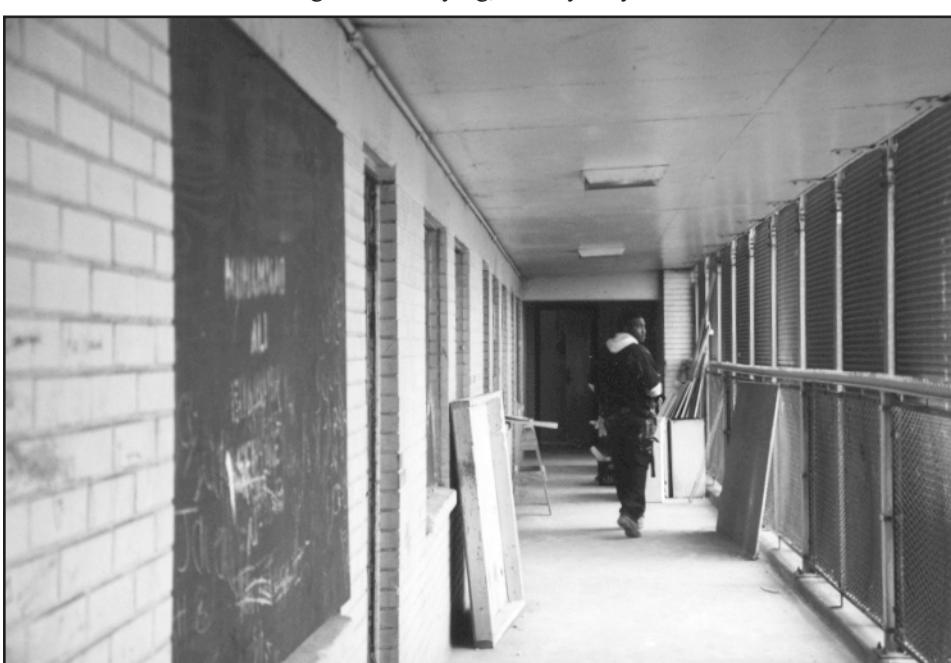
"The plan is going to happen. If not us, this team, if not this opportunity, then who's going to do it?" he added.

"Those high-rises are going to come down with us or without us."

### Residents Speak

Some Robert Taylor residents being relocated out of the 9 buildings have already moved into a cluster of three Robert Taylor buildings that have been rehabbed, according to Barbara Moore, president of 5266 S. State St., one of the buildings scheduled for demolition.

But Moore said she was trying to convince residents to stay in her building. Moore said her building is the present location for the God's Gang program, a food pantry and worm farm. These programs are reasons for residents to stay in the (Continued on Page 7)



**A CHA resident employed by the Muhammad Ali Community and Economic Development Corp. rehabs a Robert Taylor Homes apartment for one of the hundreds of families that are being moved out of closed buildings in that development**

Photo by Beauty Turner

# A New Day In CHA?

## Budget Cuts at the Chicago Housing Authority

by Andre Robinson

CHA officials recently released a five-year, \$1.5 billion plan that calls for restructuring the agency, tearing down all of the high-rises, and privatizing all management and resident programs.

CHA CEO Phillip Jackson presented the plan at an early October press conference. If the plan is implemented, professional property managers will run all CHA developments by June 1, 2000.

Over the five years, CHA will spend \$28 million to link residents to community-based services, such as drug treatment, job training and day care; \$25 million to train and place 3,000 CHA residents in jobs; and \$20 million for construction apprenticeships.

"This plan represents a genuine rethinking and rebirth of

already have started.

The lay-offs include all of the 365 officers and staff in the CHA Police force. The move came after a series of resident town hall meetings conducted by the CHA management team.

The meetings were held in September at Madden Park, Henry Horner and 5670 W. Lake St., a West Side Senior Citizen building. Residents were asked to give three suggestions on what programs should be continued and what programs should be cut. Many residents suggested the CHA police force should be cut. Residents of some areas said CHA Police didn't patrol their neighborhoods. Other residents said officers had not stopped drug and gang activity.

Some residents said they had seen CHA Police vehicles in places where there weren't any CHA developments, such as riverboat casinos and motels.

**"We won't go anywhere. They'll have to blow us out of there with a stick of dynamite."**  
*- Stateway Gardens LAC President Francine Washington*

public housing for the benefit of those who live there and taxpayers who have been supporting a failing system," said Jackson.

Under the plan, the agency plans administrative cuts to put 40 percent more money into property management. To add this money to the property management, CHA proposes to reduce the 2,455 current staff positions to 700 by July 2000. The lay-offs

But the main issue was that since CHA residents are taxpayers and live in the City of Chicago, many residents said, "We pay taxes and we should be protected by the Chicago Police."

The lay-offs of CHA officers began in October and the whole force will be gone by Oct. 29.

CHA's five-year plan also calls for the demolition of 17,000 public housing units, including all

open, gallery-style high-rises. During the redevelopment, residents will receive relocation assistance to move into newly rehabbed CHA properties or in Section 8 housing. After redevelopment, residents will get first preference to return to their current developments.

CHA officials estimate that about 1,200 families per year over the next five years will opt for Section 8 housing, less than the 3,000 families per year that have moved into the private housing market in the last three years using Section 8 vouchers, according to Jackson.

The plan depends on a series of waivers and guaranteed federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for 10 years. Funding for the plan would be generated through a bond issue.



**CHA Chief Operating Officer Bridget Reidy (from left), CEO Phillip Jackson and Chief Financial Officer David Agazzi during an Oct. 7 Community Editorial Board Meeting.**

**Photo by Andre Robinson**

that residents had worked out previously with former CHA Executive Director Joseph Shuldiner.

Francine Washington, the LAC president of the Stateway Gardens development, which is slated for demolition, spoke at the press conference at the CAC headquarters, 243 East 32nd St.

"The residents' plans are falling on deaf ears," Washington said. "The mayor, Julia Stasch (Mayor Richard M. Daley's chief of staff) - none of them really care for us."

"We can fight it," Washington said of the plan. "We won't go anywhere. They'll have to blow us out of there with a stick of dynamite."

CAC Chairperson Mamie Bone criticized the privatization in the five-year plan. "Privatization is not the answer. Accountability is," said Bone.

"Without the funding and commitment to rent vacant units regardless of who manages the property, they will fall into disrepair and de facto demolition."

Daniel Cantrell, a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-7), said, "Sixty eight percent of public housing is in the 7th Congressional District.

"If the plan does not have the endorsement of the people who live in the housing, the congressman will not support it. And if it's not endorsed by the people, it's going nowhere."

The Rev. Stanley Watkins, a member of U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush's (D-1) staff, was just as outspoken. "Jackson briefed Congress on the plan," Watkins said. "After we saw it on TV and read about it in the papers, we thought it was disgusting. As far as we're concerned, the plan was dead on arrival."

The resident leaders also

raised questions about the proposed demolitions. They announced they were seeking pro bono assistance from architects and engineers who could help assess what it would cost to rehab and repair buildings that HUD had earlier determined must be torn down.

The CAC also challenged a proposed list of waivers and requests submitted to HUD. "Some of those waivers may be helpful, although the CAC had not been provided with any details," said Richard Wheelock, the group's attorney.

### Hearings

Over the next few weeks, public meetings will be held for input from CHA residents, elected officials, community representatives and others.

CHA will then submit the proposal to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Dec. 1, 1999, for approval.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also will be holding hearings about the CHA plan.

In a letter from HUD Assistant Secretary Harold Lucas to Julia Stasch, chief of staff to Mayor Richard Daley; Phillip Jackson, CHA CEO; and Mamie Bone, CHA Central Advisory Council president; Lucas stated public hearings will be held to allow HUD to get input from "residents, citizens and interested parties."

"In light of the far-reaching changes proposed by the CHA and the extraordinary authority sought by the City in carrying out these changes, I believe that meaningful community participation is essential to success," Lucas wrote.



**CHA senior residents discussing what CHA services they would increase and/or decrease funding for during Budget town hall meeting at the Madden Park Fieldhouse on Sept. 14.**

**Photo by Mary C. Johns**

# A New Day In CHA? Veto Blocks '99 Congressional Cuts

by Andre Robinson

**H**ere's a story for all you non-voters who won't have anything to do with politics because it doesn't make any difference to you who wins.

The Republican leadership in Washington, D.C., wanted to give the country a \$792 billion dollar tax break. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development web site, the tax cut would have benefited middle- to upper-income Americans. Public opinion polls repeatedly showed that Americans would rather use federal surpluses to shore up Social Security and Medicare than reduce taxes.

In late September, President Bill Clinton vetoed the \$792 billion tax cut that congressional Republicans had proclaimed the centerpiece of their legislative year. Clinton thought a compromise, less costly tax cut of between \$250 billion and \$300 billion was both possible and desirable, according to the HUD web site.

But Republicans said they don't expect a compromise tax cut to emerge this year, even though Clinton has said he is willing to work with the Republicans.

"I don't see it as practical this year," Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) said.

"This is a sad day for the U.S. Congress," House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) said.

"But this Congress is not going to throw in the towel. We will not give up on tax relief for the American people."

If the tax cut had gone through, Congress would have cut \$1.6 billion of HUD's budget, which would have impacted the poorest people and communities in the U.S.

Instead of cuts, Clinton said that increases are needed in HUD's budget. After the veto, the President said, "We have worked very hard and made great strides to reverse decades of decline in our cities, transform public housing, and create new jobs and opportunities for millions of Americans. But the job is not done. Our nation needs the budget I proposed for HUD so we can move forward to help even more hard-working families get the jobs and housing they need to build better futures."

The proposed cuts to HUD's budget were the main topic of conversation at the National Association of African Americans in Housing (NOAAH) conference in Chicago in September.

NOAAH conference participants said that the cuts to HUD's budget would deprive 97,000 people of jobs, 156,000 families of affordable housing, and 16,000 fami-

lies and individuals who are homeless or have AIDS of housing assistance.

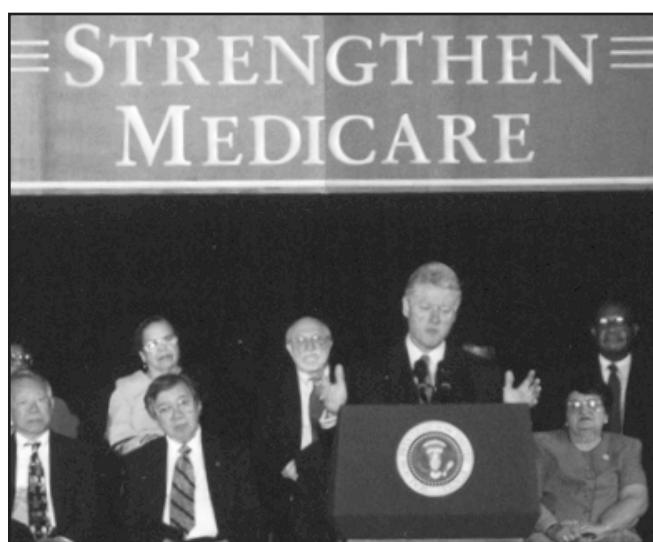
Speaking at the NOAAH conference, HUD Assistant Secretary Harold Lucas said, "At a time of unprecedented national prosperity, Congress shouldn't rob the poorest Americans to provide reckless tax cuts and create a new deficit. Now is the time to invest in a brighter future for people and places left behind."

Various comments were made on how the cuts would affect various communities. Materials released at the NOAAH conference included quotes from senior citizen and Latino leaders.

Steve Protulis, executive director of the National Council of Senior Citizens, said: "Cuts to HUD's budget would have reduced housing assistance available to older Americans struggling to get by on fixed incomes. Congress should not endanger the security and safety of the poor, the disabled and the elderly who simply cannot afford to pay the costs of housing."

Raul Yzaguirre, Executive Director, National Council of La Raza, said: "The National Council of La Raza has worked with HUD on a variety of housing and economic development projects and we know firsthand the positive impact that these programs have had in the Latino community. For that reason, we are strongly opposed to the proposed cut in HUD's budget which would eliminate much needed housing, employment, and other economic opportunity programs for families around the country."

U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis's (D-7) office said the con-



**President Clinton addresses a group of senior citizens during a recent conference in Chicago. Clinton's veto of the bill funding the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) prevented program cuts at the agency.**

Photo by Mary C. Johns

cuts would result in a total of over 128,000 families being denied housing vouchers.

The cuts also would have eliminated the Regional Opportunities Counseling program, which provides critical assistance to families trying to move out of areas with high concentrations of poverty.

The cuts would have prevented funding for the rehabilitation of almost 28,000 units to create quality housing for low- and moderate-income renter and owner families.

The HOME Investment Partnerships program, a flexible block grant that helps communities build and rehabilitate housing, would have been cut by \$20 mil-

lion compared to 1999 levels.

The HOPE VI program to replace severely distressed public housing with well-designed, mixed income communities would have been cut by \$50 million and public housing capital funds would be cut by \$445 million, despite a backlog of rehab and repair needs in the nation's public housing authorities.

The cuts also would have reduced by \$10 million the Lead Hazard Control Grant program. The cuts would have

meant that about 900 private homes would not have had lead removed, putting at least 600 low-income children under 6 at risk of permanent developmental and health problems from elevated blood lead.

The cuts also would have affected job programs. \$250 million would have been slashed from 1999 levels of the Community Development Block Grant program, impacting community and economic development activity. CDBG funds are used by local officials to create jobs, construct and rehab shelters for battered spouses and the homeless, make buildings accessible to the elderly and disabled, and help working families become first-time homeowners.

\$5 million would have been cut from the job-generating Brownfields Economic Development Initiative.



**Residents will no longer be able to call on the CHA Police (left, photo by Julio Martinez). As of the end of this month, all of the department's officers and staff were laid off. Security responsibilities will now fall on the Chicago Police Department (right, photo by John Brooks). See Related Story on Page 5**

# Robert Taylor Homes & Rockwell Gardens Dilemma

(Continued from Page 4) building, Moore said. Moore suspects that there is no problem with the heating plant in the building.

"I believe they sabotaged those pipes," she said.

Christine Watkins of 4101 S. Federal St. said that moving residents of one building into another building in the same development will cause trouble due to opposing gangs.

"We're like prisoners now," Watkins said. "The only difference is that the war is going to be closer."

Michell Palm-Louis of 4037 S. Federal, a building which is scheduled to stay standing, said the buildings should be torn down but agreed with Watkins that relocation of residents from one building to the next is not a good idea.

"It will be a Holy Hell. No one is going to be safe. They're not going to be screened."

Palm-Louis continued that if residents of other buildings were moved into hers, "It'll make me push harder to move out."

But Patricia Moore, building president of 4950 S. Federal, one of the buildings in the cluster, said relocation of Robert Taylor residents from one building into another wouldn't be a big problem.

"It's wonderful," she said. "We have to work with each other and if we put our fears in God's hand, he will erase them."

"I want to move," said Lavia Owens, resident of 4848 S. State, one of the buildings scheduled to close. "But why wait until winter (to notify residents)? Give me a reasonable amount of time."

Jennifer Barnett of 4331 S. Federal said that she had a 12-year-old disabled daughter and didn't want to move.

"I don't want to go from building to building," she exclaimed. "Why throw us out?"

Of the 590 households to relocate from the six Robert Taylor-B buildings selected for closure, residents are being relocated daily and the majority have chosen Section 8 vouchers, according to CHA officials. As of Oct. 15, none of the 105 households in the three buildings in Robert Taylor-A had been relocated.

## Rockwell Gardens Closures

Residents of 2417 W. Adams St. and 2517 W. Adams in Rockwell Gardens are also waiting for relocation.

Rockwell Gardens LAC President Mary Baldwin told *Residents' Journal* during a recent phone interview that the buildings in Rockwell had no prior problems due to winter weather. Baldwin implied CHA was shutting down the buildings under the guise of a winterization plan.

"How can you use that excuse to get us out? We did not have any winterization problems," Baldwin said. "They need to come up with a better excuse."

Baldwin compared the current situation at Rockwell with that of the situation which took place at Rockwell almost 2 years ago involving 2510 W. Monroe St. and 117 S. Rockwell Ave., the two buildings currently closed but still standing.

"We were promised that funds would be given to demolish the buildings and supply residents with jobs but they didn't do anything," she said. "Now they're doing the same thing with this bum rush move."

State Sen. Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago) said he wouldn't support the closure of new buildings until CHA kept its promise to demolish the current closed buildings.

Hendon told *Residents' Journal* that a year ago, he and representatives of Rockwell sat down with CHA and negotiated a redevelopment plan for Rockwell that included some demolition.

Because gang activity was taking place in the closed buildings, Hendon said CHA promised to demolish the closed buildings before winter.

Hendon said that he would not support the additional closures because "CHA reneged on their promise and just allowed the buildings to stay."

"The bottom line is that we simply cannot trust CHA," he said.

"CHA's overall plan calls for Rockwell to disappear all together."

"Now they're trying to say that the whole development has to go and we think that's outrageous."

The senator added that he intends to have state laws passed which will protect residents.

"Replacement housing must be built prior to demolition or at least started. The land has to be identified and redevelopment plans have to precede demolition," he explained.

"We may not be able to stop the winterization but we will definitely be able to stop the wholesale demolition."

The two closed buildings are still standing because the U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development rejected CHA's \$1.1 million proposal for demolition costs.

Ann Scherrie, acting public affairs officer of the local HUD office, told *Residents' Journal* the proposal was denied because it was incomplete.

"The proposal was incomplete and not all the required exhibits were submitted," she said.

John Roberson, CHA's Director of Management Development, told *Residents' Journal* that the funding for demolition will come out of CHA's 2000 capital budget.

As of Oct. 15, of the 97 households in the two buildings, only one has been relocated.

**"I don't want to go from building to building.  
Why throw us out?"**  
**- Jennifer Barnett, a resident of 4331 S. Federal St.**



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by  
Cenabeth  
Cross

I recently interviewed the leaders of the Chicago Coalition for Justice, a group which has held a number of recent protests against police brutality.

My first interview was with Jane Ramsey of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. The Jewish Council on Urban Affairs' slogan says it "combats poverty, racism and anti-Semitism in partnership with Chicago's diverse communities."

Ramsey said JCJA works throughout the city, which gives them a unique understanding of the economic, social and racial challenges that intricately unite us.



**Jane Ramsey of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs.**

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

JCUA works with the Coalition to Protect Public Housing (CPPH) along with other organizations.

For the Chicago Coalition for Justice, Ramsey said there are 80 organizations of which she is co-convenor of along with the Rev. Paul Jakes, Calvin Morris and many others. They advocate for such issues as a moratorium on

"The police should stop their ways. There should be some type of independent body to sanction their methods. It should be structured with power to change their ways to eliminate police brutality.

-Jane Ramsey of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs.

the death penalty and police brutality.

"The police should stop their ways," Ramsey said. "There should be some type of independent body to sanction their methods. It should be structured with power to change their ways to eliminate police brutality."

"We want the U.S. Justice Department to lead the change. Other cities have it. It's enough here to warrant same. We want video taping of investigations. There should be provisions to keep reports on repeat offenders whose records were erased and we want the public to know of them. The police department's current contract is up and a new one is being negotiated at this time."

"We support the moratorium of death row inmates. We believe there are more who need their cases reviewed. John Burge was a police lieutenant who was exposed for putting people on death row. We endorse the move to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, a radio journalist in Philadelphia known as the 'voice of the voiceless' and a leading critic of police violence."

Ramsey said she works closely with Calvin Morris, a co-convenor of the Chicago Coalition for Justice and also a founding member of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing.

"We provide support in the struggle to remain in housing or to obtain good replacements. We are now working with Cabrini Green and the Robert Taylor Homes. The people are the attention-getters. They are the ones for the marches."

"There is much police brutality in public housing. The insensitivity and callousness to people in housing means we need to see changes from the Mayor's office,

putting the welfare of the people first so they have the ability to live in the community they choose. Response has been inadequate on both scores."

Ramsey finished by inviting me to the National Day of Protest to "stop police brutality, repression and the criminalization of a generation" on Friday, Oct. 22, at noon at the Federal Plaza, Adams Street and Dearborn Avenue.

### Rev. Paul Jakes

I had an appointment to interview the Rev. Paul Jakes, head of the Christian Council on Urban Affairs, at the rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal on Sept. 25. He was at the rally but had to leave abruptly. The police had arrested a few of the people at the rally.

The next time I caught up with him was on Oct. 3 at his church, Old St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, 531 N. Kedzie Ave. I was not the only one. There was the journalist from Northwestern University and a freelance photographer, Najieb, who sometimes works for Streetwise.

They were talking about the Robert Russ case and some other issues. Robert Russ was a graduate of Northwestern University who was killed by police during the summer.

Jakes said, "He hadn't done anything to warrant getting shot. His only crime was the pigmentation of his skin."

Jakes believes that police recruits - whether they are white or black - who aren't up to the job should not be hired.

"Those who are on the job who have a track record of beating and killing our community should be fired and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Jakes said.

The organization is calling for an independent review board.

"We advocate the creation of an independent review board that will have the power to receive and investigate complaints or allegations of police misconduct and brutality," Jakes said.

"This board is to be comprised of members of the affected communities. This board will have the power to subpoena documents, compel witnesses, make findings and impose disciplinary sanctions. These sanctions include but are not limited to reprimand, probation, suspension and termination."

"We demand that the presentation of all deaths involving law enforcement personnel to the grand jury be presented by prosecutors specially dedicated, skilled and committed to reviewing cases of police misconduct. These prosecutors must be guaranteed independence and integrity, free from negative political influence."

Jakes mentioned that Bill Cosby has started a program to connect the public with police officers that is doing great.

"When people know someone, they connect better. If the people got to know the police and the police got to know the people, they would be more attached. The concern is human. Everyone is somebody and we must confront each other. So many angles bring about the healing in each individual officer and each individual."

"If they (police officers) consider how they want to be treated, they could get along with each other. There is a need for many more organizations to join in the fight of police brutality."

Jakes said the coalition was started after D. Benedict, his colleague, felt the need for more support from whites and upper class individuals. Jakes said the organization works with all the people, including CHA residents. Jakes has organized over 16 marches so far.

When I asked Jakes how the cases of people who are

arrested turned out, he replied, "There are some who get deeply and emotionally involved and lose control when being harassed. We always want to follow the ways of the late Dr. Martin L. King and do it the non-violent way."

### Calvin Morris

My last interview was with Calvin Morris of the Community Renewal Society. Morris, along with Jane Ramsey, heads the Chicago Coalition for Justice. We went for the straight question and answer approach:

**RJ:** How does the Chicago Coalition for justice work?

**CM:** Bringing together individuals and organizations who are concerned for criminal justice. They pool their resources and network around the specific issues, with demonstrations when necessary, and seek to bring communities together around issues which provide security for people and support for community policing.

**RJ:** How will your organization play a role in the CCJ?

**CM:** By providing staff, in-kind services monetary contributions and our constituents, when necessary.

**RJ:** What changes do you want in the way the Chicago Police treat people?

**CM:** We want to see Chicago Police treat all of the citizens of the city with equal respect, equal consideration and equal justice. We want police in this city to be accountable for how they treat all citizens so that the police themselves are not above the law.

**RJ:** How do you intend to enforce these changes?

**CM:** By working with our City Council representatives as they consider revisions in the police contract by encouraging citizens to voice their concerns; by providing a public voice that raises issues that are rarely heard.

**RJ:** Will the changes you intend to make with the Chicago Police help CHA residents?

**CM:** We think the work we do with the CPPH organization and changing the way police perceive minorities and the poor will help.

**RJ:** Are you making any special efforts in the CHA to help residents fight against police brutality?

**CM:** Not directly. The coalition is and has joined in the various marches and demonstrations by working with the CHA groups who are concerned.

**RJ:** How effective have the marches been?



**The Rev. Paul Jakes, head of the Christian Council on Urban Affairs.**

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

**CM:** They have been effective by drawing attention to the fact that the people in the communities are concerned enough to put their bodies on the line and protest visibly. It shows in a public way that while we are concerned for safety and security, we are concerned when overzealous police act in ways that threaten our security and sometimes our lives.

**RJ:** Do you plan to make any more protest marches?

**CM:** We plan actions that we think are responsive to the issue so they may in fact be marches, press conferences, community forums and legal challenges.

Morris summed up, "It's important for the police, citizens and particularly citizens who come from the communities who receive the blunt of police conduct to have an opportunity to sit down and talk together and share perspectives of who they are and where they live."

by Thomas  
Merriweather

People with disabilities  
always have needed  
special transportation.

When I became disabled - officially on April 16, 1993 - I had no idea what was involved with providing transportation for people with disabilities. The only thing I knew was that those who use wheelchairs use a lift at the front door of a bus to board the vehicle and then are secured by the driver to a special wheelchair space on the bus.

I was certified by Regional Transportation Authority to use special door-to-door transportation service in November 1993. Soon afterward, I used for the first time CTA Paratransit Operations, the first of the four private carriers providing door-to-door service at that time. My experience was rather poor for the first use of this transportation. My pick-up was one hour late.

CTA Paratransit Operations has had many problems. Many people with disabilities have difficulty telephoning one of the four existing carriers to reserve a trip. Many others experience often erratic dispatching of vehicles to pick up those of us who use the service. There have been many complaints from users of the service and this has resulted in aggravation and has affected the drivers, the reservation personnel and others, including management.

I have covered the subject of transportation in previous stories for RJ and this has been a topic of concern in meetings of CHA's Equal Access Tenant Advisory Committee, of which I was elected president in September 1998. In our November 1998 and January 1999 meetings, we had speakers come in to talk about this issue.

For our Sept. 22, 1999, meeting, we planned on having another speaker come in to talk about transportation issues for people with disabilities.

#### The Pick Up

On the day of our Sept. 22 meeting, I was picked up by Cook DuPage Transportation (CDT), the carrier I usually use, 25 minutes late for a scheduled trip of 1 p.m. and arrived 10 minutes late for the meeting. The driver said he had to pick up a kidney dialysis patient for whom he had to wait 20 minutes.

When I arrived at the meeting, the main speaker already was making a presentation on transportation. The speaker was Kimberly Robb, an accessibility specialist for the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Robb addressed new certification procedures for Paratransit and explained the various facets of the program, including the emphasis being given to disabled individuals being able to use the fixed routes system of busses and trains.

# Access Report

Ironically, one of the other speakers was Christopher Jans, operations manager for Cook-DuPage Transportation, the company which brought me - late - to the meeting. The other guest was Percy Fry, field coordinator for CTA Paratransit Operations.

Both Fry and Jans were very helpful in shedding some direct light on the advantages as well as the limitations of Chicago's Paratransit Service.

I presented the problems I had been confronted with during my nearly six years of service, including the problem with telephoning for service, which has become decidedly worse over time. Lately, I have received a recording rather than a busy signal when I call to reserve a ride: "We're sorry, all circuits are busy. Please try your call later." Often when I try to re-dial, I receive a busy signal or the same message again.

When I questioned CDT officials, they said new construction was causing a shortage of available telephone lines. (A CDT driver recently advised me that if I dialed (312) 226-7300 rather than the generally known number

etc. This was acknowledged by the RTA representative to be a City of Chicago problem.

#### CTA Paratransit

On Wednesday, September 29, I met with James Payne, acting General Manager for CTA Paratransit Operations, to receive information on the new contract for service beginning in December 1999. The general funding for this contract will include all of the private carriers - currently CDT, SCR Transportation Arts Transportation and Simtran - and will come directly from CTA's operating budget.

Along with the new contract, Payne said there will be some needed improvements, including a system-wide telephone queuing system (first call-first-serve basis), such as currently exists with SCR. A zone system will be installed for some carriers (south or north), along with a citywide service for other carriers, as well as 24-hour availability for one or more carriers, similar to the type of service which currently exists with CDT.

As of the date of my interview with Payne, contract negotiations had not been completed because the bids that were submitted were either too high or too low in that they did not aim to provide the necessary quality of service.

At this point, the carrier selections were not complete

**A zone system will be installed for some carriers (south or north), along with a citywide service for other carriers, as well as 24-hour availability for one or more carriers, similar to the type of service which currently exists with CDT.**

(312) 226-0310, there would be no recording.)

CTA Paratransit has slightly more than 4,000 trips available each day for riders using the service and these are usually reserved by 6:18 a.m. for the 6 a.m. calling hour and 6:16 a.m. for the 8:00 a.m. hour, according to Percy Fry. The question of calling later in the day or at night was raised by one of the disabled residents who has become a regular attendee at meetings.

Fry said the system is available to take calls for service up to eight hours following the 6 a.m. hour for the following day. However, some of the residents at the meeting indicated that this is not practical because of the early, complete booking of all available trips.

Other problems presented were the generally deplorable conditions of streets and sidewalks in many areas of Chicago - including my neighborhood, West Town. The poor condition of the sidewalks makes travel in my wheelchair from my senior housing residence to the bus stop extremely difficult or impossible because of the many crumbling or eroded curb ruts, sidewalk pot holes,

but I was assured by Payne that no cuts in the budget or in service would occur.

I had purchased vouchers for the Chicago Taxi Access Program (TAP), a CTA Paratransit component, in late August but had generally been dissatisfied with this service. Payne said that improvements also would be made to this program: direct computer access for the 2 larger taxi companies, Yellow and Checker, would go into operations and the vouchers would be eliminated.

Payne said all the service improvements are designed to eliminate the many problems that have existed in the past. The result will be a more effective distribution of the available trips to those who use the service, whose needs far exceed the services available.

CTA Paratransit Operations began in 1981 with Payne coming on board in 1984. On the whole, it would appear that this transportation entity is well on the right path to a more efficient operation than has previously existed.

R E S I D E N T S '

J o u r n a l

A d v e r t i s e

In Our December '99 Edition

Jeffrey Davis at (773) 285-0200 x3372

Residents' Journal/October 1999 p.9

by Julio  
Martinez

**O**n Oct. 30, 1998, fire engulfed the Flannery Homes CHA senior citizens building at 1507 N. Clybourn Ave. Dozens of residents lost all of their belongings and were displaced. One year later, many of those residents are still waiting for a resolution to the issues raised by the fire. Correspondent Julio Martinez caught up with many of those residents and investigated the status of the building.

On Friday, Sept. 10 at 10:30 AM, I interviewed Jeff Jones at 1507 N. Clybourn, where he resided before the fire. "I lost \$3,700, which I was keeping in my apartment," Jones said. "I lost all my belongings. All I have left is what I was wearing that day."

## Dozens of residents lost all of their belongings and were displaced.

**One year later, many of those residents are still waiting for a resolution to the issues raised by the fire.**

Jones said he cannot read or write and he doesn't know how to fill out the papers for these transactions.

"I thought they were safe in my house and now I don't know how to get my money back. I hope that you all will help me because the fact is, the building had a fire and it wasn't my fault. I went out to take a woman friend to work and when I got back, I was horrified to find the building in flames. I couldn't believe my eyes because my mind had me spinning. I couldn't bring myself to believe what was happening but it really was," said Jones, who lived in the building for 11 years.

Ciola Chinn, who lived at 1507 N. Clybourn for 20 years and is 86 years old, said she never imagined that she would lose all her belongings and the family memories she held for so

many years in letters and pictures.

"In October, a year will have already gone by since the accident and we need to know when the situation will be resolved. For letting us know what we have to do, thanks," Chinn said.

Birdie Whitfield, also a former resident of the building, said she wants to return to it as soon as possible. "But as far as I can see," Whitfield said, "I don't

"When is this building going to be repaired? I don't know but here we are looking in two directions: at the steam shovel operator who works for Harrington Construction and at the gas company.

"The Illinois Commerce Commission hired the services of Hanson Engineers and they were able to verify that the excavation job that was being done by the steam shovel operator was not parallel with the gas line

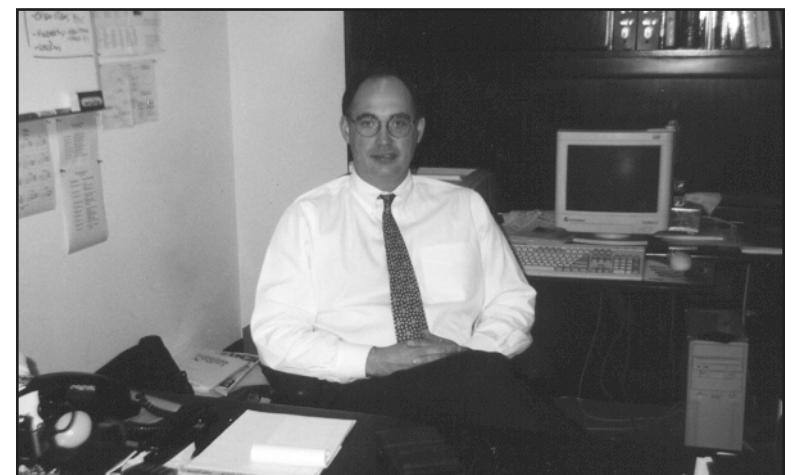
different precincts and immediate intervention by all the city's emergency teams, they were able to evacuate the building, which was occupied for the most part by the elderly and some blind residents. "They were taken to the nearby YMCA, which opened its doors to take in the residents in that time of emergency. There, the Red Cross immediately served them coffee, sandwiches and refreshments, and the residents were very comfortable.

"But even so, it was no easy job to evacuate the building,

because the elevators couldn't be operated, lest an electric arc might have ignited the gas and trapped the building's residents. The other problem was that several residents were in wheelchairs and it was most difficult to get them down the stairs; also, others used canes and walkers, and had to be helped down the building's two different stairways. We were also faced with the problem of not knowing how many people there were in the building at the time. All the apartments were opened and inspected floor by floor, to get an exact count of the residents.

"There were several problems, one being that there is a subway tunnel running immediately below Clybourn Avenue. We were afraid that gas might accumulate there. But this never happened.

"We hope to provide information to the residents of 1507 N. Clybourn as soon as we get reports from these agencies."



**John Smolk, CHA's director of Risk Management.**

Photo by Julio Martinez

### CHA Explains

**R**egarding the fire, John Smolk, the manager of Chicago Housing Authority's Risk Management Office, said: "I'm not sure that I could say anything specific. It's my job to manage this office and investigate the damage done to this building and try to learn who is responsible and what happened that day.



**Former senior residents of 1507 N. Clybourn: Rosie Dochery (from left), Ciola Chinn, Thelma Rainey and Birdie Whitfield.**

Photo by Julio Martinez

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## por Julio Martinez

El 30 de octubre de 1998, las llamas envolvieron el edificio Flannery Homes habitado por ciudadanos de la tercera edad de la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) ubicado en 1507 N. Clybourn Avenue. Docenas de residentes perdieron todas sus pertenencias y fueron desplazados de sus viviendas. Un año después, muchos de estos residentes aún están esperando por una solución a las cuestiones y problemas que surgieron a raíz de este incendio. Nuestro corresponsal Julio Martínez se reunió con muchos de estos residentes para ponernos al día respecto a sus problemas e investigó el estado del edificio.

El viernes 10 de septiembre a las 10:30 a.m. sostuve una entrevista con Jeff Jones en 1507 N. Clybourn, donde Jeff residía antes del incendio. "Perdí \$3,700 que yo guardaba en mi apartamento", se lamentó Jones. "Perdí todas mis pertenencias. Todo lo que me ha quedado es lo que llevaba puesto ese día."

Jones declaró que no sabe leer ni escribir y que no sabe cómo llenar los papeles para estas transacciones.

"Pensé que mis pertenencias estaban seguras en mi casa y ahora no sé cómo recuperar mi dinero. Tengo la esperanza de que todos ustedes me ayuden porque el hecho es que hubo un incendio en el edificio y no fue mi culpa. Salí para llevar a una amiga al trabajo y al regresar me sentí horrorizado al encontrar el edificio en llamas. No podía creer lo que estaba viendo porque la mente me daba vueltas en total confusión. No podía convencerme de que lo que estaba ocurriendo era real, pero realmente estaba sucediendo", confesó Jones, quien vivió en el edificio durante 11 años.

Ciela Chinn, que vivió en el edificio de 1507 N. Clybourn durante 20 años y tiene 86 años de edad, declaró que ella nunca imaginó que perdería todas sus pertenencias y los recuerdos familiares que atesoró por tantos años en cartas y fotos.

"En octubre ya habrá transcurrido un año desde que ocurrió el accidente y necesitamos saber cuándo se resolverá esta situación. Muchas gracias por hacernos saber lo que tenemos que hacer", agradeció Chinn. Birdie

# Flannery Un Año Despues



1507 N. Clybourn CHA senior building the day after the October 30, 1998, fire.

Photo by Julio Martinez

Whitfield, también una ex residente del edificio, aseguró que deseaba regresar a su edificio tan pronto como fuera

**Dozens of residents lost all of their belongings and were displaced.**

**One year later, many of those residents are still waiting for a resolution to the issues raised by the fire.**

possible. "Pero por lo que puedo ver hasta ahora," advirtió Whitfield, "No sé si alguna vez regresaré a mi hogar porque este edificio está cercado y nadie ha venido a decirnos lo que está sucediendo en este caso. Yo ni siquiera pude salvar mis dentaduras postizas."

Estoy cansada de comer Pablum y comida de bebé", agregó Whitfield. "Se los agradeceré con todo mi corazón. Tengo 65 años de edad y necesito mis dientes postizos".

### Un representante de la CHA explica

Con relación al incendio, John Smolk, el director de la Oficina de Administración de Riesgos de la Chicago Housing Authority, declaró: "No estoy seguro de poder decir algo específico. Mi trabajo es administrar esta oficina e investigar el daño que sufrió este edificio y tratar de saber quién es el responsable y qué pasó ese día."

"¿Cuándo se va a reparar el edificio? No lo sé, pero en esta oficina estamos concentrando nuestra investigación en dos direcciones: en el operador de la excavadora a vapor que trabaja para Harrington Construction y en la compañía de gas."

"La Comisión de Comercio de Illinois contrató los servicios de Hanson Engineers y esta compañía pudo verificar que las obras de excavación que llevaba a cabo el operador de la excavadora a vapor no corrían paralelamente con la tubería de gas sino que se desviaron en un ángulo que dirigió la excavadora hacia esa tubería de gas."

"Por esta razón, el viernes 30 de octubre de 1998 a

**Jeff Jones, a former resident of 1507 N. Clybourn Ave., points to the closed CHA senior building where he says he lost his life savings.**

Photo by Julio Martinez

las 10:30 a.m. se produjo el daño a la tubería de gas de 24 pulgadas de diámetro en el Edificio #1507 de Chicago Housing Authority, lo cual ocasionó un enorme incendio 40 minutos después de que la tubería de gas resultase dañada; pero, gracias a la rápida acción por parte de la brigada de bomberos, así como por parte de la policía de distintos distritos de la ciudad y la inmediata intervención de todos los equipos de emergencia de la ciudad, se pudo evacuar el edificio, que estaba ocupado en su mayor parte por personas mayores y algunos residentes ciegos. "Estas personas fueron trasladadas a la sede más cercana del YMCA, que abrió sus puertas para acoger a los residentes en este momento de emergencia. En ese lugar, la Cruz Roja sirvió inmediatamente café, emparedados y refrescos, y los residentes estaban muy cómodos.

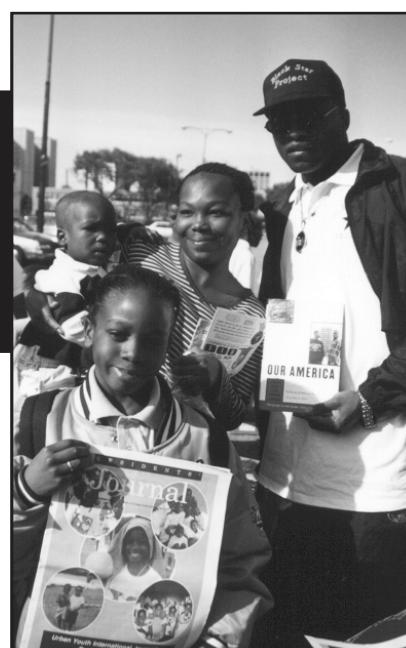
"Pero aun así, no fue una tarea fácil evacuar el edificio, debido a que los elevadores no podían ponerse en funcionamiento, ya que podía presentarse el caso de que cualquier chispa provocase la combustión del gas atrapando a los residentes del edificio. El otro problema era que varios residentes estaban en sillas de ruedas y era más difícil bajarles por las escaleras; además, otros residentes utilizaban bastones y caminadoras, y tenían que recibir ayuda para bajar las dos diferentes escaleras del edificio. También nos enfrentamos al problema de no saber cuántas personas se encontraban en el edificio justo en ese momento. Se abrieron e inspeccionaron todos los apartamentos piso por piso, con el fin de determinar el número exacto de residentes.

"Nos encontramos con varios problemas, uno de ellos era la existencia de un túnel del subterráneo que pasa justo por debajo de Clybourn Avenue. Estábamos preocupados de que el gas pudiera acumularse en ese sitio; pero eso nunca ocurrió.

"Esperamos proporcionar información a los residentes de 1507 N. Clybourn tan pronto como recibamos los informes de estas agencias."

A Robert Taylor Homes resident with her daughters and Kevin "Rappin" Tate of Rappin' Tate Productions during "The Read & Hip-Hop Iowa Literacy Tour 2005" on Sept. 23. To inspire reading, Tate gave away CDs, posters and copies of "Our America" provided by Residents' Journal.

Photo by Mary C. Johns



Dearborn Homes Local Advisory Council president Theresa Ricks with young people during "Dearborn Homes 50th Anniversary Fun Day" on Aug. 13.

Photo by Arminta Clark

## KOREAN TRANSLATIONS

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# CHA's Korean Community

by Timothy Ohr

The Argyle Apartments at 4945 N. Sheridan Road is a 22-story building only three blocks from the lake. The building is too neat and tidy compared to the public housing buildings most people imagine. In the garden, a double row of colorful cosmos make a natural fence while several althea trees, the Korean national flower, compliment the garden with white, red and purple flowers.

From the rooftop of these apartments, the beautiful Chicago skyline, world-renowned for its architectural excellence, is in full view. Plus, Lake Michigan, as big as the sea, is meeting the horizon on the east, and O'Hare Airport on the northwest. Moreover, the recently remodeled hallways with fresh tiles and bricks look attractive.

This reporter went into a unit where the main characters of this story live. This unit is equipped with a living room adjacent to the kitchen, a bedroom, a washroom and two large closets. As you walk in, an embroidered portrait of Jesus occupies half the entire wall. On other side of

**The Lims said they take care of their unit as if it is their own. They try to live each day happily while their hope is in heaven. They seldom forget the children they left in the North separated by the war.**

the wall was a beautiful array of family pictures as if telling the life story of this elderly couple. The tile floor was so clean that my white socks with shoes off remained white.

"You keep the apartment so clean and neat," I greeted. The couple, both of whom are in their late 80s, greeted back, "We are so thankful that we are given this comfortable apartment. All we need to clean is our room. The hallway and the garden is all taken care of." Laid on the corner table were two Korean Bibles and a hymn book.

Mr. and Mrs. Lim Bong-Ryong explained how they came to the U.S., how they came to call CHA home, and how they live.

I asked, "How did you come to the U.S. and when?"

"I was 69 years old. My children had come decades earlier. Now I am 85 years old, so we came 16 years ago from Korea." Mr. Lim continued with the interview while looking at his wife kindly for approval.

"The motive? Well, I would say my children had kept bugging us to come. My three children kept calling us night and day urging us to join them in the U.S. I am sure they ran at least a couple of thousand dollars on the international calls," said Lim in the accent of people from Pyongyang (now a city in North Korea).

I asked, "Why did you not

immigrate with your children in the first place?"

"There is a story to that. When we moved to (South Korea) after liberation from the Japanese, we left our two children with our grandparents in the North. Our plan was to go back to the North to bring our parents and children after we had settled in the South. But the Korean War broke out so we have been separated ever since."

Tears welled up in Mr. Lim's eyes while telling the story. Mrs. Lim broke into tears also. He gently rubbed his wife's hand.

Mr. Lim continued with his story, "We prayed for our two children and parents every day hoping we could reunite someday." Mr. Lim stopped a while and they both looked out the window to Sheridan Road. Their shoulders were shaking. They prayed, "My father God..."

They again turned the faces toward this reporter and apologized.

They probably were not aware that this reporter too was deep in his own memories. After liberation from Japanese, Korea had to go through five years of civil

children, it was not easy to leave the country leaving our parents and children in the North."

At one point, they realized their own children in the U.S. were experiencing separation from parents in a sense. So they decided to join their children in the U.S. Recalling the moment of take off while on board of a plane going to Chicago, they asked for forgiveness. "Father, mother, and my children! Please forgive us but we were told it could be easier for us to visit you once we get to the U.S."

I asked, "Have you had an opportunity to visit North Korea since you came to the U.S.?"

"Not really," Mr. Lim answered. "Not having enough financial means is one thing. Even if I could make a trip, my parents probably passed away by now. Moreover, we do not know the whereabouts of the children. So I guess I have no choice but prepare to meet them in the heaven." The 85 year-old man turned his eyes to the Bible.

This reporter switched the subject, "You said you had children in the U.S. too?"

A smile returned to their faces again. "Yes, we have one son and two daughters. The son lives in the suburbs and two daughters live in different states."

Mrs. Lim volunteered information to the reporter regarding her children. "My daughters call me at least once a week. My son and daughter-in-law contact me often too. We sometimes visit their home and stay a few days when we miss our grandchildren so much."

"Don't you have problems living in a country where things are so new, especially when you came at advanced age?"

"Well, we cannot compare with my own land but we are making out. There is a saying that once you get used to a place, it becomes your home. We are so thankful to SSI check, what we call 'dutiful son's allowance,' which arrives unfailingly at the same time each month. We came to realize that this country is indeed blessed. We never contributed to this country. We owe its people. We hope my children and their progeny will pay back what we have owed to this country. Regarding our social life, we have no problem because there are so many Koreans around."

"Fortunately, a Korean cardiologist, Dr. Nam's office, is in the same building

on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor. He examines elderly people once every week. In addition, a Korean nurse, Ms. Yang, takes care of us every other day. So it is very convenient. In the past, we had communication problem with the building manager but now we have a Korean staff member, Mr. Chung."

This reporter decided to visit Mr. Chung. According to Mr. Chung, residents are multi-ethnic but they all get along fine with each other. There are 125 Korean households in these apartments. Koreans



**Argyle Gardens residents Mr. and Mrs. Lim Bong-Ryong**

Photo by Timothy T. Ohr

make up almost 80 percent of the attendees at the building's monthly meeting. According to individuals involved with the tenant patrol, of 13 volunteers, the vast majority are Korean. They volunteer 32 hours per week. Chung added that an English-speaking Korean security guard also helps out a lot.

The Lims said they take care of their unit as if it is their own. They try to live each day happily while their hope is in heaven. They seldom forget the children they left in the North separated by the war.

They sometimes stroll along the lake and foster illusions that the lake is an ocean - the ocean they flew over. Then, they miss their homeland at the other side of the water.

They accept the problems of living in a foreign country as their fate. Instead, they try to live happily while depending on each other. This reporter felt that he was witnessing a piece of U.S. immigration history throughout the interview.

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# Youth Experiences

## The Outward Bound Experience

by Kareem Lewis

This past summer, I and other participants of the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center Teen Reach program were selected to go on this wildlife expedition called Outward Bound.

Unsure as to what the name meant, the other participants and I started to ask questions about the whole concept behind this unheard of place. We came to find out that this place known as Outward Bound was no place of fun like we thought it was but a place where we learned to be friends and act like a group. We were about to find out the true meaning of teamwork, determination and how a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

Weeks before we set out on the trip, we were introduced to the challenges and obstacles that were ahead of us and believe me, they didn't look easy. They started us out with tapes of other groups that took these courses to give us insight on what we were about to encounter.

We had second thoughts on going after viewing these tapes. I mean physically, I thought that I wasn't prepared for this wild experience. But through great persuasion, the mentors of the center got me to change my mind.

So from there, we started training before the actual trip, doing certain aerobics. Also, we went to this place where we actually got a chance to wall climb and that helped a lot.

So when the day finally came, I had all my clothes packed that I needed for this kind of trip. We all had to meet up at the center and from the center, this CHA bus would take us from Chicago to Duluth, Minnesota.

We were prepared for a long ride, so when we finally got there, we were picked up in a van and there was no turning back. We got to the place and got everything sorted out. We also got acquainted with the people at the site. We went over some information we needed to know and got the things we were going to need. Then they proceeded to split us up into groups. After that, we went to our cabins for a goodnight sleep. We did not know that it would be the last night we would sleep in beds for a while.

The next morning, we had to wake up real early to eat breakfast and get ready for this four-day adventure that was ahead of us.



Kareem Lewis (standing) practices canoe safety during the Outward Bound journey.

But before we set out, they started us out with rock climbing. We learned how to put the equipment on and the safety rules. After that, it was time to climb. There were levels of rocks to choose from: The easiest level was called Charlotte's Web and the hardest level was called Greasy but Groovy. After we got acquainted with our challenges, we started climbing. With help and motivation

portage, it was time to start canoeing. The first day, we canoed about a mile and one half before we set up at a campsite. And during this canoeing, we learned how to paddle and steer the canoe. For our first time doing it, I'll say we learned pretty quickly.

But the most challenging part of the trip came during these four days of total wilderness. Within these four days, I learned the true meaning of hard work. I learned that we as a people need to better our social skills and learn to work together because you get more done.

For example, at our campsites, we all had to play a part in order for us to eat, sleep and drink. Some of us had to put up the tents. A person had to cook, clean and make sure our food was protected before we went to sleep.

We were a brigade and the name given to us by the two instructors - Simon Warr and Chris Rogers - was the Verendrye Brigade. As a brigade, we experienced something that we never thought we would in our lives: our first battle with nature.

This Outward Bound experience brought us closer together as friends because without each other, we would have never made it. The physical and mental challenges that lay before us were hard but with teamwork and dedication, they were easy to accomplish. For five days and four nights, the Verendrye Brigade and the other group, which got a head start on us, paddled across rivers and lakes and in the Boundary Waters. We hiked portage trails carrying canoes and mondo backpacks, camping during the night.

Overall, the part of the trip that everybody enjoyed the most was the Solo. The Solo was a part of the trip where everyone would have time alone to contemplate or just write in our journals.

To start the Solo, each of the participants got dropped off on different islands that were in the area. For seven hours, I wrote in my journal, thought about the rest of the

**Within these four days, I learned the true meaning of hard work. I learned that we as a people need to better our social skills and learn to work together because you get more done.**

from our teammates, we accomplished our first goal and it was not easy.

From the rock, we went to the van and started to load the canoes and our gear. So after we were done, we all hopped in the van and were on our way to the place where our journey was about to begin. The place was called the Boundary Waters. So when we got there, we got everything unloaded and ready to go.

But before we could move any further, we had to learn how to carry the canoes on our shoulders. There would be certain stops along the way where we would have to unload all of our things and carry them through a pathway which was referred to as a portage to avoid riding through strong rapids. So we took turns carrying the canoes because when we got to the start-off point, there was a 30-rod portage we had to do in order to get to the water.

For those that don't know, one rod is a canoe and the length of the canoes were about 16 feet and they weighed 75 pounds. So just think: you have 30 canoes and you line them up in a straight line, one behind the other, and that's how long the first portage was. Now think about that without concrete - just mud, rocks and hills. I mean this wasn't an easy task.

So when we finally got through with the first

trip and wrote a rap about the trip.

So after five days and four nights of rough winds, horrible thunder storms and attacks by millions of mosquitoes, we finally made it back to the main campsite.

We all took a nice long sit in the sauna and then cooled off in the lake. When all of the groups got through taking care of their personal hygiene (we hadn't taken a bath or a shower for the entire time we were in the wilderness), the instructors and employers of the Voyager Outward Bound School held a reception for all the participants. And afterwards, we had our own little group graduation where we received a certificate of completion and these Outward Bound pins for completing the Outward Bound Experience.

And now I want to give a big thanks to the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center for selecting me and believing that I could overcome an obstacle such as this one. And I also want to give a special thanks to the sponsors because without you, this would have not been possible.

Last but not least, I want to thank my fellow participants who went through a lot while we were out there. I want to say thank you because while we were out there, without you I would have not made it through. I really enjoyed this trip and believe I am a better person for attending this camp.



Outward Bound participants learn how to rock climb.

# **A Visit to the FBI**

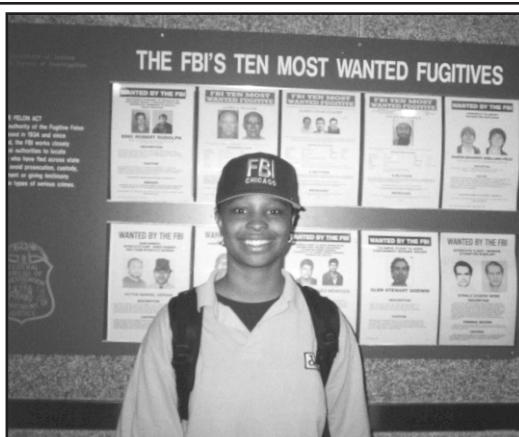
**by Shenika Brown**

"You don't have a civilized society without some laws. Our job is to enforce them," said Kathleen McChesney, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Bureau of the FBI.

For many, the FBI represents an exclusive group of federal agents set out to make everyone's lives miserable.

However, McChesney considers the FBI very professional law enforcement agents dedicated to seeking the truth.

Sometimes in the community, the FBI has gained a bad rep-



**Shenika Brown poses in front of the FBI's 10 most wanted list.**

Photo by Moriel Asiel

utation. But McChesney believes this bad reputation can be improved by more involvement in the community. One effort is the Adopt A School Program, which takes part in anti-gang, anti-crime activities in neighborhoods. Volunteer federal agents go out into our neighborhoods, spend time with the youth of America, and give them positive influences.

McChesney also mentioned ways in which community residents can help the FBI serve them better. McChesney said people should stay out of trouble, not buy goods that you know are in fact stolen, and keep the FBI informed to what's going on around them. She said people should not be afraid to let them

know when crimes are being committed in their neighborhoods.

"We can't be everywhere so we rely on people to help us," McChesney said.

**"We can't be everywhere so we rely on people to help us" -  
FBI Special Agent Kathleen McChesney**



**Shenika Brown interviews Kathleen McChesney,  
Special Agent in Charge of the local FBI office.**

Photo by Moriel Asiel

"We consider people as our partners. If people are not willing to help us, we will have a hard time in the neighborhoods."

Another agent who was also present was Ross Rice, who gave me a tour of the FBI's local headquarters. I got the opportunity to see FBI headquarters, where I learned of all of the duties that are assigned to the FBI. They deal with bombing cases, kidnapping, crimes against children, drug smuggling, organized crime, fraud and white collar crimes, which are a few of the many crimes that are investigated by the FBI. We also got opportunities to meet many other agents who were in fact in action. I also learned of how sometimes federal crimes can be turned into films that have sometimes become hits in movie theaters.

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R E S I D E N T S '

# **Journal**

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

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# The Duncan YMCA

by Karen Owens

If you are looking for a place to expand your creativity, learn the latest in information technology and find good quality fun in a safe environment for the entire family (grandparents as well), the place to go is the Duncan YMCA Chernin Center for the Arts. The staff at the Duncan YMCA is ready to help you with these plans.

The Duncan YMCA has been operating since 1982 at 1001 West Roosevelt Road and on site within the ABLA community at 1200 West 14<sup>th</sup> St. The Duncan YMCA provides a well-rounded program for all those that attend.

The services at the Duncan YMCA include quality child care for children 3 to 5. The Summer Day Camp is a fun-filled program for youths 6-12. It has swimming, trips and various sports activities, all of which are supervised by well-trained, energetic counselors. The Youth Sports program consists of athletic events that are popular among today's youth along with various school activities.

There also are various after-school programs that children can participate in daily. And lastly, there are family nights, events that the whole family can be involved in. They are held on Fridays and a lot of creative activities are involved.

## Arts Center

In November 1997, another milestone took place when the Chernin Center for the Arts made its debut. With this new center, the Duncan YMCA became the only YMCA in metropolitan Chicago dedicated to the arts and education.

The center provides new and innovative programs to ABLA as well as the Near West Side. The center consists of a state-of-the-art computer lab known as the "life-long learning center," which offers Internet access to prepare people for the information age.

There is also a 220-seat theater for various dramatic live stage productions such as the "Wiz" and "Little Shop of Horrors," which was performed by ABLA's own youth. Summer Arts camps features dancing and a youth theater workshop. Dancing is also offered other times of the year for youths and adults. Youth Enterprise Studios produces some of the sculptures and jewelry on display in the Lagniappe gift shop located at the Roosevelt location.

Since the YMCA has been in the ABLA community for so long, input is always welcomed from residents as well as the surrounding communities so all that want to participate can. Over the years, thousands of ABLA residents have come through the doors for all the wonderful programs that have gone on.

Youth enterprise studios produced some of the various sculptures and jewelry on display in the gift shop located at the Roosevelt location.

Fred C Matthews III, executive director of the Duncan YMCA, is very excited about the center. He said, "Our programs are accessible and we're here for the communities and welcome ideas and suggestions.

"I strongly believe that everyone should be involved and exposed to the arts."

## A Youth of the Community Responds

Lindsey, a youth from the ABLA community, attended the summer day camp. Here's her response: "I found camp to be quite fun, playing games with other campers and making new friends. I also had the chance to learn how to swim and the coun-

ly interacted with us and displayed total dedication to our cause. After a great many years of difficulties, sickness prevailed and the Lord called for my best friend to come home.

By now, we had already endured countless meetings and various field trips. After visiting several trails throughout Chicago and its neighboring suburbs, we decided on the current design for the trail.

With the news of Jimmy's death having been passed on to our advisory board, we held another meeting. Jimmy's presence was greatly missed. It was unanimously agreed that we would call our river trail the Jimmy Thomas Nature Trail. After all, Jimmy contributed such brilliant ideas and there could be nothing better than our trail being his namesake. We know we will never forget him. Now neither will anyone else.

Thanks to the hardworking young men and women of Green Corps, CHA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the foundations

selors were great. Hopefully, I'll be able to attend next year."

If you're ready to release some hidden talent you may not know you had or just looking to explore new and exciting activities, come or call to find out more information.

Duncan YMCA Chernin Center for the Arts Staff:  
Mary Irvin  
Administrative Director  
(312) 421-7800

Chernin Center for the Arts  
Ifa Bayeza  
Artistic Director  
(312) 738-7980

Child Development Center  
Alpha Jackson  
Director  
(312) 783-5991



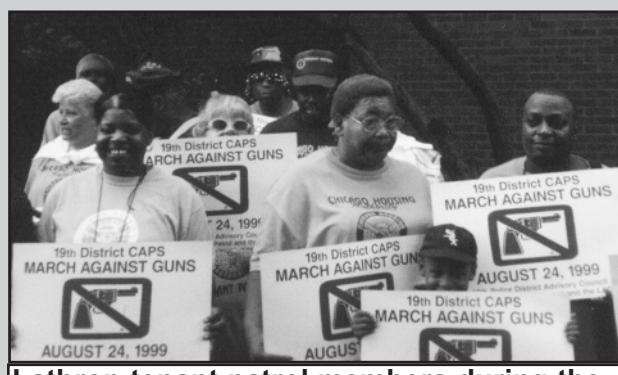
**ABLA residents Lauren Owens (left) and her grandmother, Daisy Matthews, before a performance at the Duncan YMCA.**

Photo by Karen Owens.



**Lathrop residents and others at the dedication of the "Jimmy Thomas Nature Trail": CHA Intergovernmental Affairs Director Bud Meyers (top row, from left), Cathy Hudzik, David Jones, state Rep. John Fritchey (D-Chicago), Lathrop LAC President Juanita Stevenson (center), Andre Brown (bottom row, from left) and Calvin Gatewood.**

Photo by Bobby Watkins.



**Lathrop tenant patrol members during the 19th District CAPS "March Against Guns" rally on Aug. 24.**

Photo by Bobby Watkins

that donated so generously, and especially Friends of the River. You've helped to make a dream come true.

## March on Handguns

Lathrop Homes would like to commend Bonnie Brown and the tenant patrol for their participation in the recent March on Handguns.

# CHA's War Against Rats

by Arminta Clark

**T**here are evictions being planned in Robert Taylor and other Chicago Housing Authority developments. But this time it's not legal human residents that are being evicted. These days, it's the uninvited non-human residents that are causing a major disturbance. A lot of rats are attacking our children and adults. Rats have been a disturbance in Chicago since there has been a Chicago, causing restaurants, fast food chains and other businesses to close down.

Now the City of Chicago and CHA have joined forces to rid the developments of its rodent problem. CHA CEO Phillip Jackson has made this his personal problem.

"This is Phillip's problem," Jackson said during an Oct. 17 radio show on WVON. "We are not going to have our children being bit by rats."

Jackson recalled the incident that happened to the family in September that once lived at 4410 S. State St. inside the Robert Taylor "A" development.

Jackson said it was reported to him shortly after the incident that newspaper reporters were at the building taking pictures of a little boy who had been bitten by a rat.

"I said, 'A rat.' I didn't understand it. I couldn't envision it. What does this look like for a little boy to be bitten by a rat? So I asked, 'How old is he?' They said, 'He's four.' And so I am trying to think in my mind, 'What does a four-year-old look like?'

"Where did it bite him at - on the finger? Did it bite him on the leg? So I went right out to the building. I wanted to see for myself. Well, I found out that it was a four-year-old little boy who was in his bed and at 5 a.m., a rat - a big rat - crawled into his bed. The little boy had come from a barbecue the day before and he had barbecue sauce on his face.

"The rat started biting the little boy in his face. The little boy started screaming and his mother came into his

room because her little boy was screaming. Then she started screaming also and the rat looked up, looked at the mother and kept on eating the little boy's face. The mother told the little boy to knock it off. Knock it off. This four-year-old little boy had to knock a rat off of his face. The rat ran into a hole. The hole that the rat came out of had been there for two years. The mother had been trying to get the hole fixed for two years.

"Now, one might think that the apartment was probably dirty. That would be the reason why there was a rat. Not so. The mother's apartment was immaculate. It was pristine. It was super. It was beautiful. But this rat crawled up out of this hole and it had access and it bit her son."

Jackson continued, "I wanted to see it. What does it look like? The little boy had been taken to the hospital. It was blood all over his pillow, blood all over his sheets. That's what it looks like when a rat bites a baby."

Jackson said rat bites occurred in Robert Taylor approximately once a week. The residents are telling Jackson that they have a severe rat problem.

Jackson exclaimed, "I have a building down in Dearborn Homes where they were digging down in the ground and they hit a gas main or something and it caused the rats to start running up. In one hour, they killed 350 rats. These are like little puppies."

"What we are doing to combat the problem? Number one, it's not really a rodent problem, per se. It's a garbage



**This uncovered CHA plastic dumpster situated outside the Darrow Homes on 39th Street and Langley Avenue is a possible haven for rats.**

Photo by Arminta Clark

**"This situation did not occur with Jackson nor is it the fault of the residents. It is due to poor management with dealing with the garbage situation."**

*- City Streets and Sanitation Spokesperson Terry Levin*

spokesperson Terry Levin said, "We have been begging CHA for years to change the situation regarding their garbage removal."

Levin is hopeful and optimistic that Jackson is serious about this matter. Levin said, "This situation did not occur with Jackson nor is it the fault of the residents. It is due to poor management with dealing with the garbage situation."

Levin said beefing up garbage removal would help starve the rats. Cutting off their food supply would force the rats to eat each other and eat the poison anti-coagulant which causes internal bleeding.

At one time, Levin said city workers used cyanide and strichnine poison to kill rats. Later, these poisons were found to be harmful to the environment and people.

A lot of rats can live off just one bag of garbage, Levin said. He added that city workers never leave poison out in the open. The poison is placed in a rat hole and sealed up with paper.

Levin recommended that residents use glue boards or any other rat traps and secure garbage properly. The real problem is after the garbage is dropped in the chutes. Levin said his department's jurisdiction is outside of the buildings. Inside CHA buildings, CHA is responsible for controlling rats.

After the city has finished baiting rats outside a building, then a rat warning sign is posted on a telephone pole, Levin explained.

## A Tip Against Rat or Mice Bites

If rats and/or mice occupy your unit,  
please do the following:

**-Wash your face and hands  
before going to sleep**

Food residue around your mouth  
and fingers will attract rats and/or  
mice.



**This exposed incinerator chute located on the ground floor at 706 E. Pershing Road is a possible route for rats to access each floor.**

Photo by Arminta Clark

problem. Rats only come around when you have uncontrolled garbage. So, first of all, I am working to containerize the garbage.

"Back in the day when Robert Taylor was built, they use to burn the garbage. They would let the garbage go down the incinerator and they would burn it. The garbage would be gone because they put the hot flame to it. But now, with environmental control, you can't burn garbage.

"So what happens: they just let the garbage go down the chute and sometimes it backs up three, four, five floors. Yes, it does. The rats love that. It's the way the building was designed. And then environmental features changed. So it's a very hard thing to do. So we're looking at compactors to compact the garbage into a very contained small area and then we are looking at baiting the buildings.

"Because right now, the rats - if they get to choose between rat poison and open garbage - they're going to choose the open garbage. So that's how we're combating the problem."

Chicago Streets and Sanitation Department

# Welfare to Work: People In Transition

## Residents Rehab Robert Taylor

by Beauty Turner

**C**ontractor Dennis Muhammad of the Muhammad Ali Community & Economic Development Corporation (MACEDC) is rehabbing 38 units in one of the three designated buildings in Robert Taylor-A, 4525 S. Federal St.

Muhammad believes in the people in the community. He hires single mothers, young men who are ex-offenders as well as young and old people that reside in public housing and in the community.

These are people who have been badly stereotyped as lazy, trifling and always up to no good. But ask Muhammad, "How do the residents work?" and a smirk and a smile come to his face.

"They are eager to learn and are hard, dedicated workers. Most of the time, they are here on the site early in the morning before I get here," Muhammad said.

Matina Lee, a resident of Robert Taylor Homes and a young, single mother of a 10-month-old baby, said she has learned how to paint and plaster and that it is a great experience for her.

"It's hands-on experience and the wages are good. Dennis Muhammad is a good, fair man, when it comes to women and men," Lee said.

She added that she wouldn't mind working with him again.

Dwayne, also a resident of Robert Taylor, said, "It makes me feel good as a person to be able to have this opportunity to do something like this rehabbing apartments.

"This gives me an opportunity to do some things that I wouldn't have been able to do without a decent wage and when I finish an apartment, it looks good and so do I."

Jeanett King, a resident of Dearborn Homes, said it's good physical work for women to lose weight.

"I have been working for Dennis Muhammad for 6 1/2 years and as a resident, it has boosted my self-esteem sky high and my 26-year-old son is proud of me. I have seen

**"With all the redevelopment that is occurring, it's about time the residents benefit from work in the community."**

*-Dennis Muhammad*



**Robert Taylor Homes resident Matina Lee of the Muhammad Ali Community & Development Corporation in action during rehab of a unit in the 4525 S. Federal building.**

Photo by Beauty Turner



**Workers take a break during rehabilitation of 38 units in the 4525 S. Federal St. building in the Robert Taylor development.**

Photo by Beauty Turner

him hire young men and women with little education and little work experience and I notice a great change in them," she said.

"Mr. Muhammad doesn't judge you. All that he asks is that you give your all and do your individual best.

"I started back in 1992 and I was inspired by the ability to be able to give back to the community," said Muhammad.

"By creating jobs (for this project), I have hired 27 residents and 17 people from the community."

"I'm willing to guarantee that my people - the residents in the community - can and will do a fantastic and a great job," said Muhammad.

"(CHA) can pay us unit by unit if they want to. I say, 'We can do it.'"

The residents are paid \$28.35 an hour. They receive a \$23.35 hourly rate and a \$5/hour cash fringe. They earn \$266 a day and \$1,200 a week.

"With all the redevelopment that is occurring in our communities, it's about time the residents benefit from work in the community," Muhammad said.

"Not only do the apartments look newly rehabbed and good but also the mentality and the self-esteem of the residents does."

## Service Employment of Redevelopment

by Bobby Watkins

**S**ervice Employment of Redevelopment (SER) is a program designed to help recipients of the Illinois Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.

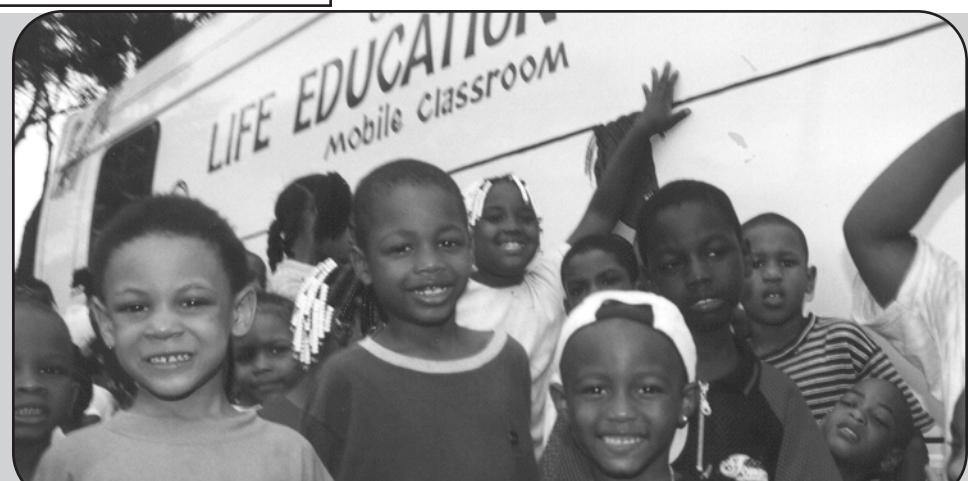
This program is designed to help the mothers on TANF get into the work force. The client is sent to SER to find work. Then they are placed in different companies throughout the city to work for their checks with the hope that after a certain period of the time, they will be given permanent employment.

Pat Bolder, coordinator of SER, said the program has been 90 percent successful finding placement for their clients through job fairs and personal interviews.

This is fine and good but there are also problems that this program has had. One young lady who was placed in our development said she was not paid on time and often, no one was in the office to answer questions about being in this program. For eight months, she still has not found a better job and the time is running out for her.

Some of the young women who have come through the program can't file, don't have computer experience, and some can't even answer a phone properly.

The programs say they have a high success rate. But most of the companies these



**CHA youth at the Dearborn Homes "50th Anniversary Fun Day" celebration.**

Photo by Arminta Clark

young women are sent to don't provide training.

Most of the young women I have talked to about this program think it is a good program but they also said a lot of work still needs to be done in preparing the people for work. With more training, the women feel this program can be an even greater success for more people.

**The programs say they have a high success rate. But most of the companies these young women are sent to don't provide training.**

# Welfare to Work: People In Transition

## Ex-Offenders: No Jobs, No Housing

by Wateka Kleinpeter

**T**here are all sorts of obstacles for people transitioning from Welfare to Work but ex-offenders have the fewest options. The job market fluctuates and even when there are plenty of jobs available, an ex-offender has a hard time getting employment. Ex-offenders also have problems obtaining housing and have trouble going back or getting into subsidized and public housing.

Ex-offenders who return to society have several basic needs in order to succeed. A job and a place to live are two key elements that might deter the recidivism rate. Although those formerly incarcerated have paid for the crimes they have committed, they are often denied many things. Of course, it is difficult to get a job but it is also almost impossible to get housing.

Nic Howell, spokesperson for the State of Illinois Department of Corrections, said that in 1997, 22,000 adults were released from the Illinois prison system. The cost of housing a prisoner for one year in Illinois correctional facilities is \$17,300 a year for adult men and women and \$31,000 for juveniles. Howell said many of the women who are released are parents.

Formerly incarcerated individuals will tell you that once they admit to having committed a crime, their job application goes to the circular file (garbage can). Or if they leave their criminal histories off of an application, they are automatically terminated if their employer finds out. Many people go to transitional homes upon their release because they cannot return to public or subsidized housing.

In March of 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law "One Strike and You're Out." This gave public housing authorities the framework for more stringent lease enforcement of current residents and more intense screening for potential residents.

One Strike initiatives enforced by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) dictate that individuals who engage in drug-related activity and other criminal offenses can be evicted or eliminated in the screening process. More recent legislation has been passed that prohibits newly released ex-offenders from returning to CHA, Section 8 or other subsidized housing.

Many families are faced with a dilemma when their loved ones commit a crime. Barbara (not her real name) recently moved from a CHA development because her son is due for release from prison in the early part of 2000.

Barbara said her son, a grown adult, was not arrested in her house and was not living with her at the time of his arrest for possession of drugs. Nevertheless, Barbara said she was threatened with eviction by CHA under the One Strike rule because her son remained on her lease. Barbara knows that upon her son's release, he has no where else to go. So she moved to keep from being evicted or hassled by the housing authority.

Barbara said, "As soon as (her son) gets home, I would be going to court again. That's why I'm moving."

### Agencies that Help

There are several agencies in Chicago who have programs tailored to help ex-offenders. They believe these individuals have been punished once by the court system and again by losing their relationships with their families.

Michael O'Connor, grant administrator for Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees (STRIVE), said his organization has a program for ex-offenders that helps in several ways. They provide counseling, job training and other necessary support systems. He also is involved in working with city, state and federal legislators in an effort to help ex-offenders.

O'Connor said that he was a trader on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade for over nine years. During the administration of President Ronald Reagan, O'Connor said he saw quite a few young Black males who were runners on the floor lose their jobs when Reagan asked for background checks through the Securities and Exchange Commission. Reagan's rules forced anyone that had been arrested for anything to quit or lose their jobs.

A lot of STRIVE's clients are current or former CHA residents, which makes sense, since the organization started out in the Harold Ickes Homes.

STRIVE recognizes that most potential employers are apprehensive about hiring this special population of individuals. It is a "legitimate fear," said O'Connor.

"That is why we work hard to establish good relationships with them (area businesses)," he added.

Once established, many ex-offenders do well - often better than the average employee because of the difficulties they have in obtaining a job, O'Connor said.

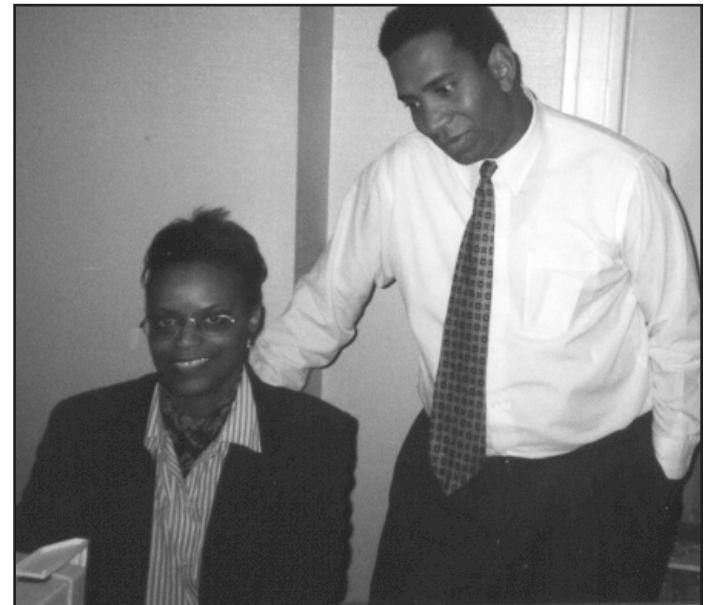
One example of the types of job programs that STRIVE has for ex-offenders is the culinary arts program. O'Connor said they now place people in a culinary training program that once would not accept ex-offenders. But because of the reputation and the rela-

**"Women who face the judicial system for the first time usually receive more time than men, who often get probation for a first time offense."**  
**-Sylvia Benson, Deputy Director of STRIVE West**

tionships that STRIVE has built, they decided to take a chance. They now have several students in the program who soon will be chefs.

O'Connor said men - especially those who have just been recently released from jail - have few resources and often need clothes, or more up-to-date clothes, to go to an interview.

At STRIVE, staff members, private individuals and community residents donate clothing for participants to go on job interviews. STRIVE also refers to other resources, such as the Bottomless Closet, which provides clothing for women in work training programs.



**Sylvia Benson, deputy director of STRIVE West Side, and Michael O'Connor, Grants Administrator of Strive South Side.**

Photo by Wateka Kleinpeter

O'Connor said that STRIVE does not get any local funding like other local social service agencies. Instead, STRIVE depends on private foundations, in-kind donations and services.

Sylvia Benson, deputy director of STRIVE West Side, said that females in the correctional system have one problem that men don't. Once women enter into the system, they automatically lose custody of their children to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Men don't. And often, family members will not let the women see their children while they are in prison.

"Women who face the judicial system for the first time usually receive more time than men who often get probation for a first-time offense," said Benson. "Sexism is alive and well in the criminal justice system," added O'Connor.

Another agency that has programs for ex-offenders is the Safer Foundation. They have been in existence since 1972. Safer offers job preparation in its welfare to work program that is tailored to prepare individuals for work and answer most of the questions a prospective employer might have. They work with the individual to address child care, professional work behavior and

other issues that may hinder an employee's work performance. The majority of the clients in their welfare-to-work program are women single parents receiving Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF) benefits, although there are some male single parents in the program also. All are ex-offenders.

On every job application, there is the question of felony convictions. Safer teaches an ex-offender the right way to respond to the "dreaded question." The ex-offender is taught to be up-front about their history and ask for a chance to prove themselves. Safer workers hope that through this method, the application is not automatically thrown in the garbage.

## RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

# Crime Busting In Senior Buildings

**O**n Aug. 15, CHA officials and Ald. Vi Daley (43) held a press conference to announce new security measures at 2720 N. Sheffield Ave. and 2640 N. Sheffield. Acting on complaints from residents, the officials promised to root out problem tenants and stop unauthorized persons from wreaking havoc in the buildings. Correspondent Anita Baker followed up on these announcements to see if security has improved in the past few months.

### Interview with Edward Croft, building president of 2740 N. Sheffield Ave.:

**T**he reason for the August press conference was that there were a lot of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution in the building. I could not get any help in the building until I went to Ald. Vi Daley. So we went to meet with Chicago Housing Authority CEO Phil Jackson, Mayor Richard M. Daley and (Chicago Police Commander Terry) Hilliard. CEO Phil Jackson called the press conference and invited the Chief of the Chicago Housing Authority Police, Harvey Radney.

So this is the reason the press conference was held here at 2720 North Sheffield.

"From the press conference, there were 19 arrests and 10 evictions. In attendance at this press conference were WBBM-Channel 2 news, WGN-Channel 9 news, Fox 32 news and various reporters from different newspapers.

"I would like to see the building free of all of the prostitution and drugs, have the alcoholics out of the building, and return back to a seniors-only building the way it was designated to be. If we can get rid of the residents that are having these problems in the building, we then can keep the unwelcome guests out of the building because they won't have anyone to visit in the building.

"I feel the press conference let the residents see that this will not be tolerated from their guests. As you interview me now, they are removing a guest that has been in the building for a couple of weeks in an apartment and has been arrested 15 or 20 times.

"There have been 19 arrests from 2720 Sheffield. This does not include 2640 N. Sheffield. One has been evicted already and nine more are in court. Their court date is October 13, 1999, and I am sure they will be evicted.

"I prayed about this matter. I am a member of Apostolic Church of God where the Bishop Brazier is pastor. I am on several committees of the church and asked them to pray with me for the building and it's beginning to work. When you ask God, he hears your prayers. You must have the faith that he will answer your prayers. I thought that it should happen then. But I had to learn that it just doesn't work that way. It works at God's time, not man's.

"Once again, I must thank Ald. Vi Daley because I had no help with the

Chicago Housing Authority in the beginning. But when Ald. Daley came on board, the Chicago Housing Authority followed."

### Comments from Ald. Vi Daley (43):

**T**he press conference demonstrated that we certainly have the attention of CHA and its leadership. Phil Jackson has thanked me on several occasions for bringing these concerns to his attention. I am very impressed with Mr. Jackson's responsiveness to these concerns. With this level of commitment from the CHA and the community, I am confident that improvements will be made.

"My top priority is to ensure that our seniors are living in a safe and comfortable environment.

Mr. Jackson suggested that we organize a committee of CHA residents and neighbors to address all of the concerns facing this community. My office will chair these meetings on a regular monthly basis. The key to the success of the

committee is active participation by the residents and neighbors. We will take what we learn from these meetings and bring it to the attention of the CHA and other appropriate city departments.

"Wrightwood Neighbors, the neighborhood association around the Sheffield buildings, has been very interested in these issues and is making efforts to improve the conditions for their senior citizen neighbors."



**CHA seniors at the Chicago Neighborhood Assembly which was held at McCormick Place on July 17.**

**Photo by Mary C. Johns**

# Altgeld Gardens Report

## by Sharon Forinzy

Hey this is Ms. Forinzy again.

I need to get with you but I have not forgotten you. I am around for all good information and if you need to get in contact with me, please feel free to call me at (773) 535-5223 or fax me at (773) 535-5613.

### Altgeld Gardens' Parade

We had a glorious time at the Altgeld Gardens parade. Children from all blocks participated to show their talents. Thousands were in attendance and afterwards, everyone went to Carver Park for food and other activities. It was a success!

### Altgeld Local Advisory Council Members

The names of some of the Local Advisory Council are Esther Wheeler, president, Norma Harris, vice president, Connie Hays, Bernadette Williams and Annette Reid.

We have been having good meetings and all of the members have been coming. One thing I can stress is that President Wheeler gets to the point at every meeting.

Some of the block representatives are also having good meetings and nice

things for the children.

The LAC Office telephone number is (312) 674-3513

### AMAP Workers

The workers of the Chicago Housing Authority's Altgeld-Murray Alternative Program (AMAP) program are doing a lot of good things.

These ladies get the job done in the community area and offices within the development. If you need to contact them, call them at (773) 291-6060.

Thank you for a job well done.

### Sympathies

Our deepest sympathies and prayers go out to the families of Jerome Williams, Michael Malone and other families I don't know about. To my own family, the Macintoshes, and Mrs. Anna Ferry's grandmother, Ms. Rios.

To those who are sick or hospitalized, our best wishes go out to you for a speedy recovery. Ruby Blokey of Block #10, Mr. James Weston Sr., Mrs. L. Blowtown and to the ones I don't know, get well soon.

We love you.

### Free Trips

111th Street YMCA is having trips on Saturdays in which any kid from the community can participate. The activities include flag or regular football.

See me for registration forms.

The YMCA always has good things going on for young people in the community.

### Aldridge Elementary

I went to Aldridge Elementary School. They have many sports activities such as soccer, basketball, baseball, track, cheerleading and volleyball. There is also an after-school program that will enrich your grades in the future.

The teachers are Mr. Hatcher and Ms. Bartnett. We are very thankful we have Deborah Jackson as our principal because she allows all after-school programs to take place.

In the future, I will be around to do interviews in the other schools in the community.

### Halloween Party

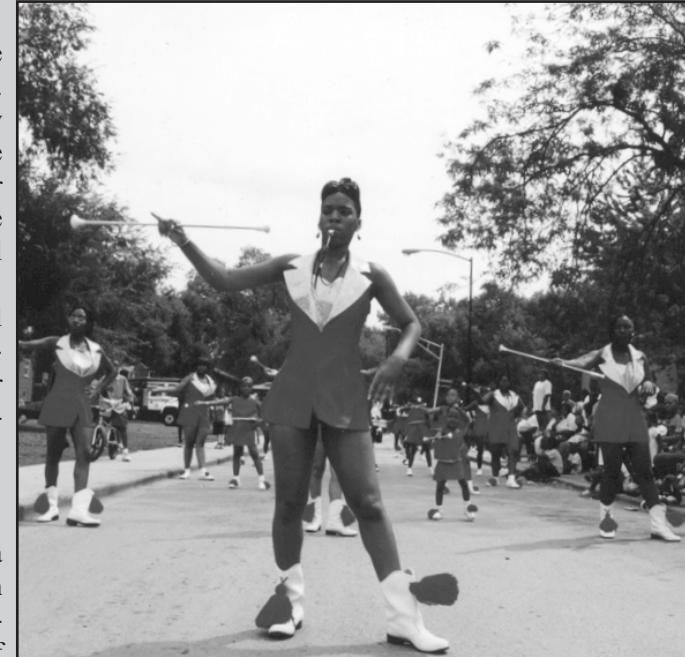
I am having a Halloween party in block #17 for the children with the help of Tim Hooper and Bernette Macoch.

### Altgeld Baseball Team

The ladies and gentlemen of Altgeld Gardens baseball team did well. The team members are called the Strong Arms.

### Cardra Program

Cardra is one of Altgeld Gardens' community organizations which helps the children in the community and schools. They host a variety of games and other activities in the community.



The "Lindsey Dancers" during the Altgeld Gardens' parade.

Photo by Sharon Forinzy

## CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

# Letters to the Editor

## Washington Park Alumni Club

Dear Editor:

We are alumni of 6215 S. Wabash Ave., 220 E. 63rd St., and 6217 S. Calumet Ave. We grew up in these buildings in the '60s. Our committee has been together for about 8 years and we get together a couple times a year and give parties. Also, we have our annual alumni picnic in July. For the last 3 or 4 years, we take part of the money we make from the parties and have been buying school supplies for the children living in these buildings as well as the 6145 S. Wabash Ave. walkups and the 61<sup>st</sup> Street row houses on Wabash and Michigan. We have honored our graduates and bought

school supplies for our college students also.

Our members are Mr. Wilbert Winslow, Mrs. Sylvia Johnson-Scott, Ms. Debbie Austin, Mrs. Angie Bender and Mr. Joseph Kimble.

We like to thank Mary Wiggins, LAC president of Washington Park, for working with us as well as the Yancy Boys and Girls Club located at 6245 S. Wabash for letting us use their gym the last 3 years in order to pass out the school supplies and honor our graduates of those buildings.

I would also like to thank you, *RJ*, for passing on the positive information about things happening in

CHA.

It was very enjoyable to me but it was Mary Wiggins who passed the *RJ* papers to me. I have been passing the paper to others who have lived in CHA as well as others.

May God Bless you and your staff and keep up the good work.  
Peace and Love,

- Joseph Kimble  
Washington Park Alumni Committee

## Letters from West Africa

Dear Editor:

During the Urban Youth International Journalism Program Israel and Ghana tour in 1998, I was the girl with the Ghana Institute of Journalism who represented our side of the discussion at Sanaa Lodge.

I must say that I was so excited when I received the newspapers. They are such good reading materials from Chicago, most of all from colleagues. Your efforts are so commendable.

When the group came to Ghana, I practically didn't think that I would be writing to you, most of all hear from you guys again. All I know about America is what I either hear or see on television. Although I'm a journalist, people expect that you should know everything. There are some things you learn along the way and I must say that interaction at Sanaa Lodge is one such learning process for

all of us to help straighten some or all the misconceptions about the world through "our" peers and research.

Running such a program to equip young people with journalistic tools is one sure way of helping the youth to understand issues affecting their country, state or town. It also helps us fashion out appropriate remedies for some or all of the problems we face in our various societies.

The practice of "positive and follow-up" journalism is what we all need to face the next millennium. And of course, community involvement in development is what CHA is doing, which needs to be emulated by developing countries.

I would like to tell Carly Hodges that I really felt so bad when she admitted anger about the views we expressed. As a young journalist, you should expect

that people's views may not necessarily please you. That's our opinion. We know we haven't been to America but Hey! Stuff happens all the time.

Don't worry. We learned that we are all the same as people with our differences. Let us work harder on researching and proper data analysis so we will understand well as much as we can. Remember, as journalists, we are supposed to be frank about issues and that's exactly what you did. Well done.

I personally enjoyed the group's presence and wish to be part of your program sometime.

Bye, Bye, Bye!! Kiss, Kiss, Kiss.

Thanks,

- Aba Asante  
Accra, Ghana

Dear Editor:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your publications. I really enjoyed all the publications, especially the special section on Ghana and Israel. I have completed my course at the institution and now reporting for Ghana television news.

I find your article "History and the Defender" in the February issue very interesting. I do agree with you that history is not an old, musty tool. Shaped by truth and perspective, history is the most powerful tool we have to determine our future.

Sincerely yours,

- Peter Kofi Gbedema  
Ghana Broadcasting Corporation

## The FBI Responds

To: Ms. Shenika Brown  
c/o Urban Youth International Journalism Program

Dear Ms. Brown:

I enjoyed reading your recent article about the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the Residents' Journal. As the Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago FBI's office, I am very interested in the impressions of community members relative to our agency.

I was pleased to know that the people you talked with like the way we investigate crime. You might be very interested to know that we investigate many crimes, particularly those involving gang violence and illegal drug trafficking, with the Chicago Police Department. They are excellent, professional partners, as well as leaders, in the fight against crime.

If you and your fellow journalists or class-

mates are interested in learning more about the FBI or in visiting our office, please contact us. We would enjoy having the opportunity to tell you more about the FBI and the many things we do here in Chicago.

- Kathleen McChesney  
Special Agent in Charge  
U. S. Department of Justice  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

***Editor's Note: Shenika took up Agent McChesney on her offer to visit the local FBI office. Her article appears on page 14.***

Residents' Journal welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents.

Please send all letters to our new address:  
4859 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60615.

You may also call our office at (773) 285-0200 x 3372 to discuss your ideas for submission.

# Dear Resident

by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

Just like the season, many things have changed in my life since the last edition of **RJ**. And I'm sure that the same holds true for many of you. As public housing residents, according to what I have read and heard in the paper and on television, many changes are going to hold true for all of us in the very near future now that Team CHA, led by Mayor Richard M. Daley, is in charge. I have come to realize that the only constant is change. And on Earth, forever is now, right now.

If you have been following my column, you know how I feel about children, women, family and community. Over the years, I had hoped for a greater response to *Dear Resident* from the readers of **RJ**, especially my last column. Sometimes, I wonder if anyone is out there.

But I also know how hopeless life in public housing can be, especially in the high-rise buildings. The very atmosphere can be demoralizing. The smell of garbage, urine and "what the — is that?" Stepping over food, paper and various body secretions. The foul odor, foul language and foul behavior is too much to bear some days.

While you may tire of cold weather, you hate to see warm weather come because the cold weather makes it all less obvious until you almost break your neck on an ice-covered step in the stairway. At my age, it takes away from who you are some days. At a very young age, it can take away from who you can become every day. Most of our time is spent trying to survive day by day. Or until hope against hope, we can get out.

Living in public housing is a fight. You must master it or it will master you. But today, everything is a fight. You fight for your family, with your family, but never against your family. And when we tire, the greatest fight is not giving up. Today, you have to fight for your health, your life, even your love. And the less you have, the harder you have to fight.

You fight with your children to get them out of bed in the morning and in the house at night. You fight the urge to stay at home and go to work. You fight with your family about every little thing and every big mess. You fight with CHA to get what you need done. You fight the fear. You fight the reality. You fight the fight. Because as long as you fight, you master it; the minute you stop, it masters you. You become enslaved by the conditions in public housing. You become a causality of poverty.

You become the property of ignorance. And if you are heavy into drugs, you become the living dead.

Living here adversely affects me. It adversely affects you. And I have been fighting the urge to leave.

I grew up here. I have been here for good, bad and worse. I hope to be here for better, which seems closer but still too far away. But it's a hard fight. And notwithstanding all of that, there's still the ultimate battle that each of us faces: the battle within ourselves. If we don't master our body, mind, heart and spirit, they too will master us. Instead of you leading yourself, you end up following others. They take your body, mind, heart and spirit to use at will.

Like so many families here, we have children who have lost the fight. We buried one Friday, Oct. 22. But we also have children who have won and continue to win the fight. Children who have graduated high school, attended college, married and started families. Such a group came from a wedding celebration and sat with our family at Northwestern Memorial Hospital while our child lost the fight for his life. They sat tall, speaking well of the community from which they came.

It did our hearts well but we were unable to express our gratitude at the time. To them, I would say,

**You will have to fight together and you will have to fight apart; but always fight for each other lest you lose your love, your family and your home.**

'Congratulations.'

But please know that the fight only gets harder. The more you have, the more you have to fight for. Never take yourself or your family for granted.

Remember always your love; it's the reason you chose to start a life together and your children. You have to fight for them until you teach them to fight for themselves. Men will have to fight off other women and women will have to fight off other men. Together, you will have to fight off other family, friends and foes who will point out what's wrong in your family instead of what's right.

You will have to fight together and you will have to fight apart; but always fight for each other lest you lose your love, your family and your home.

Truly, the question is not "Can you fight?" The question is, "Do you have the fight in you?" People, even children, who fight are generally angry about the circumstances of their lives. This often results in the harm of themselves and others through their angry behavior. People who have the fight in them struggle to change the circumstances of their lives for themselves and others. Those who fight hit brick walls. Those who have the fight in them tear brick walls down.

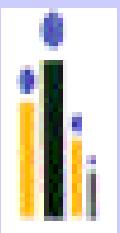
May the "fight" be in you.

- Pat

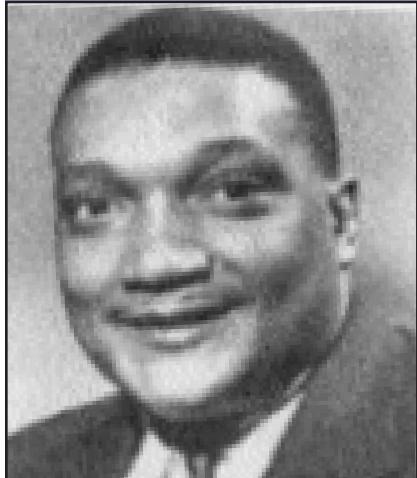


The photograph pictured here is one in a series featured over the past three years depicting posters that originally hung on the wall of the Tranquility Marksman Organization, 660 West Division. The building was recently demolished.

Photo by Patricia Johnson-Gordon



# The Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center



Charles A. Hayes  
February 17, 1918 - April 8, 1997



Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center Executive Director Zenobia Johnson-Black with V-103 radio announcer Herb "the Kool Gent" Kent and CHA Board of Commissioners Chairperson Sharon Gist-Gilliam before the "Time Square Reunion" fundraiser for the FIC. Kent hosted the October 16, 1999 event.



The honor guard outside the FIC.

## Hayes Family Health Center

Patients without insurance welcome! Public Aid welcome!

Please call us for an appointment!

We're open Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

(773) 268-4305

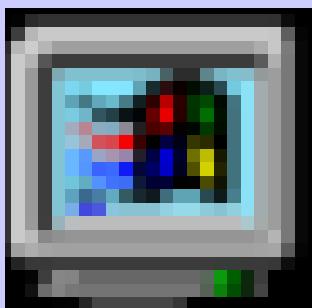
## Artena Randolph Technology Learning Center

### Free Information Technology Training

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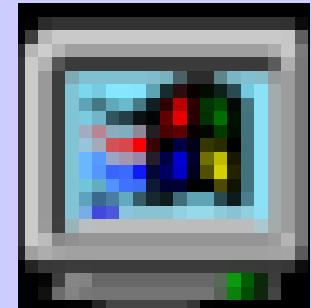


Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center technology staff members community worker Carla Smith (from left), technical support analyst Lynell Dillion, director of technology Trushar Desal, manager of technology Kimberly Strong and technical support analyst Mario Drake.



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

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



**(773) 285-0200  
The FIC Hotline**