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Credits

Publisher
Ethan Michaeli

Editor-in-Chief
Mary C. Johns

Assistant Editor **Outreach Director**
Beauty Turner Gabriel Piemonte

Editorial Assistant **UYIJP Development Associate**
Crystal Medina Micah Madenberg

RJ Correspondents

Earl Battles, Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson, Deborah A. Britton, Cecilia A. Clark, Cenabeth Cross, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Michael Ibrahim, Alicia McNeal, Cheryl Murphy, Karen Owens, Lorenzia Shelby, Jacqueline Thompson

Photographers

Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson, John Brooks, Cenabeth Cross, Michael Ibrahim, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Karen Owens, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner

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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.

Our Readership

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

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

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

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

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The Compassionate Blues

By Ethan Michaeli,
Publisher

Where does the nation's heart still beat? Once upon a time, the thump-thump of compassion was not hard to hear. The footsteps of those who marched for justice and equal rights generated a powerful rhythm that was audible around the country.

Today that beat is a little softer, but the echoes can still be heard among the abandoned buildings, vacant lots and potholed streets of Chicago's low-income neighborhoods. The nation's heart was beating loudly the other night at Lee's Unleaded Blues. Located at 75th Street and South South Chicago Avenue (the double south to indicate the direction of 'South Chicago Avenue'), Lee's is among the last of the city's 'juke joints.' Seven nights a week, Lee's hosts authentic Blues acts for a largely African American crowd. Everyone is welcome at Lee's, though, and on many nights, you can see working class people along with college students and even a few downtown types. In a city infamous for its segregation and racial tension, Lee's is a rare haven for those who long for a truly multicultural place to have a good time.

Thursday, Dec. 16, was a special night at Lee's. Some 100 people gathered in the club for "Beauty Turner Appreciation Night." Beauty has been *Residents' Journal's* assistant editor for several years now and has conducted award-winning journalism as well as groundbreaking research. She also writes for other publications around town.

Many of Beauty's journalistic colleagues came to honor her that night, as did those who know Beauty for the activist work she did before coming to work here. Veterans of the struggle to secure civil rights were shoulder-to-shoulder with hard-core revolutionaries, opponents of police brutality and Beauty's family members. Beauty sat at



Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

Lee's front table, admirers on all sides and with a constant stream of people coming up to pay their respects.

She was serenaded by the host of the evening, Clarence "Little Scottie" Scott, a blues musician, licensed evangelist and civil rights activist. Dressed in a fashionable, lemon yellow suit and matching hat, Scott sang, the band played, and no one escaped without having a good time.

Scott sang his recent hit, "Hot Dog," a raunchy number in which he asks a woman to "take off

your wig so I can play with your bald head," among other lyrics. Scott announced, with equal parts humor and frustration, that he would be running for mayor under a "Poor Peoples Campaign." The festivities lasted well into the night.

Scott, 59, said he came up with the idea of an appreciation night for Beauty because of her decades of service to the community.

"I like Beauty because she reminds me of Harriet Tubman," Scott told me during a phone interview. "She is a strong lady in the movement and she isn't scared."

Coming from Scott, that

is no small tribute. Scott is himself a longtime activist who has risked his life many times. In his native city of Florence, South Carolina, during the late '50s, he was firebombed by members of the Ku Klux Klan. It took him 3 1/2 years in the hospital to recover from those injuries, though he still bears the scars.

He spent many of the following years marching with Martin Luther King Jr. During those turbulent years, he started accumulating a collection of political buttons. Everywhere he went, Scott gathered little metallic disks featuring candidates and causes he supported.

After King was assassinated, Scott continued his nationwide activism, his blues and his button collecting. He became a fixture at the political events and protest rallies. Eventually, after numerous requests from the public, he began designing and selling his own, unique buttons.

The blues and the movement have both faded from public view. Juke joints like Lee's have disappeared around the country, and the leaders of the movement have "sold out to the dollar," Scott said. He settled in Chicago because it is one of the few cities in the country where the beat of the blues continues.

"Chicago is a thriving town – a town a person can sink their roots in and make a living," Scott explained.

"You might not get rich, but you can work."

Playing music is becoming more important to Scott these days. His second wife was murdered less than one year ago, and he is suffering from numerous health problems.

"Now I'm getting older and I can't march as much any more," he explained. "Now I'm trying to make my music my ministry."

Little Scotty believes that the nation's heart has grown weak and cold with disuse. In his lifetime, he has watched the general abandonment of once-teeming inner cities, the withering of government services for single mothers with young children, and the growth of a blood-thirsty foreign policy.

The demolition of the city's public housing developments is just the latest symptom of a national heart that is clogged and a national body that has grown obese and sedentary. After decades of social manipulation that wrecked the residents' family structures, inadequate and corrupt police practices, and an evaporating low-skill job market, Scott wasn't surprised

"Anywhere you have a lot of people stacked on top of each other, you're going to have problems," he reasoned.

"But those people were not savages. They were human beings. They could have been shown how to live."

Little Scotty believes that the nation and the planet have lost much as the protest marchers of yesterday have traded their dungarees, rubber-soled shoes and a life on the road for pinstripes, fancy heels and comfortable offices.

To Little Scotty and others who are still fighting for justice and equal rights, those one-time civil rights leaders have let the nation's sense of compassion atrophy. Recognizing the work of Beauty Turner was Little Scotty's way of demonstrating that there is beauty everywhere, even and especially in the poorest neighborhoods of the country. Little Scotty reminds all of us that a country, like a human being, cannot survive without a healthy heart.



Clarence "Little Scottie" Scott and his band perform at "Beauty Turner Appreciation Night" at Lee's Unleaded Blues, 75th Street and South South Chicago Avenue.

Special photo by Marc Monaghan

Transforming CHA

News Briefs

HUD Cuts Threaten CHA Bond

CHA's bond rating may be in jeopardy, according to the country's premier rating agency, because of dwindling commitment by the federal government to brick and mortar financing.

Standard & Poor's recently warned CHA that the decrease in funding could lead to a downgrade of their AA rating, according to a recent issue of *Crain's Chicago Business*. The rating is key to borrowing money.

In 2001, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development committed to \$291 million in capital funds as part of CHA's 10-year, \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation. Each year since, HUD has paid out less and less of that commitment, down from \$139 million in 2001 to \$120.9 million this year. HUD had originally promised \$139 million annually through 2009 and \$55 million each year after that for a decade.

New Drug Discount Program Launched

A new program will allow many Midwest prescription drug users to buy cheaper versions of their medication from overseas vendors, officials recently announced. The program is part of a nationwide effort to ease the burden of expensive medication on Americans.

All residents of Illinois are eligible to join the program, which allows consumers to purchase more than 100 of the most commonly prescribed drugs from companies in Europe in Canada.

A 2001 study by nationwide emergency food provider America's Second Harvest reported that 30 percent of their clients reported having to choose between food and medication. Another recent study reported that seniors at or below the Federal Poverty Level spend just under 15 percent of their income on medication.

President Reauthorizes TANF

According to the *Associated Press*, the U.S. Congress and President George W. Bush recently extended the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, tacking on the eighth six-month extension of the public assistance plan since its planned expiration in September of 2002. Calling the renewal a "clean" extension, public aid activists are breathing a sigh of relief that policy changes originally inserted in the law were struck down.

Before H.R. 5149 was enacted and the programs were extended, Senators Rick Santorum (R-Pennsylvania) and Evan Bayh (D-Indiana) attempted to move legislation to extend TANF that included two years and \$200 million worth of funding for the President's Marriage Initiative and \$100 million for "fatherhood programs." Funds for these programs would have been diverted from the TANF program.

The TANF Program is extended to March of 2005.

No New Vouchers in 2005 Budget

The National League of Cities reports that while the U.S. Congress rejected proposed cuts and dramatic changes to the Section 8 program, no new vouchers were added in this year's budget despite an ongoing call for more affordable housing by advocates and activists.

Congress shot down a proposed \$1.67 billion cut to the Section 8 program, as well as a rule shifting the program allocation to one large block grant to each state, two significant provisions of the Bush Administration's housing policy. At close to \$15 billion, the appropriation is \$681 million less than last year's Section 8 provision.

Closure Razes Resident Hopes

by Beauty Turner, Assistant Editor

In its last days, eight families resided at the otherwise empty public housing high-rise building at 4947 S. Federal. As the wind became colder and the nights grew longer with the coming of winter, these CHA residents waited. They felt as if their lives were being demolished along with the building that closed in late October.

According to former residents of the building, the closing process was confusing. CHA wanted to close the building on October 19, but later pushed back the date so residents could have more time to move. Relocation was supposed to be managed by the CHA and the Service Connectors, private businesses contracted with CHA to provide social service referrals to residents. But CHA was not prepared to handle relocation issues and problems, residents told me, throughout the process. Until the last days of the building, some residents did not know where they were going to live.

Adding to the uncertainty, many of the last residents in the building were elderly and disabled. In previous building closings, CHA moved these folks first. This wasn't the case with 4947 S. Federal.

One long-time resident of the building, Elaine White, gathered residents together to offer moving assistance by getting in touch with *Residents' Journal*.

"CHA doesn't seem to care about the seniors and the disabled people that are left behind in this building," White said.

White, who has a degree in social work and recently relocated herself from the building, was referring to her 83-year-old mother and her brother, Tyrone White, who is severely disabled and subsisting on a Social Security check. Her brother uses an oxygen machine that only holds air in it for one hour. If he is visiting anybody for more than an hour, he has to scramble back to his apartment to get a refill.

"I was told that my mother and my brother will be going to the Hilliard Homes," Elaine White said. "But now I'm being told that my brother cannot go to the Hilliard homes, so I'm worried about my brother because CHA hasn't secured a spot for him yet. So yes, that worries me."

Tyrone recently received his Housing Choice, or Section 8, Voucher. His Service Connector, Changing Patterns, has taken him to view apart-



Beauty Turner

ments. Some of the apartments they showed him, around 67th Street and Prairie and Calumet Avenues are "not fit for a dog to live in," he said.

"The foundation had holes in the floor, there were holes in the wall," White said. "It was colder in the apartment than it was on the outside."

Another major issue for Tyrone, and other residents as well, is the utility issue. White depends on his oxygen 24-hours a day; his equipment is always charging, running the electricity.

White eventually secured an apartment on the South Side using his

provider], Ms. Birdsong, that they weren't supposed to take us to high poverty areas. They can only take us to low poverty areas," she continued.

"I was later told from Mr. Ashford who is in Interstate Realty, that Ms. Birdsong wasn't supposed to tell me that," Henry went on to say.

At first, CHA wanted to close the building by October 19. They showed up with moving trucks to move some of the residents to the Dearborn Homes. Some of those moved to Dearborn, such as Delores Potts, would be moving again after her Section 8 apartment was inspected on October 20.

I asked CHA Relocation Specialist Rayne Martin how the housing authority would address the multiple issues of the remaining residents of the building.

Martin said she would get back to

Many of the last residents in the building were elderly and disabled. In previous building closings, CHA moved these folks first. This wasn't the case with 4947 S. Federal.

voucher. He found his new place on his own after it seemed to him the units Changing Patterns knew about were a step down from his apartment in Robert Taylor.

Another resident, George Wilson, is 53 years old and disabled. He found himself in a dilemma when his mother passed away and left him alone in her apartment in the building.

Wilson was never listed on the lease. But he lived with his ill, elderly mother for two years along with two of his brothers, who were on the lease. The brothers received Housing Choice Vouchers after the mother died.

George Wilson blamed both CHA and Interstate Realty, the private company CHA contracted to manage the Robert Taylor development.

"CHA and Interstate Realty knew that I lived here with my mother, but yet they will not give me a Section 8 voucher or a place to stay. I'm in a wheelchair and can barely move my hands. Where am I supposed to live?" Wilson asked, with a worried look on his face.

Vernelle Henry is another resident of 4947 S. Federal who is concerned with where she will stay after the building closes. After all, she has no income but has recently received a Housing Choice Voucher.

"I was told by Interstate Management that I could choose to look at apartments in any area that I wanted to move into – at least that is what they told us when we did our Housing Choice Surveys," Henry said.

"Now when it comes down to the wire, I was told by the lady from Changing Patterns [a social service

me about George Wilson but eventually said they were going to give the residents until October 26 to move. So the residents, including Tyrone, were able to breathe a little easier, without rushing up out of their building.

The Wilson brothers - including George - all moved to the Dearborn Homes as well despite concerns for their safety in the development.

But the problems won't end with the closing of 4947 S. Federal. Many of the residents have high hopes about their new apartments but may find trouble later on paying bills.

"Residents walk into an apartment and see wall to wall carpet and a ceiling fan and think they are in Pill Hill [a wealthy South Side area]," Elaine White said. "They don't know what to



Tyrone White, among the last of the residents relocated from 4947 S. Federal St., appears here with the oxygen tank he needs to breathe.

Photo by Beauty Turner

Transforming CHA

“Deadly Moves” - an Update

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief
and Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

The city, its police department and the Chicago Housing Authority recently proposed to increase police patrols at several public housing sites and in areas where residents have been relocated.

This announcement came after publication of “Deadly Moves,” a series of articles produced this September by *Residents’ Journal* and the *Chicago Reporter* investigative magazine on the increased murder rate in and around CHA communities since October 1999. “Deadly Moves” reported that the murder rate in CHA developments nearly doubled since the start of the Plan for Transformation, CHA’s \$1.6 billion redevelopment effort.

The series exposed continuing questions about the nature of police protection for residents of public housing, the vast majority of whom are women rearing young children.

Now police officers will be assigned to “hot spots” at eight CHA sites and in other areas for the public housing residents’ sake, according to CPD Deputy Superintendent Dana Starks.

“We are looking at the concerns of the residents and the [Local Advisory Council] presidents so we can attempt to address their needs,” he said during a November phone interview on the matter.

Uncensored Facts

Immediately after “Deadly Moves” hit the streets, the CHA and the CPD disputed the reports, which used their own data to show a substantial increase in shooting deaths at public housing sites and in other high poverty areas. Since the Chicago Housing Authority’s Plan for Transformation began in October 1999, CHA has continuously shuttered public housing high rises, driving residents into low-income, African American neighborhoods where a high concentration of crime already existed.

Beauty and I can attest to the fact that, before and

These elite units are dispatched and conduct aggressive visible patrols in parts of the city where violence appears likely to increase.

-Mayor Richard M. Daley

since the series of articles, public housing residents were often complaining to CHA officials during tenant meetings about the constant gang shootings and murders within their respective public housing sites.

In a mid-August public meeting, two elderly members of the Local Advisory Council for the CHA’s West Side LeClaire Courts housing complex pleaded with CHA CEO Terry Peterson and the Board of Commissioners to do something about the recent gang violence at their site.

“At least six to eight young men died due to shootings,” proclaimed Sandy Duncan, one of the two disengaged seniors.

The following month at the September CHA board meeting, a resident from the Rockwell Gardens public housing complex asked Peterson and the commissioners to do something about the removal of the police officers that were assigned to their location for the tenants’ safety and protection.

“Why doesn’t Rockwell have police protection anymore? We were at a meeting and we [residents] found out through another young lady that represents the building that we will not have police in Rockwell. They’re all going to Cabrini Green and Henry Horner and I want to know why we won’t have anyone?” she said.

Gossip was floating around at the time among residents at the CHA Cabrini Green housing complex that two white men had allegedly been found dead in an unoccupied unit.

Derek Hill, the director of CHA’s public affairs office, disputed the allegations during a phone interview in November.

“I had heard rumors of two Caucasian men who had been murdered in Cabrini, and also of two police officers being murdered there. But none of those are true,” he declared.

CPD spokesperson Pat Camden said the police raid was a routine drug bust, done with the assistance of camera surveillance.

Commentary

“The raids were a street corner conjunction operation. We had identified 7 to 15 targets undercover that we ended up taking into custody,” he said.

“By videotaping them, we end up with a 98 % conviction rate,” he explained.

Insecurity in CHA?

The CHA is now paying the CPD \$12 million annually since they replaced the public housing police force in 2000. Under the contract between CHA and CPD, police officers are required to walk up and down and around buildings, car patrol and establish relationships with residents, among other things, as a deterrent to criminal activities.

In “Deadly Moves,” we discovered that more than 350 police officers were detailed to man all of CHA’s now 20 family developments and 53 senior buildings. But only 13 police patrol cars were assigned to 11 CHA developments, according a 2003 report from Thomas P. Sullivan, the former State’s Attorney and then-independent monitor of the plan.

Shortly after the series of articles produced by *RJ* and the *Chicago Reporter*, Mayor Richard M. Daley held a press conference with top commanders from the police department and CHA officials, including CEO Terry Peterson.

The press conference announced a new police pilot program for 80 additional officers to be deployed at eight CHA sites, and 40 officers to be assigned to other areas around the city of Chicago where residents have relocated.

Throughout the press conference, which Beauty attended, the Mayor and other speakers referenced the decrease in crime in CHA developments. When Beauty and another reporter asked about the increased homicide rate to the Mayor, Peterson stepped in to answer the question. Peterson continued to dispute the idea that murders in CHA have increased.

Under the new pilot program, the police will be detailed in three family public housing developments currently under redevelopment in the Historic

Bronzeville District; four public housing developments that are used as temporary relocation sites; and at one CHA City-state property.

At the South Side Stateway Gardens “hot spot” and redevelopment site, just one building out of eight high-rise buildings currently remains. It is located in the vicinity of CPD’s newly constructed Central District Headquarters. Police will also be sent to the Robert Taylor Homes redevelopment site, where two of three remaining buildings are occupied.

The five additional sites are South Side developments Raymond Hilliard Homes, Harold Ickes Homes, Dearborn Homes and Altgeld Murray and West Side development LeClaire Courts.

A Confirmation of the Facts?

Mayor Richard M. Daley said at the October press conference that the new pilot program was “based on the latest information on gang rivalries and drug activities.

“These elite units are dispatched and conduct aggressive visible patrols in parts of the cities where violence appears likely to increase,” he said.

In a later interview in November, Chicago Police Deputy Superintendent Dana Starks defined what the city meant by “hot spot” areas.

“What CPD means when we say hot spots are peaks where violent activities occur in that frame; a spike in crime that some time occurs,” he told *RJ*.

CHA spokesperson Derek Hill said, during a mid-December interview, that the increased police presence at the eight targeted public housing sites is much needed to better deter other crimes besides homicides in these hot spots – these crimes, he added, were being perpetrated largely by non-public housing residents.

“Eighty percent of the people who are in violent crimes on our property are not residents of CHA,” he said.

“I think if you pass by Stateway or Robert Taylor you see fixed patrols, meaning there’s usually a patrol car sitting outside of either or,” Hill added.

In response to curious residents’ speculations as to why the police have now decided to increase its presence at these sites, especially at Stateway Gardens, where only one building remains, Hill said residents should be ecstatic and not complain.

“I don’t get why people would have any problems with police beefing up their patrols to make crime go down even further. That’s a good thing. People on one hand want better patrols, but on the other hand want to second guess the police. You shouldn’t second guess the police department to create harmony in your communities,” he said.

“You keep saying that ‘the people say.’ Well, the people aren’t police officers and have no idea how to make things improve out here in the streets,” Hill declared.

In December, after the announcement of the police pilot program, two young men were shot to death within a two-week span of time, according to Hill. One was Martin King, killed at the Dearborn Homes where the CPD were to increase their presence. Another shooting death occurred in Cabrini-Green on December 4.

Even with a stepped-up police presence, shooting deaths like Martin King’s will still occur, according to CPD spokesperson David Bayless.

“People shouldn’t assume that just with the mere presence of police officers that every homicide will be prevented,” Bayless said in a December 17 interview.

“That is not true; some homicides happen in closed corridors, as in the case of Martin King,”

Transforming CHA

Senior Rehab Update

by Lorenzia
Shelby

Two years ago, the Chicago Housing Authority proposed to renovate all of the senior citizen buildings. It's now 2004 and the restoration is nearly finished. At Las America Racine Apartments, a senior building located Southwest of downtown in the Pilsen neighborhood, CHA hasn't finished yet.

Here's a partial list of work that has been done. The outside walls of the building have been scraped and tuck pointed. Contractors have rejuvenated the roof and the front yard, removing the old brick walkways and replacing them with new concrete sidewalk paths. The brick wall that was in the front of the yard on the west side of the building near the sidewalk was removed. They put in twelve new benches and planted five new trees. The grinding and the scraping and all of the other irritating noises and clouds of white dust that surrounded the building has ceased.

Now, let's enter the building. In the apartments, they painted the walls and the ceilings, put new tiles on the floors, and installed new showers. New air conditioners were put in, replacing the old ones that left a half inch opening underneath the units that permitted a lot of extremely cold air into apartments.

For a while it was chaotic moving people around. The tenants on the ninth floor had to be moved twice, while the apartments on that floor were being decorated. When that floor was completed, some tenants were granted a privilege to move back to the ninth floor and some were relocated to other units. All of the



Lorenzia E. Shelby

residents who lived in rooms ending with "6" – from 106 to 906 – because the apartments were being made accessible to the handicapped.

After all of the apartments were done, the loud banging noises and the loud grinding noises from the inside of the building stopped.

From 2002 to 2004 the tenants only had access to one elevator while the other one was repaired. In September of this year, inspectors from the city allowed the second elevator to be reopened. However, both elevators are still experiencing an occasional breakdown.

A long time resident said "The elevator repairman be here so much, they should give him an apartment in the building."

Other improvements include new windows in all the units, cabinets and a light underneath the cabinets. Most of the apartment units on the first floor have been converted into offices occupied by the Department of Aging, the tenant patrol captain, management offices and maintenance staff.

Also, on the first floor, there was a reconfiguration done to the sitting room. The sitting room was divided in half. The west side of the room is used for smoking and card playing while the east side is soon to be a computer room. The exercise

room remained the same, except the treadmill is broken.

On the east side of the building, the construction crew knocked holes in the wall on each floor, eliminating the bathtubs that were on the side of the building to make way for a temporary elevator for construction supplies. The elevator has been removed, leaving holes in the wall. Instead of refilling those holes with bricks, they put windows in those openings on each floor.

During the renovation, CHA stopped moving new residents into the building, causing nearly half of the units to be empty in a building that has two hundred apartments. Now that the reconstruction is finishing up, there has been an increase of tenants. To rent an apartment at this site, you must be 62 years old or older. A spokesperson for Habitat management at a residents' meeting said "The response in that age group has been very slow in their efforts to recruit tenants. We will have to lower the age requirement to sixty or even lower hoping that will remedy the rental predicament."

Some the tenants at the Racine Apartments had varying opinions about the renovation of the site. Some were silent and others were very candid.

James Robinson, a long time resident, said "The work wasn't done. They did just enough to maintain their jobs."

Another tenant, Edward Mannie, said "What irks me is the way the elevator keeps breaking down and it's a new elevator. I know, it broke down with me on it. I was stuck for twenty minutes

before I was rescued by one of the building employees."

Around September 20, the construction workers came back to work at the Racine Apartments. They are removing heavy slabs of concrete from the side of the building, nearly at the top. They have erected two safety scaffolds so the residents can walk through and be protected from falling objects. One is in the front yard at the entrance door and the other is near the side door that leads into the parking lot, which is the side that is used during the day. The front yard is closed during working hours. As of now, no one knew when this renovation would be completed.

Resident Frank Thomas is most verbal, opinionated and adamant in his convictions. About the renovations, he said, "The whole renovation took too long to complete. They used inferior materials to repair the units. They put down cheap



Las America Racine Apartments resident Frank Thomas questions the quality of the materials used in the recently completed rehab.

Photo by Lorenzia Shelby

Positive People

by Crystal Medina
Editorial
Assistant

Geraldine "Penny" Walton

Geraldine Walton, or "Penny" as most people like to call her, is one of the sweetest people that you will ever meet and her genuine demeanor is quite refreshing.

She was a resident of Washington Park for four years. She explained how the building that she lived in, at 220 East 63rd street, was one of the last to go up and one of the first to come down.

"It was so nice there," Penny said of the time she spent in the development. "Everything was clean. Back then, the gangs were just getting started so they weren't so bad. When those street lights came on, everyone was in the house. Obviously, the situation has changed from the time that the buildings first started

going up, with so much hope and well wishes, and now that they are pretty much deteriorating.

"I don't fault the people for what they are; I fault society for letting things get the way it is."

While she was in the development, she received the first Chicago Housing Authority Outstanding Teen Award. For her accomplishment, she and some other youths were taken to Washington, D.C. While she visited the nation's capitol, she met with senators, had dinner with them, and spoke about living in the developments on TV.

"It's just like a big family that helps take care of each other," she said in her interview.

Penny first started her high school years at Dunbar and then graduated from the Chicago Vocational School. She did very well in high school and her interests included drama and modeling. Penny modeled for Simplicity, an agency that helped place her in catalogs. She was also a Black

Velvet Girl; she did still photos and helped advertise hair products.

After high school she attended Southeast Junior College, Chicago State and UIC. She went on to be a teacher and was even nominated for the Golden Apple Award. As a teacher, she also did home visits, bringing puzzles, crayons and coloring books, blocks and other educational aids into the homes of children that were unable to go to school. For children who didn't have coats and shoes, Penny called Montgomery's, Sears, Spiegel's and they were kind enough to donate clothes, shoes and coats.

"Dealing with the residents, I've found out residents want what everyone else wants. They want a decent life, food and clothing without waiting on a check," Penny said.

Later, she worked as an organizer at Parkway Gardens, a Section 8 building, tutoring, doing outreach and working with the senior citizens. She was also an organizer for the Grand Boulevard area. She

dealt with the schools in the district, churches and with the Local School Council Presidents.

"I had to attend all the meetings that had to do with the youth. I had to develop a resource guide," she explained.

Penny is now an asthma coordinator for the Grand Boulevard Federation. She goes door to door to different developments including Robert Taylor A and B, Stateway Gardens, Dearborn Homes, Madden Park, Ida B. Wells, Rockwell Gardens and Washington Park. She educates residents about their asthma and how to take care of themselves.

When Penny isn't putting a smile on the face of the world, or at least the residents in it, she is a very active grandmother, raising her three grandkids, ages 15, 10 and 6. She had three children and two of them passed away, due to illnesses.

Franklin Williams

Renaissance 2010: Sweeping Changes

by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson



Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

Ask people in low-income communities if they have heard of Renaissance 2010 and the majority would likely say they have. Ask them if they know what Renaissance 2010 is and chances are they would say they don't. Ask if they know schools on the South and West Sides of Chicago have been closing and reopening as "small schools," and they would most likely answer a definite "Yes."

That, in essence, is Renaissance 2010: the closing and reopening of both grammar and high schools as "small schools" - schools within a school. The goal, according to Chicago Public Schools, is to reinvent the Chicago Public School system by the year 2010. The policy was made official at the Board of Education's September 23 meeting according to CPS spokesperson Sandy Rodriguez, despite ongoing protests by community advocates.

Community advocates have protested Renaissance 2010 since it was announced in the spring of 2004, calling it a hasty experiment on neighborhoods and on inner-city children's education.

They allege the plan has been targeted at families living in Chicago Housing Authority buildings, particularly those in the Mid South area of the city, between 31st and 55th streets, from the lake front to the expressway.

In the Kenwood/Oakland neighborhood, an area that will greatly affect by the plan, activists, parents, and concerned citizens held a meeting at Kenicott Park this past summer. They

met to discuss ways to fight Renaissance 2010, which they say was handed to them without community input.

The protesters' primary allegation was that Renaissance 2010 is aimed at an area with a high concentration of CHA and other low-income families - an area that happens to be

the heart of the CHA's Plan for Transformation. The Plan for Transformation is Mayor Daley's proposal to revitalize CHA and other low-income areas into mixed-income communities that will include public housing, affordable and market-rate apartments and homes.

At the Kenicott meeting, advocates said Renaissance 2010 will enhance the schools in the area only to accommodate the mixed-income families who will be moving to the neighborhood in the future.

The plan will change over 100 schools by the year 2010. one-third will be converted into charter schools, one-third will become contract or private

"Some of those same students have been moved more than once and it's an interruption of their learning progress," she said. "They lose about one year of academic progress every time they move."

Seventeen-year-old Tanisha Williams, a senior at Dyett Academy, 555 E. 51st Street said at the meeting, "Changing schools [so] quickly could mess students up academically, cause issues with transportation, and if the students don't wear uniforms it could cause the parents financial problems . . . Real small things can hinder a student's learning process."

She also said that small schools could incite gang violence, "pitting one school against another."

"Having one school in one building could mean better security," Williams said. Dyett was one of the schools in the headlines this past spring because of gang violence and security issues.

Williams also expressed her concern for yet another matter the protesters opposed concerning the new school plan: a fear that Local School Councils won't be installed in the reopened schools.

"LSCs are very important to all schools. They are the governing body to choose principals . . . if you don't have an LSC the schools are operating off nothing . . . you don't want any old body as principal. [LSCs] make things happen."

Derrick Harris, Executive Director of the North Lawndale Local School Council

Federation, aggressively addressed the need for community involvement through LSCs in the school system.

"Our fight is for meaningful parental involvement and local community control of our schools . . . local community control is mandatory," he said. "We must be involved in the decision making process . . . our struggle is now a civil rights issue . . . there are political consequences for elective officials that sell out our children."

In a later meeting, Andrea Lee, Director of Schools Coordinator for Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, and John Paul Jones, Director of Community Research, agreed that Renaissance 2010 is too risky to chance on students who are already high risk.

NCGB has released to the public a number of critical reports regarding Renaissance 2010. They alleged that CPS is moving forward with a plan that was established without LSC and community input. They are also opposing the plan to allow private businesses into the Chicago Public School system.

"Any company like Dunkin Donuts," said Lee, "can submit a proposal and if accepted, the neighborhood school can become a contract school without the community and principal even knowing it."

"Renaissance 2010 says all those



Valencia Rias of Designs for Change

Photo by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

kids who are pushed out of those schools, they get the first guaranteed right to return, but I want to make this very clear that guaranteed first right of return is dependent on what that contract or charter or CPS run Performance school looks like," Lee said.

Jones said he wants the public to know that "CPS has targeted their school district. CHA leaders need to inform their CHA residents of what has happened."

He said CHA "needs more venues to look at policies and school reform . . . Local Advisory Councils for CHA are not providing venues for these conversations."

Chief Executive Officer of CPS, Arne Duncan, attended a public meeting this past summer about Renaissance 2010 hosted by the Chicago Urban League to address the community's concerns. He announced that, "[CPS] wants to fundamentally change the nature of what it means to be a school," and stressed the statement a number of times.

"Closing schools," he said "is a tough decision to make, but the right thing to do."

He also said a number of times, "We want every single neighborhood school to be a school of choice."

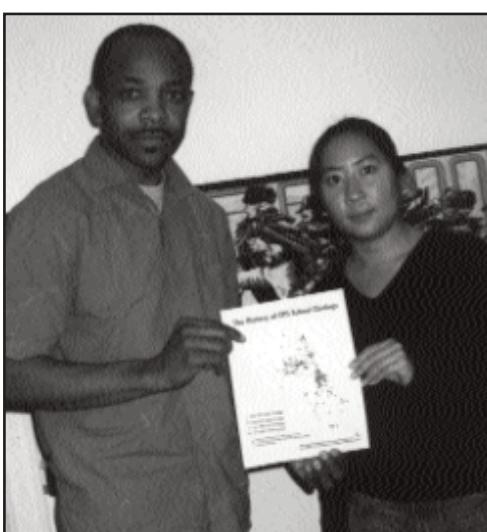
When asked why the rush and without the community's input, Duncan answered "you raise some good points. We're doing everything we can."

"We really want your input."

He also addressed Tanisha Williams' question about what's going to happen to the LSCs. He said "LSCs have to be a major part of the process of appointing the Transitional Advisory Councils. Not all schools will have an LSC . . . CPS will insist that every school have a governing board."

When told at the meeting that Renaissance 2010 had been handed out with flaws in it, and that "we're not opposed to change, but you haven't had the community's input," Duncan again answered, "we really want your input."

Residents' Journal spoke with CPS spokesperson Sandy Rodriguez, who said she would have someone contact **RJ**, and referred **RJ** to a website for more information. She said she recommends that the public also visit the website. No one has contacted **RJ** as of press time.



John Paul Jones and Andrea Lee of the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group hold a map depicting a history of school closings in Chicago.
Photo by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

LAC Elections 2004

Election Report: Harold Ickes Homes

by Jacqueline Thompson

The day opened to a dreary sky, which probably was the cause for the slow early morning attendance at the local polling place for the 2004 Local Advisory Council elections at the Harold Ickes Homes. After opening on time at 9 AM, by 9:45 there were only 9 voters' ballots registered.

This year's election was carried out by a new organization, the Black United Fund Institute and the Institute for Government Research. The judges were workers hired from the 71st and Jeffery office and their supervisor, Rexford King, was knowledgeable and welcoming to the residents, which made all transactions go smoothly and quickly. The security company was Houston Associates, and their guard, Officer Shabazz, was considerate to the residents, reflecting a calm demeanor that is so important for the conduct of the election.

However, when this reporter talked to a resident anxiously waiting by the elevator while it was being worked on, the piece described above was not a part of our conversation.

Residents' Journal: Good morning, ma'am. Are you going to vote today?

Tressa Rodgers: No! They [the LAC] didn't do nothing for the kids this year. There was garbage all down the steps. I reported to the LAC and management and they don't do anything about it. Young parents leave little kids out in the hallway playing. The LAC didn't enforce the rules - no playing in the hall.

RJ: Did you report the children playing?

TR: Yes, I went to the housing office. Later, someone told me, they laughed when I left.

After that, I went in to the polling place and talked to Otelia Kelly, a long-time resident of 2430 S. State. I also spoke to Kelly about her application to run for the office of president for her building. She was not listed on the ballot.

RJ: Did you get your application in on time?

OK: Yes, I was one of the first ones to submit my application. However, it did not get on the ballot. I made a call to BUFI-IGR. They claimed they would research the application but nothing came of it. I made a call on November 23, because I also filled out an application for a community outreach job. They did not reply. I had my son-in-law drive me over there.

I'm upset because I'm the first one who applied.

RJ: Do you plan to follow up on your problem?

OK: Yes I do.

One interesting outcome of the day was an eighteen-year-old judge, Lamar Coats. He's still in high school, his senior year.

RJ: How do you feel about working this election?

Lamar Coats: It's very interesting. I never knew about the LAC elections.

RJ: Did you vote in the United States' presidential election?

LC: No, I just wasn't thinking. Some of my friends voted for the first time. They were thrilled.

RJ: Do you live in Ickes?

LC: No, I did, but now I live in Ida B. Wells.

The voters continued to trickle in slowly. Some people forgot their ID cards and they had to go and come back. The only sour note was that BUFI-IGR did not support their judges with much needed food. At the end of the day, there had been no disturbances. It was just that the rain kept many would-be voters at home. The LAC office reports there were no changes in LAC officers in each building. Gloria Williams remains Ickes' LAC

Cabrini-Green Election

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

In the North Side development Cabrini-Green, residents were busy going to vote and expressing their views on the election when I stopped by on the morning of Election Day. The question was simple: who would penetrate the hard concrete public housing walls, a Cannon or a Steele? Which one would be the winner?

Residents that reside in Cabrini live in potentially the most valuable properties in Chicago. Kelvin Cannon, who has resided in a Cabrini-Green high rise for over 38 years, challenged community activist Carol Steele for her seat.

This race had a lot of ups and downs. Some residents in the high rises said they felt that the residents of the low rise row houses had too much influence in the development.

One resident who was living off-lease even told me that Steele wasn't representing all of the residents. Residents made Steele LAC President the last election.

This election was crucial for the low-income residents that reside here and want to continue living in their neighborhood. Steele is the head of the Coalition to Protect Public Housing, a prominent advocacy group for the Cabrini-Green community, as well as heading up the Resident Management Corporation for Cabrini. This is also an important time in Cabrini's history because an ongoing lawsuit has allowed the residents greater control over redevelopment of the site than residents at other public housing locations have.

I ran into Kelvin Cannon sitting in the polling place where the residents went to vote. I don't know why the judges didn't tell him that a candidate couldn't sit in the polling place. But there he was.

"It's time that the residents who are not only in the row houses but also in the high rises be represented," Cannon said. "A LAC President's supposed to represent all of the residents and that is what I intend to do."

At another polling place at 1230 N. Larabee, the voting process seemed to go fairly well, although there was some confusion about whether residents needed two forms or photo ID or just one.

After the sun had set on Election Day, I stopped by Cabrini one more time and found Carol Steele. As she stepped into a SUV, I asked her how she thought the election was going.

"Regardless of who wins, in the words of Rene Maxwell, our fight must go on," Steele said.

In the end, Cannon prevailed over Steele, according to the certified result of Black United Power Incorporated, who oversaw the election.

2004 LAC Election Results

Editor's Note: Elections for Local Advisory Councils - leadership for public housing communities - were held on Tuesday, November 30. These are the certified winners of this year's Local Advisory Council election. The first name under each development is the presidential candidate; the second name is the vice-presidential candidate. The challenge results of the Tenant Council Elections were not available by RJ press time.

<u>ABLA Homes</u>	<u>Henry Horner</u>	<u>Lawndale Homes</u>	<u>Scattered Site North</u>	<u>Ida B. Wells</u>	<u>Senior Housing - Green Apartments</u>
Deverra Beverly	Crystal Palmer	Obienetta Bell	Willie Burrell	Sandra Young	Pauline Wesley
Ruth Crockett	Florence Wright	Mary Williams	Sallie Ross	Ernestine Clark	VP results contested
<u>Altgeld Gardens</u>	<u>Hilliard Homes</u>	<u>LeClaire Courts</u>	<u>Stateway Gardens</u>	<u>Wentworth Gardens</u>	<u>Senior Housing - Central - Albany</u>
Bernadette Williams	Maner Jean Wiley	Natalie Saffold	Francine Washington	Beatrice Harris	Martha Marshall
Debra Parker	Julia Wimms	Stacey Scott	Arvill Vera Miles	VP undecided	Jewel Bohanon
<u>Cabrini-Green</u>	<u>Ickes Homes</u>	<u>Rockwell Gardens</u>	<u>Trumbull Park</u>	<u>Robert Taylor (A)</u>	<u>Senior Housing - Clark and Webster</u>
Kelvin Cannon	Gloria Williams	Mary Baldwin	Myra King	Shahshak Ben Levi	Shirley Hammond
Maurice Edwards	Idella Ross	Dianah Canser	Ethel Norman	Georgia Barron	Otha Henderson
<u>Dearborn Homes</u>	<u>Lathrop Homes</u>	<u>Scattered Site Central</u>	<u>Washington Park</u>	<u>Robert Taylor (B)</u>	
Gail Singleton	Terry Rousseau	Maria Fonseca	Mary Wiggins	Mildred Dennis	
Alexander Hall	VP results contested	Sandra Rodriguez	VP undecided	Barbara Moore	

LAC Elections 2004

Wipe Out

Mary C. Johns Editor-in-Chief

The families living in the remaining buildings at Madden Park Homes on the South Side were wiped out of the Tenant Council Election this November. They received no official notice of the change that the Chicago Housing Authority made just prior to the resident elections.

Residents allege that, without the residents' knowledge, CHA replaced their leadership. Eunice Crosby, the Local Advisory Council president for Madden Park and a resident of the community for the past 12 years, was dumped for Mary Wiggins, the LAC president for Washington Park Scattered Sites and president of the Central Advisory Council, the body of public housing residents to which the city negotiates directly. This unexpected move on the part of the CHA denied the residents - and the LAC president - the opportunity to vote or run in the elections. It also means that the relocated residents of Madden Park have no official, elected representation in returning to their mixed-income community. But Crosby is challenging that notion.

A Ball of Confusion

"To me this is illegal. Our intelligence was undermined. I feel as though you all lied and denied my families the right to vote," said Crosby to CHA CEO Terry Peterson and others at the Tenants Services meeting in early December.

The Chicago Housing Authority defended the move, saying they were merely returning the Madden Park row houses back to their original status.

"The Madden Park town-homes have always been a part of Washington Park," said CHA spokesperson Derek Hill in a December interview.

The resident council elections are held every three years at public housing sites across the nation, according to HUD guideline for tenant councils.

A public housing resident council "is synonymous with a tenant association and is headed by a Local Advisory Council president who is part of the Central Advisory Council, the

Eunice Crosby complains to the audience about the irregularities in the voting process for the the Madden Park Homes at the December Tenants Services meeting.

Photo by Mary C. Johns



Mary C. Johns

governing body of the LAC," the guidelines read.

Eligible residents can run for several offices in the tenant council elections, such as the LAC president or vice president, secretary, treasurer, or building president.

The 27 families living in the 34 row houses remaining at the Madden Park site were upset about being denied the right to vote and run for office.

"Residents weren't allowed to vote," said Carol Kidd, a long time resident of the Madden Park Homes.

"We didn't vote because we didn't know where to go or who to vote for," she said.

These 27 families and their row houses are what remains of what once was a mix of row houses and nine-story buildings amounting to more than 300 units. The development was opened in 1970.

Crosby said nobody had the opportunity to say that they wanted to be LAC president for Washington Park or LAC president for Madden Park.

"They denied us the right of choice, and a right to participate in this election. To me it was manipulative, because I should have never been told that Madden Park was not in this election. And if it was true, we should have been informed prior to elections, giving us the right of choice," Crosby said.

"Documentation should have been given out in a timely manner to everyone in Madden Park," Crosby added.

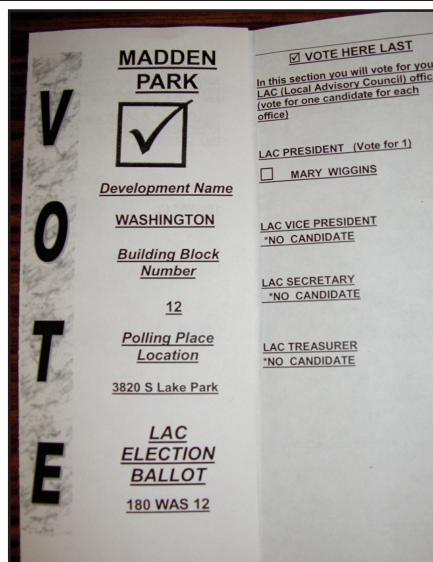
"Who [were] we supposed to vote for? There was nobody that campaigned or petitioned in this area other than myself. And since I was the only one that campaigned and petitioned them, who could they actually vote for? Who did they know to vote for," Crosby said.

The families had been treated like members of the Madden Park community for many years. The families received funding from the CHA with federal dollars under the auspices of the Madden Park Homes. The CHA even let several residents living within the row houses run in the Tenant Council Elections and become representatives of Madden Park.

Crosby challenged the election results naming Mary Wiggins the LAC President for Madden Park. The results of her grievance hearings on the matter were not available by *RJ* press time.

The site is currently under redevelopment with two other CHA sites that jointly received a \$35 million HOPE VI grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2000 for redevelopment into one mixed-income community.

Crosby said she learned about the change prior to the November 30 resident elections. She said the worker for the independent contractors running the elections also told her on



This ballot instructs Madden Park residents to vote for their LAC president on election day. Mary Wiggins, the LAC president for the Washington Park Scattered Sites, is listed as the candidate running to represent the Madden Park residents.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

November 23 that Madden Park was no longer a separate development.

"I was told that Madden Park no longer exists," she said

Crosby said she had a Chicago Housing Authority statistical report dated 1984 – 1985 that lists the 34-unit row houses within the boundaries of Madden Park, not Washington Park.

And the results of the last election, documented in the January/February 2002 edition of *Residents' Journal*, clearly show that Crosby is the winner of the LAC presidency for Madden Park, and Mary Wiggins was elected LAC president for Washington Park.

But in this election, at the polling site at 3983 S. Lake Park Place, there were two separate election ballots listed for Madden Park Homes and one for Washington Park. Both ballots had Mary Wiggins, the LAC president for Washington Park listed. No candidates were listed as running for any of the offices, such as secretary or treasurer, on the Madden Park ballots. But candidates were listed on the Washington Park ballots.

"Why tell me I'm not a part of the elections, and yet Ms. Wiggins' name is under Madden Park? That question never got any clarity," Crosby said.

CHA Attempts to Explain the Confusion

After the December 4 Tenants Services meeting, CHA CEO Terry Peterson said that his legal counsel would give me documentation showing when Madden Park was included in the Washington Park Scattered Sites.

Derek Hill, the CHA director of public affairs, insinuated that Peterson only told me that I would get the documentation on that day to brush me off.

"Mary I'm not the boss, but sometimes he just says things to people. It takes a lot more than just 'boom,' getting it to you. So, I don't know if I will be able to get that to you today," he said during a mid December phone interview with a CHA general counsel.

CHA legal counsel Bill Preston said in a December interview that the change occurred "sometime this fall."

CHA failed to provide *RJ* with the written documentation by press time.

Hill said that the row houses were always a part of Washington Park Scattered Sites.

Hill confirmed that Crosby represented the Madden Park residents in the working group for the Madden/Wells redevelopment plan. But he added that he didn't know why Crosby was representing Madden Park residents in the first place since her unit is under Washington Park.

Crosby took part in the working group for the redevelopment process of the Madden Park, the Darrow Homes that were demolished in June 2000, and the Ida B. Wells sites.

More CHA Residents Voting Woes

by Mary C. Johns Editor-in-Chief

For more than 30 years, residents using project-based Section 8 Housing Vouchers within the City-State properties have participated in Tenant Council Elections along with the residents living in public housing units at the sites, according to Robert Whitfield, an attorney representing the CHA resident councils. But, for this election, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development put a stop to that before

the November 2004 resident elections.

These residents living in the CHA City-State properties were stripped of their voting privileges because they were not developed under the United States Housing Act of 1937 and are not eligible for operating subsidy because they do not qualify as public housing developments, according to HUD.

"The regulations say it's for public housing. City-State is not public housing. Public housing is federally funded, and those projects are not federally funded," said Janet Elson, a regional counsel for HUD's Illinois regional office during an interview in December.

CHA spokesperson Derek Hill said HUD allowed the residents of their CHA City-State properties to vote in all of these years.

"I think it was permissible by HUD in the past to do so because we were overseeing the City-State. But we don't run it or control it. We just oversee it because it's public housing. They are not our properties. They are City-State," he told *RJ* in late December.

Elson, who worked on CHA issues for over 15 years, said to her knowledge it wasn't allowed by HUD.

"They should be able to answer [why] themselves. We never allowed it, as far as I

know of, as far as from a legal perspective," she said.

CHA and CAC representatives asked Elson for the interpretation of the regulations, she said. That is how the HUD legal department found out that these residents had been voting in the past.

"We got an official request this year asking for the interpretation of the regulations. The long and the short of it is that the legal department here was not asked previously, and we looked at the regulations. We gave our opinion and hopefully it was followed properly," Elson said.

LAC Elections 2004

A Taylor-Made Election

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

Residents from Robert Taylor A who relocated into the Quincy and Langston Homes were upset when they found out they could only vote for the B side of the development.

"I lived on the Robert Taylor A side for 33 and a half years," David Wilson, a relocated resident from 4410 S. Federal said.

"I don't think that that is right that I have to vote for whoever is down on the south end of the development when I have lived most of my life down on the north end." Wilson said. "I know the people running there, why should I have to vote for an area that I didn't live in?"

Mildred Dennis, the LAC president of Robert Taylor B, ran for president unopposed. Meanwhile, on the A side, there was a hot race between the incumbent president Mattie McCoy and community activist Shahshak Ben Levi for president.

None of the relocated residents from Robert Taylor A

received a letter, a note, or a message in a bottle that stated that they would only be able to vote for the candidates on the Robert Taylor B side.

I brought these concerns to the LAC President of Robert Taylor A, Mattie McCoy to see what her response would be.

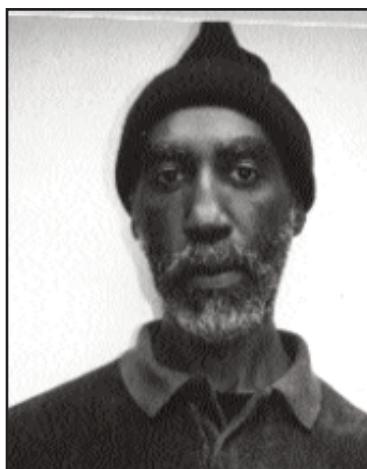
"Whatever CHA wants to do it is all right with me," McCoy said angrily in her office at 4429 S. Federal. "The CHA is going to do what they want to do."

"And besides, none of the relocated residents have the right to vote anyway. That's what CHA said," McCoy said.

"Then why are our names down at the polling place on side B?" Wilson asked, referring to his name and mine.

"Residents of public housing don't know how to live in the private market anyway," McCoy said.

"That is why a lot of the residents feel that their best interest is not represented by



Shahshak Ben Levi, newly elected LAC president of Robert Taylor (A)

Photo by Mary C. Johns

certain LAC presidents," Wilson responded with rising frustration at McCoy's remark.

McCoy then threatened to call CHA, started thrusting her hand in the air at us and said "Bye! Bye!" In order to not create more confusion, this reporter and Wilson left the office.

"It is time for a change. We need somebody in office who will honestly represent the residents in Robert Taylor," Clarence Davis, a long time resident of Robert Taylor said.

Later in the day, I returned to 4429 S. Federal to check the results and interview the challenger for president, Shahshak Levi. I learned that McCoy was thrown out of the polling place four times by election judges during the course of the day. I later learned that Shahshak won the election.

Rockwell, LeClaire, ABLA Elections

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

Strange Tales from Rockwell

On a dreary, rainy November day, a large Maroon van pulled up to the polling place located at 2540 West Jackson by the Rockwell Gardens development. A short, older man adorned with a gray cap and glasses opened up the door like a gentleman for six young women who exited out of the van. I motioned for one of the young women to come over to talk to me.

Yolanda Buchanan, a resident of Rockwell and a young, single mother of five came over for an interview. Are you a resident, I asked.

"Yes, I'm a resident, I have been a resident for about six to seven years now," Buchanan said.

I then asked her why she was at the polling place.

"Because that young man brought us here to vote. All I want to do is just move, that's all," Buchanan added.

I asked Buchanan who is that young man.

She hesitated as he looked at her. He walked over to me and said "Please don't mention me, I will get in trouble. I have to work with whoever wins this election."

As an inquisitive reporter, that comment only fueled the fire that lined my belly. It made me want to seek more answers.

By asking around, I found out that the young man was Eddie Williams and that he worked for a Chicago Housing Authority Service Connector at Rockwell.

Perhaps Williams was afraid because CHA is supposed to stay neutral - that means don't mess with - the resident's LAC elections.

I talked to current Rockwell LAC president Mary Baldwin. How do you think the race is going?

"It's going very smoothly. It's doing okay!" Baldwin said.

After that, I went in front of 2515 West Jackson, a 15 story red high rise building located across the street from the polling place.

A young lady and 27 year resident of Rockwell ran up to me as I stood at base of the building as the rain drizzled down. Her name was Tyeisha Matthews and she was upset because the ballots at Rockwell had nobody opposing current LAC President Mary Baldwin.

"I think that it is wrong. I wanted to run for the LAC president. But whoever made up the ballots just put me down as running for building president," she said as Baldwin looked on at us. "This is not fair to me. I petitioned to be the LAC President."

CHA spokesperson Derek Hill said Matthews did not have enough signatures on her petition to be placed on the ballot as a candidate for LAC president of Rockwell. CHA said she had 19 names and she needed 25.

City-State Residents Sold Short at LeClaire

Residents on the city-state side of LeClaire Courts were complaining about not being able to vote in the LAC elections. Only residents on the federally administered side would be able to vote, after a rule change by Housing and Urban Development, or HUD, based in Washington, D.C.

This is a new policy, ending more than 30 years of involvement in the elections by City-State residents. (See "More CHA Resident Voting Woes," p.10)

A letter posted in the management office detailed the new rules. It read, in part, "City-State residents cannot vote, cannot run for office, and cannot sign a petition for someone else running for office." Gail Niemann, top lawyer for CHA, wrote and signed the letter.

"I think that this is devastating to know that we are not a part of the working group, and to know that we do not have a voice but yet whatever CHA does affects us," said Jornell Holly, a long-time resident of LeClaire Courts.

"I don't like it, but if it is a HUD regulation, I will have to accept it. But I'm not going to sit around doing nothing, I will continue to be active in the community," Ruth Todd, a former LAC President said. Todd lives on the city-state side, so she is no longer eligible to be LAC President because of the new rules.

"I don't like the division, the rip, between city and state and the federal side," Natalie Saffold, a 13-year resident who is running for LAC President said.

"I guess that they are competing against each other but regardless of who wins, I hope that they can help the residents that have no income,"

Happy Coleman, a two-year resident, said.

"The election is okay, but I wish that Ruth Todd was still in the election. It doesn't seem fair for the city to do that to her. I really don't understand why she can't run again," Quinetta Walton a 12-year resident said.

Allegations are surfacing that Ruth Todd paid voters \$20 each for them to vote on her surrogate, Ms. Saffold.

Beverly Runs Unopposed

BLA Homes LAC President Deverra Beverly ran uncontested in this election.

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"My residents are coming out with no problem," Beverly said. "This is the only time in the last four elections we haven't had any problems."

Residents that I spoke to all agreed there was no better choice than Beverly.



Jacqueline Thompson, Residents' Journal writer and resident advocate in the Harold Ickes Homes, is pictured here with her 2004 Crepuscle Award, bestowed by the Chicago Park District to celebrate her work at the park facility adjoining the National Teachers Academy. The award was sponsored this year by the Jazz Institute of Chicago.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Presidential Election Notebook

by Michael Ibrahim

There was more activity and excitement surrounding the recent presidential election than most Americans living today have experienced in a lifetime. Throughout the nineties, the media presented convincing evidence showing continued apathy among registered American voters. Today, due to the excitement already mentioned, I suspect most of the apathy has dissipated, and that everyone has an opinion. More people were more passionate about the election than ever before.

Most us are accustomed to seeing a conservative, older crowd of people, traipsing through the neighborhood making the effort to encourage people to vote. However, at the Taste of Chicago this year, many visitors and participants alike might have been surprised by the bombardment of young Hip-Hop enthusiasts who were aggressively encouraging people, young and old to register and vote. Their main focus, however, was the youth. More importantly, they spoke of holding classes in various communities in order to teach people how to be an informed voter, and how to make their vote matter. According to Tasha Williams, a hip-hop voter activist, they have had quite a successful summer appearing at all the festivals and many of the free concerts.

Nowadays, the matter should seem crystal clear to everyone: Vote the issues, not the candidate!

United Power and Action! is the name of another group addressing problems of massive voter apathy, especially among minority and immigrant groups.

United Power is an ecumenical umbrella group comprised of many religious and secular groups. They are dedicated to making our politicians realize that with a community's vote must come respect and accountability.

Greg Pierce, a businessman and publisher, was one of the early founders of United Power. He said, "Mutual respect and responsibility is what it boils down to" when



Michael Ibrahim

it comes to a community's support. Pierce said that United Power was inaugurated in the fall of 1997 at the University of Illinois Pavilion.

There, thousands of people convened, including representatives from a number of churches, synagogues, temples and mosques.

On Sunday July 11 of this year, United Power convened a meeting at Navy Pier in order to explain three important points to their membership. The first point which they sought to drive home was that an organized voter would not be ignored the day after the election. Next, they wanted to explain to their respective communities what for them amounted to a very important voting strategy: "Vote with your family. Vote with your congregation or organization. Vote strength to make your voice heard on Election Day!" This message was printed everywhere and commented on throughout the afternoon.

At the July 11 meeting, various presenters set out to explain some of the issues that many Americans and immigrants are grappling with: the war in Iraq, health care, affordable housing, the economy, jobs. These are a few of things that were brought to everyone's attention to consider.

We were told that the strategy of United Power is to approach the candidates of both parties, interview them to determine where each candidate stands on the issues, and bring this information back to their members. What United Power intends to do is marshal the strength of their leadership, representing different community groups, at the ballot box. Their intention is to register five to ten thousand new voters. The next step

would be to push for 20,000 or more to actually go to the polls and vote.

Daryl Campbell was one of several well dressed, dapper young men working efficiently at crowd control, making it seem all too easy. Fortunately for me, he was able to parcel off a few minutes of time for a short interview. He agreed to discuss with me his reasons and in effect passion for wanting to work with this and other activist or advocacy groups.

Campbell is a young man who has a lot of ambition. He told me that he has experienced multiple, even drastic and unfortunate changes in his life. Becoming homeless was one such change.

"There has been so much happening in my life. However, it was just a few years back when something occurred you could almost that it was cataclysmic. The fact is, as fate would have it, I became homeless. I had nowhere else to turn but to different organizations similar to the ones represented here at this conference," Campbell said.

If for some reason or other Campbell found himself unable to give back in some way, he said it would bother him quite a lot.

One of the questions I was asked recently was what effect, if any, the relocation efforts related to the CHA Plan for Transformation would have on the vote of those moving into new neighborhoods. In fact, there were two basic questions. What happens to those voters who may have moved into a new neighborhood and where would they be allowed to vote? And, again, in terms of voting, would the Plan for Transformation seriously affect the neighborhoods CHA residents left behind?

The first question was answered by Tom Leach, the Public Information Officer for the Cook County Board of Elections. According to Leach, citizens who change permanent addresses by moving into new residences prior to October 5 had to register at the new location. Leach explained that voting applications are available from public libraries, postal facilities and from City Hall downtown. For those who similarly

find themselves changing permanent residences after that date (October 5, 2004) they need only to return to the polling place for the old address from which they moved, provided they are already registered.

As to the second question, later on I caught up with Alderman Walter Burnett. What he explained instantly made sense. Burnett's answer was that people come and go all the time. Everything always seems to balance out, as over time neighborhoods change. That's inevitable.

Wherever the people voted on November 2, they did it in large numbers. In Chicago and many parts of the country, voters waited in long lines to cast their ballot. Unlike the last presidential election, the outcome was clear by the next day. George W. Bush, the Republican candidate, won reelection for president. In the Illinois Senate race, voters made history by electing Barack Obama the first Black man to be elected to the U.S. Senate since Reconstruction.

I caught up with voters in my neighborhood to talk with them on Election Day. Here's what they had to say.

Henry Flynn said he felt mixed emotions during the campaign.

"I mostly remember being engulfed by the single feeling of hope or hopefulness," he said. "I lost much of it the closer the time came to cast my vote."

Dan Morrill is a poet, author and philosopher. For president, he said he voted for the Democratic challenger John Kerry.

"I was in the military around the same time Kerry was. I was there from 1961 to 1964," Morrill said. "Kerry is exciting to me because when he does something that looks like a flip-flop, it only means that he is able to see many different things from many different angles – or points of view..This is something we need."

Morrill also said "[The vote] feels good, but if I might borrow in a literary way from Cyrano de Bergerac: 'You really cannot change what cannot be changed, you can only make the right gesture.'"

Residents: "What People Want"

by Gabriel Piemonte
Outreach Director

More than one year ago, We The People Media began a new effort that has recently produced the first of what will be an ongoing series of reports relating to the CHA Plan for Transformation, the agency's \$1.5 billion effort to totally redevelop public housing in Chicago. The creation of "What People Want: The Relocation Information Center Feasibility Study" has expanded We The People Media's employment of public housing residents in the pursuit of resident-based documentation and analysis of the low-income communities in and around public housing developments.

For one year, *Residents' Journal* Assistant Editor Beauty Turner and I worked with a group of residents of public housing and other low-income communities to develop an Advocacy and Outreach Team. Together, we created "What People Want." It is a survey of the thoughts and perspectives of community members - both residents of public housing and



Gabriel Piemonte

non-residents - of the Grand Boulevard neighborhood regarding the Plan for Transformation and neighborhood change in general. "What People Want" is the first study of its kind: a report documenting a low-income Chicago community

imagined, researched and written by public housing residents and other members of low-income communities.

This report is a direct result of the experiences of We The People Media's staff. As the community newspaper for Chicago's public housing residents, *Residents' Journal* has been in the center of the conversation – and controversy – surrounding the CHA Plan for Transformation in the five years since the Plan

was unveiled. *Residents' Journal* has ensured that the community of public housing residents received information and that their perspectives were preserved throughout this time of dramatic change and uncertain outcomes. This experience has trained the staff of *Residents' Journal* in documenting and analyzing the information connected to the plan; the core of the Advocacy and Outreach Team are members of the freelance staff of *Residents' Journal*.

Last fall, Beauty and I assembled a team of advocates and experts from the fields of sociological research, journalism and community development. The Fall Institute, as we named it, allowed the team to fully debrief themselves on the perspectives of people involved in the plan who live outside of low-income neighborhoods. With these perspectives in mind, the Advocacy and Outreach Team developed a research strategy to collect the ideas and perspectives of those who are living and working in and around public housing neighborhoods. We The People Media's Advocacy and Outreach Team documented the perspectives of residents on the Plan for Transformation; where policy gaps existed; and

what, if anything, the community thought could be done to improve the plan.

"What People Want" found overwhelming consensus in Grand Boulevard that greater efforts to provide information to residents of public housing are needed. The study also paints a picture of the Grand Boulevard community that rejects the stereotypes of Chicago public housing developments and of low-income communities in general.

"What People Want" recommends the creation of a Relocation Information Center, a resident-managed facility that would provide information to residents and monitor the services they receive. Led by public housing residents, the Advocacy and Outreach Team will continue to add the undiluted perspectives of the low-income communities they represent.

We are moving forward to create the Relocation Information Center to implement what we have learned in our study. Please check our website and watch these pages in *Residents' Journal* for updates.

Update: Zoning and Affordable Housing

by Michael Ibrahim

Incentives or mandates: which tool will increase affordable housing in Chicago? On the one hand, Mayor Richard M. Daley wants to use density bonuses as incentives for developers to build affordable housing units. On the other side, several alderman are proposing strict mandatory requirements to ensure affordable units and better meet the needs of low-income residents.

At a May 26 press conference, the Mayor announced zoning changes that he says will have an impact on affordable housing in Chicago.

The Mayor explained that when he established what was aptly referred to as the Mayor's Zoning Reform Commission, he did so with the view towards enhancing the quality of life in Chicago for all its citizens, or as he then put it: "both in our neighborhoods and downtown – for decades to come."

The Mayor further said that the Zoning Reform Commission "spent countless hours on this project. They held seven community meetings in neighborhoods across the city, followed by six public workshops on specific zoning issues." They heard from 300 organizations representing thousands of residents and businesses. They even set up a special Web site to keep the public informed and to solicit comments. Was anybody listening? How much did public input affect the mayor's position on zoning reform, especially how it relates to affordable housing?

According to Peter Scales of the Department of Planning, the Mayor's zoning reform plans will hopefully provide new incentives for developers of downtown residential buildings to also build affordable housing units in the city.

"We allow them to build an additional three square

feet of market-rate residential space for every square foot of affordable housing they decide to include in their plans," said Scales. "We will let them build a taller building or a building with more dwelling units if they agree to set a number of affordable units aside."

Scales further explained that 'density bonuses' could also be earned by commercial builders, with contributions into an affordable housing fund. Scales added that "had the fund been in existence during the period from 1997 to 2002, at the height of the real estate boom, by this time we would have generated upwards of about 650 units of affordable housing together with about \$25 million dollars into an affordable housing fund."

There are other views promoted by activists and advocates for affordable housing. In previous editions of the *Residents Journal*, I have covered inclusionary zoning issues. Inclusionary zoning is said to better meet the housing needs of those who need housing the most. I decided to go back and ask some questions regarding the status of the affordable-housing ordinance put forth by Alderman Toni Preckwinkle (4th) and Alderman Walter Burnett (27). This ordinance is favored by grassroots activists and advocacy groups.

Preckwinkle continues to be optimistic about her inclusionary zoning ordinance. She said the current zoning laws do not go far enough.

"The affordable housing incentives are all downtown, they are not in the neighborhoods. What we are looking for, of course, is an ordinance specifically requiring developers to include affordable housing units. That's the set-aside ordinance which we re-introduced on May 6th of this year and which we hope will be heard some time soon," she said.

Preckwinkle and Burnett's ordinance would require 20% of units in new developments be set-aside for low-income residents.

Alderman Preckwinkle spoke at length in order to clearly distinguish the differences between what the need is and what is being offered in the Mayor's plans for affordable housing. In February 2004, the City Council passed the Mayor's Affordable Housing Ordinance. The Mayor's ordinance only requires that affordable housing units be built when a city subsidy or when city owned property is part of the deal. However, the number of units produced by the Mayor's plan "are negligible" said Preckwinkle.

"The Mayor's Affordable Housing ordinance will have minimal impact," she explained.

In a previous interview with Preckwinkle that I used in a *Residents' Journal* article published in June 2003, she informed me that the need for affordable housing units hovered around 50,000 and that was just for metropolitan Chicago. She went on to say that many housing advocates were certain those figures would increase incrementally over time.

City of Chicago Housing Commissioner Jack Markowski strongly supports the mayor's ordinance. At the time, Markowski testified at the City Council in favor of the ordinance. He said "the ordinance would provide 500 to 1,000 units of affordable housing per year," according to Alderman Preckwinkle.

But Preckwinkle argued that the Mayor's plan won't meet the need that exists.

Harold Ickes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

The Gospel Comes to Ickes

July 10, 2004 was not the first time Bishop Larry Trotter of Sweet Holy Spirit Church brought a true gospel program to the residents of Harold Ickes. In the all purpose social arena, we were treated to uplifting, soul stirring singers and gospel happy dancers.

The program was planned to remind weary souls of the power of the spiritual side of life, the joy of seeking a new way of life and the proof of happiness found as confessed by members of the visiting congregation.

Trotter was born in Harold Ickes and answered the call to serve humanity when he was a young man. His sister Connie shared with us how excited she was at the promise of a new baby sister or brother when he was born.

Usually, at this point in a story you could say, "and he never looked back." Well, not Trotter. He not only looked back, he comes back. He brings his strong convictions to life and makes a real impact on Ickes residents.

This year, he has initiated a Bible study class for adults to be held weekly. He made three young students and their families very happy by awarding them college scholarships. He turned around and adopted three boys to be his Godsons, to be mentored by himself and his church family.

Before the end of the program, Bishop Trotter introduced his brothers and sisters to the happily receptive audience. Those of us who knew his mother wished sincerely that she could celebrate life among us on this day. She died recently, and it is gratifying that she witnessed all the fruits of Trotter's endeavors to serve and love his fellow man.

Knowledge of this well-planned "Gospel Fest" became a mini-reunion. Everywhere you looked, you saw someone you had not seen for many years. Both adults and children were a welcome sight. There were hugs, even kisses "a plenty." Our new manager participated in the excitement of this special event as well.

After the benediction, close to 200 large paper bags full of food were given out to the residents. This was truly an

exposure of the heart of a man of God.

Shortly after this inspiring event other groups of messengers for the Gospel invaded Ickes with their various methods of reaching the people.

The first group was a disappointing vanguard from a religious camp based somewhere in Texas. Their first invitation was rapidly taped to any door where children might see it. It said be sure to come to "Ickes Gardens" to find a big pink truck to get toys and a book. The flyer promised "Fun for Everybody!!!" and the appearance of a star from the movie "Friday."

What actually happened once the residents and kids discovered our "Ickes Gardens" on the grass between 2240 and 2250 S. State Street was disappointing. The groups put on a vulgar and garish display of crowd control and displeasing scripture delivery. A handful of children received toys. All the others were sorely disappointed. The adults booed and booted. The rain came just in time for the group to rush to pack and speed away.

Perhaps the next time this group from Texas wants to visit South State Street, they should wait to be invited.

Health Benefits in a Pool

The National Teacher's Academy Pool is the playground and health spa for many wise and faithful senior swimmers.

The pool is open between 9:00 a.m. and 10 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday, for individuals who want the enjoyment of participating in a regular aquatic exercise program while gaining health benefits without medicine. The rest of the week, the pool is open for laps and general swimming during that time.

When I paid a visit to the NTA Pool one morning recently, I found a most cheerful group of senior citizens thoroughly at ease moving in the water to a peppy tune while being gently coaxed into a spiffy routine by Dedrick May, the senior lifeguard and

supervisor. Each person wore lightweight aquatic dumbbells on their upper arms as they floated on soothing ripples of warm water.

I asked Mr. May what were the benefits of aquatic exercise.

Dedrick May: It's a good way to exercise, burn fat, calories and lose weight.

Residents' Journal: Is it just for seniors?

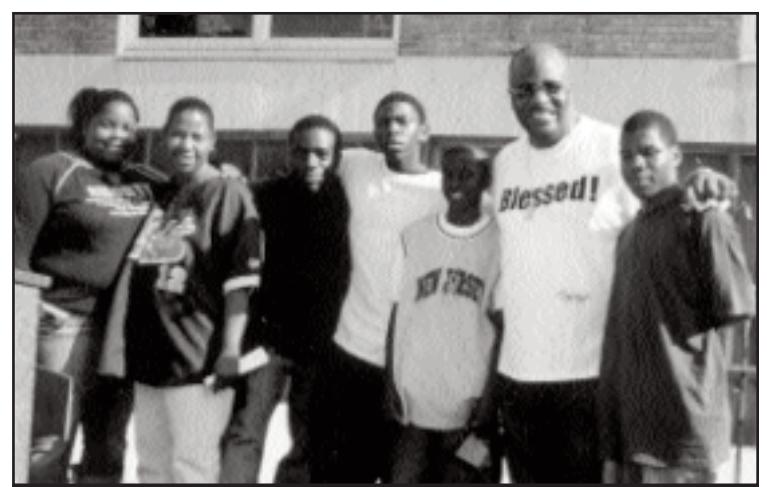
DM: No, No matter what age, size or sex you are, it's an easy way to lose weight.

RJ: Can you describe the dynamics "Aqua-cising"?

DM: They're doing water walking that gives them an upper body and lower body workout that adds up to the total body workout.

RJ: What else can you tell me about this program?

(Continued on page 18)



Bishop Larry Trotter (second from right) pictured here with Ickes residents (from left) Rueben Howard, Shamarka Clark, Krystal Rice, Anthony Clinton, Kwanay Evans and Quentin Savado.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson



"If you didn't write it down, it never happened"



Obama's Visit to Howard Alternative High School

by Josh Kuhnhen

On Nov. 2, 2004 history was made. Barack Obama became the third black senator since the Civil War when he beat Alan Keyes in the Illinois Senate race.

On Oct. 29 just before the election, Obama came to Howard Area Alternative High School.

Obama's mother is a white woman and his father was from Kenya. Obama was born in Hawaii and had a very diverse childhood. He grew up mostly with Asians and white people and was also affected by problems in the Black community.

He received his bachelor's degree in political science from Columbia University in 1983 and then attended Harvard University, where he was the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review. He also worked as a community organizer in Harlem and Chicago. He was elected to the state Senate in 1996 and has served on the state senate judiciary and review committees. He has received numerous awards for campaigning for better health care.

Obama plans to help increase college grants and make college more affordable for kids like us who graduate and don't have enough money to go to college. Obama also plans to help small businesses by targeting tax breaks in depressed areas and holding corporations accountable for tax breaks they receive from the state. When Obama visited Howard, he received an Education Champion Award and student leaders asked him questions.

Robert McKinney asked, "What do you see as the correct way to end the war? How would you make sure our troops aren't overextended, and that the draft isn't reinstated?" Obama said he was opposed to going into the war in the first place but he said we can't pull out right away. The best way to end the war, he said, is to vote Bush out of office. He said we need someone like John Kerry because Kerry can create better allies. Obama also said half the troops in the army aren't qualified and we should take them back and give them more train-

ing.

Chris Smothers asked, "What is your vision for creating long term economic security for all people in our country? What is needed to make that vision a reality?"

Obama said we need to improve access to education because people need a good education to get a job. He also said high school education isn't going to cut it, we need college so we can get well-paying jobs, to be better-trained than foreign-



Staff and students from Howard Alternative High take a picture with Senator Obama.

Photo provided by Josh Kuhnhen

ers so they won't get all our jobs. He said foreigners are paid less, that one US dollar is equal to two of China's dollars, so that's why all the jobs are going overseas.

Pebbles Kearney asked, "How can we get more money so that kids can get back into school so they can graduate? Can we take some money from the military budget and use it better for education?"

Obama said, "We need to spend more time on education

too strict, something I wasn't used to. My sister would come over but she would say I couldn't see her. Then I couldn't visit my mother every weekend like I wanted to. I would only see her once a month. When I was on the phone, my foster mother would have someone monitor me and no one could call me, no friends or boyfriends, and she would question me if they did.

I would write my feelings in a diary and leave it out for her to see what I wrote about her, and once she found it and read it for about a week and then came to me and told me to get up because we were going to fight. I got up and packed my bags and started to leave but she was following me wanting to fight. I went to mother's house for as long as I could, then I ended up in a center for parenting teens. That was more stress because there were too many girls to be around, and no one liked me. They said I had a nasty attitude. It was just stress on top of stress. When I arrived there, my grades were all Fs. But then I enrolled in prep school and began to get good grades that I couldn't even believe were mine. I graduated ranking 17th out of 77 kids and then went to Howard Area Community Center Alternative High School. I started doing great and made the honor roll every time and I will graduate in January 2005. I have a real nice mentor and my own apartment.

So my advice to teen parents is no matter how hard it may seem, never stop going to school. Always stay strong and don't let people pull you down or discriminate against you. The way I've been so strong is by knowing I have to be strong for my daughter. It's all about her. You have to be a good role model and a good parent because it's all

a chain reaction.

I interviewed other teen mothers to see how they handle it.

Shara, who didn't want her last name used, is 17 and has a two-year-old daughter. I asked her if it's hard being a mother.

"No, not at all," she said. "I always babysat so it's easy. The only difference is I can't give the baby back."

She said she stayed in school through her pregnancy, though her life did change a lot.

"I had so many doctors appointments and shopping for baby clothes and so many responsibilities," she said.

She said the father is involved. "Very much so," she said. "He always has her." When asked if the baby had a big impact on her life, she said, "Yeah, but it's nothing I can't handle."

Diane, 16, who didn't want her last name used, has a nine-month-old baby.

"It is very hard because I can't come and go as I please, it's hectic," she said. "I have no more freedom. I tried going to school but I kept getting kicked out or dropped out."

I asked if her life has changed a lot.

"Oh yes, I dropped out of school and had to get a job to pay for my baby, bills and rent. That was something I wasn't used to."

I asked if the father is still involved.

"Kind of," she said. "He just brings clothes, milk and diapers. He never spends time with her."

I asked if the baby had a big impact on her life.

"Man, I had so much growing up to do," she said. "My mom left so I had to take care of myself [and the baby]. I wasn't a kid any more."

**Urban Youth
International
Journalism
Program**

Publisher

Ethan Michaeli

Assistant Directors

Satin Crable

Kari Lydersen

Participants

*Shalissa Abbey, Ebony Adams,
Daisy Babena, Tieara Brown,
Yolanda Cathey, Rashawn
Coleman, TaTiana Coleman,
Candace Conner, Mia Dunlap,
Serrita Douglas, Nemayah Evans,
Antoinette Franklin, Eric
Franklin, Corey Gathings, Jovan
Gathings, Iesha Griffin, Cierarra
Herring, LaMonica Hicks, Shelby
Holland, Shacara Hudson,
Nysheena Jackson, Josh Kunen,
Lois Lewis, Jessica Logwood,
Elissa Matos, Daniela Medrano,
LaKendra McKay, Jeremiah
Redmond, Sheena Rhodes, Alexis
Salgado, Jacqueline Scott,
Rashawndra Sistrunk Britney
Smith, Anise Tatum, Roberto Del
Toro, Tolanda White, Twanda
White, Yolanda White, Ebony
Williams, Tiffany Young*

The 2004 Election: My Experience by Chantell Suggs

This year, I decided to be a student election judge so a few other students and I from school signed up. We were told we'd be getting our instructions in the mail. Most of us didn't receive anything. I got a phone call, but they called while I was in school. "Why would they call a student during school hours?" I thought.

When I reached them, I was told to be at a training downtown on Oct. 31 with my ID and that I'd get \$50 for the training. At the training were about 30 students from my school. During the training, they asked everyone if we'd been placed at a location to be an election judge. I hadn't been, so they told me to go across the street to the sixth floor. I got there and explained how I hadn't gotten placed, but they couldn't find me in the system. A woman named Kelly went to the back to "get the boss," as she said. She had a really nasty attitude towards me. She said she had nothing on me in the system and I hadn't been placed anywhere.

I said, "I know I didn't do all this for nothing. If that was the case, then why would I have come to the training?"

I explained to them how I had gone to all the lunch

meetings about being an election judge. She told me to get my principal to call and fax a form to her. The next day I did that, and she told my principal she didn't know who I was. I was so mad. After all this, I never did become an election judge. But I interviewed a student who did, named Marquanna Tate. I asked how her experience was.

"It was all right, but the people had too much attitude," she said. I asked how long she was there. "It was supposed to be from 5 am to 9 pm," she said. "But I was there until 10:30 pm." They told her if she didn't stay until the end, she wouldn't get paid, even though she had to take the bus home alone that late. She got paid \$100.

I asked her if she would ever do it again. "No, never," she said. "It was too much work and not enough pay. It was just too confusing."

I also interviewed the teacher that was in charge of our class being election judges, Natasha Saleskia. I asked how many students were judges? She said 22 were planning to be judges but only three actually went through with the training, including me. I asked her if she would be involved with election judging again. "Yes, but I would do it differently," she said.

I had a phone conversation with Mia Henry of the group Mikva Challenge, which was coordinating the judging. She was very nice. She apologized to me about what happened and apologized on behalf of the woman named Kelly. She said I would still get paid for the training, and she said, "Don't stop. Try it again in 2006." I did get the check for the training on Dec. 15.

I also asked people what they thought about the out-

come of the election. Tate said, "I knew [Bush] was going to win because he was going to cheat. We don't need another four years of him!"

I asked my teacher Natasha Saleskia what she thought about the outcome of the election. "I'm not surprised about it but it makes me worry about the future of our country," she said. "I'm also disappointed in our country."

I think the first four years of Bush as president were hell. Less jobs and so many deaths. After the Twin Towers fell, the war started and people started dying in Iraq, even though no weapons of mass destruction were found. The movie Fahrenheit 9-11 by Michael Moore showed things that were true about the Bush administration that didn't come out right away. It looks like Bush is a president who wants to rewrite the history book. I believe that's his goal. A lot of people were upset about him winning. News reports showed that in New York, a man named Andrew Veal was so upset about Bush winning that he set himself on fire at Ground Zero.

So why would people still want Bush to be president? Some say he's stronger and he started this mess so why should someone else have to clean it up? They say he loves his country and he's fighting for what's right.

But I think he's the worst president we ever had. I do believe if more youths had voted, John Kerry would be the president. Only 51.6 percent of people under 30 voted, according to numbers from Professor William Galston. And they tell us every vote counts, but do they really when it turns out every time there is something wrong with the ballots? I think all we can do now is pray.

Yorel and I have very similar personalities and a good working relationship.

"I love having a partner that I can trust," Yorel said of the music group. "We might have our differences but we always have a good understanding in the end."

A lot of friends and family are very supportive of us. Our parents always tell us, "Don't give up." We take advice from everyone and that pulls us even closer together with our friendship and with the group. People tell us to be more relaxed and less nervous on stage. I can't help being nervous but I try to be relaxed and comfortable on stage.

"When I'm on stage, my heart starts to pound very fast but I get over it," Yorel said.

We don't want to be in the industry just for fame but rather for the love of music. That might sound crazy but it's the truth. We have sung at churches, funerals, talent shows, studios and a TV show called "The Royce Glamour Show." Everything that we are involved in we had to set up ourselves. Yorel and I both promised ourselves we would stay focused on our work. We are trying to create a new kind of music for the industry and we are never going to quit.

"He smashed the single season homerun record, and he is on track to possibly beat the all-time record held by Hank Aaron. He plays for the San Francisco Giants."

"Mark Prior is my favorite because he is a well-rounded player," said Jasaitis. "Not only is Prior an excellent pitcher, he is also a threat when batting."

Ellingsen said that his favorite player is Robin Ventura, "because he played with the White Sox for a long time and we played the same position when I was growing up. He now plays for the Los Angeles Dodgers."

"Johnny Damon of the Boston Red Sox is my favorite because he's a good player and he's got a cool beard that makes him look like Forrest Gump," said Gee.

Two Great Sports - Which is better?

"Football has more intense plays and people love the action," said Topping. "Baseball seems to be more of a laid-back sport compared to football, although baseball can get just as exciting sometimes."

"I still believe baseball is America's favorite past-time because baseball is associated with summer, the majority's favorite season," said Jasaitis. "Football has a captive audience during winter because outdoor activity options are limited due to the inclement weather."

Ellingsen said that he thinks football is a bigger sport because all the games are on Sundays or Mondays in the winter when people sit inside and watch more TV. Ellingsen also said that fans know all the players because more of the games are televised and the fans know all of the players because they watched them in college too.

Unsigned Talent by Ebony Williams

What does it really take to get in the music industry?

I ask myself that question every time I perform on stage. I have had an ear for music ever since I was young. Whether it was singing, dancing or writing songs, music was always involved. I'm in a singing group now called 2-Way. The other member of the group - Yorel Griffin - and I are both 15 years old. We both sing, write songs, dance and rap R&B and gospel songs.

I grew up in a single parent home living with only a mother and two older sisters. My neighborhood is surrounded by drug dealers, crack heads, teen mothers and drug addicts.

Instead of me ending up like them, I put my life experience into creative songs. I spend most of my time writing and singing. I'm a great student in high school and I have goals for the future. My music career is only up to me, because no one can tell me my dream can't come true. When I met Yorel I was searching for talent to make a



The singing group 2-way.
Photo provided by the author

singing group. Like me, Yorel has been through things that made her strong. A lot of people doubted her talent, but she never gave up.

each pitch that often goes at speeds as high as 90 miles per hour; the catcher has to wear protective gear so if the ball hits them they don't get hurt.

The first, second, and third basemen play around the pitcher. The shortstop must be ready to cover for the third baseman, second baseman and the pitcher when any of those players move. The outfielders catch fly balls and get any balls that go past the infielders.

There are nine innings to every game. If a team gets three outs, the inning is over for them and the other team bats. If the game is tied or no one has scored by the end of nine innings, the game goes into overtime until someone scores.

Baseball in Chicago

Baseball is a very popular sport here in Chicago.

"It is enjoyable to watch players hit home runs and make exciting plays, including late games-winning rallies. Besides, baseball is one of America's favorite past-times, like apple pie," said Dan Topping, 30, a student at Loyola University.

Tim Jasaitis, 27, who works in the Sears Tower, said, "I enjoy baseball because it provides an opportunity to be outside, and I also appreciate the slow pace of the game."

Norm Ellingsen, 26, a website designer, said he likes baseball because he has fun playing it and watching it on TV.

Mitsu Gee, 23, an Americorps Member, said, "I like baseball because I think it's an exciting sport. And I like to see home games and really good pitching at a game."

Favorite players come from different teams all over the league.

"Barry Bonds - he is just exciting to watch," said Topping.

Baseball 101 by Roberto del Toro

History

Baseball was invented in the early 19th century by Alexander Cartwright. At the first game in 1846, Cartwright's team, the Knickerbockers, lost to the New York Baseball Club. In 1857, a convention met to make rules better and talk about other issues. 25 teams sent representatives and the next year they created the National Association of Baseball Players, the first organized baseball league.

As the league grew, expenses also grew. The teams started charging the people who wanted to go to games. The teams also asked for sponsors to make trips. For teams to get money from people, winning became important.

In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings wanted to become a professional team. Harry and George Wright recruited the best players from around the country, and beat everyone. Their record was 65 wins, 0 losses. In 1871, the National Association became the first professional league.

The Positions

Here are positions of baseball players: pitcher, catcher, first, second, and third baseman, shortstop, left, center, and right-fielder. The pitcher begins every play by pitching the baseball to the batter. The object of the pitcher is to pitch the ball in the strike zone without the batter swinging at the ball, or pitch it so that the batter swings and misses. The catcher's job is to catch

Are You Treated Better on the Streets Than in a Shelter?

by Sheena Rhodes

Sometimes I sit back and wonder what it's like to be in the shoes of a homeless person. A lot of the homeless you see on the streets are so friendly and respectful, but people treat them like they're some kind of animal just because they're homeless and because they don't have on the best clothing, Armani or Gucci. A lot of people don't even look in the direction of a homeless person and wouldn't dare hold a conversation with them.

I feel bad for these people because you never know their circumstances. No one chooses to be homeless. They may have made a few bad decisions that caused them to end up in that situation. You never know what state of mind someone is in and what they have been through and what they're going through. Sometimes when people are without a home they feel like they're incapable of getting one on their own so they go to shelters to get whatever support they can.

There are great shelters out there, but there are also a lot of bad ones that mistreat people.

That is my concern. I've talked to several people who said they spend most of their time on the streets because the people who work in shelters are so cruel and nasty. They say it's just a warm place to lay their heads at night, but they refuse to even eat the food because it's often spoiled rotten. So they still have to go on the streets and beg for whatever food they can get.

Sharon Wright, 29, said, "I know for a fact that these streets are not to be played with, they are no joke. If I had a choice I would have never been in a shelter. But that was something that just happened to me and they weren't easy staying there. Still, I can guarantee it's better than the streets."

She said no one deserves to live on the streets.

"It can get hectic at night and that's when people do all their dirty work," she said. "I don't wish bad luck on anyone, because no one should have to go without a home."

Jason Collin, 22, said, "I've never experienced being in a shelter but I have heard a lot of people say how bad they were treated when they

had to turn to a shelter for help. But they'd rather go through that than being on a street, because so many people get killed on the streets. My mother always told me that if I ever needed shelter, that I could turn to her for shelter because she didn't want me to experience that type of life. I really didn't understand how any family member could let another member of their family suffer like that. My heart goes out to them."

Dorien James, 27, a vocalist from Naperville, said, "I struggled for a long time in and out of a home and I wasn't stable for a while, going from home to home and house to house and shelter to shelter. I struggled until I couldn't struggle anymore, and then I decided to use my talents and skills to my advantage. I got a nice outfit and did my hair and went out singing for different producers until I was finally discovered, not big enough but enough to get paid to do different shows in restaurants and concerts. I also got a chance to sing "The Star Spangled Banner," which was an honor to me. I say if you try and put effort into what you do, you'll succeed. I thank God for where I am today and for how I ended up

prospering. I don't regret anything because where I came from, in and out of shelters, is how I ended up where I am today."

Sharon, 32, a hair dresser who asked her last name not be used, said she used to work in a shelter.

"But I had to leave because I couldn't stand the way some of the other people who worked there would treat the homeless," she said. "It hurt me because I really don't understand how you could treat another human being that way. They are no less of a person than you are. It just isn't right."

She said she reported some of her coworkers to a higher-up, and they were caught on camera mistreating the homeless people.

"They were treating them badly and talking to them like they were garbage," she said.

After those workers weren't allowed to work there anymore, she said, "That was a relief off my chest. I slept much better at night. I think just by changing one shelter, word will get around and things will get better."

by Iesha Griffin

I recently watched an episode of the "Sharon Osbourne Show" and I was alarmed by what I saw. The topic of the day was about teens having sex. Teens are starting to become sexually active at a younger and younger ages. There were girls on the show who became sexually active as young as twelve and thirteen! There were also young girls on the show that have been pregnant, had a miscarriage, abortion, or actually had a baby. This is an epidemic in our country. Why are pre-teens having sex at such a young age?

I interviewed five young people about teen sex. Because these questions were so personal, I'll only include initials, ages, and genders. I interviewed QM, female, age 17; CW, female, 16; DT, female, 18; CB, male, 15; and DJ, male, 16.

I asked each one of them how old they were when they first became sexually active:

QM: 16.

CW: 15.

DT: 11.

CB: 14.

DJ: 13.

Resident's Journal: Why did you do it?

QM: I lost my virginity because I felt like he was the one. Because he was different from the other boys I dated. He didn't pressure me to do it. He never even asked me. A lot of my friends were sexually active before

me and I was teased about being a virgin. But that didn't bother me because I was not ready. One time, I tried with another boyfriend but God and my body told me not to stop because it wasn't right. He was not the right one. So I listened to my premonitions and they were right.

CB: Because that person and I had been in a relationship for a long time and we both felt that we should lose our virginity together.

DT: I was young and dumb. I'm still young but I [have] matured a little bit. I was a follower. All my friends were doing it so I decided to do it too.

DJ: Mainly peer pressure. I was at a party and we got drunk and high. My guys were [having sex] with some girls. They made it seem like if I didn't [have sex with] a girl too, then I was a lame and couldn't hang with them no more or whatever. If I wasn't under the influence, I would have been smart enough to say no.

CW: Because I wanted to.

Residents' Journal: Are you still in a relationship with that person?

QM: Yes, I am still with him to this day. I have been with him for one year and ten months. It will be two years in April.

CB: No, she moved to another state. Mississippi.

DJ: No. She was like a one night stand. I saw "shorty" at the party. She "got down" or whatever and that's all. I haven't seen her here any more.

Fatherless

father was out of my life again until I was 10. The most tragic year of my life was when I was in DCFS and went to his job and spent a day with him and his new girlfriend. After that day, I didn't see him again until he called me at age 13. Do you see the pattern? I'd meet him every three or four years, and he'd always be with someone new.

When I got pregnant, my sister told him, and he came to my house but I wasn't there. On Mother's Day when I was 16, he called me and cursed me out for having a baby. I felt so devastated. I cried and cried. Later, he called me back and explained his feelings and it seemed better. But over the years, he would stand me up and never visit. He would disappear, only to show up and act like everything was fine.

I would be so upset and I still am so upset. He doesn't get that everything I've gone through is his fault. I would always wonder if I would run into him on the street, and I would look at the Illinois Department of Corrections

DT: "No. We're still cool, played together and had sex for a little while. Then his family moved to Iowa.

CW: No, I am not because I chose to be with someone else.

Residents' Journal: If you could go back to the point before you started having sex, what would have done and why?

QM: I support my decision to do it because it was my choice and nobody else's. If I could go back in time, I would not have lost it. I am not missing out on anything important.

CB: I would have waited instead because she's gone now, and we're no longer together. I had to let her go because of the distance between us.

DT: If I had a chance to go back, I definitely would. I wouldn't have had sex so early. I mean, I didn't even know or realize what I was doing at that age.

DJ: If I could go back, I know I would have waited. Virginity is something both special and important. You only get one chance to be a virgin. I was so caught up in drinking and smoking I forgot to realize that. But if I could go back, I never would have smoked or drunk. I would have also picked a better crowd to hang with.

CW: If I could go back, I wouldn't change anything. I would have done it to the same person, the same place, and the same age because I loved him.

I interviewed one more young woman.

web site to see if he was in jail. At some points, I even thought he was dead. My father has really upset me throughout my life. He doesn't deserve to be called my daddy. I could never be "daddy's little angel." You just can't leave and come back like everything is OK. I can try to forgive but I can't forget.

Now at 17 years old, I live basically on my own. I'm very independent and I don't need a father. My advice to everyone who is growing up without a father around is you can still go on in life. Even though it might affect you, it will soon someday be OK.

I interviewed two teens whose fathers were not in their lives - Jermaine Taylor, 17, who lives on his own and a 17-year-old boy who wants to remain anonymous, who I'll call Robert, who lives on the South Side.

I asked if it was hard for them not having fathers. Robert said, "To be honest, I don't care because he left my mom and I wouldn't care if he came back or not." He said his mom talked

Right now, she is 16, and she requested that her name be kept secret. She lost her virginity at 15. Here is her story.

"I thought I was in love. He was 22 and I was only 15 but I just felt like it was right. Now, I know that what happened was wrong and since it was consensual, I will not press charges against him. I thought we were going to be together forever. But after we started having sex, it was totally different. He started treating me any way he wanted to. It's like after they have sex with you, they are through with you and don't care about you anymore.

"I truly regret ever doing it. Especially with him. If I had the chance, I would have kept my virginity. I wouldn't even have looked his way. It really wasn't worth it, nor was it all that I imagined it to be.

"Plus, the worse part about it to me was that we had unprotected sex. I got Chlamydia and Gonorrhea twice within two months. Thank God I did not contract HIV/AIDS or get pregnant. After that, I started using condoms. I am currently single and I am not looking for a partner. I'm trying not to have sex until after I am married. I know that it'll not be unprotected."

All of these teens became sexually active at a young age. Some because they wanted to and were in love. Others because of peer pressure. Some of them don't regret losing their virginity so young but most of them do. Make wise decisions because you really are special.

about him. "She spoke of him but she would always tell me he was nothing and I'm just like my dad," he said.

I asked if he thinks what she says is true.

"Not really because I don't hit girls, I'm still in school but I do be in the streets a lot and not in school," he said. I asked if he would set a better example for his kids.

"Of course I would," he said.

Taylor said he is happy without a father.

"The streets have been my father my whole life," he said. I asked if this affected him in any way.

"Yes, because without a father I needed money and started selling drugs and got locked up," he said.

I asked if his mother ever downed his father.

"My mother was very aggressive towards my father. She really didn't like him," he said. "My mother said I would end up just like him."

Without a Father: Does It Take a Village to Raise a Child?

by Ebony Williams

Why should we be judged as nobodies just because we grew up with single parents?

A lot of people say that children who grow up without a father or a mother don't succeed in life. I feel that this theory doesn't apply to everyone, especially not to me. I interviewed four teenagers about this issue and here is what they had to say.

Destiny Smith is a 15-year-old girl who only stays with her father. She is a very smart young lady with a GPA of 3.3 in high school.

"My neighborhood is a very violent place," she said. "There are drug dealers, gang-bangers and drug addicts all around my house. Most of the teenage girls around there are either pregnant or already have kids."

Smith has a very loving father who treats her well. She has no brothers or sisters and right now her father is unemployed. Even though she is surrounded by negativity, nothing has side-tracked her from succeeding.

Deon, 17, only stays with his mother and little brother. He lives around gang-bangers, drug dealers and drug addicts as well. But his

story is different from Smith's. His mother treats him well and meets all his needs but yet he is in and out of jail and sells drugs and always fights with gang members.

"I love to be known around my 'hood," he said. "And I hate my father."

Should those words be coming out of a son's mouth against his father? In his situation, the theory that growing up without a father makes you make bad choices is true. He needs a father figure in his life. That's why he's so bad.

I interviewed a 16-year-old girl who asked her name not be used and who lives with both parents and eight brothers and sisters. She said, "My parents are never at home and they never talk to me about anything." She lives in a nice neighborhood and goes to a great school. But since she was lacking attention at home, she ended up pregnant at the age of 12. Her parents disowned her and kicked her out onto the streets while she was still pregnant. Since age 12, she has been living with her baby's father, who is 21. She's now back in school. "I'm doing better now," she said.

Finally, I interviewed a 15-year-old boy named Brian Barns who lives in a nice neigh-

borhood with both his parents. He loves writing music and is very smart, with a GPA of 3.5 in high school. "I have a wonderful life," he said.

I am truly disappointed at fathers who leave their child with only the mother. It is so confusing. How can you leave someone who is part of you? And I'm not only mad at fathers because mothers do it too. I feel that if you're grown enough to lay down with someone then you're grown enough to take care of your responsibilities.

But to kids who don't have both your parents in your life, don't let yourself give up because you will succeed. There are a lot of kids without both parents and they're doing great. Out of all the people I interviewed, there is something in common: what they have become is not because of their parents, it's because of them. I have experience growing up without a father and I never went down the wrong path. My neighborhood has drug dealers, gang bangers and teenage mothers but I don't choose to be that way. Parents do have a lot to do with how a child's life ends up, but it's also up to the child. Most of my friends are doing well with just one parent.

So, does it take a village to raise a child? I

**A Poem
By Ebony Williams**

'Cause you have feelings
You want to have sex.
'Cause you have sex
You end up pregnant.
'Cause you get pregnant
The boy runs away.
And now since the boy is gone,
Your baby is looking for a father figure.

'Cause you don't have a father
You look for a father image.
'Cause you look for this love
You look in the wrong places.
'Cause you meet someone
You fall in love.
'Cause you're now in love
The relationship gets deeper.
'Cause you think you're ready
You begin to have feelings.

Juvenile Detention: Don't Let It Play You

by Sade Edwards

I'm a young adult who has been held at the Audi Home juvenile detention center for a year. I have been going there on and off for a long time. Back in 2000, juvenile detention was more like Kiddyland. We wore different types of clothing to separate our sections and it wasn't that bad.

In 2004, things have changed. Starting in March, the directors decided to put the young people in jumpsuits like we were in Cook County Jail. This was to prepare us for "the Big House" (a real jail or prison). That's where they see us going.

I interviewed two young ladies who are also in juvenile detention. Here's what they had to say:

"Sharon" (who asked her real name not be used) is 16 and has been to juvenile three

times. She said that in the past, it was fun because you didn't have to do anything and the staff let her do whatever she wanted.

"Now it has changed," she said. "The difference is we have jumpsuits, the food is bad and they treat us differently, kind of like we won't amount to anything."

Dana, a 15-year-old young lady, has done eight months in juvenile detention. She said that being in the juvenile detention center was fun, and that sometimes it teaches people a lesson.

"I began to think and I turned my life around," she said. She also mentioned she doesn't know about the changes in detention that are happening now.

"And I don't want to find out," she said. "As long as I keep my focus, I'm not going back."

In the four years I've been involved

with the system, things have changed quickly. We got wristbands with our name and Department of Corrections number on them. The system is getting more and more powerful as it looks at what it can do to keep us from coming back.

During the week, about 25 kids will come in every day and African-Americans make up the largest number of them. As I began to talk to the staff, they told me the system has a lot planned for us. They said we are setting ourselves up for failure. Soon, we will be called by a DOC number instead of our names. Superintendents there are making big changes. One, Willy Ross, wants to make us work out, like a boot camp. "Hopefully, young people won't come in and be dumb all their life," he said.

For the most part, they are making everything hard on us. The staff knows this.

And the worst part is once young people come in and say they won't return, nine times out of ten they do - especially Black males. They are always coming in and out of the juvenile detention center, then Cook County, boot camp or the state prison system. The same thing happens with Black females.

Let me tell you a secret: gang-banging, selling drugs, shooting guns, stealing cars and all that other stuff isn't worth it. I've been there, done that and it didn't get me anywhere but jail. You may get away with it at first but it's going to catch up with you. The best thing to do is play the system, don't let it play you. Don't get in trouble by the law. Stay in school. We can have fun without slangin' and bangin'. There's more to life than that. Don't be like me and learn the hard way.

Athlete News

by Jovan Gathings

What kind of example are athletes setting for us by potentially ruining their careers on and off the field? Many athletes are going to be future Hall of Famers of their sports, franchise players of their teams.

Sammy Sosa, Kobe Bryant, Jamal Lewis, Ricky Williams and Barry Bonds are all high-profile athletes. Why are they doing the things they are doing?

Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs is one of the greatest players in Cubs history. He is one of the all-time home run leaders. In many fans' opinion, he has been carrying the Cubs for years now. However, the last two years have been rocky for Sammy. In 2003, Sosa tested negative for steroids. Some people thought he might be on steroids because he has reached unbelievable home run heights. Later during the season, while Sosa was at the plate, he broke his bat revealing that he used a corked bat, a type of bat used for practice to increase hitting power, but illegal in official games.

Sammy apologized to the media about the incident, but his name was removed from the All-Star balloting that year, banning him from the 2003 All Star Game. In the last week of the 2004 season, the Cubs were the last team with a playoff spot. Through the week, the Cubs fell in standings and lost their playoff spot. During the final game of the season, Sammy walked out of the game early, and was given the biggest fine in Cubs history.

In the 2004 season, Ricky Williams of the Miami Dolphins suddenly retired. Ricky was a young football player, having played only a few seasons, but he led the league in rushing yards in 2002. He was his team's best offensive player. Williams also was a three-time offender of the NFL's Drug Policy, testing positive for marijuana. Ricky stated that he wants to return to the NFL but he owes his team \$8.6 million. Before retiring, Ricky could have thought about his team, his contract, and the impact his drug use had on everyone, including himself.

Jamal Lewis plays for the NFL's Baltimore Ravens. In 2003, Jamal led the NFL in rushing yards. He broke his franchise record in rushing last year, rushing for more than 2,000 yards and led his team to the playoffs. Jamal helped his team win the 2000/2001 Super Bowl. Unfortunately, Lewis also is a two-time violator of the NFL's Drug Policy. Lewis has also confessed to charges of setting up a drug deal. He'll be heading to prison in the off-season.

NBA superstar Kobe Bryant is one of the youngest and most exciting players in the basketball today. With the help of Shaquille O'Neal, Bryant led the LA Lakers to three straight NBA Championships. In the summer of 2003, Kobe was charged with sexual assault in Eagle County, Colorado. Several endorsements were dropped because of the charge. From 2003 to 2004, Kobe and Shaq had an ongoing feud. In the end, Kobe requested free agency and Shaq was traded to Miami. In the summer of 2004, Bryant was scheduled to go to trial. If he lost, he'd be sentenced from four years to life in prison. The alleged victim ended up dropping the charges, freeing Kobe from possible jail time, but put his reputation in

question. It was definitely a negative point in his career.

One young man I interviewed about the Kobe case believes it wasn't his fault. He snuck into the room.

Another young man said, "Kobe wasn't thinking, he should know how people are."

Whether they ask for it or not, great athletes like these have many fans who look up to them and respect them. Because of this they are automatic role models. Sometimes they need to be reminded of this.



Kari Lydersen, an instructor for the Urban Youth International Journalism Program, reads to a large crowd from her recently published book "Out of the Sea and Into the Fire: Latin American-US Immigration in a Global Age." Congratulations, Kari!

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Stop The Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

L ocated at 2650 and 2710 Ogden Ave. on Chicago's West Side, the Odgen Courts development is mostly occupied by single parent households, headed by women. The apartments are in deplorable conditions. Mice, lead poisoning and dirty water are only a few of the problems we face daily. And many of us suffer from depression, asthma and other ailments. There are shootings, fights and other conflicts constantly.

One of the most violent acts that has happened here at Odgen Courts between residents was a fight between four women, including the former LAC president, Latresha Green. Also involved was her twin sister, Lakisha, and her mother, Debra. The three of them jumped on a young lady. There were two eye witnesses. One was the young lady's seven-year-old son.

The terrible fight started over cupcakes. The residents had started having church services on Saturday afternoons, from 11 am to 1 pm. There would be food for us after the meetings were over. A minister always presided over the meetings. She was going to help us get religion and our records erased. Everything was going along fine until one afternoon on the April 15.

After the meeting was over, the minister told the victim, Juanita Tyler, that she could have the cupcakes left over after the service because she had come in late and hadn't gotten a chance to eat anything. I learned later when I interviewed Tyler that Lakisha Green had called her a "b----" and told her that the cupcakes belonged to her and that she shouldn't have taken them.

The fight took place two days later



Cenabeth Cross

when Tyler was getting off the elevator. Debra Green, Latresha and Lakisha's mother, hit her on the arm with a two by four board. Tyler's son appeared and told her to run into the apartment. By the time she reached her door, the Green women had caught up with her and the three of them attacked her at the same time. The son went and got a friend of the victim, a resident named Malykah Franklin.

Franklin told me that when she arrived, the mother was twisting Tyler's arm, Lakisha was pulling her hair out while Latresha Green, LAC President of Odgen Courts, was beating her in the face. When the fight was over, Tyler had a broken arm, two knocked out teeth and a large patch of her hair pulled out from the root. Both of her eyes were black. She said that she didn't know that her arm was broken until the next day when she had to go to see the doctor because of the pain.

"I went to the hospital and my arm was put in a cast. I then called the police and they gave me a police report, where the Greens were charged with simple battery. I was only able to find one of my teeth," Tyler said. "A lady from CHA named Ruby Holly came to see me and a man named Dwayne Bailey [CHA Chief of Operations] and another called Terry Peterson [CHA CEO] have called me."

The vicious attack between the ladies happened at the very polling place where Latresha Green first became president.

I have to admit that even I had problems with Green.

My troubles started when I wrote about the hole in my ceiling and she got into trouble because Vice President Rose Jenkins told a bigwig at CHA about the hole. CHA got on Green's case, and she has been on mine every since.

Things may be better soon. The Greens gave themselves up, went to court, and they have all moved out. We can talk to the new president, Rose Jenkins. She seems to care about the residents. For example, on August 21, we had a block party. We have them every year but the food and the real goodies never trickle down to the children. This year it was different.

On that same day, President Jenkins had the Lawndale Christian Health Center come out to the development to test the children for lead poisoning. We've had workshops on sexually transmitted diseases for women and after-school tutoring for children sponsored by the tenant patrol and management.

Also, we just found out that we can get Section 8 vouchers. This information is being given to us by our new LAC president. Before, management and Green kept this information to themselves. Some of Green's friends were taken care of and moved out.

We have been living in hell. The people that are supposed to help us shouldn't be the ones that hurt us.

Problems Remain

Problems remain unresolved at Odgen Courts. Latasha Allen wants to know when they will get rid of the mice. She has young babies and when



Ogden Courts resident Juanita Tyler, shown here after being assaulted by LAC President Latresha Green, sister Lakisha Green and mother Debra Green.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

the mice smell them, they want to nibble on the babies.

"Why would they stop us from having a cat when the building is infested with mice?" Allen said.

Residents can have cats, as I found out, but there is a payment of \$100 to keep one, a fee many residents cannot afford.

Pearl Nesbit, a senior citizen who formerly lived in Odgen Courts, had me take pictures of her apartment. The bathroom and kitchen walls were chock full of mold. Pearl died before anything could be done about it. She complained about the mice as well.

I find dead mice on a regular basis. I

Positive People, continued

Franklin Williams lived in the Robert Taylor homes in the 1960s. He lived (Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 7)

at 4429 S. Federal to be exact, for four years. Through a program made possible by the Chicago Housing Authority, he and his wife were able to purchase a house and make a better home life for their two children. After all of these years, they still live in the same place.

After high school, Franklin attended a barber college.

"When I was coming up, the goal was to go to college. The school system was different," Franklin said as he described the differences between today's youth and how young people felt about education back in the day.

As a barber, Franklin started learning about money. In 1970, he purchased his building. He was the first African American on the block to purchase a building. It

included four stores. He describes the process of buying the building as involving a lot of "back and forth" because it was hard to finance. In the end, because of redevelopment, he was able to purchase the property.

"In this country, everyone can become financially independent if they learn how to invest," Franklin said. "Success in life is behind money, and, of course, education is first. You have to have a construction plan."

One of Franklin's major role models was Harold Washington. In 1977, Washington won a seat in the State Senate, then became a U.S. Representative in 1980 and in 1983 became Chicago's 42nd mayor.

"Harold Washington opened up doors, and while he was in office, I really felt free," Franklin said. Among many achievements while he was mayor, Harold Washington was known for an executive order that increased minority business contracts.

These days, Franklin works in his barber shop called Headliners, on the West Side of Chicago. He has donated his wall on the side of his building so a group of

Ickes News, continued

(Continued from page 13)

DM: There's a friendly family environment here and most people come regularly. The same program is also offered at 6 pm to 7 pm on Tuesday and Thursday, however, most people come at 9 am to 10 am.

RJ: Are all the participants from this neighborhood?

DM: No, they come from different parts of the city. They find it a very enjoyable program.

RJ: Did you have a small group when you started the program?

DM: No, we started off strong and it's getting stronger. We're getting more and more people. It's word of mouth that gets a lot of people coming.

There were both women and men in the pool at the time I was there. However, I was only allowed in the women's locker room for interviews. Some of the senior swimmers were very eager to share their frequent pool experience.

Mamie Grady: It's the best thing that

ever happened to me and I'm so happy my friend Mattie J. Moore brought me here. I have spinal stenosis and it helps me greatly.

Mattie Moore: I had two heart attacks and my doctor advised that this is the best exercise to keep my heart accelerated.

Betty Kenny: It's excellent! I come because my doctor said to come for my arthritis. It makes a big difference. I've been doing this for eight years. I had to change pools. I think the park should allocate more time in the summer time for seniors to take aquatics.

Annette Robinson: I've been taking aquatics for three years. I keep at it for health reasons. I have to keep the healthy regimen for life!

This fascinating group of women have shared some very valuable experiences. The hope is that the readers will think about them and if they could benefit from what has been shared, see their doctor and come to the Park @ NTA Pool, 2216 S. Federal. There is a parking lot and a team of lifeguards to support the safety of each participant. You will be welcome.

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

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

Glass breaking. Children crying.

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

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

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN DANGER CALL 911

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

1-877-863-6338

1-877-863-6339 (TTY)

THERE IS HELP AVAILABLE

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

312-745-6340

or your local Community Policing Office.



Chicago Police Department:
Philip J. Cline, Superintendent



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

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

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

Otra visita a Las Americas Racine Apartments

por Lorenzia Shelby

Hace dos años, la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) propuso renovar todos los edificios habitados por personas de la tercera edad. Estamos a finales de 2004 y las renovaciones casi han terminado. Sin embargo, en Las Americas Racine Apartments, un edificio para personas de la tercera edad situado al sudeste del centro de la ciudad en el vecindario Pilsen, la CHA no ha terminado todavía.

A continuación presentamos una lista parcial de las obras realizadas. Se quitó la pintura de las paredes exteriores del edificio y se les dio un nuevo acabado en las juntas. Los contratistas han remodelado el techo y el patio delantero, eliminando los viejos pasillos de ladrillos y reemplazándolos con nuevas veredas de concreto en las aceras. Se eliminó el muro de ladrillos que estaba frente al patio en el lado oeste del edificio cerca de la acera. Instalaron 12 nuevos bancos y plantaron 5 nuevos árboles. Se acabó el estruendo de los trabajos de rectificación y raspado y todos los demás ruidos molestos y las nubes de polvo blanco que rodeaban al edificio.

Entremos ahora al edificio para verlo por dentro. En los apartamentos pintaron las paredes y los techos, pusieron nuevas losas en los pisos e instalaron nuevas duchas. Además, se instalaron nuevos aparatos de aire acondicionado, reemplazando los viejos aparatos que dejaban una abertura de media pulgada por debajo de las unidades por donde se colaba una gran cantidad de aire extremadamente frío a los apartamentos.

Por un tiempo todo fue un caos de gente en movimiento por todas partes. Los inquilinos del noveno piso tuvieron que ser reubicados dos veces mientras se decoraban los apartamentos en ese piso. Una vez que se completaron las obras en ese noveno piso, se concedió a algunos inquilinos el privilegio de regresar a sus apartamentos, aunque algunos otros inquilinos fueron reubicados en otras unidades. Todos los residentes que vivían en apartamentos que terminaban con el número 6 del 106 al 906 fueron reubicados porque se remodelaron esos apartamentos para hacerlos accesibles a personas con discapacidades.

Una vez que se finalizaron todas las obras en esos apartamentos, se acabaron los fuertes ruidos de chirridos y martilleo en el interior del edificio.

Desde el año 2002 al 2004, los inquilinos sólo tuvieron acceso a un elevador mientras se estaba reparando el otro. En septiembre de este año, los inspectores de la municipalidad permitieron la reapertura del segundo elevador. Sin embargo, ambos elevadores siguen teniendo averías ocasionalmente.

Una de las personas que ha vivido largo tiempo en este edificio afirmó: "El técnico del elevador tiene que venir tantas veces que deberían darle un apartamento en el edificio."

Otras mejoras consistieron en nuevas ventanas en todas las viviendas, muebles de cocina y una luz instalada debajo de esos muebles. La mayoría de los apartamentos en el primer piso se han convertido en oficinas ocupadas por el Departamento de Atención al Anciano (Department of Aging), el capitán de la patrulla de inquilinos, las oficinas de administración y el personal de mantenimiento.

De igual modo, en el primer piso se remodeló la sala de estar, dividiéndola en dos. El lado oeste de la sala se reservó a los

fumadores y a los jugadores de cartas mientras que el lado este será pronto una sala de computadoras. La sala de ejercicios sigue siendo la misma, con la única diferencia de que la cinta mecánica para caminar está rota.

En el lado este del edificio, las cuadrillas de construcción hicieron huecos en la pared de cada piso, eliminando las bañeras que estaban en ese lado del edificio para dejar espacio para un elevador temporal donde se transportaban los materiales de construcción. Ahora que quitaron el elevador, han quedado los huecos en la pared. En lugar de taponar esos huecos con ladrillos, pusieron ventanas en esas aberturas en cada piso.

Durante las obras de remodelación, la CHA dejó de trasladar nuevos residentes al edificio, por lo cual casi la mitad de las viviendas quedaron vacías en un edificio que tiene 200 apartamentos, pero ahora que se está terminando la reconstrucción, se precisa aumentar el número de inquilinos. Para alquilar un apartamento en este sitio, es obligatorio tener 62 o más años de edad. En una reunión de residentes, un portavoz de la administración de Habitat recordó que "se han obtenido pocas respuestas entre las personas en ese grupo de edades cuando se ha intentado conseguir nuevos inquilinos. Tendremos que bajar el requisito de edad a 60 años o incluso menos para remediar el problema de la falta de inquilinos."

Algunos de los inquilinos de Racine Apartments tienen diversas opiniones respecto a las obras de renovación en este sitio. Algunos guardaron silencio mientras que otros hablaron con mucha franqueza.

James Robinson, que ha vivido en este edificio durante muchos años, aseguró lo

siguiente: "Las obras no se terminaron, ellos simplemente hicieron lo justo para conservar sus empleos."

Edward Mannie, otro inquilino, reclamó: "Lo que me molesta es la forma como el elevador se avería una y otra vez, ¡y eso que es un aparato nuevo! Lo sé porque se averió una vez conmigo dentro. Me quedé encerrado allí durante 20 minutos hasta que me rescató uno de los empleados del edificio."

Alrededor del 20 de septiembre, los obreros de la construcción regresaron para trabajar en los Racine Apartments. Están quitando pesadas placas de concreto en un lado del edificio, cerca de su parte superior. Han montado dos andamios de seguridad, de tal forma que los residentes puedan caminar por debajo sin el peligro de que les caiga algún objeto encima. Uno de los andamios está en el patio delantero en la puerta de entrada y el otro está cerca de la puerta lateral que conduce al estacionamiento, que es el lado que se usa durante el día. El patio delantero está cerrado durante las horas de trabajo. En este momento nadie sabe todavía cuándo se terminarán realmente las obras de remodelación.

Frank Thomas, otro de los residentes, expresa sus convicciones con mayor fuerza y firmeza. Así, respecto a las remodelaciones afirma lo siguiente: "Todas estas obras tardaron demasiado tiempo en llevarse a cabo. Usaron materiales de inferior calidad para reparar los apartamentos. Colocaron losas baratas en los pisos, montaron aparatos de aire acondicionado de poca calidad, retretes que se obstruirán en lo que les metan un trozo de papel higiénico, y un elevador pesimo, por eso no deja de averiarse."

Russian

Chinese

Korean

Letters to the Editor

Reflecting on the Past - and Future - of the Robert Taylor Homes

Dear Editor:

As Robert Taylor Homes takes its transformation into Legends South, we remember the tragedies that have happened to our people.

Through displacement, political plays are optimal by a Mayor who chose dictatorship over people having a place to stay before entering the humiliating world of homelessness. We are committed to making sure that our people continually have a say and receive what was promised to them by past

administrations in the White House under President Clinton.

We are even more eager to passionately address the demagoguery by the Mayor, the mass media, and the false perception that everything is being done in the best interests of residents who have the right to return.

We shall prevail. It is an honorable and privileged position and we are forever humbled and thankful as your servant. For the work has just begun. We have a well-designed plan which will be executed after allowing the people to

brainstorm their immediate and top priorities.

We will begin to administer and add expert advice and skills in order to fulfill the priorities agreed upon after a consensus has been reached by the people. While the decision making process may seem long and complicated, it is long past time we ironed out those differences. We first took the initiative to challenge displacement and violation of residential constitutional rights back in the "Winter Freeze."

We must constantly revisit our past in order to avoid mistakes in the future. Only by this can we complete our goals in the present and the future. We encourage you all to stay involved in the process. As the old saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child." But, "it takes villages to create cities."

-Shahshak B. Levi, LAC President Robert Taylor (A)

Article on Positive Resident Brings Back Memories of Happy Times

I first would like to congratulate Jacqueline Thompson on such a well written article on Mr. Roosevelt Norris in your most recent issue. I was truly amazed that he is still with us. May God bless him.

Ms. Thompson's article brought back wonderful memories of a by-gone era when the projects were considered "good living." I spent the first sixteen years of my life in 2430 S. State, Apt. 801. I wasn't even a year old when my mother moved us to that building back in 1954. Back then, you could take a nap with your door wide open and didn't have to worry about an intruder.

I remember Mr. Roosevelt in those days as a proud, hard-working man dedicated to his job. CHA couldn't pay him enough for his commitment. When we were kids, he would put the fear of God in us about stepping on the lawn that surrounded the building.

His stern words about keeping off the grass - which still resonate in the echo chamber of my mind - were metaphorically saying take care of what's yours because no one else will. No truer words spoken. His words got my butt "whupped" when he caught me doing things I wasn't supposed to be doing. And that helped lead me to the

person I am today. I can honestly say that he was part of my early development, an icon keeping my immediate environment clean and presentable.

I would like for him to see this letter and I'd like to know if he remembers me and my family. My mother's name was Bea Evans, my name is Alfred, and my sister's name is Nikki. Hopefully, he will remember like I remember.

Mr. Roosevelt is an icon. He was part of an era when the phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" actually meant something. A reunion with him would be like having a reunion with a long lost uncle. A street down there should be named after him. I want so much to shake his hand and give him a hug. Mr. Roosevelt Norris is truly the definition of what a "man" is. Call **RJ** for my phone number.

-Alfred Evans

Outrage at the Conditions of Section 8 Voucher Holders

Good morning.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am an assistant editor with a web-based publication and write a column called "The Observations of a Demented Housewife."

My name is Roxanne, but everyone who knows me

does so as "Aunty Mapuana." I read with horror the plight that Section 8 recipients have suffered. It is a terrible injustice when the people who are supposed to be helping are instead hindering.

It is no wonder that people in situations that you

described have a hard time trusting people who tell them that they are going to "be there" for them. This was very enlightening.

-Aunty Mapuana

Crystal Clear Views

Dear Crystal,

My upstairs neighbors are seriously getting on my nerves! I live in an apartment that I have rented with the help of a housing choice voucher. The other tenants in the building do not have this assistance. At first, my neighbors were great. Then the loud music started at really late hours of the night. Their children are constantly running and bouncing balls over our head. I find garbage on the landing of my back porch, that I believe they have left there. I finally complained to the lease holder one night, after I had enough of the music, and she apologized. A couple days later, the problem persisted except this time, it was the loud music, her kids running and jumping all at 11:30 pm on a Tuesday! I went and complained once again. She apologized again, turned down the music, but her kids kept being a nuisance.

The next night, the very same thing happened, and I marched upstairs to tell her she was bothering me. In her agitation, she let me know, that she had never had a problem in the building until I came along and she



Crystal Medina

was not going to change the way she ran her house because of a "nagging neighbor" I was furious at how inconsiderate she was being. Then, she said, "Besides, why are you complaining? Aren't you getting the 'hookup' on this place?" in reference to my housing choice voucher. I was so mad all I could was turn and walk away! How should I handle this type of ignorance around my home?

-About to Snap!

Dear Snap,

OK, take a deep breath. First, of all, I want to commend you for not taking further actions after what was said. It is none of her business how you pay your bills just like it is none of your business how she runs her household. Her comments to you are just an excuse for her behavior. She is definitely in the wrong. As neighbors, you have a responsibility to one another to be considerate and courteous to one another. She is not complying.

What I recommend is to go back upstairs (I know: easier said than done) nicely tell her that you didn't

appreciate what happened and what was said the other day. Be that as it may, put it simply, you will not tolerate this nonsense any longer (remember, be nice). Let her know that the next time problems arise, you have no other choice but, to take the issue at hand to the landlord. She may become defensive so remind her that you tried to settle the problems between the two of

you and the situation didn't work out that way. If need be try to get her to see where you are coming from. Try to make comparisons between your situations. For example, You have

to work in the morning, she has to work in the morning. You have children who have to wake up early, she has children who have to wake up early. You enjoy your sanity. She enjoys her sanity. I think you get my drift.

If something else happens, follow through with what you said and have a talk with the landlord. Then it is the landlord's job to step in and that should definitely fix the problem.

I t is none of her business how you pay your bills just like it is none of your business how she runs her household.

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 Ave. Chicago, IL 60615. You may also call our office at (312) 745-2682 to discuss your ideas for submission.

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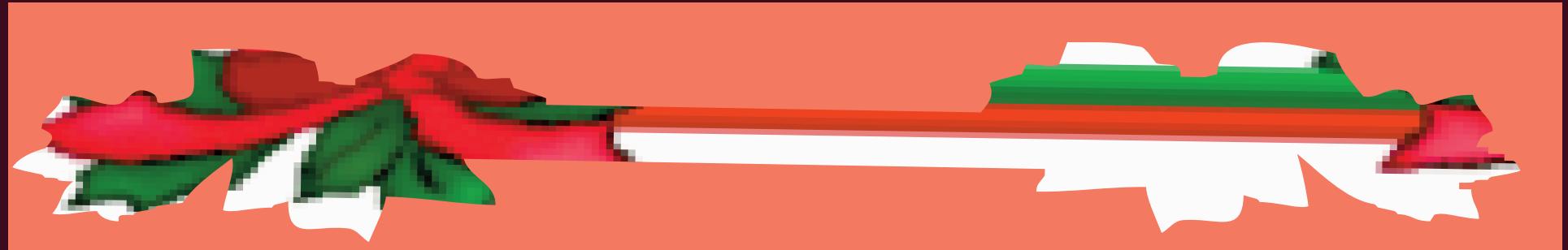
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**HAPPY NEW YEAR AND
SEASON'S GREETINGS
FROM THE STAFF
OF
RESIDENTS' JOURNAL**

