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THE DAYS OF OUR LIVES

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Haymarket House AD

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The front page photo depicts the final phase of demolition of the Madden Park Homes. Residents have been relocated and the grounds cleared as part of the Chicago Housing Authority's "Plan for Transformation."

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Publisher
Ethan Michaeli

Editor-in-Chief
Mary C. Johns

Assistant Editor
Beauty Turner

Intern
Crystal Medina

Advertising/Circulation Manager
Bobby Watkins

Layout Design
Mary C. Johns
Satin Crable

RJ Correspondents

Earl Battles, Deborah A. Britton, Cecelia A. Clark, Cenabeth Cross, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Michael Ibrahem, Julio Martinez, Alicia McNeal, Karen Owens, John "Popcorn" Sampson, Lorenzia Shelby, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins

Photographers

John Brooks, Cecelia A. Clark, Mary C. Johns, George Johnson, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Karen Owens, John "Popcorn" Sampson, Jacqueline Thompson

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Our Mission

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

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

We The People Media is committed to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the Freedom of the Press.

The views expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of We The People Media or its staff.

Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli



Riots are a sensitive subject on Chicago's West Side. Though a new generation has grown up since the social explosions of the '60s, the scars of those days are still visible on the streets of the West Side. The main avenues are lined with crumbling, burned-out hulks of stores, restaurants and factories. The residential neighborhood streets that used to house masses of people are now quiet and dark with abandonment and poverty. The rage that once engulfed the West

youths and Chicago police officers, themselves rampaging under orders to "shoot to kill" by Mayor Richard J. Daley, are gone. In their place, small groups of police officers and young men skirmish in

A Social Explosion

Side has changed into desperation now. The epic street battles between mobs of angry

the seemingly permanent War on Drugs.

(Continued on Page 9)

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Transforming CHA

Shocking Electric Bills Update

by Beauty Turner

In the March/April issue, I wrote about extremely high electric bills that many of the residents in Robert Taylor Homes are faced with.

Some low-income residents have bills from \$1,000 to \$20,000. Many residents are in shock as if they have been struck by lightning when it comes to these high light bills.

The high light bills could make them "lease non-compliant" and then they will not be eligible for replacement housing.

Many Robert Taylor residents can watch the storm of demolition and relocation from their windows; they watch the surrounding buildings falling and being demolished at a rapid pace. Many of the residents don't know which way to turn or where to run for cover or for help. Many of them are expressing great concerns about where will they live.

Many of the residents whose buildings are due to be closed soon are highly charged. They feel Commonwealth Edison is leaving them hanging like a broken light fixture in need of repair.

Lithia Henderson, whose light bill was reprinted in the last issue, received her most recent bill that now reads \$11,356.

Henderson, a young single mother of three, said, "How will I be able to pay that bill? A bill like that is going to take me years to pay and I will still owe it when I'm dead and gone."

"I'm low income. I'm not a rich woman living on the Gold Coast."

I called the office of Commonwealth Edison's CEO and talked to the head of communications, Tim Linderberg, about the high light bill situation in the Robert Taylor development. I asked him what has been done concerning the residents' dilemma?

He said, "Commonwealth Edison deals with each client on a case-by-case basis. We are encouraging anyone who feels that their light bill isn't accurate to feel free to call us. Don't hesitate to ask us, 'What am I being billed for?' We will investigate."

Commonwealth Edison wrote a letter to the head of asset management for the Chicago Housing Authority, Kevin Collins, concerning the high light bills in Robert Taylor. The letter was obtained by Residents' Journal and reads, in part, as follows:

"Mr. Kevin Collins,

"As we discussed today during our telephone conversation, we attempted to contact 24 tenants from the South Federal location (4525 and 4429 buildings). Of those tenants, no arrangements were made for various reasons.

"Some of the reason arrangements were not made were the lack of responsiveness from the tenants. Several households indicated that they would return our calls and none have.

Arrangements were offered and the tenants refused them. "Several locations are due to be disconnected for non-payment, yet the tenants indicated that services were off. We pointed out that the services were on without authorization and should not be connected, to which the tenants acknowledge that the services are supposed to be off but had no knowledge of how they got back on.

"Some of the delinquent balances are in the excess of a thousand dollars. The arrangements that the tenants were looking for ranged from \$5.00 to \$20.00 a month, until the balance was paid off. These arrangement time-frames translated to as few as 5 years to as long as forty five years to pay. These arrangements were impractical and were not valuable to ComEd. We offered up to two years to pay off the balance with zero plus their regular bill. However, no one accepted this.

"Only one tenant has made payments and is trying to stay current. The remaining tenants, of which we attempted to contact twenty-three, either made no arrangements or failed to call or simply wanted arrangements that were beyond the scope of reason as listed above...."

The letter was signed by a senior administrator of Commonwealth Edison.

When I went back to the buildings to talk to the residents about this letter, they wanted more than ever to have a meeting with ComEd.

Robert Taylor resident Joyce Smother said, "They haven't tried to contact me about a light bill. I went to the first meeting."

Many of the residents in 4525 S. Federal St. told me they need another meeting and that the letter is simply not true. "No one tried to contact us about our electric bills," one resident said.

The residents are not the only ones interested in setting up a meeting. CHA officials said they, too, are trying to set up a meeting with ComEd officials.

Collins, the asset manager for CHA, said, "We are trying to set up a meeting...concerning the high light bills with the residents of Robert Taylor Homes, and Commonwealth Edison staff.

"We are talking to Robert Taylor 'A' LAC President Mattie McCoy concerning that very issue."

Duwayne Bailey, head of operations for CHA, said, "CHA is committed to working with the residents, and the residents' leadership, so that we can resolve this issue."

"I will call a meeting with Commonwealth Edison, resident leadership and CHA. We are very concerned about this problem concerning the residents."



CHA Board of Commissioners Chairperson Sharon Gist Gilliam (middle) shows off the recent award to Stateway Associates for the redesign of the Stateway Gardens public housing complex. Also pictured are Stateway Gardens LAC members Arvile Miles (far left) and Learna Solsberry (far right) along with the designers.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

In early August, however, residents of Robert Taylor were still waiting for that meeting.

There's a great reason for every resident in public housing and beyond to be concerned about their electric bills not being up to date and current. The reason why you as a resident should worry is because many other residents who received their Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers or certificates) owed high electric bills, couldn't pay and found themselves without a Housing Choice Voucher any longer.

Veronica Givens, a former resident of Robert Taylor Homes, moved to Atlanta, Ga., with her voucher. Givens had a high light bill, couldn't pay, and lost her voucher. She found herself homeless in a strange city with no family or friends. Now she's back in Chicago, looking for a home.

Manager Ousted from Robert Taylor

by Beauty Turner

Until recently, Moorehead and Associates and Robert Taylor Homes residents were like two bad kids who fight and constantly are at each other's throats. The Chicago Housing Authority, the parent organization, recently separated the two after numerous residents complained of incidents that took place in Robert Taylor Homes.

CHA saw no other way to solve these problems but to remove the two from each other. In July, CHA removed Moorehead as the manager of Robert Taylor and installed Interstate Realty Management.

In the January/February issue, I wrote about the bonds

Although the ties with the Robert Taylor Homes have been cut, CHA still has Moorehead and Associates contracted to manage smaller properties.

between CHA and Moorehead and Associates ("Is Moorehead on the Move?"). At that time, the relationship between the two seemed very shaky - almost like standing on quicksand.

In mid-December, many resident janitors were complaining about their checks bouncing like ping pong balls, leaving them un-balanced in their bank accounts. Yet, Moorehead and

Associates had obtained a contract with CHA to be the Service Connector for Robert Taylor - a task which includes teaching the residents how to balance a check book.

Many resident janitors, including former Robert Taylor "A" LAC President Cora Dillard, expressed anger and outrage. Dillard wondered how could this company teach the residents how to balance a checkbook when they obviously don't know how.

CHA officials said that as of June 10, Moorehead and Associates were removed as managers of the Robert Taylor Homes.

Although the ties with the Robert Taylor Homes have been cut, CHA still has Moorehead and Associates contracted to manage smaller properties.

Duwayne Bailey, head of operations for CHA, said, "Moorehead and Associates will continue to do work with the Senior developments and scattered sites."



These Odyssey Project participants show off their certificates of completion after graduating in May from the free eight-month college-level course program offered by The Illinois Humanities Council.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA

News briefs

Enrolling Uninsured Children

U.S. Rep. Bobby L. Rush (D-1) announced on Aug. 2 that he is seeking to enroll Illinois uninsured children into the Kid Care programs. Rush recently introduced new legislation, the Children's Health Coverage Improvement Act of 2002.

At least 144,300 children in Illinois are uninsured, according to statistics compiled and released by the Urban Institute.

Rush's spokesperson, Robyn Wheeler, said, "We are working hard to make sure that this bill becomes a law soon because every day, more and more children are finding themselves in a desperate need for health care coverage."

MacArthur Gives \$3 Million to CHA Transformation

On July 18, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced that it awarded nearly \$3 million to 7 organizations to help with the CHA transformation.

The organizations which received grants are as follows:

A grant totaling \$750,000 was awarded to the National Opinion Research Center to gather information.

Business and Professional Persons in the Public Interest (BPPI) also was awarded \$750,000. A public interest law and policy center that play an active role and ensuring the redevelopment of public housing, BPPI was funded to continue this work.

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) was awarded \$470,000 over a two-year period to enable the council to educate and communicate in support of the CHA Plan for Transformation.

The Leadership Council for Metropolitan Open Communities was awarded \$250,000 over a two-year period to adapt its counseling services to better meet the needs of the current residents.

The Northwestern University/University Joint Center for Poverty Research was awarded \$288,500, also over a two-year period, to evaluate the CHA's mobility counseling programming.

Marcy-Newberry Association was awarded \$125,000 to provide support to the Westside Consortium to help local social services agencies and larger institutions.

One Economy Corporation will receive \$80,000 to devise technology-based solutions to help public housing residents gain access to information.

Daley: Cardinal Wrong on Housing

Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Cardinal George are at odds when it comes to low affordable housing. Daley criticized George on July 22, after the cardinal called for more affordable housing.

On the North Side in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods, the cardinal wants 3 mandatory units set aside for low- and moderate-income residents for every 10 units the developers build. The cardinal reportedly said, "What we are seeing in parts of the city is economic segregation."

Daley is opposed to such a mandate. Instead, he would like to reward the developers with density bonuses.

Who Speaks for Residents?

by Bobby Watkins

The Coalition to Protect Public Housing has been around for years. When it was first started in 1996, residents at Lathrop Homes, where I live, and other developments didn't hear about it that much, except for maybe when there was a particularly interesting monthly meeting at First Congregational Church on Ashland Avenue and Washington Boulevard.

We also heard about the Coalition when it was around the Juneteenth Day rally. For their Juneteenth Day rallies, the Coalition would distribute fliers to the Local Advisory Councils and the management offices.

The Juneteenth rally in 1997 was how I first heard about the Coalition to Protect Public Housing. I really didn't know what it was all about but I knew it was something to do with public housing, and that made me want to be a part of the rally, which took place in Grant Park that year.

There were buses and people walking from many developments headed to the park to take part in this Juneteenth day. I sat and listened to the speakers and resident leaders, who then seemed to play a different role. Not just the resident leaders but everybody was working together in those days. Resident Management Corporations, Local Advisory Councils, the Central Advisory Council - everyone was coming together to help each other.

Then things changed. Many residents I spoke with said their leaders have become 'sell-outs' since the launch of the Chicago Housing Authority's Plan for Transformation in 1999. Some residents accuse their leaders are getting what they can for themselves and of not being concerned with the benefit of the residents as a whole.

This goes for the Coalition, too. The Coalition is now made up more of groups outside of public housing than inside public housing. Residents complain the Coalition doesn't involve enough residents and doesn't work with resident groups or resident leaders.

I wanted to know what happened. Why are the LAC presidents and the Coalition seemingly at odds? Why can't all the leaders and advocates of residents work together?

A lot of people I spoke with believe the Coalition is not the same as when it was first started.

"Its purpose is not just for the concerns of the residents, but seems as though it is more of a matter of what can be gotten from all the demonstrating and bringing all these outside organizations in," said an unidentified resident of Lathrop Homes.

"It just seems like it's more for the benefit of these organizations than for the benefit of the residents."

The resident was critical of the LACs as well.

"There are cliques and they won't let residents be involved," he explained. "They won't even tell you when a meeting is."

His comments were echoed by many across Lathrop and in other developments who feel no one - neither the LACs nor the Coalition - is representing them.

I got opinions from both sides - those who are with the Coalition and those who are not a part of the Coalition - so that this article would not be biased to any one.

A young woman, a resident of Maplewood Courts, was at a recent Board of Commissioners meeting in Lathrop Homes

and was seeking help about the management in her building. Residents didn't want the management team any more because of the way they were neglecting the buildings. They also felt they weren't getting help from CHA.

So, while at this meeting, this Maplewood Courts resident spoke with members of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing. And later, she said maybe this was the kind of help all residents needed to get things done in the developments.

Now, I don't know if the Coalition got involved. I have tried to reach her to see if they were able to help but had not heard from her by press deadline.

I went on to speak with others, such as a member of the Coalition to get his views as well as some LAC presidents so I could get their opinions.

Most of the presidents felt the Coalition was sending the wrong message. While they emphasized they are not trying to badmouth the Coalition, they added that it seems the message the Coalition is sending is not for the benefit of the residents.

One resident who was active with the Coalition in the beginning said the Coalition was created by the Chicago Association of Resident Management Corporations, had 21 members and that Cora Moore, a former president of the Cabrini-Green LAC and current president of the 1230 N. Burling Resident Management Corporation, was the first chairperson.

It was designed to work with RMCs and LACs to research the plans the Chicago Housing Authority had for residents. Once the research was done, the Coalition was supposed to bring everyone together and meet with CHA and try and work out what was best for everyone and not have a lot of havoc in the developments.

The Coalition had strayed from this original purpose, said this resident, who asked that his name not be used.

"It seems now the Coalition just wants to bring all these people who are not residents into our developments, stir up a lot of trouble among the residents and management as well as CHA and whoever else is involved, and then leave. Most of these people in the Coalition have nice homes except for maybe some of the residents," he said.

Coalition members, however, disagreed that the Coalition had changed. Carole Steel, Cabrini-Green LAC president and chairperson of the Coalition, said in an interview that she was really disappointed in the way people have been treating the Coalition. She said some of the LAC presidents have been "very disrespectful, especially the Central Advisory Council and some of its members, and that it seems a shame as some of its members were once members of the Coalition."

Grant Newburger, a member of the Coalition since 1996, said, "The Coalition hasn't changed. The Central Advisory Council would be serving residents better if they worked with the Coalition rather than thinking that the Chicago Housing Authority has residents' interests at heart. Because of this thinking, generations of public housing residents have suffered...."

"Also, the murder rate has increased and so has stress because of the substandard housing. And now, it's even worse."

One recent incident shows how

complex and troubled the relationship between the Coalition and the LACs really is. The incident took place at a meeting of the working group in Ida B Wells Homes in May. The working group is designed to plan the new mixed-income community that will be built in Ida B. Wells with the help of HOPE VI funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Members of the Coalition felt they were treated unfairly at this meeting, put out a press release about their treatment and held a press conference. These Coalition members, some of whom are residents and some of whom aren't, were upset because some of them were refused entry to the working group meeting. One member of the Coalition said force was used against her.

The members of the working group, meanwhile, explained that the residents who were part of the Coalition group could have stayed but the non-residents were asked to leave because of a confidentiality clause.

I asked Wells LAC President Sandra Young how she felt about the Coalition and whether it had the residents' concerns at heart. She said, "No, I don't. They don't try to assess a situation. They just go on assumptions without having facts."

Young said the Coalition is positioning itself to try and take over the LACs.

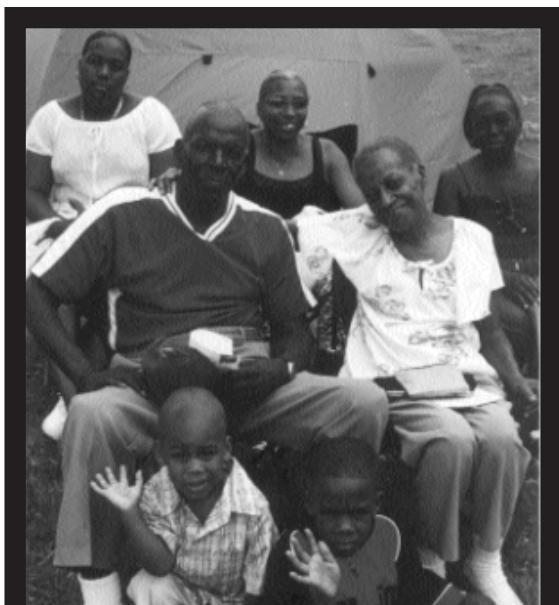
But Annie Smith, a resident of Ida B. Wells and one of the people who was involved in the Wells incident, said she is not in favor of the Coalition or the LACs but for "what is right for residents."

Smith, who ran against Young in the recent LAC election, said she did not want to see the residents "sold out."

"There had been so-called leadership training and a plan to prepare us for this transformation," Smith said.

"There was to be HOPE VI monies and resident management. Also resident-owned businesses, life skills, job skills for all. How did the plan change so much?"

Where will all this strife between the Coalition and the LACs lead? One way or the other, all of the people who want change to benefit the residents will have to work together. Otherwise, the residents will lose out.



These Ida B. Wells residents participate in the celebration at the Juneteenth Day Rally given (by the Coalition to Protect Public Housing at the CHA South Side public housing site on June 19.)

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA Maintenance Defects at Ogden Courts

by Cenabeth Cross

I am working with RJ Assistant Editor Beauty Turner on a study of the relocation of the people in public housing high rises.

My residence is Ogden Courts. The Local Advisory Council election is over and the new officers are installed. I hadn't heard anything about our relocation and I found out that neither had any of the other tenants. So I went to ask the LAC officer in my building, Marie Jones.

Jones told me she was being blackballed and no one was telling her anything. She told me to go to the LAC president in the next building, La'Tresha Green. I went to ask when would we be having a meeting to let us know when we would have to start our relocation.

When Green answered the door, I gave

The janitor was supposed to bring me a kitchen light and a smoke detector the next day, June 27. I haven't gotten them yet.

On May 28, a tenant meeting was held in the next building, 2650 W. Ogden St., in the Tots Center. It was packed. Hosted by the new LAC president, La'Tresha Green, the event featured CHA Operations Director Duwayne Bailey and CHA's Denise Richardson. Marie Jones sat on the side of the room.

The meeting was to voice our concerns. There were a lot of problems to talk about. The lady in 209, Rena Jones, reported that she still had lead in her apartment. She said she had been reporting it for years now. Now the school was threatening to expel her 6 year old because of his behavior in school. Her one year old hasn't learned to crawl yet. She has taken them to Mt. Sinai Hospital numerous times and has the medical reports for same. Bailey said he would talk to her after the meeting.

When Green answered the door, I gave

Children are not allowed to play on the galleries just outside their apartments and the playground is dangerous. Now the children have been pushed into playing in the street.

her one of my cards and asked her when we would be having a tenant meeting? She didn't answer. She kept looking at the card then she looked up and asked me if I was the one who wrote about Ogden Courts in the last issue of the paper? I said, "yes." She told me, "That couldn't be a picture of your apartment. You must have taken it in one of the vacant apartments."

I assured her that it was indeed my bathroom ceiling and I don't go into the vacant apartments. I asked her if she would like to come to my apartment and see. She refused.

I told Marie Jones what was said and she told Denise Richardson at a Central Advisory Council meeting. Four days later, Green, along with Jones and Richardson, came to my apartment to look at the damage. Richardson took me down to the office and they got it fixed right away. It took them over two weeks to complete the job and another week before the manager came to inspect same.

When the meeting got heated and a couple of women got into a loud argument, Bailey left without saying good-bye. I was watching him. I've been checking with Rena Jones, my neighbor, and Bailey hasn't contacted her yet. I made a call to Bailey myself but he was unavailable to comment before my deadline.

The officials at the meeting had all of the tenants fill out forms listing the damages to our apartments. A man in our crowd said we were tired of filling out forms with nothing ever done about it. But this time they promised action. Nothing has been done yet.

The meeting got heated when Ericka Hill, one of the service connectors, and a woman who works in the management office got into an argument about getting the names of the people who were served eviction notices. Hill wanted the names so they could get the residents being evicted some help. Then Green, the building president, ended the meeting.

I sat there until 8 p.m. and then left.

Green resided in apartment 403 at the time. A new apartment was fixed for her and she has moved into it.

The residents also complained about the rats and roaches. They have exterminators come around and spray for roaches but they give you sticky paper to get rid of your rats. It doesn't work. I finally bought some spackle and sealed the holes in my apartment myself.

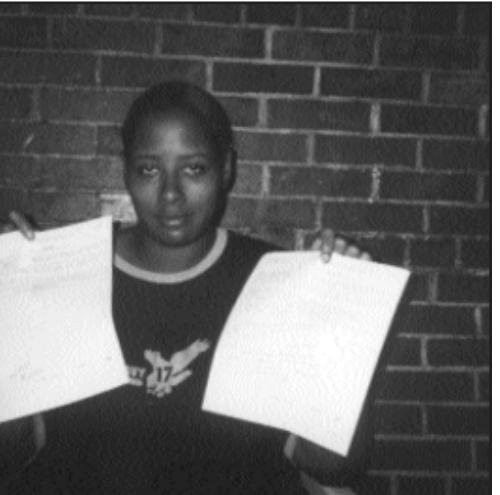
Last year, I tried to get a phone but got no connection. I finally called for a repairman. He came and found that the wires were dead. He went into the basement but returned and told me that the rats were too big. I still don't have a phone.

The next day after the meeting, I started to go around taking pictures. First, I took pictures of the floor in the Service Connector's office. The water runs down the wall into the bottom of the sink cabinet and on to the floor. Hill said Mondays are the worst because the water runs onto the floor all weekend and is completely covered after the weekend.

Next, I took pictures of black mold all along the top of Rosalyn Dorman's window. She has mold in her bathroom too. She informed me that I should go to 309 and look at the mold. I did. That's when Dorman told me she had been reporting this to management for over five years. She has also been supplying management with the medical records of her allergic reactions to it.

I read in the property manager's protectors that black mold, also known as Stachybotrys, is a serious problem and tenants can sue their landlord because of it. It can cause bronchitis and sinusitis. It aggravates other allergies and causes asthmatic conditions. It also increases their risk of osteopenia and tuberculosis.

Worst of all, a 13 year old is in Mt. Sinai because of the bad conditions I wrote about in the last issue. Children are not allowed to play



Ogden Courts resident Rena Jones shows a doctor's reports on the amount of lead found in her two children.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

on the galleries just outside their apartments and the playground is dangerous. Now the children have been pushed into playing in the street.

This 13-year-old girl was hit by a car July 6 on Fairfield Street, the side street between Ogden Courts and Schwaab Rehabilitation Center. Both of her legs are broken, and her liver and kidney were crushed. But she's alive. Her mother told me she was going to have to have steel rods put into both legs in order for them to heal correctly.

I was in her apartment to take pictures of the bullet hole in her window. The bullet went through the refrigerator door and lodged in the back. Her walls have the paint bubbling off the wall and her bathroom ceiling looks almost as bad as mine did. And she has mold too. The management fixed a broken window in her apartment but not the one with the bullet hole in it. They said they didn't have the larger size and would get back to her but never did.

This reminds me of the tales my grandmother used to tell me about the slave days. We lived in row houses and the master could come in any time and do anything he wanted. As a race, we fight each other cause we're all that's there.



Left photo depicts Madden Park and Ida B. Wells residents who are 2002 graduates of the citywide Youth Build program. The women (ages 16-24) received 9 months of education, job related and construction work training. In the middle photo, renowned activist the Rev. Al Sharpton, joined by other community leaders and area residents, speaks out against violence on August 6 at the site where three young women were struck by a runaway van. The van's driver and passenger were beaten to death by an angry mob in late July. The photo to the right depicts Norris Stevens from the Illinois Dept. of Public Aid instructing young male resident workers of the Ida B. Wells public housing development on child support issues in June as Sandra Young, the LAC president, looks on. The workshop was given through Ujima, a nonprofit resident-owned business in the South Side public housing complex.

Photos by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA

A CHA Relocation Runaround

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

It was a long and rough road leading to my moving day on March 15, 2002 after a 5-year stay at the CHA's Madden Park Homes on the South Side. With Madden Park currently under demolition, I moved into a Scattered Site unit on the city's Near Northwest Side.

The day before I moved, my apartment flooded. A thief took out the kitchen sink from the apartment directly over me. I had often complained to management that the vacant apartment needed re-boarding after vandals had broken in and were nesting in the unit after dark.

But that was only a part of the aggravation I went through after I was informed in 2001 that my children and I had to move.

Notification to Relocate

On Dec. 24, 2001, I received a 90-day notice to vacate the premises of 3863 S. Cottage Ave. by March 26, 2002, under Phase I of redevelopment of the Madden Park Homes.

On the Housing Choice Surveys, residents are required to make one temporary choice and three permanent housing choice selections.

In early 2001, CHA publicly announced that they were rehabbing their scattered site units. They reported that not much work would be needed in rehabbing the units because they were in very good condition.

So, at the June 2001 Housing Choice Survey Clinic I attended, I made scattered sites my three permanent housing choices for relocation on my housing choice survey. As a reporter, I have seen too many residents with Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers and certificates) who have trouble finding or keeping a unit. I chose scattered sites so I would get a nice apartment that wasn't in a CHA development and that was permanent.

According to my housing manager, Dee Robinson, the CHA Section 8/Relocation Department had my file for relocation since July 2001.

But on the 90-day relocation notice I received from Robinson through the mail in December, I was informed that CHA would move me temporarily into an apartment in Altgeld Gardens on the Far South Side.

At this point, CHA had had my files for 5 months, and certain officials knew of my choice to relocate into scattered site housing permanently. But instead of preparing a few permanent housing units from among their scattered site housing stock, they wanted me to view a temporary unit.

I didn't want to go to Altgeld Gardens or any other CHA development 'temporarily.' I didn't want to be shuffled around from unit to unit until I got to my permanent apartment. The 90-day notice said I could grieve the notification according to my lease by Jan. 3, 2002. So I did. But I never heard anything back from CHA.

By the end of April 2002, I was one of five leaseholders left in the building and one of seven families left in all of the Madden Park units which will be redeveloped under Phase I.

I talked to Eunice Crosby, the elected resident representative of Madden Park and a co-founder of Ujima, the non-profit organization that is assisting in the Madden Park relocation. Crosby told me I was the only resident that had chosen to relocate into scattered sites. CHA later confirmed Crosby's statement.

As time passed and I saw other families relocating from Madden Park, I became concerned. I asked Robinson, my housing manager, in March why I was still there, who my relocation specialist was, and why they hadn't contacted me?

She said that she did not know whether it was Crosby or Brenda Hunter from Section8/Relocation.

That same month, I began hounding Dwain Bailey, CHA's chief of operations. I informed him that I was still in the building and he referred me to Carl Miller, the CHA official over scattered site public housing.

Both were 'Johnnie on the spot' in terms of handling of my relocation once I began pressuring them to assist me.

But what if I did not know whom to call to bug about my

relocation? Perhaps my family would have been shuffled from place to place until CHA decided to move me into a permanent housing unit. I wonder.

Anyway, Miller provided me with more than enough addresses to make my three choices according to the CHA relocation process. And he stayed in contact with me during rehabilitation of the unit I selected.

I took a lot of time off from work and traveled on public transportation to view two of the scattered site units Miller had listed for me. None of the units were rehabbed. But I found one I liked and informed the management. They promised to rehab it for me before I had to vacate my unit. I was worried because CHA's deadline to vacate my unit was March 26, just a few days away.

On March 13, Hispanic Housing, the management company for the scattered sites in my new area, informed me that my unit was ready. I informed Robinson that same day and was given boxes to pack my belongings. The next day, Robinson called me and said Crosby would oversee my move. With the water from the flood threatening to ruin all my stuff, I was ready to go.

By the time I was relocated on March 15, I was the one of three families left of the 235 occupied households that had been relocated under Phase I of redevelopment.

CHA Explains

According to the CHA relocation process, relocation specialists are required to assist residents in their housing search and provide transportation assistance to view units.

I asked Rayne Martin, the CHA director of relocation, in June why I did not have a relocation specialist to service me in my relocation. She could not give me a sufficient answer.

"There is no answer because that particular scenario, I don't think, had had any thought," she said.

"Your situation compared to most other relocatees was so rare in that you moved off site into another public housing unit."

According to Martin, at least 4 other families relocated into scattered site housing last year. But she did not know who relocated them.

"I started in October (2001), so everything that went on last year I'm not sure of," she said.

Martin said based on my relocation experience, CHA's Section 8/Relocation department would handle future relocations into scattered site housing.

"This year, based on your experience, we are going to have all of those coordinated through Section 8," Martin said.

Three hundred and forty residents are projected to relocate into scattered site housing this year, according to CHA's Year 3 Plan.

Commentary

The Good Neighbor Workshop

According to CHA redevelopment policy, part of what is required for a resident to be designated as lease compliant is to attend a one-time mandatory Good Neighbor Workshop.

CHA initiated the Good Neighbor Program in 2001 to provide counseling services in housekeeping, apartment hunting for those choosing the Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as Section 8 vouchers and certificates), and money management. A host of other services for residents that request them are also supposed to be available.

I went to a Good Neighbor Workshop presented by employees of the Spanish Coalition for Housing, a service connector, on April 10, 2002. Presenter Anthony Holmes said that in order to get our leases that day, we had to complete, sign and return the Service Connector Screening Form. Hispanic Housing officials further explained that residents who did not return a signed and completed screening form would be refused a lease.

I looked at the Service Connector Screening Form. It asked me a lot of personal questions about how much I earn at



Residents' Journal Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns stands in the kitchen of her newly rehabbed CHA scattered site unit in March.

my job, whether I have a disability, whether I have child care, whether I was being evicted and other matters. I never asked for help from the Service Connector and didn't feel like I needed any help from them at that time since I was working, had health insurance for my family and was current on all my payments.

I didn't feel the need to fill out or sign the form. But since I was told it was a requirement to get my lease, I signed it but wrote on the form that I was doing so in protest and just to get my lease that day.

I was suspicious that residents were being forced to fill out and sign the forms to make the service connectors look good. The service connectors get money from CHA to serve residents. I suspected that residents were being forced to fill out and sign the forms to make it look like the service connectors were working with more residents than they actually were.

I've since heard complaints from other residents who attended other Good Neighbor workshops who also were forced to fill out and sign the service connectors form. Some suspected the same as I did. Others didn't want to give out personal information.

In May, I spoke to Hispanic Housing manager Rosa Ortiz and other officials. Hispanic Housing's Jennifer Bonia said that return of the completed and signed service connector form was part of being lease complaint.

"Those forms, regardless if you don't need those services or not, these people (the Service Connectors) need those forms signed so that they can present all their documentation to CHA showing them that they did make the attempt to offer you those services," she said. Ortiz and the other officials agreed and said CHA told them it was mandatory for residents to sign the form.

Gloria Seabrook, the CHA official who oversees the Good Neighbors Program, said it was not mandatory that the service connector screening form be completed, signed and returned before a resident could receive their lease. She said there was miscommunication between the agencies involved. Seabrook said she would inform those agencies the form was not mandatory and explain the purpose of the form.

"There is nothing there that you have to sign other than the sign-in sheet to verify that you were there," Seabrook explained.

"It was a requirement that you do the class. It is not mandatory that you do the intake form," she said.

Seabrook said residents are requested to fill out the service connector forms to ensure they are in the service connector database for easy referral to housing, social services or job assistance at any time in the future.

Transforming CHA Harold Ickes New School Update

by Jacqueline Thompson

The December 1999 RJ first revealed that the residents of 2233 S. Federal St. would feel some of the pain of progress.

The end finally came in recent months, when 65 families received word they would have only five weeks to vacate the premises that had been placed on a prioritized schedule to be demolished. Zip! Zap! No questions allowed. Just be ready for the movers because they will come. And come they did.

The movers came with disregard for the fact that the kitchens in each apartment had been renovated merely three months before. New floor tile, kitchen cabinets and stoves were installed just prior to when the eviction notices were issued. But CHA pressed on with the upheaval of families of long standing, young families with infant children, and seniors comfortable in a familiar neighborhood, all of whom were resigned to facing the pain of progress.

An earlier victim of the pain of progress was the nearby office building at 55 W. Cermak Blvd., which stood adjacent to 2233 S. Federal and also was an integral part of the community. This building once held the Chicago Housing Authority's Occupancy Department, the CHA Police Department and the CHA Credit Union, among other departments.

At one time, an expensive mosaic tile adorned the walls of the main lobby at 55 W. Cermak. This mosaic was treasured by all who visited the building. I wonder what happened to yet another displaced treasure. The residents were informed of the change years ago. On Nov. 18, 1999, a community meeting was held to inform the residents of plans for new, cutting-edge developments on the site of the office building at 55 W. Cermak and 2233 S. Federal. The site would be used for a new institution, now known as the National Teaching Academy of Chicago.

But was the residents' sacrifice worth it?

This reporter was very gratified to have had an interview with Dr. B. Terry-Lundy, one of the main players in the development of the state-of-the-art curriculum that is to be offered to the classroom students and student teachers who will be coming from the universities in Chicago that will connect their teacher programs to the new curriculum being taught.

RJ: "Will there be a place for Parent Volunteers?"

BTL: "We haven't covered that aspect of our staffing. However, I anticipate parental involvement." RJ: "What can the community look forward to in after-school programming?"

BTL: "At the end of a regular school day, 2:30 p.m., a new staff will take over and a complete community school will open for enrichment classes for high achievers. There will also be more assistance for low

achievers, with no distinctions attached to who is eligible." RJ: "Will this community school be available to the adult residents?"

BTL: "Yes. There will be parent academic classes. Health, fitness and wellness classes. Physical education programs will center around nutrition. Healthy, normal physical fitness with swimming included."

RJ: "This sounds extremely exciting to me. However, what plans do you have for helping parents help their children with computer skills?"

BTL: "There will be computer lab after 2:30 where they can learn how to help children at home. There will also be a time when they can come into the classroom and sit in on classes with their children."

RJ: "What measures will be taken to combat poor and irregular attendance?"

BTL: "The whole curriculum is designed not to be traditional learning. It will be real world learning, hands-on situations. Interesting enough to attract better attendance and to allow students to enjoy school more."

"The classroom is all-inclusive, meaning no separation of students with learning disabilities. There will be special education teachers available to assist each student."

Terry-Lundy projected a complete overview of the state-of-the-art curriculum. He said it would be to the advantage of every adult who lives within the boundaries of this new educational breakthrough to stay alert to the dates and times of the open house.

He urged residents to visit the premises, become connected and become educationally enriched. The regular school day hours will be from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with a closed campus lunch period.

The main address will be on Cermak Road, also known as 22nd Street. The Chicago Public School neighborhood boundaries are 18th Street to the north, 24th Street to the south, the railway on the west and Michigan on the east to 22nd Street to the lake.

Teachers who are presently teaching at other CPS schools and have taught a minimum of four years will come to the Academy and spend 3 weeks to learn more about engaging children in learning by using proven research and instructional strategies to improve student achievement. The purpose of this tactic is for the teachers to become strong and reflective and to take back what they've learned to the faculty of their school.

By taking turns, more than one person from the school learns the same things. Together, they form a network of in-school, experienced teachers.

Because the huge community center attached to the academy will house the physical education department, I was very interested in speaking to Tom Poulos, the physical education director.



The National Teaching Academy of Chicago nears completion near the Harold Ickes Homes where children of the public housing development are expected to attend.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

Poulos explained that the new techniques for involving the students will have funding and work with a lifetime skills building program. Many activities will focus on individualization. However, intramural games will be designed to fine-tune good sportsmanship and healthy fun. A sensory motor program will be included to try and show the connection between physical education and academics.

A great idea, say many residents. It sounds like a new and good thing.

The icing on the cake is the extensive daily preschool programs for infants and toddlers up to 3 years old. All learning programs will be public and administered at no cost. Pre-schoolers ages 3 to 5 will have their own educational program geared toward giving them the best possible early childhood learning experience. The program will be geared toward fitting the needs of each child.

The hours of attendance for infants through toddlers will be 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For the pre-kindergarteners, 3- to 5-year-olds, the hours will be 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. To those parents who would need this service, their children will be among the first ever to attend school at the age of 0. Mind boggling!

Being a longtime resident of Harold Ickes, I have many wonderful pictures of before, during and after the completion of this state-of-the-art educational site. I intend to share a collage of the photos with the school so that the community can enjoy them.

It is my sincere hope that each child that was displaced for the edification of the Academy can return with his or her parents and become a complete and satisfied participant in the birth of a whole new educational system.

Relocation Rights Contract

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

The Chicago Housing Authority announced in June that they would meet with former residents who didn't receive the contract which gives them the right to return to their old neighborhoods.

A number of residents who moved between October 1999 and March 2001 did not receive the Relocation Rights Contract, which gives them the option of returning to a mixed-income community after they are built on the site of old developments.

...all lease-compliant residents who moved before receiving the Relocation Rights Contract would be notified by mail some time this year...

Under the CHA Resident Relocation Rights contract, all residents who were lease compliant in October 1999 have a right to return to a new or rehabbed unit after redevelopment.

Residents who relocated with Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly known as a Section 8 voucher or certificate) in late 1999, 2000 and early 2001 did not receive a Relocation Rights Contract because the contract was not put into effect until March 2001.

This situation affects residents like Janice Patton, a former Robert Taylor Homes tenant who relocated with a Housing Choice Voucher in November 2000.

Patton said she wants to return to one of the CHA's mixed-income communities after redevelopment.

Patton spoke with Sharon Glenn, director of the CHA Section 8/Relocation office, at a Grand Boulevard Federation meeting in January 2002.

Patton asked when CHA would notify and meet with the residents who had not received the Relocation Rights Contract.

"I asked them (the CHA officials) when would they be getting to the people that had moved out in 2000," Patton said.

Sharon Glenn said after they got through servicing the (current) Robert Taylor residents. That's when they were

going to get in touch with Section 8 about us. But I still haven't heard from them."

In July 2001, CHA received a \$1.7 million grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and \$225,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help pay for an automated tracking system for more than 14,000 families as they move into temporary housing.

CHA official Raine Martin told *Residents' Journal* in late June that with the help of CHAC - the company paid to run CHA's housing voucher program - all lease-compliant residents who moved before receiving the Relocation Rights Contract would be notified by mail some time this year to determine whether they qualify for the right of return.

"If they are out on Section 8 and they left during that time frame, in all likelihood they have the same right to return," Martin said.

"What we will be doing this year is actually doing outreach to individuals to have them talk to us and find out what their situation is and make those determinations."

(Continued from Page 3)

The murder rate on the West Side, the highest in the city, helped to push the number of murders in Chicago past cities two and three times its size and give the Windy City the dubious distinction of having the largest number of murders in the United States in 2001.

Desperate for jobs and opportunities, many West Siders look at the few spots of development like desert wanderers look at an oasis. Hope springs in places like the corner on Roosevelt Road and Ashland Avenue, a long-vacant site where a new supermarket anchors a modest strip mall.

But in the early morning hours of April 17, the old rage that engulfed the West Side a generation ago seemed ready to erupt again. On that date, Chicago Police say between 200 and 500 young people coalesced into an angry and violent crowd determined to march to that same new supermarket. Police responded by fielding approximately 50 officers – complete with helmets, batons and shields - from several different units, led by the Police Department's highest ranking officer on duty.

No one was seriously hurt and no property was destroyed during this incident. But the sight of a large group of young African Americans facing off against police officers has challenged the notion that the West Side is on the way back to prosperity.

For at least a moment, hope was dashed that the new supermarket will become the center of a 'mixed-income community.' Suddenly, the fancy new town homes and condominiums which have replaced the old Maxwell Street Market and filled in the Taylor Street Italian neighborhood seemed less attractive, less likely to be filled with ex-suburbanites seeking culture in an urban environment.

The incident that led to the confrontation was common enough: a plainclothes, two-man team from the 12th District assigned to look for narcotics activity approached 1510 W. 13th St., a high-rise public housing building in the ABLA Homes.

The building has been designated a community "hot spot," which is supposed to allow police to break up street gangs who congregate in these locations. But most nights, the building's front yard, lobbies and hallways are busy, noisy marketplaces.

The officers tried to arrest two men who were standing in front of the building. A large crowd intervened and started menacing the officers. Kerrie Walker, 22, allegedly started punching the two officers while Cortez Paramor, also 22, allegedly punched the officers and kicked them in their groins.

The officers were somehow able to bundle Walker and Paramor into their car and drive off. By now, the crowd had swollen to several hundred angry people. They were mainly young men who, like Paramor and Walker, may not officially live in ABLA but spend most of their time there, working in the drug trade or other underground industries and developing relationships with the leaseholders and their families.

Someone from the crowd threw a brick through the window of a squad car west-bound on Roosevelt Road. The officers called for reinforcements.

The police deployed officers from the 12th District, the public housing unit and the special operations unit. They were led by the highest-ranking officer on duty at the time.

The officers established a perimeter to block the crowd from reaching the supermarket. For a time, the two groups confronted each other, threatening the kind of explosion that obliterated opportunity on the West Side for 30 years. But then, the crowd dispersed.

Ralph Chiczewski, the Commander the 12th District officers who first approached the building, is proud of the job done by his officers and other police on April 17. Chiczewski, like numerous other officers interviewed, noted that Walker and Paramor were the only two people arrested during the incident and that no one was seriously injured.

Chiczewski blamed the incident on "gang

A Social Explosion

bangers and drug dealers who seized the opportunity to create a...large street disturbance."

A police officer since 1972, Chiczewski is a firm believer in the tactics of the War on Drugs. He talked about street corners where the drug trade has been eliminated. Tough laws and strong enforcement are key ingredients in keeping the streets safe, according to Chiczewski.

"There are some real hard core people out there," Chiczewski explained in his office recently.

"It's almost incomprehensible – the disrespect for human life."

"The violence makes traditional organized crime look almost like alter boys."

But Chiczewski does not count all residents among the bad guys. He boasted of his good relationship with Deverra Beverly, ABLA's top elected tenant leader, and other residents.

"My officers care. They're out there every day working for me, for the residents who don't want drug dealing, who want to walk their kids to school safely."

Chiczewski emphasized, however, that his police officers cannot do the job alone. He acknowledged that many of the young men who sell drugs in front of buildings like 1510 W. 13th St. are doing it for economic opportunity. He also acknowledged that his officers have nowhere to refer drug addicts who are ready for treatment.

"It's not just a police thing," he said.

"If there's no buy in from the community, I don't know how long gains can be sustained."

In that sense, Chiczewski isn't sure police alone can stop the next social explosion from occurring. Moreover, he isn't sure the next incident won't be larger or more dangerous.

"I don't want to be naive," he said. "They can have larger numbers and it can get dangerous if they feel they can overpower the police."

The danger is that incidents like the one which took place April 17 will end the prospects for renewal on the West Side. Market-rate homebuyers and renters won't even think of moving into the new mixed-income community that is being built in the ABLA Homes as part of the larger CHA redevelopment.

How people perceive the April 17 incident is a cause for concern for Deverra Beverly, the longtime tenant leader of ABLA. Despite the fact that she is a volunteer, like all Local Advisory Council presidents, Beverly can be found in her office more hours than most of the paid employees in ABLA. A feisty, dignified woman who wields as much power as many of the city's aldermen, Beverly has invested much time and effort to make the transition at ABLA an opportunity for her residents rather than a burden.

Thus, Beverly takes exception to descriptions of the April 17 incident as a 'riot.' To her, a characterization of that incident as a 'riot' perpetuates negative stereotypes of public housing communities and imperils the years of work she has put into the \$35 million redevelopment of ABLA. Indeed, Beverly said that police "over-reacted" to a minor incident largely because of those stereotypes.

"It wasn't a riot," she explained during a May interview in her office.

"I don't see why (the police) would do that. Why? Because it's public housing?"

Beverly does not put up a smokescreen when it comes to the problems in her community. But she looks at the problems as obstacles to be overcome with practical, creative solutions. As an example, she noted that she worked with Francine Washington, the similarly dedicated tenant leader at Stateway Gardens, to bring to ABLA a program which provides free eyeglasses to residents and others.

"A lot of people - I don't want to say drug dealers - they didn't have glasses. They couldn't half see," she explained.

"A lot of residents don't have health care and even if they have Public Aid, they can't get glasses."

"You can't do anything if you need glasses and it doesn't cost anything to bring that program from one development to another."

When it comes to the young people who participated in the April 17 incident, Beverly said what they most need are good jobs and effective job training programs.

Few programs exist for young men with no skills or work history. Worse yet, many of those programs put young people through extensive training but don't offer job placement at the end. Even fewer programs offer assistance to those with drug abuse issues or criminal records.

"Many of these young men come to me and the first thing they say is 'Ms. Beverly, I just want a job.' They say, 'It doesn't matter to me how much. I just don't want to go to jail,'" she said.

"Residents tell me they are constantly trained but not paid for the training and they still might not get the job."

"They've been trained to death."

Beverly's analysis was confirmed by a group of young men who were working outside of her office as part of the Youth Build program. These young men, all of whom said they were present on April 17 and all of whom wished to remain anonymous, agreed with her that the police overreacted to what they described as a gathering of neighborhood children on a warm spring night.

"It was more police than people," recounted one young man in a red t-shirt.

"It was just a bunch of kids...(but) if you're a young guy in corn rows and baggy jeans, they think you're a gang banger."

The young men also agreed with Beverly that what is most needed in their community are good jobs. A young man in a brown t-shirt explained that the drug trade is essentially played out in many urban neighborhoods. In business terms, stable supply of the product, a glut of retail venues and a customer base that knows both of the above have sliced deeply into the profit margins of your average street-side narcotics sales operation.

"Ain't no more getting rich with this," he said.

"It's just to get you to the next day."

The young men emphasized that the April 17 incident had nothing to do with the ongoing redevelopment at ABLA. Yet, they complained that the products of the redevelopment had made little effort to accommodate them in the new mixed-income community. The new supermarket had made little effort to hire them. They also dismissed the 'Service Connector,' housed in a white trailer across the street from the Local Advisory Council Office, and other programs launched by the Chicago Housing Authority in the midst of the redevelopment.

"The trailer was supposed to be for getting jobs but all they give us is the run-around," said a young man in a white t-shirt.

If the young men were frustrated from years of stunted opportunities, they emphasized that many eyes were watching to see if this would offer them some real

opportunity. If this program fails to deliver, the young men said the disappointment and anger which already abound in the area will be compounded.

"I'm going to see if they're going to do what they say because they often don't do what they promise," said the young man in red.

"It's really based on us that are in the program. I tell everyone what they tell me. If they see I'm not getting anywhere, that's going to keep the others out of it."

In these comments, the young men offer a lesson which is applicable across the country and even internationally.

If what took place on the West Side in April were an isolated incident, it would merit no more ink than the short blurbs that appeared in the two largest daily newspapers the next day. But the "street disturbance" in ABLA Homes was the largest – not the only – incident that took place in and around the city's public housing developments this spring. On April 10, less than one week before the incident at ABLA, 49-year-old Alton George died after being arrested during an incident at the Robert Taylor Homes on the South Side. Just one day before the incident in ABLA, six people were arrested after police were pelted with trash from a building in the Cabrini-Green complex on the North Side.

Together, these incidents hint toward a layer of molten lava just underneath the surface of our society. The full-fledged riot that took place in Cincinnati last year was sparked by the police shooting of Timothy Thomas, who spent most of his life in the Robert Taylor Homes on the South Side of Chicago. A volcanic explosion could erupt in Thomas' home town just as unexpectedly.

Even another bushfire of the type which took place April 17 could jeopardize the Chicago Housing Authority's entire "Plan for Transformation," a 10-year, \$1.5 billion effort to redevelop 25,000 public housing units into mixed-income communities. Countless other, smaller public and private developments will be wiped away.

The consequences of failing to recognize and defuse - these conditions will be grim for the entire city and worst of all for that same West Side that already has suffered so much.

Our nation has a poor history when it comes to responding to what we call "riots." From the 1960s through the street disturbances which followed the acquittal of the police officers who beat Rodney King a decade ago, through the Cincinnati incidents, we tend to react slowly and indecisively in the wake of such incidents. Rather than finally address the real needs of poor, desperate people, we might just hasten the abandonment of these communities.

Already quiet and dim with despair and grief, the West Side might slide into total silence and darkness.



Parent patrollers from several senior North and South CHA buildings pose with Chicago Police Cmdr. Charles Williams of the public housing unit division, and Sgt. Lolitta Parham (far right), after the CAPS Annual School Safety Luncheon in May.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Welfare Reform: Lost In Space

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Many U.S. government policy makers seem to be getting their information on the lives of welfare recipients from science fiction television rather than real life.

Their welfare reform proposals appear to be something straight out of the 'twilight zone.' And there appears to be a 'lost in space' mentality when it comes to financial and food assistance, training and education, housing, childcare and health care.

The legislators who are proposing new welfare reform laws seem to be under the impression that welfare reform has been a big success. They even have convinced much of the country.

By September 2002, the U.S. Congress must again pass, or "reauthorize," the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in order to continue funding the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families welfare-to-work program. But residents of public housing and other low-income families know better. Poor Americans know that welfare reform has been a flop.

When I started working at Residents' Journal, I was receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families welfare benefits.

When officials at the Department of Public Aid told me I was on a five-year clock to get off welfare, I felt motivated but worried. I was motivated to go and search out a job. But I was worried about whether I could make ends meet in the long run.

It did not make any sense to me when public aid officials put me on a time limit for how long I could receive the much-needed medical, financial and Food Stamps benefits to aid in my family's survival.

I was blessed to find employment that offered me on-the-job training and an income on which I can support my family.

But no one's job is promised them, and to say that a person can only receive the benefits for 5 years is not a sensible solution in helping people become self sufficient. What happens to those who exhaust their five years of benefits?

Most welfare recipients need more than motivation to find a job to support their families. They need training, education, flexibility, healthcare and an income level that allows them to take care of their immediate needs, and also to put some funds away for a rainy day or emergencies.

Some of the nation's top advocates for the poor agree with me and other residents.

These advocates do not expect that the new welfare reform law will be any better than the current one. Many are saying the soon-to-be-revised welfare reform law will limit the opportunities for the poor - mainly mothers with children - to better themselves. These advocates are concerned about cutbacks for

housing, child care and health care in many states. The advocates warn that menial pay from jobs found by those who transition from welfare to work is still not enough to pay for rising prescription costs, utility bills, rent and other daily living expenses.

What will become of the poor, the sick and disabled and the downtrodden of America in the years to come?

Foundation Report

The Chicago-based Joyce Foundation's April 24 report on "The Effects of Welfare Reform in Seven Midwest States" finds that welfare caseloads were down in many states. But the drop in welfare participants does not mean that families who were on welfare are now in jobs that help them meet their needs. The Joyce Foundation report did find an increase in working families but also finds that the families remained poor.

Jennifer Phillips, a program officer for the Joyce Foundation, said during a mid-July interview that the loss of food, health care and child care benefits is a major factor why the former welfare families remained poor. Phillips said the 1996 Welfare Reform Act's policy was to get people into any job instead of focusing on skills, training and education that could get people into higher paying jobs.

"Most people were in part-time jobs, jobs that didn't last very long and were working at low wages," Phillips explained.

The Joyce Foundation's research also shows that a large number of the working poor do not know that they can still qualify for Medicaid and Food Stamps benefits because states do not do much outreach.

Included in the Joyce Foundation report were surveys with 112 social services agencies in six Midwest states. The surveys indicate that low-income families were hit hard

ed by families. And more families are seeking assistance than in the previous year to help secure basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, child care and medical coverage. In mid-July, the Joyce Foundation reported that since publication of the report, welfare caseloads have gone up in five of the seven states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Iowa.

A Welfare Reform Critic

During a May interview, welfare reform critic Peter Edelman, a former assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, agreed with the Joyce Foundation's findings regarding working families remaining in poverty since the 1996 Welfare Reform Act. "There were about 40 percent, if you look around the country, of former welfare recipients... (who) don't have a job," said Edelman, who quit his position in protest of President Bill Clinton's signing of the Welfare Reform Act in September 1996.

"What that means is that over 3 million women and children - over 1 million women, over 2 million

there, and people are able to work, they are not going to go back on welfare. The big problem is going to come when we have a serious recession and people need help because they lose their jobs.

"I hope there will be some improvements in the law. And I hope there won't be ways in which it gets even worse," he said.

Poverty and Housing Facts

Poverty is on the rise once again in the state of Illinois, according to Sid Mohn, president of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights.

In Mid-June, Mohn explained the major findings of the Illinois Poverty Summit's report on poverty in the state of Illinois. The report states that while poverty dropped in Chicago, it increased in the Chicago suburbs and throughout the state.

The report gives five primary reasons why people are or will remain in poverty: Inadequate or no health insurance, the shortage of

Residents' Journal Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns stops for a pose with Welfare Reform critic Peter Edelman after his speech at a Jewish Council on Urban Affairs recognition ceremony in May 2002.

affordable housing, the lack of food, poor or inadequate education and low paying jobs. The report projects that in Illinois, a person must make \$14.92 per hour in order to afford fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment. To illustrate this point, the report includes a scenario for affordable housing in the Chicago region. A family of four, two parents and two children, whose total earnings are \$20,000 per year, or about \$10 per hour, has a monthly income of \$1,667. Their rent is \$500 and their estimated costs for other living expenses such as the cost of food, transportation, utilities, child care and health care, is \$1,500. So each month, the family will be short \$363 for their basic needs.

During a June 20 press conference on the report, Mohn said that the lack of affordable housing and rising health care costs keep the poor in poverty.

"The lack of affordable housing is in a crisis proportion in Illinois," Mohn said. "Health insurance in Illinois (costs) more than 10 years ago. Those poor people struggling to pay for rental housing and health care further impoverishes them," Mohn declared.

Mohn said the relocation of residents under the Chicago Housing Authority's \$1.5 billion, 10-year Plan for Transformation also contributes to the increase of poverty in some suburban areas. But he said there was no data to date as to how much of a factor the CHA Transformation really is.

DuPage, Lake and McHenry are the counties that experienced a significant increase in poverty from 1990 to 1999, according to an analysis by the Illinois Poverty Summit of recently released figures from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Commentary

by the recent economic crash, otherwise known as the recession.

The survey results indicate that the organizations which serve the working poor are experiencing difficulties as funding from state budgets and personal donations is cut. The 112 social service agencies which responded to the survey reported that more than \$2.5 billion has been cut from their state budgets.

children - are actually worse off than they were when the law was enacted. And so, I think that's a very bad result that we don't hear about very much," he said.

Edelman said that President George W. Bush's new welfare plan will only make matters worse.

"I think it's a very bad plan," said Edelman. "It's going to require a very high percentage of people currently on welfare to be in work programs. And the only way states can comply with that requirement is to run workfare or make-work programs, which have been demonstrated not to be successful in helping people to actually find employment in the regular labor market."

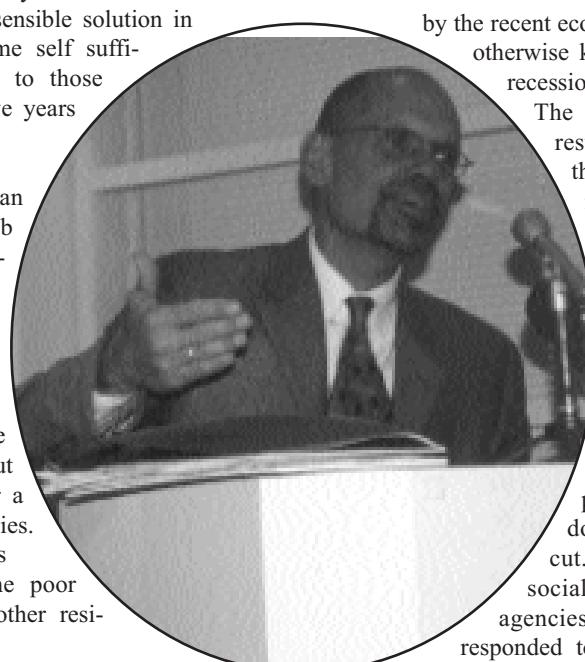
"So, (Bush's plan) is actually going to reduce the flexibility that's available to states and result in more welfare recipients being treated in unfair ways," Edelman explained.

"One big problem here is this is up to the individual states. This is a block grant. So you've got states that have some really negative policies. States like Idaho, Utah and Mississippi have really very unfair policies.

And they're perfectly legal under the federal law. What this law is, it tends to have a lot of requirements on people without really helping them."

Edelman said he hopes that federal lawmakers improve the welfare law so the situation will not get any worse for the poor.

"The recession that we're having is pretty mild. And so, as long as there are jobs out



Sid Mohn, president of Heartland Alliance, gives reporters an overview of the organization's 2002 Report on Illinois Poverty during a press conference in June.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Forty-three (43) percent of the social service organizations surveyed have lost their state revenue to provide critical services need-

The High Cost of Medicine

by Bobby Watkins

As regular readers know, I have been writing lately about the high cost of medicine and how it is affecting not just our seniors and Medicaid recipients but also the working poor who are struggling to stay off the welfare rolls.

I know a young mother who makes minimum wage, has three children and no health insurance? Yeah, they can always go to Cook County Hospital. But not the way people used to. Now, even the folks at Cook County Hospital want to know how they are going to be paid.

This situation is scary for a lot of people and I mean those with and without the

Medicaid card. Now, beginning July 1, instead of paying \$1 for each prescription drug, Medicaid recipients will be paying more.

It is a shame that something like this can happen in this country. Others are calling this the land of opportunity and we don't even have a good health care plan for our own elderly. And then programs are being cut for the handicapped, not to mention the problem of affordable housing.

Already a great number of people don't know if they will be able to eat if they buy medicine. Next it will be, "Where will I sleep?"

Recently, there has been lot of talk about this subject. In fact, Families USA released information showing how prices

for popular prescription drugs for seniors rose at three times the rate of inflation last year. This is sad, given that seniors live on a fixed income, while year after year prescription drugs continue to sky rocket at rates that far exceed inflation.

Ron Pollack, executive director of Families USA, said there is no reasonable basis for these alarming price increases.

Generic prescriptions rose 1.8 percent versus 8.1 percent for brand name prescriptions. The prices for name brand drugs rose 4 1/2 times faster than the rate for generics.

It is said that seniors benefit when there are more generics on the market. But

what about those seniors who can't take generics?

Many people tell me they want to know when law makers are going to stand up and take notice of this situation and do something about it.

We need help, not just for our seniors but for everyone who has to worry about becoming sick.

Already a great number of people don't know if they will be able to eat if they buy medicine. Next it will be, "Where will I sleep?"

I will keep writing about this topic because this is one ongoing issue we need help with.

Harold L Ickes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

The violent death of 10-year-old Rita Haskins on May 3 was heartbreaking, unconscionable and unnecessary.

Rita was a sweet, loving, inquisitive, caring child, a daughter, a sister, a cousin, a student, a friend, a neighbor and a child of God. She also was a beloved member of her community. As a matter of fact, at the moment of her untimely death, she was holding a smaller child on her hip, just like any loving mother would hold her own child.

The shock of her death, coming closely on the heels of the also-cruel death of maintenance worker Tina Noel, prompted another crisis meeting to be called by the Local Advisory Council President, Gloria Williams, to open more dialogue for unburdening the unbearable grief still surrounding the community.

This time the audience was mostly comprised of children. I counted at least 50 children of all ages who came to the meeting alone or with an adult family member.

They sat quietly, with wide-open, teary, questioning, fear-filled eyes, angry eyes, hurt eyes, listening for snatches of dialogue that could explain what had happened to their friend.

Many of them witnessed the whole thing.

As an unusual addition to the all-too-frequent meeting, LAC President Williams invited the Rev. Victoria Snow to come and be the facilitator who could possibly soften the molten turmoil created from such a rash act.

Snow spoke words of comfort from a spiritual perspective to the people gathered together. Oddly enough, she was the only member of the clergy present and standing with the community. Why must we be so isolated or stereotyped that no other clergy felt even the mothers' pains?

Are we so far removed from greater Chicago that no noted African American dignitary would grieve with us, help stir up our faith, and gather strength to face days of uncertainty for our children's safety? Are we truly the "island of the poor?"

When it comes to Ickes Homes, the world seems to say, "Don't go there. You may find someone to love."

The Discussion

The attending adults were outraged and demanded of management to invoke the One Strike You're Out clause to get rid of undesirable persons living in Ickes apartments. These parents noted that the undesirables are usually living here with someone illegally - meaning they are not on the lease.

The gunman, whose deadly bullets allegedly missed his intended target yet found another victim, was reportedly living with a leaseholder in 2330 S. State without being on the lease. Clearly, demanded the residents, the One Strike ruling should apply to this leaseholder, and he should be made to move out.

The panel of administrators chose to discuss the fact that no one wants to point out the offenders, the law-breakers.

However, the attendees countered with the knowledge of a long list of so called "One Strike-able" families who are still living where they were when they broke the law.

Many voices spoke to this issue, claiming that management is fully aware of these families but has taken no action to put known felons out of their living space.

At one quiet point in the meeting, a sensitive adult had been inspired to write a poem about the loss of our children.

It was heartwarming and served to cool down the angry rhetoric building among grief-stricken mothers whose small children were present and being hugged to distraction.

"Whose child was killed?"

"Our child was killed" was the outcry.

"How could you separate them? What is the management doing?" asked many attendees.

Mrs. Haskins, Rita's mother, out of her mind with grief, spoke briefly, using phrases created out of deeply wounded passion, love and loss.

We all shared her pain. Through hundreds of expressions of sympathy and love which have adorned the lobby where her child fell, the hope is for peace to replace pain.

At this point in the meeting, solutions of active participation on the part of the residents began to come to the floor.

The residents suggested that everyone be aware the open public lobby is by far the most dangerous place, recognize that this is a wake up call, and let us all take responsibility

for each other's children.

One parent, during the fatal incident, was trying to get other adults to take the children that had gathered out of the area but could get no help.

We all have to realize the truth of the saying "It takes a village to raise a child." There is a need to truly embrace each other and show love for one another. Talk to the children, teach them to go in the other direction and away from an angry group of fighters.

Open dialogue with the children. They can tell the adults a lot. Recognize the fact that many of our youth are spoiled and have not been taught conflict resolution. Let us teach it at home.

Mr. William from The Woodlawn Organization, Ickes' private manager, agreed that what he could do is to hold monthly building meetings to discuss conflict resolution, grievances and other concerns.

"Unwanted activities that abound in our area will not get resolved without participation from the truly concerned residents who want to help change things," said Mr. William.

If you know that there is a conflict between neighbors, talk to someone who could do something about it.

The meeting wound calmly down with a call from the Rev. Snow to circle all the children who stayed at the meeting and clearly were deeply interested in what was going on.

She also called on a few prayer warriors to express sincere, thoughtful, powerful prayers to end a very vigorous community session and have one and all feel the blessing of persons willing to share their faith with all.

My one regret is that Anthony White, AKA "Cold Pepper," was not so eulogized as Tina Noel and Rita Haskins. White was shot in the head June 5 and killed. This was no ricochet. Not only was White killed but Reynard Tinkson, an innocent bystander, was shot in the knee.

Even though White's reputation was not pristine, his mother had moved her family away, which nonetheless did nothing toward displaying the pain of losing a child. She has this reporter's condolences.

I interviewed Mrs. Haskins, Rita's mother. I was privileged she even agreed to speak with me. The interview wasn't easy for her or myself. She was very gracious and candid.

RJ: "Many residents were concerned that you have to stay in a place where tragedy struck you so hard. Has CHA or management offered you a Section 8 option?"

Haskins: "I went down there. They (Management) said they can't find it. They lost my number. They should be giving me a house. They made me very angry."

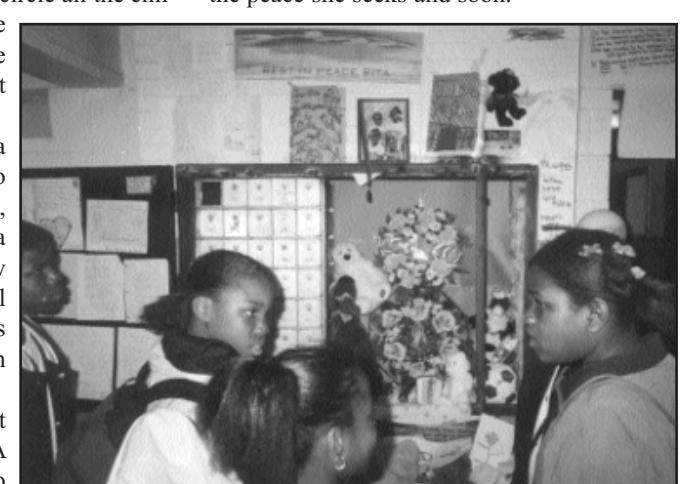
RJ: "Who? How?"

Haskins: "Housing, period. They should do the sweeps more often, not just every three months, to find people who are not on the lease."

RJ: "Is there anything specific you want the readers to know about what happened?" Haskins: "I try not to think about it. I've got to stay strong for my children."

RJ: "How many are there?" Haskins: "Three left. It's very hard. I'm trying to be the strong one."

I can only hope Mrs. Haskins can find the peace she seeks and soon.



Friends of 10-year-old Rita Haskins, who died of a gunshot wound to the head from a stray bullet during a dispute in early May at the Harold Ickes Homes, reminisces about her at a memorial site established within one of the development's buildings shortly after her death.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson



Teenology

Where Will People Go? by Oshana Johnson

My name is Oshana Johnson. I'm from the South Side of Chicago and I have lived in the Wentworth Gardens development all my life with my two younger brothers and four younger sisters.

My article is coverage of the debate over whether residents living in Chicago public housing should be given Housing Choice Vouchers (previously known as Section 8 vouchers and certificates) to rent private apartments with government subsidies, or whether they should rebuild public housing in the same areas where the housing is being torn down.

In my opinion, there are advantages and disadvantages to rebuilding housing in the same areas as well as to giving the residents vouchers.

I think that if they rebuild houses in the same area, the advantage would be that the residents get to stay around family and the children won't have to transfer schools. I think the disadvantage is that lots of police harassment happens in these areas, and most people believe that if you live in the projects, that automatically means you are a menace to society or going to grow up that way.

It is also segregated in the projects. If residents are given vouchers, the advantage is that the children will be exposed to a wider range of social contacts. It is less violent in the neighborhoods the residents can move to and you can get away from the police harassment.

I think the disadvantage to vouchers is that the children have to transfer to different schools and you also have to worry about discrimination from neighbors.

A grandmother who lives in the projects, who asked that her name not be used, said, "I think public housing should be mixed income housing and public housing should not exist as it is today.

"It is a stigma to live in public housing and other people have a tendency to label you, like 'Oh you live in the projects' or 'those project people.'

"Public housing is known for crime, gangs, unemployment and unwed mothers. A GED (diploma) should be mandatory for all leaseholders and family members age 18 to 35, and screening rules and regulations should be enforced."

She said youths in public housing areas need strong men and women as mentors to help them foster a positive attitude.

A 20-year-old woman who has never lived in the projects, who asked that her name not be used, said, "I believe most people in the projects are not fit to live in single-family environment. People from the projects have adapted to

their living status. They are used to lots of people, big buildings, late nights outside and in-front gambling. I don't believe project people can live in a neighborhood that isn't surrounded by drama."

An 18-year-old woman who lives in the Dearborn Homes said, "You could take people out of the ghetto, yet you can't take the ghetto out of the people.

"(But) not all of the people who live in public housing are ghetto," she said.

"Some do have jobs and their children are well-behaved. There are people who want to move out of the ghetto and have a better life. Then there are those who are loud, wild, don't care about their children, and are violent. These people don't act as if they want to move out or up in the world. The people who apply for Section 8 should have their homes or apartments checked to see how well they treat a real home."

Teen Individuality by Mia Dunlap

"I am a teenager and one thing that makes me different are my goals. I want to be a housewife. I will let my husband make all the money while I cook, clean and take care of our three children.

"You can't find many young people who could be anything and aspire to be a housewife."

That's what 15-year-old Dana Williams, from the North Side of Chicago, said.

You may notice from what Williams said that all children are different and have different goals in life. What you expect for 'Sally,' don't expect for 'Sue.'

Many adults expect children to be so mild, moderate, cool, calm and collected but teens are at a stage where they are finding out who they are. Therefore, adults, including parents and teachers, should allow time and space for this to happen.

Marilyn Owens, a mother who did not want her age revealed, said, "My children are not the same in any way. But I have a set of rules I expect them to all follow, whether they're 8 or 18. It's not a matter of them being individuals. It's a matter of them respecting me and following my guidelines."

Again, teens are individuals. Many of them now complain that adults are too hard on them because they fail to see they're in a growing phase.

"Yes, I'm 16 and my mother still expects me to be in by 9:30

p.m. When I come in late, she starts yelling," said Brittany Walker.

"I'm 16, for God's sake. Give me some space."

Walker thinks her mother treats her differently than her brother because she's a girl.

"My brother comes in at that time and is 15," she said.

Male and female teenagers are different and often treated that way. However, parents who have females around the same age often expect them both to do well or be like their other sisters. If one sister or brother does well in school, the parent always wants to compare her or him to the child that doesn't do so well. Doing that often causes the child to rebel and really mess up in school.

Can we just be accepted as who we are? We are individuals who need guidance, love and nurturing. But still we remain individuals. There are some teenagers who aspire to be different things.

For example, I want to become a psychologist and later an actress. I can't wait until I become those things.

A 17-year-old girl whose name cannot be used said, "I'm my own person because of my home life or at least my former home life. My father used to abuse both alcohol and my mother. He molested me and my oldest brother.

"My father got my mother addicted to drugs (cocaine) and then left us. Neither he nor my mother ever held a steady job. My brother and I never really had much. But I decided to beat the odds and at 17, I'm already in my freshman year in college.

"I'm already out for summer break so I decided to visit Chicago."

Some teenagers are also more outgoing than others. We have different personalities and adults need to understand that.

Alisha Jones said, "I keep to myself because now in society

them. They cost \$30 or more per month at a pharmacy.

Sometimes, other people can find the pill and know that you are on them. You have to remember to take a pill every day. Some women have a hard time trying to control their weight while on the pill. The pill can often cause headaches, depression or high blood pressure. But this is not an every day thing; side effects are rare.

While on the pill, your motivation to make your partner use condoms may be reduced. That may increase your risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

The way birth control pills work is that they basically make your body think that it is pregnant when it isn't. Contrary to some rumors, birth control pills have not been found to cause cancer. They also strengthen your bones and can also help your complexion.

Hilary Burns, 18, said, "I was on birth control pills. I didn't feel so comfortable on it. I've been on birth control for two years. I couldn't

take it any more so I got off of it. My hair had started to come out and I was getting big. My hips also started to spread. Now I'm off of the pills and use protection such as condoms."

Tiara Jackson, 16, who is taking birth control, said, "I've been on birth control for a year and three months. So far, I haven't seen any changes, except in my hair.

"One night, I was combing my hair and all of a sudden, plugs of my hair were on the floor and in my comb. I was so upset but I couldn't do anything. I still take the pill and put tracks in my head so I don't have to worry about my hair falling out."

Shanail, 22, who asked that her last name not be used, said she thinks birth control pills are an effective form of contraception when they are used properly.

"They're a good way for young women who are sexually active to become more responsible about their bodies," she said.

"I know several women who use birth control and it's effective for them. For most of

them, it's been helpful because of their lifestyles and situations. Some have had adverse effects and had to stop taking it."

She said she would recommend the pill with proper counseling from a physician.

Alisha Jones, 17, has not been on birth control pills but she got a shot (Depo Provera) that lasts three months and provides birth control.

"To me, a three-month shot and birth control pills are the same," she said.

"They just come in different forms."

She said she didn't feel any change in her body from the shot.

"But when I hear people saying that they lost or gained weight or their hair came out, it made me want to get off the shot and remain off," she said. "Now I have finally restrained from sex. I have finally realized that I am too young to have sex and that's what young girls need to realize."

Should Alcohol Be Legal?

by Chris Watson

A lot of people have died from drinking alcohol or been killed because someone was drunk from alcohol. So I went around and asked people if they think alcohol should be legal or not.

Dave West, 23, said: "I think that alcohol should not be legal because when people get drunk, they will do whatever comes to their mind first. Like one time I was drunk and I just wanted some money and I was willing to do anything for some money."

"So I went home, got my gun and went outside looking for someone who looked like they had over \$100."

"I saw this man on the bus stop and I ran up with my gun and told him to give me all his money and he gave it to me. So I ran off and as soon as I made it to the next bus stop, the police

came up in five cars. I tried to run but it was too many of them so I gave myself up."

"The police took me to the police station for armed robbery. While I was in the station, they gave the man back his money and the amount was \$35. So I just got myself locked up for \$35."

West added that "Later that day, I stopped drinking. That was about four years ago, when I was about 19 years old. Now I am 23 and to this day I do not drink, never ever in my life. Alcohol makes you do things you do not want to do."

Different amounts of alcohol have different effects. If you have .5 percent alcohol in your blood, you can die. A lot of people don't know that you can die if you drink too much alcohol at one time. If you have .02 percent alcohol in your blood, you get a mild alteration in feelings and slight intensification of moods. At .05 percent, you have feelings of relaxation, giddiness, lowered inhibitions and judgment and motor skills that are slightly impaired. At .08 percent you will lose muscle coordination and reaction time will be impaired, and you may have tingling and numbness in your face, hands, arms and legs.

Legal intoxication levels vary by state. In many states, the level is .10 percent. Mr. Key, a history teacher at Bronzeville Academy, said

alcohol should remain legal.

"Although it is true that over-consumption of alcohol can lead to abuse and poor health, responsible and moderate consumption should not be prohibited," he said.

"Within some Mediterranean and European countries, alcohol consumption is part of daily life. The lifestyle within these countries has not stigmatized alcoholic consumption, so alcohol-related problems are much lower. What should be combated are the problems that lead to binge drinking and alcoholism. Alcohol is simply the tool through which depressed masses of people choose to dilute their problems."

Ebony Redmond, a student at Bronzeville, said she thought alcohol should not be legal.

"I've experienced three deaths in my family because of alcohol," she said.

"My mother and two uncles. I feel strongly that alcohol should be illegal as it used to be."

An English teacher at Bronzeville said, "Since alcohol is legal already, I think it would be nearly impossible to make it illegal now. Alcohol is our country's most commonly addictive drug and takes many people's health and lives every day, from babies with fetal alcohol syndrome inherited from their mothers' drinking to teens who drive drunk and get into traffic

accidents, to middle-aged people who've destroyed the health of their brains and livers.

"And who could even begin to count all the family bonds that are broken by alcohol addiction. Alcohol's toll is taken not only on the addicted person and his or her personal life, but we as a society lose all the talents and contributions addicted people could have made."

"Yeah, if alcohol were invented today, it would never get through the Food and Drug Administration. But I'm afraid we're stuck with it and must find ways to help people and families recover and prevent young people from getting addicted."

I think that alcohol should not be legal because so many have died or gotten hurt from people drinking alcohol, not just people that drink alcohol but also people that don't drink and never drank in their lives. Every day, you can look in some kind of newspaper and see that someone died from drinking alcohol or someone was killed because some other person was drunk.

See, it is illegal for a teenager like myself to buy it from the store. But we can get someone that is older to buy it for us. I think that's not right because if I'm not old enough to buy it, no one should get it for me and other teenagers.

The R. Kelly Case

by Chris Watson

R. Kelly is an R&B music singer who was raised in Chicago, Ill. on the Northwest Side. Kelly, who is now facing criminal charges that he had sex with underage girls, was sued several times in the past for similar allegations.

He was accused of impregnating a 16-year-old girl in 1998 and forcing her girl to have an abortion.

Now he is 33 and he is being sued by at least three young women.

I did street interviews on the way people feel about the R. Kelly case. My first interview was with a 23-year-old woman named Roselle who was on 47th Street and Greenwood Avenue. I asked her what she thought about the R. Kelly case:

"I think that R. Kelly was wrong because R. Kelly knew that girl was too young but he still had sex with her. In the movie [shown on the Internet] it looked like the girl had a really big crush on him because she was all into it like she was his wife or fiance. So that's why I say it's R. Kelly's fault."

My next interview was a 19-year-old woman who

was walking on 48th Street and Lake Park Avenue. She asked for her name not to be used. I asked her if she thinks people should stop playing R. Kelly's music.

She said, "I think people should not stop playing his music because his music doesn't have anything to do with his personal life. Like when Michael Jackson had his charge, people didn't stop playing his music and his charge is way worse than R. Kelly's."

Then I interviewed a man named Carl Smith, 21, who works at the J.J. Fish on 47th Street and Lake Park. I asked him what he thinks about the case.

"To me, people should stay out of his personal life and let him deal with his own problems by himself," he said."

Should Pot Be Legal?

by Prince Burrell

I interviewed a non-smoker, a marijuana dealer, and a smoker of marijuana about why they smoke marijuana and what effects it has on their lives. These are their answers.

Do you smoke weed? Why or why not?

Non-smoker: No. Weed is bad for your health.

Smoker (a 29-year-old man named Rice):

Yes. I smoke to pass the time.

Dealer: Yes, I get high.

When did you start smoking weed?

Smoker: I blew my first when I was 14 years old.

Dealer: When I turned 16 years old.

Should weed be legalized? Why or why not?

Non-smoker: No, it doesn't serve a purpose.

Smoker: Yes, it doesn't do damage any more than people drinking, smoking squares (cigarettes) or crack, cocaine, acid, opium, etc.

Dealer: Yes, I could open up a coffee shop with weed, like in Amsterdam or Canada.

Do you drink?

Non-smoker: Yes.

Smoker: I drink about twice a month.

Dealer: No, it kills your liver and makes you violent.

What is worse, drinking or smoking weed? What are the effects of each?

Non-smoker: Smoking is worse. Drinking makes you relaxed; weed makes you forget things.

Smoker: Drinking is worse. Drinking makes you aggressive, violent, ready to have sex. Weed makes you feel relaxed and calm.

Dealer: Drinking makes you violent. Smoking makes you calm.

How much weed do you smoke daily?

Smoker: Sometimes I smoke three, sometimes five blunts a day. Most days, I smoke one or two blunts.

Dealer: About three blunts.

How much does your weed cost?

Smoker: I pay \$5 or \$4 if I'm low on money for a nickel bag (five grams) of weed.

Dealer: The weed I sell costs \$250 per quarter pound.

Where do you get it?

Smoker: On 47th Street.

Dealer: A white hood on the North Side. How does it affect your life?

Non-smoker: It doesn't have any effect on me.

Smoker: It's just something to do. I might stop.

Dealer: It calms me down.

Do you know anyone who died in any way related to weed?

Non-smoker: No.

Smoker: (giggling) No!

Dealer: This rich dude got shot for 100 pounds.

Do you know anyone who has gone crazy through weed?

Non-smoker: No.

Smoker: Never.

Dealer: No.

Do you know of anything bad that happened to a weed smoker?

Non-smoker: No.

Smoker: I remember I got high and hungry but I didn't have any food.

Teen Parents

by Latroya Clady

One big issue that affects teenagers today is teen pregnancy. Millions of teens are getting pregnant every year, some keep their babies and some get abortions. I talked to two students, one boy and one girl, about their life since they have had a child. They had many things to say. You will see how a boy differs from a girl.

The first person I talked to was a 17-year-old girl, who asked that her name not be used. She has one little boy. I asked her if she

believes in abortions.

She said, "No, I don't, I consider that murder. It's just the baby is unborn. [If you don't have an abortion] you will have double the number of kids in the future."

She was 16 years old when she got pregnant and she felt she had to take care of her responsibilities. It's not all about money with her, but the money she does have goes to her baby for shoes, pampers, clothes, food and other materials. You never finish buying what you need.

"I don't have much money to give, but one thing my baby won't be short of is love and caring," she said. "The father of the baby is around and he's trying to be the best father he can be. We want to raise our baby together, not separate, like a family."

"He's the love of my life," she said.

She told me she has help from her grandmother and her child's father. When it comes down to going out her and the father compromise.

"It's what you make it to be," she said. "If I could start all over and do it again I would do it again, because my child is the best thing that ever happened to me."

Last I talked to a male because men often have differing perspectives. He was 18 when he had his first baby and the girl was 15. He also has one girl who is 17 months. I asked him if he believes in abortions, and he said no, "that's just like being a murderer."

"I regretted it when she was pregnant but when my daughter got here everything changed," he said. "I love her more than life itself. It's a struggle to see her because I always have to deal with baby mama drama. It's hard

to raise her when it comes down to money. You have to buy Pampers, clothes, milk, and the girl still asks for child support."

He said he gets a lot of support from his mother, family and friends.

"Me and my daughter's mother are not together because we don't see eye to eye," he said. "But that doesn't affect me raising my child. I don't feel locked down, because I laid and got her, I have to take care of my responsibility. If I had the choice of doing it over again, I would, but I would choose a different girlfriend."

I can conclude that regardless of how old you are, it's still hard to take care of a child. We need to use some type of protection to prevent so many babies being born to teenagers. Also a baby isn't all you can get from having unprotected sex — you could get an STD too.

Urban Youth International Journalism Program

Publisher

Ethan Michaeli

Assistant Directors

Kari Lyderson

Satin Crable

Participants

Brandon Allen, Iesha Hampton, Latroya Clady, Garron Hodges, Chris Watson, Dimitry Johnson, Chetiqua Smith, Lynette Bramley, Carla Wells, Shanell Jackson, Abu Muhammad, Mia Dunlap, Iesha Griffin, Twanda White, Yolanda White, Talanda White, Jovan Gatlings, Corey Gatlings, Antoine Shaw, Tiera Brown, Ebony Redmond, Chris Davis, Oshana Johnson, Alexis Colbert, Prince Burrell, Tiffany Young, Jamila Loggins,

Young NBA Stars

by Jovan Gathings

The NBA's youngest stars are some of its best. Stars like Allen Iverson, Vince Carter, Jason Kidd, Tracy McGrady, Baron Davis, Paul Pierce, Tim Duncan, Kevin Garnett, Kobe Bryant and Peja Stojokovic.

Iverson, the NBA's smallest shooting guard, is as quick as a point guard. Iverson was the first round draft pick for the Philadelphia 76ers in the 96-97 season. He was the rookie of the year for that season.

Later in his career, he led the Sixers to the play-offs four times in a row. In 2001 he was the All-Star MVP and led the Sixers into the NBA Finals but they lost to the Lakers and this year they lost to Boston.

Kobe Bryant is one of the most talented and youngest players in the NBA. He was the 13th pick in the NBA draft in the 96-97 season. He was drafted to the Charlotte Hornets and traded to the Lakers. This year he got the All-Star MVP.

Vince Carter of the Toronto Raptors is a young player who is on a quest for a title. He proved his point after his rookie

season, when he won the slam dunk

competition, went to the All-Stars and led his team to the play-offs. Later, he became a superstar, with his own shoe line, shirts and more. The number

of "VC" fans continues to grow.

Kevin Garnett went from high school straight into the pros. He went to

Farragut High School in southwest Chicago. When he entered the NBA he didn't

have any experience. He had to grow and gain experience. Later on with experience and mentoring, the Timberwolves, where he plays, are now a play-off team.

Tracy McGrady has become one of the hottest superstars in the NBA. He is another player who went into the NBA straight from high school. He also had

to gain experience. He was the ninth pick for the Raptors and played bench

guard that year. His cousin is Vince Carter. McGrady signed with the Orlando Magic, and when he had to step up he became a starter and got help from Grant Hill who played a little like him in his younger years. The Magic are still striving for a championship.

Baron Davis, the guard of the Charlotte Hornets, is a young NBA player whose family struggled in life. Becoming a professional basketball player made his dreams come true. Davis was born in South Central, L.A. He grew up watching his mother come out of abandoned

buildings with drugs. He later moved in with his grandmother. It was then that basketball became his life.

After graduating from UCLA, Davis went to the NBA and became a superstar. Leading the Charlotte Hornets to the play-offs, Davis made a star of himself by going to the All-Star game and leading the team to the second round of the play-offs.

I think Jason Kidd is one of the most pure point guards in NBA history. He is a good defensive and offensive player. What I like about Kidd is that he makes sure everyone scores. He turned every team that he was on from a losing team to a top record play-off team. The three teams he played for were Dallas, Phoenix and his current team, the New Jersey Nets. He always gets over five assists a game, 20 or more points and about three steals.

Tim Duncan has done a lot in his five years in the NBA. Duncan won the MVP in his rookie year of the 1997-98 season. He made a star of himself in his second season and guided his team, the San Antonio Spurs, to the NBA Championship.

In 2000 he shared the MVP All Star title with Shaquille O'Neal. This year he got more help from rookie Tony Parker and veteran Dave Robinson, so he won the League MVP.

Paul Pierce of the Boston Celtics has brought back a lot of memories for that team. It is often called "the memory of Celtics past,"

referring to the days with Bill Russell, Larry Bird and more legends and more fans. With help from Antoine Walker this year, the team can shine, maybe to the NBA Championships.

Peja Stojokovic is one of the most improved players in the NBA. He did a lot to get where he is now. Playing bench in his rookie and sophomore seasons, later he had to step up to

the plate. At the beginning of the 2001-2002 season, lead player Chris Webber was going to miss the start of the season. In his absence, Stojokovic averaged 24 points a game. People thought when Webber came back he would stop his reign, but when he returned Stojokovic continued his reign.

Corey Gathings, 13, said his favorite player is Iverson. He said he owns all of his shoes and jerseys and he likes his style of play.

"Allen Iverson is my favorite player because he does what he does," he said.

Antoine Shaw, 14, said his favorite player is Tracy McGrady.

"I like him because he likes to put on a show, and he is a leader," said Shaw. "On the court he likes to see fancy cross-overs, like I do."

Yolanda White, 13, said her favorite player is Chris Webber. "He can play basketball, and he looks like the singer Carl Thomas," she said.

Gang Life

by Brandon Allen

Are today's communities infested with gangs and violence? Are gangs behind the terror that is going on today? Personally, I feel like it's 50-50 on everything that is occurring. Gangs are not always about trouble but some are all about trouble. Gangs may have a major effect on murder rates and violence but gangs aren't the only thing that influences these issues.

Areas all over Chicago are experiencing gang violence and chaos right now. There are also gang-infested areas where gang members are helping the community.

There are gang bangers that just gang bang for the hell of it. Do you think gangs are all cruel and should be looked down on?

I interviewed four gang members: a young woman by the name of Princess, age 17; Warlord Bob, 48; T-baggee, age 17; and another older man, who goes by Crime.

They all asked that their real names not be used. Let's hear what they had to say.

Q: "How did you join a gang?"

T-baggee: "I talked to someone who was involved with a gang."

Warlord: "I was jumped in when I was 10."

Princess: "My oldest brother blessed me in."

Crime: "By choice, not by force."

Q: "What type of influence does the gang have on you?"

T-baggee: "No influence."

Warlord: "Negative influence. They made me beat my brother over a girl."

Princess: "I look up to my brother and his guys so I'll say an influence."

Crime: "A big influence because I eat, sleep and think about my guys and what I am a part of."

Q: "Why did you join a gang?"

T-baggee: "To be a part of something."

Warlord: "I didn't have any choices."

Princess: "I guess because of my brother."

Crime: "Because of money, power and respect."

Q: "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?"

T-baggee: "With high power in the gang."

A: "Blind dates are not a good idea. You never know how the outcome will be if you really don't know this person."

Q: "How do you go about planning everything when out on a date?"

A: "With me, there is no specific way I would plan a date as long as I feel comfortable."

Q: "What was your first date like?"

A: "I was so nervous on my first date I couldn't say a word but it was OK. My date was a gentleman and he showed me a nice time."

Q: "Do you think there is such thing as love at first sight?"

A: "There was this one time where I met this guy and he was the bomb and from that moment on, I couldn't stop thinking about him. So yes I do."

Q: "Do you think it's alright to kiss on the first date?"

A: "When it comes to me, if I felt like my date deserves it for all he has done on this date, then I would."

Q: "When do you think it's OK to say the date has ended?"

A: "I would end the date when a guy steps over his boundaries with me, when he starts asking me personal questions on the first date that he

Warlord: "In jail or a millionaire."

Princess: "In college or wasting my life."

Crime: "I see myself dead."

Q: "Have you been in jail?"

T-baggee: "Yes, because of drugs and stealing."

Warlord: "Yes, crack, beating up the police, murder, armed robbery and battery."

Princess: "No."

Crime: "Second degree murder, drugs, beating a man half to death, abusing a female, etc."

Q: "What are the positive and negative things about being in a gang?"

T-baggee: "Staying into it with different gangs (is the negative side). The positive thing is you can run to someone when you need help."

Warlord: "A positive thing was I learned how to mix coke at an early age."

Princess: "The negative is all these scars and cuts on my face. The positive is of all the people I meet who are gone. My girls are still here."

Crime: "The negative is my jail record. The positive is everything. I love it."

Q: "Would you want your own kids to join a gang?"

doesn't need to know."

So this is what I heard from a young woman high school student's point of view. Now let's hear it from a male student's point of view. I interviewed a

young man, age 18, who also wanted to be anonymous. I asked him the same questions:

Q: "Why is it important to make a good impression on the first date?"

A: "I think it is very important to make a good impression on the first date. The first time you go out on a date with a person and everything turns out

well, that will determine if you get a second date or not."

Q: "Do you think the guy should pay all the time?"

A: "Well, from my point of view, I say it depends. It depends on if I approach a young lady and ask her if I could take her out on a date, then I would pay for everything."

Q: "How do you feel about blind dates?"

A: "Well! You can't see them. That's a joke. Blind dates are cool. I'm a challenging person and with blind dates, you wouldn't know what to expect. You wouldn't know the outcome out of a blind date and I think that's very exciting."

Q: "What was your first date like?"

A: "It was at a restaurant with this girl I had a crush on. I finally found some courage to ask her out and we went out. So far, the date was going real good until I spilled red pop all over her white shirt. She was kind of mad but I made up for it and showed her a nice time."

Q: "Do you think there is a such thing as love at first sight?"

A: "It was this girl I wanted for a very long time and just could not stop thinking about her since the day I met her, so you can say I believe in love at first sight."

Q: "Do you think it's alright to kiss on the first date?"

A: "Well, there's nothing wrong with kissing on the first date, if you feel you want to. Don't hold back your feelings. Do it. Be a spur of the moment person."

Q: "When do you think it is OK to say the date has ended?"

A: "When the female is ready to go. Then that's when the date is officially over. I wouldn't want to keep a girl out all night. When she feels it's over, it's over."

That was teen dating from a young man's point of view.

Teen Dating

by Garren Hodge

I'm a student at Bronzeville Alternative Academy and, like most high school students, dating is nothing new to me.

For most teenagers, dating plays a big role in our lives. I talked to many teen students on the subject of teen dating and some of them had some very unusual things to say.

The first person I interviewed was a young woman student, age 18, who wanted to remain anonymous.

Q: "Why is it important to make a good impression on the first date?"

A: "I think that if you make a good impression on the first date, then the person you are going out with can tell if they want to be with you or not."

Q: "When out on a date, do you feel that the guy should have to pay all of the time?"

A: "I think that the guy should not have to pay all the time; a woman should pitch in and help."

Q: "How do you feel about a blind date?"

Preventing Conflict

by Yolanda White

From what I have experienced in my 13 years, most of the fights in my environment get started because of boys or men. The man is sleeping with two females and they find out about each other and want to fight.

Another reason is that there are so many haters in this world today. For instance, if you have a nice outfit on and nobody else has it, they will want what you have and then they try to fight you.

How can we stop the violence? We can start by ignoring people who are trying to cause trouble. If everybody didn't listen to everything people said or thought about them, this world would be a better place.

I asked 13-year-old Lisa Smith if she has ever been in a fight. Of course, she said yes.

She said that a girl got mad at her because she was talking to the girl's so-called boyfriend. The girl went to get about five of her friends and they jumped on Lisa.

Most people would rather use violence

than talk certain things over. You would be surprised how many people have been hospitalized from being almost beaten to death. Fourteen-year-old Brian Lierman said, "I have been in a fight with four guys at the same time."

"I was winning until his friends came," he said. "They broke my nose and my arm. After that, I was ashamed to go to school. When I got out of the hospital, I thought everyone would make fun of me. But I couldn't stop going to school after that just because of one fight. So it took me a while to figure it out."

Now Brian is doing very well in school and hasn't had a fight since. Some people think that you have to fight to prove a point to everyone. You can prove a point to someone if you just walk away. It doesn't mean you are afraid but it just shows that you are a better person. I know it may be hard for someone to walk away because everyone is watching and they are cheering you on. But those people are just instigators.

Let me give you a little background on instigators. Those are the people who will go back and tell other people things you said just so they can see a fight. And then, after everything is over, they go back telling people who got beat up and everything. All that wouldn't happen if you just didn't say anything around people you don't know or trust because they

will go back and tell.

Everybody should know the saying, "If you don't have something good to say, then don't say anything at all." If everyone remembered that saying, then so many people wouldn't have to fight.

Many people who have had a fight probably don't know why they were fighting. Fifteen-year-old Britney Handler said, "I was fighting a girl once because she kept staring at me and when I asked her if she saw something she liked, she got angry and we were arguing. So she tried to hit me but I ducked and hit her."

"Everyone was shouting, 'Fight, fight,' and the gym teacher came and broke up the fight."

The principal asked them what they had been fighting about, and they both sat there looking stupid. Of course, they both got a 10-day suspension for fighting and now Britney and the girl are friends. They just sit there and laugh about the fight because they didn't even know why they were fighting.

Fights also are started by gang members. Fourteen-year-old Kevin Hunt said, "One day I was walking home from school and a group of guys dressed in blue and black came up to me and asked me where I was from. When I didn't say anything, they started surrounding me with sticks and everything. I told them I didn't want any trouble but they weren't trying to hear that."

ing and destroying people and taking people out of their territory and leaving them in other territory where they might get attacked.

I know the police can be bad because yesterday when I was coming home, two people in my building were fighting and the police rode past and looked at them and started calling them "dumb" and "stupid" and kept on riding. The police are putting a bad reputation on young kids and some of the kids are so afraid of the police that when they see them, they run and start crying.

I remember last year, the police were in our building and they arrested some of the boys and then took them to 49th Street. The boys from my building got beat up by the boys in that other building.

I also remember when I was in my aunt's house and the police came and kicked in the door to take her boyfriend to jail. As they were taking him down the stairs, they were beating him with the back of their guns and punching him with their fists.

My mother said that police are treating people that are innocent like they are criminals. In my opinion, there should not be any police. I feel that the way they act, we would be better

off protecting ourselves. It seems that when the police do something bad, nothing happens to them. But when someone else does something to a police officer, they are ready to take them to jail and give them life in prison.

I don't think that is fair. Also I think that the governor should make all police officers settle down. I'm not saying all police officers are bad but many are.

I feel like if I was standing outside and the police were coming down the stairs, they would find some way to say that I did something wrong.

I think police brutality is growing in our society. They get out of hand just because they carry a gun and a badge and drive a car. I understand that sometimes they have to do their jobs but the things they do don't seem fair. For example, if they are coming just to find out who shot at a van, then why are they kicking down people's doors and not letting anyone in the building? I think that's going too far.

One person I interviewed, Nina Griffen, summed it up when she said, "Instead of the police protecting us, they are beating and arresting us for nothing."

Police Brutality

by Tiera Brown

In today's society, police have gotten out of hand. They do things because they know that the majority of the time they will not get in trouble for it.

Two months ago, the police were in our building in Robert Taylor Homes and they were destroying people's housing and taking people to jail for nothing. Also, they weren't letting people in the building so I had to stand outside and wait until they got finished. Last year, the police shot this man by my building. They caught him and handcuffed him on the ground and shot him in the back.

I have interviewed people in my building and they said that police should be in the community to protect people and not to kill them.

I interviewed Yolanda White, who said that police brutality is a disgrace to our Black

community. I asked her and her two sisters, Talanda and Twanda White, what they think about police brutality. They said that in today's society, police have gotten out of hand "because they beat people for nothing."

Then I asked Corey Gathings, 14, what he thinks about police brutality.

He said, "It is wrong because they are beating innocent people."

One day, I was going over to my aunt's house. On the way there on the bus, I interviewed 15-year-old Atawana Smith. She said that police should not be in our communities because they are doing more violence than anybody else.

"We could protect ourselves without the police," she said.

Last week, I was downstairs playing and the police came for nothing and took some boys to jail because they said they had drugs on them. But people thought the police had put the drugs on them.

Fourteen-year-old Terrence Gould said that he thinks police brutality is bad because police do things they aren't supposed to do.

In most of the interviews I did, people said police brutality is bad because police are beat-

whole new level is called "And 1." They created most of the moves kids do on the streets today. They have their own line of shoes and clothes, including headbands and other things. They even have their own videotapes of how to do their moves.

There are five positions in basketball. Usually the smallest person on the team is the point guard and they usually have the best dribbling skill on the team. The shooting guard is usually the best shooter on the team. Next there is the small forward, who is sometimes taller than the guards, and last but not least is the power forward and center. They are the tallest ones on the team with the most control of the basket.

The reason I like basketball is because it helps get things off my mind and helps me think about stuff. Sometimes I play alone or with friends. It is a healthy sport. It keeps me in shape. I asked other kids why they play basketball.

Twelve-year-old Jovan Gathings said, "I wanted to know how it feels to hear people cheer for you and things like that. And I also wanted to win a trophy for my school, too."

I asked Jovan how long he planned on playing basketball.

"I don't know, it depends on what happens in the future," he said.

I asked if he planned on playing professionally or going to college.

"College, because I want my degree," he said. He said he doesn't know what high school he wants to go to but he wants to go to college at the University of North Carolina.

I don't like watching basketball on TV because it is a little boring. I like to experience the game and make shots for myself. Some people think basketball is boring and like soccer or softball better, or even no sport at all.

No one said it is the law to play sports. Others do different things like drawing or singing in their spare time. One reason I started playing basketball is because I was going to be graduating from 8th grade this year and I was thinking that I won't be remembered for anything so I played basketball and softball. I even played the clarinet for a while and it was fun too. I enjoyed doing things like that.

When I first came to Coleman School, I didn't really have any friends. I didn't talk to anyone and I was very quiet and calm. Then I joined the team and I started talking to everybody and even got in trouble for it a couple of times. Then I joined the Urban Youth International Journalism Program. I got a little popular and made even more friends and I was on TV.

So, as you can see, basketball can be someone's favorite game or someone's worst sport. Or it can even change your life. But it isn't just basketball that changed my life. It was also my friends and those close to me. Another was God, who blessed me with the gift to play basketball and I thank Him for that.

One more person for me to than is the coach at Coleman School, Darrell Kelly, who taught me how to play and taught me that you should do your best if you're going on the court. Win or lose, he said, just have fun.

Love & Basketball

by Corey Gathings

For me, no sport can compare to the vigorous game of basketball.

Basketball was created in Africa, then brought to America in the late 1800s.

In Africa, they used peach baskets as basketball hoops and tied them to a tree. The official orange basketball wasn't created until later on in the early 1900s, when basketball became an official sport in the U.S. The game includes players and a referee, who lets each team know when they are not following the rules.

One of the rules is against "traveling." Traveling is when you take more than two steps without dribbling the ball. "Out of bounds" is when the ball is knocked beyond the out of bounds line (which outlines the court). Two other terms are "double dribble" and "backcourt."

One of the basketball teams that made basketball very popular is the Harlem Globetrotters. They have been playing for years. The team was formed in Chicago by a man named Abe Saperstein. The team showed that Blacks can play just as well as anybody else.

Another team that took the ordinary crossover dribble to a

Youth Violence Prevention

by Michael Ibrahim

Not all the victims of terror are people who were hurt on Sept. 11. Just weeks after the infamous terrorist attack, the current head and Executive Director of the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention, Debbie Bretag, gave a speech at the opening of her group's convention.

"Getting back to normal should not be our goal," Bretag said. "Rather, changing what has been considered to be normal and acceptable must be our mission."

Bretag said the rivers of tears shed by our nation must not be shed in vain but hopefully turned into rivers of social change for those of us subjected to domestic or communal terror across America.

"Right here in Illinois," she said. "Far too often, children live in terror in their own homes - victims of child abuse or witnesses to violence committed by the adults in their lives.

The violence in our streets can terrorize an entire community, numbing our children, youth and families, diminishing their ability to meet their most basic human need for connection and intimacy."

She called us to be aware of the violence suffered by women and girls as victims of what she refers to as "intimate partner and sexual violence."

After her speech, Bretag pointed out that hate crimes and violence have permeated our country for centuries.

She said, "Many young men, especially African-Americans...are dying on our streets, leaving a generation fatherless and with far too few role models."

Bretag also wanted us to be aware of the suffering of those young people for whom there is seldom a voice due to the shame and feeling of disgrace shared by the unfortunate victims and their families. Here I refer to the number of gay and lesbian youths who often turn to suicide in their attempts to deal with their anguish and victimization caused by vicious acts of bias, teasing and exclusion.

Bretag's agency strives "to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence in families and communities throughout (the state) and society as a whole through the initiation or support of...advocacy and training; evaluation and research," to quote from their Mission Statement.

Two of the youth violence prevention programs operated by the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention are YouthPeace and SisterNet. These two programs were recently distinguished by receiving the BP Leader Award, which made available to them a substantial amount of money to help fund some of the agency's expansion projects.

The BP Leader Award will enable the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention to add a staff person to each program and expand services throughout the Chicago collar counties.

The Illinois Center for Violence Prevention was founded in 1992. YouthPeace was initiated in the fall of 1995 to build a network of young people who want to be leaders in violence prevention and peacemaking in their families, schools and communities in local, regional and statewide violence prevention efforts.

In February 1998, YouthPeace added SisterNet in response to the young women in YouthPeace who advocated for a safe place to address violence against and by girls. SisterNet is incorporated into each YouthPeace chapter, according to the group's Web site.

The day I met Youth Initiatives Coordinator Mari Sanchez, she spoke passionately and articulately YouthPeace and SisterNet. She summarized for me the program's aims and goals and briefly explained how these two programs function.

"We're hoping that it really helps them (the youth) get a sense that they can accomplish things that they

plan," Sanchez said.

"We hope that the experience they have planning the projects that they're doing through the program can transfer to other areas of their lives. (Due to their involvement with these programs), they realize how hard it is to do public speaking, or how hard it is to get organized. They understand that you can't give up, you have to keep trying, and that sometimes you have to rethink your strategy.

"We hope that they learn all those very important lessons that are going to be useful to them when they are adults. We're hoping also to give them the opportunity to overcome some fears.

"Many times, young people feel discouraged. They don't feel they can make a difference. So part of it is showing them that there are things that they can do and that they are important members in their community.

"Our ultimate goal also is to decrease violence in society. Many times, when you have kids from very different environments, whether it's because of economic backgrounds or racial backgrounds or whatever reason, they have all these preconceived notions about each other that are not necessarily true.

"So, by exposing them to each other, they start realizing that they have a lot in common. We're statewide so we have 22 chapters. We have urban, suburban, rural and smaller town kids, so we have all kinds of kids. Our model is to prevent violence by promoting leadership involvement.

"Once they want to work with us, the kids partner for a minimum of one year. We spend the first two or three months talking to them, making sure they're ready for it because not everyone is ready for that kind of commitment. They (each chapter) must also have some caring adult sponsor that would be willing to sponsor the youth through this process and help them out.

"The first thing they need to do is attend a three-day retreat, (where they meet) the other chapters, all at the same time. In those 3 days, they learn about violence prevention.

"Every month, we go out to every chapter. They have a project that they pick and their job is to carry it through. We prepare them for up to a year to implement their projects," said Sanchez.

According to the group's Web site, YouthPeace can be sponsored and developed in a community, region, state or country as a membership group or project through which young people can work in partnership with adults and their peers. Sponsoring groups can include schools, community policing programs, business groups, civic clubs or service organizations.

YouthPeace activities at the local

www.wethepeoplemedia.org



Citywide youth participants, volunteers and employees of the YouthPeace/SisterNet, a youth initiative program by the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention, gather together during their annual retreat this year.

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

level can take place in schools and communities and can include activities such as conflict resolution and peer mediation, peer and adult education, mentoring and education of younger children, and various media projects.

"[One] of the hardest, most rewarding and downright enjoyable of experiences!"

—PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

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No Corraling at Cabrini

by Beauty Turner

"Gun Smoke" doesn't have anything on Cabrini-Green this summer. On June 13, gunslingers dueled in the streets and sheriffs tried to restore order in the North Side development.

On that day, two men were killed and one was left in critical condition. A 14-year-old girl suffered a grazing wound to her thigh. The two young men who were killed were not residents of Cabrini-Green, according to numerous residents who I interviewed. The four victims included three men in their late 20s, plus the little girl who was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was scraped by a bullet.

Many of the residents said they believe that somebody tried to rob some local drug dealers, who responded with armed force.

Chicago Police officers at the scene agreed. The officers said they believe these shootings may be drug- and gang-related but are not sure.

In the meantime, an emergency meeting was called by Marvin and Marice Edwards, twins who manage the high rises in the Cabrini Green development. The meeting took place at 1230 North Larrabee, on Friday, June 14.

The room was packed like a suitcase that's going overseas, no elbowroom. Wall-to-wall people consumed the small space on the second floor. I stopped counting after 100 people were there.

Commander Charles Williams, who oversees the police department's public housing unit, said, "We are going to work closely with the residents so that we can resolve this situation. As you well know, many of the violent acts that take place in the developments are perpetrated by non-leaseholders.

"In the meantime, we will put the buildings under a lock down. Anyone who doesn't have an ID will not be allowed in the buildings."

One resident shouted out, "What about our children? Most of them don't have an ID."

After hearing that statement, Williams said children without identification will be escorted to their apartments.

At this point in the meeting, a young man in his early twenties screamed out, "You're going to let them lock you up like criminals. You didn't do the killing. Someone else did but yet you're going to do hard time for it.

"So that would mean if I came to see my ailing grandmother, since I don't have an ID, I couldn't get in. That's bull s—.

"There have been many killings that have taken place in Cabrini. Why are these killings any different? I'll tell you why. Because it just means that this is just a way of the city getting closer to taking your homes."

A few of the residents agreed with the young man by showing a nod of their heads. A few mumbled underneath their breath that the young man was a drug dealer who just wanted the buildings to stay open so that he could continue to sell his drugs freely.

Diedre Matthews, a member of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, said, "If that means saving people's lives, I agree. Lock the buildings down."

Lashanda Gates, a resident of Cabrini for 4 years, said, "I agree with the Commander. If you have to lock them down to save lives, do it."

Gates continued, "But the city should help us get out of here by giving us Section 8s. The only way to stop the madness is if they close them down."

A 54-year-old resident named Isabella Malone was very upset by some residents' reaction to Commander Williams' comments. She said, "The residents disrespected the commander and the families that lost their love ones." Malone continued, "After all, he's trying to save their lives."

But another resident agreed with those who criticized Commander Williams. "Why should we have to suffer for the actions of a few? We don't want to be locked down," this resident said.

Chicago Housing Authority spokesperson Derek Hill said, "Whatever it takes to keep our residents safe is what we



Jane Ramsey, executive director of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and Richard S. Rhodes, JCUA president, present Cabrini Green LAC president Carol Steele, co-founder of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, with a "Courageous Voices" award for her housing advocacy during a JCUA meeting in May.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

will do."

That week, the whole development was locked down, just as the police commander promised. Each resident had to show their IDs and those who didn't have IDs had to have residents with IDs to prove they live there.

On June 29, two young men were arrested for the first shooting and another one was being sought. A police source said the original incident was not gang related. The shootings resulted from a personal argument.

**Dept. of Health
AD**

Stop The Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

The re-entry of ex-offenders back into society is as scary for the ex-offender as it is for everyone else. The neighbors lock their doors. No one wants to take the time to say hello and they tell all their friends about you and what your crime was.

The neighborhoods with the highest numbers of ex-offenders are trying to raise awareness and develop some type of organizations in order to address this issue. In the publication Newstips put out by the March 14 Community Media Workshop, Edward Bailey of the South Austin Coalition was quoted as saying, "We are facing a massive wave of ex-offenders returning to our communities with no jobs, no housing, no mental health care."

The prison system is failing to rehabilitate, say many advocates. Therefore, public safety is at risk when the criminals return to the streets.

Activist Cheryl Chukwu of the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety said, "If they can't get a legitimate job, they're going to do illegal things."

Felons are barred from the fields that

of cocaine. While she was incarcerated, she lost her children. The oldest boy went to live with his father and the rest of the children, 3 girls and 1 boy, went to live with her sister.

While she was serving her time, the sister and her husband adopted the four children.

She isn't allowed to see her children. She hasn't been able to talk to them on the phone. She has been out for over two months now. She has been helped in getting a job and her brother gave her a place to stay. Her parole officer helps her with most of the other problems she has to face on the outside.

She feels that the laws are more strict with women than men.

The ironic part of this story is that now that she has served her time, the U.S. Sentencing Commission has recommended that Congress reduce sentencing for cocaine and crack possession.

They recommend that instead of 5 years for 5 grams, the amount should be raised to 25 grams.

The Commission also suggests that they take into consideration whether or not there was any violence involved in the commission of the crime.

The prison system is failing to rehabilitate, say many advocates. Therefore, public safety is at risk when the criminals return to the streets.

require state certification, such as barbers, hairdressers and nail technicians, but the prisons are still giving training in these same fields. Communities are holding their own forums in Humboldt Park, Roseland, Englewood and Lawndale. The South Austin Coalition has started workshops covering the trends in alternatives to incarceration, programs to reduce the rate of return and address racial profiling in the justice system.

Meanwhile, the Rev. John Crawford is raising the issue of inadequate means of getting medication for ex-offenders on the West Side who have medical and mental health problems.

Extraordinary Injustice

One ex-offender who deserves help is Kim Allen. Allen is a woman who had to serve a five-year sentence for possession

I read this in the June 10th edition of Lawyers Weekly USA. For Kim, this is what we call too little too late. Her parole officer can't put in for expungement until she has been out for a certain amount of time and she has proven that she has been clean.

County Workers

On July 11, a number of county workers sat on the steps of the Cook County Courthouse. They went on strike.

Their slogan was "Crime doesn't pay, neither does the county".

They want a new contract and more pay.

U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-7) announced on July 16 that the Illinois Department of Corrections has been granted a \$2 million award.

This grant comes from the U.S. Department of Justice Serious and Violent

CONDOLENCES

RJ would like to extend our deep regards to the family of 10-year-old Rita Haskins who died of a gunshot wound to the head from a stray bullet during a dispute in early May at the Harold Ickes Homes.

We would also like to extend our deep regards to the family of Shani Lawrence, who died shortly after being struck by a runaway van, as well as to the families of Anthony Stuckey and Jack Moore, who were both killed by an angry mob after their van struck Lawrence and two other women in late July.

Condolences also to the families of Lathrop Homes residents Dorothy Johnson and Bernice Williams, that both died of long-time illnesses in May and July.



Former gubernatorial candidate Roland Burris (at the podium) speaks on behalf of Ill. Rep. Constance Howard's (D-Chicago) (right of Burris) Expungement legislation during a press conference given by Howard earlier this year. Also pictured are other elected officials and advocates of the house bill.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Offenders Re-Entry Initiative.

This grant targets 200 adult males ages 18-24 and 10 juveniles ages 14-17 to be helped by the Illinois Department of Corrections to re-enter society. These are people returning to the North Lawndale community.

There will also be help provided to those on parole in Austin, West Humboldt Park and West Garfield. Davis was quoted as saying:

"I commend the Department of Justice and the Illinois Department of Corrections on this initiative and look forward to some positive outcomes which will help us to better understand and deal more effectively with the issues surrounding ex-offender re-entry into normal society."

These people can be helped by the entire community. We can forgive them and treat them with some type of dignity. We can treat them as we would like to be treated had we made a mistake. Show them some love.

A Prior Effort

One earlier effort to help ex-offenders was covered in the April 2001 issue of *Residents' Journal*, where Wateka Kleinpeter wrote about the passage of House Bill 300. According to Ill. Rep. Constance Howard (D-Chicago) and U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Chicago), the law will allow people with certain negative information in their backgrounds to have a second chance to get their lives back on track.

Davis testified back in February 2001 to the Illinois House Rules Committee that as of November 2000, 45,617 adults were incarcerated and 29,120 are on parole in Illinois. Davis was relaying information from a study prepared by Claritas and commissioned by the Stein Family Foundation. Davis said that 70 percent of the men in one West Side neighborhood in his district fall into that category. He also said, "The lack of employment is the number one

reason for ex-offenders to commit new crimes."

Howard put together a group of citizens that included law enforcers, social workers, community representatives and media personnel, and started meeting weekly at Northeastern University's Center for Inner City Studies.

She then began to talk to other politicians and ask for their help. People were coming to her from all over the city for jobs.

If a person is found to be innocent, their records could be expunged, Howard said. She also proposed six other conditions where the records could be expunged: some misdemeanor convictions, some minor felonies, if people charged but not convicted, minors sentenced as adults and minors sentenced to probation or conditional discharge.

Many people's criminal records have caused them to lose their jobs, prevented them from accessing social services, and made them ineligible for public housing and scholarships and grants.

Howard has a master's of science in corrections and criminal justice. She attended Chicago State University. She successfully got the bill passed April 5, 2001.

The vote was 115 for, with only 2 saying no.

There was one supporter who had been in jail who came to testify on one of the busses of supporters.

Algie Crivens had served 8 years of a life sentence for murder. He was later found to be innocent but he still had a record.

He has a bachelor's degree but he still can't find even a minimum wage job.

There are ex-cons with other problems:

A friend, Sylvester, only wanted to be able to vote, but he couldn't get registered.

He had joined a religious Muslim organization which had helped him gain his freedom, get him a job and find him a place to stay. He died a year ago. He was never given the right to vote.

Positive Residents of CHA

by Bobby Watkins

At first, I didn't think that an article about "positive residents of CHA" would be on going because we never hear about the good things that go on in the developments, even as residents living in the developments. Do something negative and it spreads like wild fire but do something good and recognition is slow to come.

Now, I feel so good that there are so many residents in CHA doing so many positive things, especially when it comes to things that help our young residents. For there are and never will be enough positive things for our youth. It is also good to see so many residents joining the work force and becoming productive young men and women in the community. One of the women interviewed for this article was saying how there have been times when she has been in the grocery store in her area and she overheard a conversation by people who do not know she is a public housing resident herself. She overheard these people talking about how 'those people' are 'bringing down the community.' When these folks find out she is one of those people, they are shocked.

And now, with so many of the residents in the different developments working at various jobs, people can't just pick you out as one of those 'project people.'

As you will see from reading about the people in this article, residents are moving on up with the hope that CHA's new, mixed-income communities will be a better and safer place to live:



Bonnie Brown
Photo by Bobby Watkins

with people about the help one can get there, knowing from personal experience that one can say no to drugs and try to help keep our youths out of the gangs. Having a teenage son of his own, Charles feels this we cannot talk about enough about the importance of keeping kids away from gangs, especially with all the gang wars going on now.

So Charles, keep up the good work for it is truly needed.

Bonnie Brown

A former resident of Stateway Gardens for 10 years and currently a holder of a Housing Choice Voucher (formerly known as a Section 8 certificate),

Bonnie is a person who is always thinking of others.

When she was a resident of Stateway, she was involved with the Step Up program, and volunteered with tenant patrol and the youth program in the Stateway Resident Organization program. She also volunteered with the Chicago Housing Authority's Resident Outreach Department, formerly Preventive Programs, where she is now employed.

She is out there knocking on doors to check on seniors to see if they're alright when it is too hot or getting her tenant patrol groups together for meetings or to see to it that they are in tune with the community policing program in the community, stop the violence marches or just the monthly tenant patrol meetings. She tries her best to tend to these things.

Bonnie is one of those people who we need to say to keep up the good work. We need many more like you.

Deborah Britton

A hard working single mom and eight-year resident of Lathrop Homes, Deborah just started her own resident-owned business. Always interested in the welfare of children, Debbie started her own child care resource and referral service.

As a single mom, she once needed these services and knew many other parents in the same situation. These parents could find jobs, even with decent pay, but they couldn't find safe, reliable child care while they were at work.

Debbie has taken the time to carefully screen and check references and evaluate her child care workers according to strict criteria. Her program was started because of the great demand for in-home day care and the fact that quality care is hard to find.

This agency services all ages but mostly focuses on infants and toddlers. These are the children who can best benefit from care in a home environment because they require more individual attention. Her service is available to any resident of Illinois without regard to income.

Debbie said her purpose is to serve families in need of in-home child care, and her



Charles Miller
Photo by Bobby Watkins

Charles Miller

Charles is a former Rockwell Gardens resident who is still active in the development and still has family members living there. Charles has always been one to try and help others, be it the older people in the development or as a volunteer at Marilac House, the community center that helps people in the neighborhood.

We hear often about young men in CHA falling on bad times. But Charles considers his younger days a learning experience. He fought hard to get his life back on the straight and narrow. With the help of his loving wife and family and with God in his life, he did just that. It wasn't easy but he took on jobs such as Earnfare and even one of the scavenger companies.

On his first day, Charles saw a dead baby. But this incident did not keep Charles from going to the negative things that we see destroy so many men, not just the men of public housing. Charles got back into the church, which really helped him to stay positive.

Now Charles is back trying to help residents and anyone else get help and many more things through his employer, Haymarket House. He feels good talking

mission is to match parents with quality child care providers who take special precautions to ensure the health, safety and general well-being of our children. This is something needed everywhere; more people need be concerned about the welfare of our future.

Thanks, Debbie. Keep up the good work.

Donnie Allen

A resident of Henry Horner Homes/Westhaven for 23 years, Donnie has always been active in the development as well as the community. She started as a volunteer with PM 1 Management, where

she now holds down a full-time job. She has been involved in several programs that benefit the residents, such as the summer food program, the James Jordan Boys and Girls Club, the Henry Horner Asthma Pediatrician Program, and anything else that might be going on in the community.

Donnie is one of the many positive residents trying to help make CHA a better place to live. Keep up the good work.

Byron Ross

Also a resident of Westhaven, Byron also is now an

employee of PM 1 management, where he is a leasing agent. Management officials spoke very highly of Byron as someone who you can always count on. He is someone who is always considerate of other residents and eager to help them in whichever way he can.

This young man is a prime example that there are young men in the developments who want to do more than gang bang and sell drugs. Keep up the good work, Byron, and stay positive.

Byron Ross
Photo by Bobby Watkins

Another good thing about Westhaven is that their Operations Manager is also a resident. Who knows what's best for residents but a resident? Her name is Delphane Jasper.

Juwana Howard

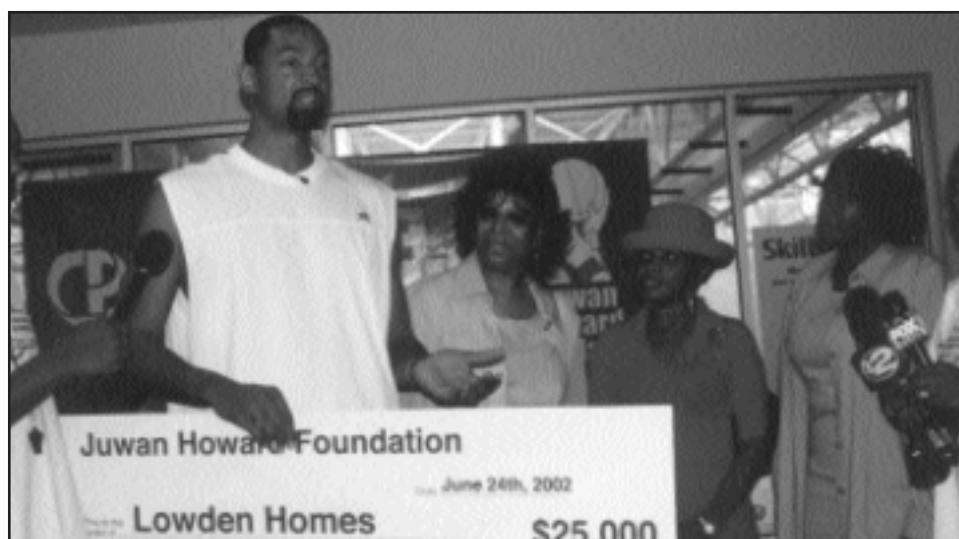
A former resident of the Lowden homes and now an NBA basketball player with the Denver Nuggets, Juwan said in a recent interview that he would just like to instill in the youth in CHA that you can be productive young men and women in society, regardless of what people say. He has given back to his community in several ways. He funded a basketball court and recently presented a check for \$25,000 to Myra King, president of the Local Advisory Council for Trumbull/Lowden Homes.

Juwana also had several youths from the development participate in a basketball camp at a local basketball club. The youths from the development were there with other youths who were picked through the Board of Education. They attended the camp through the literacy program sponsored by the Juwan Howard Foundation.

Howard feels education is the key for our youths. Howard said he gives funds to Lowden because it's his home development. He pointed out, however, that there are kids from other developments who do participate in his literacy program.

Asked about the Plan for Transformation and what he thought about it, he said he really hadn't heard a lot about it but had seen a few of the developments being torn down.

He added that he hopes CHA will be able to find homes for all families going through this process. Juwan, keep being a positive role model for our youth and may nothing but the best come to you.



NBA Denver Nuggets star Juwan Howard presents a \$25,000 check to CHA Lowden Homes LAC President Myra King (third from left) and Stephanie Turnbull (far right), the private property manager, to refurbish the basketball court and playground where he grew up. A portion of the money will go towards the underwriting of a tutoring program for the development's youths. Also pictured is Shirley Hammond, (2nd from left) LAC president for CHA Senior North

Los altos costos de las medicinas

por Bobby Watkins

Quienes leen mis artículos con regularidad saben que he venido escribiendo desde hace cierto tiempo acerca de los altos costos de las medicinas y cómo estos costos están afectando no sólo a nuestros ancianos y a las personas que reciben los beneficios de Medicaid, sino también a la gente trabajadora pobre que lucha por mantenerse fuera de las listas de beneficencia pública.

Conozco a una joven madre que gana el salario mínimo, tiene tres hijos y, sin embargo, no tiene seguro médico. Sí, es cierto, siempre pueden acudir al Cook County Hospital. Pero no pueden acudir a ese centro como la gente solía hacerlo. Ahora, hasta los miembros del personal de Cook County Hospital quieren saber cómo van a pagarle sus servicios.

Esta situación asusta a mucha gente y me refiero tanto a los que tienen la tarjeta Medicaid como a los que no la tienen. Ahora, a partir del 1 de julio, en lugar de pagar \$1 por cada medicamento con receta, quienes reciben los

beneficios de Medicaid deberán pagar más. Es una pena que cosas como éstas puedan ocurrir en este país. Muchas personas creen que vivimos en el país de las oportunidades y nosotros ni siquiera tenemos un buen plan de atención médica para atender a nuestros propios ancianos. Además, se están eliminando los programas dirigidos a los minusválidos, para no mencionar el problema de conseguir vivienda a precios asequibles. Ya hay un gran número de personas que no saben si les quedará dinero para comer si compran sus medicinas. La siguiente pregunta que nos haremos será "¿Dónde voy a dormir?" Desde hace cierto tiempo se ha hablado mucho acerca de estos problemas. En efecto, Families USA publicó información que demuestra cómo los precios para los medicamentos con receta que necesitan más comúnmente los ancianos se elevaron al triple de la tasa de inflación del año pasado. Es algo muy triste, considerando que los ancianos viven con unos ingresos fijos, mientras que año tras año los medicamentos con receta siguen aumentando vertiginosamente a niveles que superan con creces la inflación.

Ron Pollack, director ejecutivo de Families USA, señaló que no hay razones para estos alarmantes aumentos de precio. El costo de los medicamentos genéricos con receta aumentó 1.8 por ciento en comparación con el aumento de 8.1 por ciento en el costo de los medicamentos de marca con receta. Los precios



These CHA North Central Scattered Site Young Achievers 4-H Club members were among those selected in May from the County Fair competition to attend the State Fair in Springfield later this year. Also pictured is CHA official Raul Valez (right) and North Central LAC president Maria Fonseca (third right).

Photo by Bobby Watkins

Corrections

Robert Davidson, LAC vice president of the CHA's Lathrop Homes was mistakenly listed as being a resident of the Robert Taylor Homes in a photo caption that appeared on page 9 of the March-April 2002 issue of Residents' Journal.

The LAC meetings dates for NC Scattered Sites residents that were listed on page 22 of the March/April 2002 issues of RJ were incorrect. The meetings are held every fourth Wednesday of the month.

para los fármacos de marca aumentaron con una rapidez cuatro veces y media mayor que los genéricos.

Se dice que los ancianos se benefician cuando hay un mayor número de fármacos genéricos en el mercado. Pero, ¿qué ocurre con los ancianos que no pueden tomar genéricos? Mucha gente me dice que quiere saber cuándo los legisladores se van a oponer a estas anomalías, comprender la importancia de esta situación y hacer algo al respecto. Necesitamos ayuda, no sólo para nuestros ancianos, sino también para todos los que nos preocupamos por la posibilidad de enfermarnos. Seguiré escribiendo acerca de este tema porque es un problema constante para el cual necesitamos ayuda.

CHINESE TRANSLATION

KOREAN TRANSLATION

RUSSIAN TRANSLATION

Letters to the Editor

CHA Management Concerns

Dear Edito:

I'm an ex-employee of a management contractor for the Chicago Housing Authority.

I would like to share my insights with you about public stealing/corruption at the new Chicago Housing Authority, which is under the direction of the Mayor Richard J. Daley.

The difference between the old and the new Chicago Housing Authority is that the old Chicago Housing Authority paid its employees directly and was following direct regulations from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for living code standards and hiring practices, awards of bids to contracts and wages, etc.

Employees were protected under the Davis-Bacon Act. The Davis-Bacon Act passed in 1931 and was the first federal wage law to provide prevailing wage protection to non-government workers. By establishing a local wage standard that contractors have to pay worker on public projects, the Congress intended to provide a level playing field on which contractors could compete for work base on wages that were "prevailing" in the area, rather than rewarding the practice of slashing workers' wages in order to win contracts.

Now, under the new Chicago Housing Authority award contracts to the so-called private firms, each development is considered its

own entity.

The private firms hire people as they wish. They hire Joe Blows off of the

street for positions established for skilled and certified personnel, like electricians, plumbers, boiler-room personnel and carpenters, just to name a few.

For example, each Joe Blow the private firm hires is labeled as a janitor in order to skim the wages. Then he is ordered to perform work as a licensed electrician and plumber as a carpenter, as an appliance repairman, but for which he has no training or experience in the field. They are getting the correct wages stated in the contract (the contract which follows the Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wages for each position).

But here is the issue. The private firm pays the wages they wish to the employees. There

are eleven

private firms but the funny thing is that there is only one private firm that is paying the correct wages

stated in the Davis-Bacon Act (prevailing wages that all agencies and local government pays, if it is getting 100 percent of whatever portion from the federal government).

Because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has not left the federal government, I know that the Chicago Housing Authority gets 100 percent funding down to it pencils and pens from taxes paid through out this great nation, the United States of America.

So where is the difference of the wages going?

All I am asking for is true and justifiable justice.

- Jesse Quiroga

Just wishing to be different will not cause change. Instead, it usually causes discouragement. Following a plan a step at a time is the way to real success. If you don't believe it, just ask someone who is in recovery from an addiction – they know they know.

Follow The Plan

by Dr. Bill Miller
Haymarket
Center

Someone wisely advised, 'Don't be discouraged. Everyone who got where he is started where he was.'

This bit of interesting advice was given to someone who was analyzing his or her life from a warped point of view. They thought success was the result of a giant leap forward, of suddenly becoming 'successful.'

Often the people who arrive at Haymarket Center express this very attitude. They think that somehow, maybe magically, they will be released from the bondage to their addiction and will be different.

That's a nice idea but something that will not happen. Quite frequently, the reason for failure to recover is directly related to unrealistic expectations about how different they should be compared to the amount of time they've been working at it.

Those of us who have been through the demanding difficulties of living on Earth know

that thinking success is immediate is unrealistic. We have learned by living that nothing is accomplished instantaneously, at least anything that is important or of any value.

People who really change are those who decide to do what it takes for as long as it takes to be different. They clearly see that any transformation must begin where they are and they must have a clear picture of the situation of their life now. Knowing where they are and where they want to be allows them to have a plan to get there.

Many addicts have only one way of dealing with life – be in control at all costs. Many people who are not addicts have the same unhelpful method of dealing with life.

Becoming a different person means that we will have to learn to adapt our way of doing things and responding to people and situations. At first, this can be real frightening.

Real significant change happens when a person is ready to care-

fully plan a way to become the person they want to be. This is the way anyone who has accomplished anything has done it. Whether it's getting an education, getting the job you really want, having the kind of family you've always wanted, or getting released from the bondage to an addiction, you start where you are and follow a plan.

Crystal Clear Views

Dear Crystal,

I'm eighteen years old and I just finished high school. I got accepted to a pretty good university and I go off to school in the fall. I'm worried about leaving home and moving to a new city. I'm nervous about meeting new people and I'm just scared of failure period. How can I get rid of these new life jitters?

-Sleepless in Chicago

Dear Sleepless,

Congratulations on your graduation and I'm very happy about you going off to college. A lot of people don't get the chance that you have been given.

Leaving home is hard to do and you should take this experience on as an adventure.

Concentrate on the positives rather than the negatives. For example,

you are now an adult and you have more freedom.

Meeting new people doesn't have to be hard; it can actually be fun. Just remember that other people are just as nervous as you are.

So just be open and friendly. A lot of people say that they met their best friends in college.

In your question, you mentioned the term



Crystal Medina

"new life". Don't look at your situation as your new life but as your old life with improvements.

Poetry Corner

Getting Out

by Dorothy Jean Battie

Creeping through the 'jets all day long.
Residents singing the same ole' song.

Gotta get out, where do I go from here?
It just doesn't matter. It can't be far, but not near!

Living in CHA seeing what I see every day.
People dying, everybody crying.
I can't see it being this way. We cry so loud we want to get out.
What the hell is it all about?

Don't want to be here. Don't want to stay!
'Cause the kids can't safely play.

Rats got it good, 'cause they reside here free.
Humans got to pay rent, or be put out on the street.

Can't walk down your side of the steps, says

the law,
because people getting killed in the halls.

Gang banging, selling drugs seem to be ways out,
big balling, shot calling, get a little clout, so much pain, with nothing to gain.

What do the people do, turn their heads without a clue!
So now you think hard and long,
surviving CHA you have to be strong.

First strike they say you've got to move today.

Second chances don't count. No how, no way.

Got to get out is all the residents pray, so their families can live to see another day.
No income, no food, so what do you do?
Get in that homeless line and meet your new crew.

Patience is of a virtue, so I have been told.
Like merchandise on the street CHA has been sold!

Sold us out like slaves back in the day.
Got to get out. Help me find a way!

Paradise

by Mbutu Mufami

What you are looking for is staring you in the face.
All you have to do is look in the proper place.

To see what you need to see,
You have to look where you need to look.
Once you find what you need to find, it will be like reading an open book.

No explanation needed.
No one needs to say a word.

Because once you hear and see it, it sings in your ear like a bird.

All that is needed after is to listen to these sounds.
For those inner words of peace and comfort
Will be there when no one else is around.

When you're in a sad and lonely place,

You will already know where to go.
Just reach down inside, unlock the door.
You will feel like you are right at home.

I Missed Too Many Days

by Ashley Adams

I missed too many days and it all pays.

I missed too many days and the sun's rays.

I missed too many days and the song says.

I missed too many days and the sky is gray.

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

In my last column, I posed (presented for consideration) the question, "What one word could possibly make a difference as we attempt to get along with one another in our homes, communities and world?"

The first word that comes to mind, of course, is love. And upon examining the index (a list of items as subjects or names detailed in a presented work that gives for each item the page where it may be found) in the back of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures and Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, I can safely write that there are few people, places or things that have had more said, sang or written about them than love.

The Bible states, "... God is love...love is from God...you must love your neighbor as you love yourself...there remain faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love...Let all your affairs take place with love...clothe yourself with love, for it is a perfect bond of union...have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins and you must love God."

But the Bible also states, "Because of the increasing lawlessness, the love of the greater number will cool off."

Love is referenced in the index of Bartlett's Familiar Quotations approximately 1100 times. The index references love quotes like "Brotherly love"; "Labor of love"; "How do I love thee...."; "Love is blind"; "'Tis better to have loved and lost...."; "All's fair in love and war"; and "America, love it or leave it." "You always hurt the one you love" is a phrase not found in either of those two texts, despite its popularity.

Love has been captured and expressed through word, deed and song from Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" to Disney's "Beauty and the Beast." It is characterized daily by "Love is..." in the cartoon section of the newspaper.

Many of us pay homage (show reverence, honor or respect) to love by putting everything else on hold to watch our favorite soap operas Mondays through Fridays. Some of us have done this for the past 40 years. In addition to watching soap operas, many of us celebrate Feb. 14, Valentine's Day.

All of this and humanity has yet to master the concept of love. Hence the saying, "Love is not enough." At

least, not the way we love.

While love may be what we long and search for, what we most often demand is respect. Lovers demand respect from lovers. Friends demand it from friends. Parents demand it from children. Governments demand it from governments. RESPECT is important.

Respect is defined as "to feel or show honor or esteem for; hold in high regard; to treat with deference; a yielding or giving up in opinion, judgment or wishes out of regard for another person; dutiful regard of the law; to show consideration for; avoid intruding upon or interfering with; to concern or relate to;

Respecting our bodies: Our bodies are the vehicles given us to travel through life. How far we travel depends on how well we treat these vehicles.

This means not smoking, especially around our children. Not exposing ourselves to the possibility of alcohol or drug addiction. Not overeating (I am guilty of that one) or doing anything to excess. By practicing what was once called the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Or, don't do anything to anyone else that you would not want done to you.

From my own experience, I have learned that you cannot

place to live when we don't. You cannot expect anyone else to respect where you live if you don't respect it yourself. We don't have to do a big part, just our part, by disposing of our trash/garbage properly; discouraging our children from vandalizing buildings and grounds; and being respectful and encouraging our children to be respectful of our neighbors.

Homelessness in Chicago is rising and making its presence more known every day in the form of homeless men, women and children in, on and around Chicago's Loop, Magnificent Mile (Michigan Avenue) and the surrounding neighborhoods.

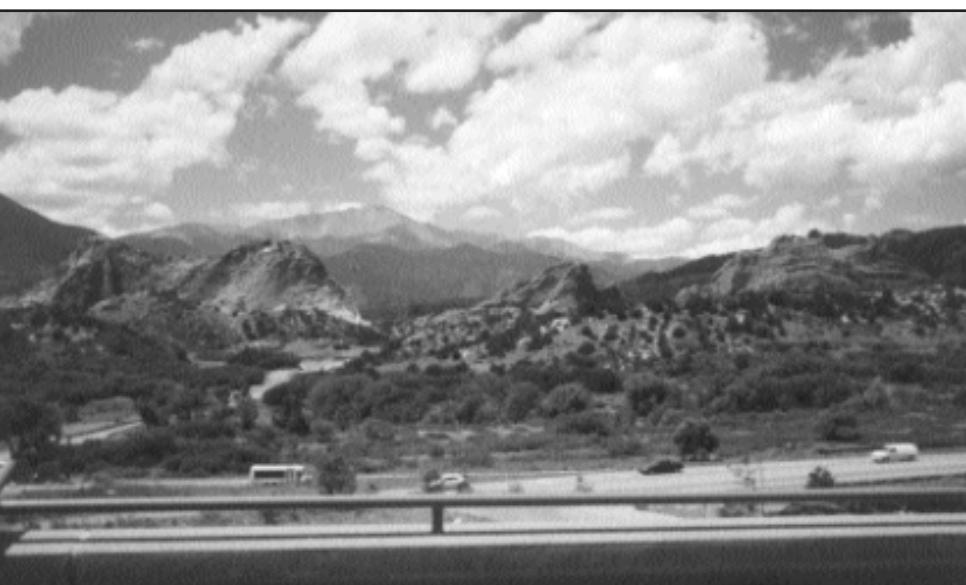
Increasingly, we all live with the disrespect of homelessness in Chicago. Most of Chicago works hard to ignore homelessness, looking the other way when they see it, crossing the street, walking around it when it gets too close, hoping and praying that it doesn't reach out and touch them. A few throw money at it in the form of a dollar here and there to a homeless individual standing in their way.

The disrespect of homelessness in Chicago screams out as the homeless and those of us who face the possibility of being homeless watch metal, glass and concrete reach high into the sky, stretching out across the city with no housing for the homeless or the working poor. But no matter where we live, we should all respect where we live, if we respect having a place to live.

Respecting the Planet - This requires caring for everything on Earth in addition to mankind. All God's creatures great and small. Animals and plants. The soil. The water. The air. They are alive and they live just like we do. But, most importantly, they are how we live and without them we would die. Still, we have no appreciation for them. We disrespect them every day. We take advantage of being created the superior creature by means of our intelligence.

Man is the only creature that destroys itself and others. Animals kill each other for food, only as a means of survival. Even with our superior intelligence, in comparison to the rest of the creation, we are the weakest creature. The planet can survive without us. Respect that we cannot survive without it.

Respectfully,
Pat



Like man, the massive mountains of Colorado Springs, Col., demand respect. Many men who came to take the mountain became part of the mountain.

Photo by Patricia Johnson Gordon

and an expression of respect or deference."

While we may sing, "what the world needs now is love, sweet love," we could really use some respect, real respect. Respect for everything, everybody, everywhere because everything has to do with everything and everybody has to do with everybody and we all do it on the same planet.

September 11, 2001, should help us to appreciate that. While we are many peoples, we are only one world. The tragic events of that day continue to resonate throughout the world and the world economy. Truly, if one of us is bad off, we are all bad off. We wonder what possible effect could another person, one that we don't even know, have on the lives of our loved ones - until an unknown person brings tragedy or joy to those lives.

And respect, like the air we breathe, must begin with each individual. We must learn to respect the body that houses us, the home that houses our body, and the planet that houses them both.

Let me define these terms:

do anything to anyone else without doing it to yourself as well. You cannot disrespect anyone without disrespecting yourself. You cannot harm another person without harming yourself in some way, shape, form or fashion. We must strive for physical, mental and emotional well being. R-E-S-P-E-C-T yourself.

Respecting our homes: It is said that we need three things to survive. Food, shelter (housing) and water. If you don't have any place to live, you don't have any place to do other things vital to a reasonable quality of life.

While it may be said that public housing in Chicago is in the condition that it is today due to a lack of respect by its residents, that's only partly true. Public housing in Chicago and every other city in America is or was comprised of at least three parties: residents, management and the City, and the state and federal government.

We all disrespected public housing in Chicago. But the City, state and federal governments don't live here. We do. And they will have some

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South African computer instructors, Amishi Lalbahadur (front), Sandhya Subramoney (middle) and Octavia Mavimbela (back), received Cisco Systems training, which began in June, at the FIC in collaboration with South Africa, Chicago State University and the United States Agency for International Development who funded the 70 or more hours of training.

Photo taken by Mary C. Johns

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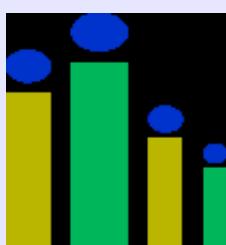
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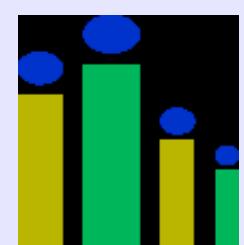
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