

R E S I D E N T S '

Journal

A publication for and by Chicago public housing residents April 2001 /Volume 5/ Number 3

where will we go?

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O u r M i s s i o n

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

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

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P u b l i s h e r ' s B o x

by Ethan Michaeli



to just over 500 in the last year, Peterson lost all those individuals who could have brought some experience from New York, Los Angeles and other large public housing authorities. Because City agencies have largely ignored CHA communities for decades, none of the individuals who came to CHA from other City departments have worked with residents before.

So maybe Peterson and his team really don't know anything about public housing residents. Well, for Peterson and others who need some information about public housing residents, I can help: In January 2000, Target Market News Service, national experts on African American media markets, conducted a readership study for us. The study was sponsored by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to help us chart *Residents' Journal's* future.

Since we distribute copies of *Residents' Journal* free to every public housing household in the city, I'm sure that the study is an accurate portrait of Chicago public housing residents.

Smashing Stereotypes

Just a week later, he returned to Stateway Gardens to proclaim victory; a few apartments and a playground had been fixed up. Peterson didn't offer proof of any similar progress at Robert Taylor Homes, Madden Park, Cabrini-Green or other developments around the city. If I was the cynical sort, I would think that Peterson's sudden show of compassion for Stateway residents had something to do with the threat from resident leaders to haul the CHA into federal court. Well, in all honesty, I am the cynical sort and I did suspect that Peterson was just playing a political game. But then I had a more frightening thought: what if Peterson was telling the truth? What if Peterson really didn't know about the conditions in the developments?

It is possible, after all. Before he came to head CHA, Peterson was the alderman of the 17th Ward, which doesn't contain much public housing in its borders. Among the CHA staff, moreover, there really isn't anyone who has any experience with public housing. As the agency downsized from 2,500 staff members

For public housing residents, the results of our study – the first of its kind – will not be surprising. But for just about everyone else, the study shatters long-held stereotypes of public housing residents.

For example, most of the city's politicians will be interested to know that 92 percent of the respondents to our study voted in the last election. Those who question residents' morals should know that 80 percent of our readers attend religious services regularly. The overwhelming majority of *Residents' Journal's* readers are single women rearing children at home on an extremely low income. 84 percent of *Residents' Journal's* readers are women.

Nearly one half (48 percent) is between the ages of 34 and 54. Seventy-eight percent of *Residents' Journal's* readers are either single, divorced or widowed, while 20 percent are married.

(Continued on Page 13)

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Transforming CHA Leaders Demand Changes to CHA Plan

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Elected public housing resident leaders and lawyers representing residents demanded changes to the Chicago Housing Authority Plan for Transformation in recent letters, press releases and phone calls to Mayor Richard M. Daley and CHA officials.

Letters to the mayor and CHA Chairperson Sharon Gist-Gilliam state residents' complaints that CHA is neglecting to maintain occupied units, violating the relocation rights contract and closing down buildings too quickly. The late March and early April letters also state that CHA is asking residents to make choices on where they want to relocate without including information on whether they can stay on-site.

"We have been patient and cooperative for over a year but we can wait no longer to begin to address the severe adverse conditions cited above," states the initial March 27 letter signed by Mary Wiggins, Vice

To create such communities again will defeat the purpose of the Plan, squander scarce dollars, and require another whole new 'Plan' again in a few years....
-comments from an April 13 CAC press release

Chairperson of the Central Advisory Council, and Alexander Polikoff, the lead Gautreaux counsel.

"What is now required," the letter states, "is an immediate, open and compassionate balancing of redevelopment goals with CHA's legal duty, and its promissory obligation set forth in the Plan, to maintain occupied units and to relocate residents in a reasonable manner...."

In the March 27 letter, the Central Advisory Council (CAC) and Polikoff threatened to take CHA to court on April 20 unless Daley and CHA officials agreed to meet with them.

The resident leadership is not threatening to take CHA to just any court but to the Gautreaux court. The Gautreaux case is a 1969 federal de-segregation court order, which ruled that CHA scatter any new public housing units throughout non-African American neighborhoods.

But Mayor Daley showed little con-

cern about being taken to court. During a March 31 press conference, Daley was asked to comment about the CAC's threat to take CHA to Gautreaux court.

"There are so many lawyers in Chicago. Everyone sues everyone," Daley said.

"The Gautreaux decision has been a decision rendered in 1969 and this is 2001."

Daley said he would trust CHA CEO Terry Peterson's judgement in dealing with the CAC's complaints.

"I'll agree and sign on with what Terry Peterson says 100 percent," Daley said.

In response to Daley's comments, Polikoff, the lead attorney for the Gautreaux court decree, told *RJ* during a telephone interview that the Gautreaux decision is still continuing.

"The mayor is correct," Polikoff said. "It is a decision that was rendered in 1969 and this is 2001. It is also true that the case is still going on into 2001."

Polikoff said the purpose of the letter sent by him and the CAC was to ask to meet with the mayor and CHA CEO Terry

available in their development.

"Of even greater importance, residents report that they are being asked to make decisions about their housing choices without being provided appropriate information about 'on-site' alternatives," Polikoff and the CAC wrote.

CHA Chairperson Sharon Gist Gilliam responded to the CAC's March 27 letter by addressing each concern separately. In addressing the concern about CHA's maintenance of occupied units during implementation of the Plan, the letter states that CHA does not intend to continue to spend money on the occupied units.

"The Authority intends to obey federal law and demolish these units, many of which are occupied and cannot be maintained in a safe and decent condition," Gist-Gilliam wrote.

"It would neither be prudent nor responsible for the Authority indefinitely to continue to expend scarce dollars in trying to maintain these buildings when those dollars can be put to more productive uses of creating or rehabbing new units, among other things."

The CAC and Polikoff responded to Gist-Gilliam in a letter dated April 5. They wrote that CHA is neglecting to repair units and buildings, which may be creating emergency conditions.

"We are concerned that in its understandable desire to preserve scarce capital dollars, CHA may be consolidating buildings too rapidly and may be pushing buildings to emergency status prematurely by 'starving' them of maintenance, before CHA is truly prepared to provide compassionate relocation for all the families forced to move," they wrote.

I asked Peterson after the April 11 Tenant Services Meeting if CHA had agreed to meet with the CAC and others. Peterson said CHA was working with the CAC to set a date.

"I've called Ms. Bone (the CAC chairperson) and personally asked to sit down with her. We're still talking about setting up a date," Peterson said.

Shortly thereafter, Peterson ordered management workers to go door to door to survey which residents needed immediate emergency repairs throughout CHA developments.

But resident leaders still want to meet with CHA and talk about a number of issues. In a press release dated April 13, the Central Advisory Council said they want to discuss funding for upkeep of the occupied units while the Plan is being implemented as well as residents' complaints about not receiving promised money for utility and phone connections during relocation. The release also mentions that residents are not being reimbursed for property that is lost and damaged when they move.

"While these emergency repairs are an encouraging first step by the CHA and City



Robert Taylor resident David Wilson makes a point during a March 29 meeting at Omega Baptist Church as Section 8 recipient Mary Sistruck (seated) and CHA spokesperson Derek Hill (back) look on.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

to address some of the more extreme housing conditions, a more comprehensive and thoughtful process must be put in place to maintain occupied housing units during the entire multi-year implementation period," the release quotes CAC Vice Chairperson Wiggins.

The CAC wants to talk about residents' complaints that they are moving into units that are in the same or worse condition than the apartments they are leaving. The release also states that some residents are receiving eviction notices for refusing to make a decision about their housing choices. Many of those residents are refusing to sign their housing choice documents because they say CHA is not providing information about how many units will be built and how many will be available.

"Under CHA's Plan, residents must compete in a lottery if enough units are not built back at specific sites," the release states. "But CHA has not provided how many will be available where, or what they will look like."

The CAC wants to talk to CHA and City officials and find out why the plan to employ residents and train them to monitor the Plan was never carried out. The CAC also wants to talk about information that many residents are moving into other low-income, largely African American neighborhoods.

"Recent reports indicated that the majority of the families being relocated under the Plan are being concentrated into communities that are nearly as distressed and racially concentrated as the public housing communities they formerly lived in," the release states.

"To create such communities again will defeat the purpose of the Plan, squander scarce dollars, and require another whole new 'Plan' again in a few years – it must be done right now."

As of *Residents' Journal's* press deadline (April 19), the CAC, their attorneys and City officials have not met.

But Peterson announced late April 19 that he would suspend any new building closures, at least temporarily.



Mayor Richard M. Daley speaks to reporters after a March 8 tour of the Renaissance Center Apartments, as 3rd ward Ald. Dorothy Tillman and State Sen. Margaret Smith looks on.
Photo by Mary C. Johns

Transforming CHA

Edificios sólo para ancianos

Por Lorenzia Shelby

La Chicago Housing Authority está exigiendo que en todos sus 58 edificios destinados a personas de la tercera edad vivan únicamente ancianos, excluyendo a nuevas personas con incapacidad que tengan menos de 50 años.

El Departamento de Gerencia, Análisis y Planificación de la CHA (MAP, en inglés) redactó un Plan de viviendas destinadas exclusivamente a personas de la tercera edad. El resumen del borrador de este plan dice así: "La Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) ha presentado un plan anual y quinquenal que exige que se designen todos los 58 edificios de la CHA para personas de la tercera edad como residencias exclusivamente para ancianos. La CHA designó 20 edificios como residencias exclusivamente para ancianos en 1996 y planificó agregar 38 edificios más como resultado de esta solicitud..."

"Esto significa que no se admitirán a personas que tengan menos de 50 años de edad (es decir, que no sean ancianos) con incapacidades en los edificios destinados exclusivamente para ancianos.

"Esto no significa que usted será excluido de las viviendas públicas en general. Significa solamente que usted no será admitido en un edificio de la CHA que sea exclusivamente para personas de la tercera edad."

Las personas con incapacidades han residido en los edificios de la CHA destinados a personas de la tercera edad durante muchos años.

A Roberto Richards, que ha residido muchos años en los Apartamentos Racine, se le preguntó su opinión acerca de que estos edificios sean ahora exclusivamente para ancianos. Los Apartamentos Racine también serán edificios sólo para ancianos según el plan de la CHA.

Richards afirmó: "Pienso que siempre debió ser así, sólo para ancianos o que no se admite a nadie que tenga menos de cincuenta años."

Bea Allen, quien también reside en los Apartamentos Racine, respondió: "En algunos casos, hay personas con incapaci-

dades que son demasiado jóvenes para vivir con los ancianos. Las que tienen de 21 hasta 40 años traen consigo a un grupo de personas indeseables. Algunos son violentos y están asociados con bandas criminales. No se debe admitir a las personas con incapacidad de este tipo." ¿Quiénes tienen derecho a residir en los edificios sólo para ancianos? En el borrador del plan de la CHA se estipula que los edificios sólo para ancianos estén abiertos a "solicitantes ancianos con o sin incapacidades que tengan 62 o más años de edad. Si no hay solicitantes de viviendas que tengan 62 o más años de edad, entonces la CHA aceptará en estos edificios a personas incapacitadas que tengan entre 50 y 61 años de edad. No se le dará vivienda a ninguna persona incapacitada que tenga menos de 50 años en estos edificios destinados exclusivamente para ancianos."

Maria Reyes, la gerente de los Apartamentos Racine, declaró: "Deseo que la CHA lleve a cabo y ponga en práctica esta propuesta. En los edificios exclusivamente para ancianos residen mujeres con niños quienes han solicitado participar en el programa *Housing Choice Voucher* según la Sección 8 de la Ley de Vivienda, pero sin resultados positivos. Supongo que ellas todavía están en la lista de espera."

Seguimos citando el texto del borrador: "¿Qué pasa con los solicitantes incapacitados en lista que tengan menos de 50 años de edad? Los solicitantes de menos de 50 años no podrán residir en ningún edificio destinado a personas de la tercera edad. Sin embargo, estos solicitantes tendrán derecho a permanecer en la lista de espera según su fecha y el tiempo de su solicitud. Se les enviará una carta de aviso informándoles de su opción a ingresar en una lista de espera para residencias familiares u obtener un vale de vivienda del programa *Housing Choice Voucher*. El solicitante no perderá su puesto en la lista de espera, siempre y cuando la fecha de su solicitud sea anterior al 1 de junio de 2000."

Seguimos citando del borrador: "¿Qué ocurrirá entonces? Si usted no responde a esa carta de aviso, su nombre permanecerá en la lista de espera para residencias de personas de la tercera edad. Sin embargo, cuando le toque el turno en esa lista de espera, la com-

pañía privada de administración le enviará una segunda carta informándole acerca de sus opciones de vivienda. Si usted no responde a la segunda carta, se eliminará su nombre de dicha lista de espera."

A Bessie Roger, presidenta del edificio de los Apartamentos Racine, le pedimos su opinión acerca de la prohibición de aceptar personas incapacitadas menores de 50 años en los edificios destinados sólo para ancianos. Roger nos contestó: "El edificio debe ser sólo para ancianos. Hay una brecha generacional entre los ancianos y la gente de menos edad que siempre provoca roces entre ellos."

Kermit Moore, residente de los Apartamentos Racine, afirmó: "Primero, ellos no debieron haber cambiado el edificio de los ancianos. La palabra 'incapacidad' es el problema. Sólo por usar esa palabra nos cayó encima un montón de alcoholicos y drogadictos. Ellos no están físicamente enfermos. Son sólo consumidores de drogas."

Betty Staten reside en el edificio Woodlawn Resident II, un edificio para residentes de bajos ingresos de diferentes edades. Le preguntamos su opinión acerca de los edificios destinados exclusivamente para ancianos y nos respondió: "Pienso que esos edificios deben ser sólo para ancianos. Las personas de menos de cincuenta años todavía están en edad de hacer fiestas, hablan alto y ponen la música a todo volumen en sus radios. Mi edificio fue una vez un edificio exclusivamente para ancianos. ¡Ojalá fuese todavía así!"

Robin Jones, un inquilino de los Apartamentos Racine quien tiene menos de 50 años declaró: "Algunas de las personas de la tercera edad tienen toda la razón. Algunas no. La verdad es que no me gusta estar aquí. He solicitado un traslado a una vivienda familiar y todavía estoy esperando. Eso fue aproximadamente hace un año y siete meses. Espero que me respondan pronto."

Josefina Torrey, una anciana inquilina de los Apartamentos Racine opina lo siguiente: "Pienso que los edificios deberían ser sólo para ancianos. Hace unos años, en los Apartamentos Racine vivían montones de jóvenes. Con ellos llegó mucha prostitución."

Milta Alegria, también es una persona de

la tercera edad que vive en los Apartamentos Racine, y opinó al respecto: "Este edificio debe ser únicamente para ancianos puesto que los jóvenes causan problemas."

Según el borrador de la CHA, los residentes con incapacidades que tengan menos de 50 años de edad tienen las siguientes opciones:

"Todos los residentes de estos edificios que cumplan su contrato de arrendamiento tienen el derecho de permanecer en su vivienda actual. Las personas incapacitadas que no sean ancianas y sean afectadas por los cambios que occasionará el plan tendrán las siguientes tres (3) opciones:

1. Permanecer en el edificio;
2. Mudarse voluntariamente a una vivienda accesible en los edificios familiares o en unidades dispersas de vivienda pública de la CHA;

3. Elegir la participación en el programa *Housing Choice Voucher* según la Sección 8 de la Ley de Vivienda.

¿Qué servicios se me prestarán si me mudo o elijo la participación en el programa *Housing Choice Voucher*?

- (a) Para todos los residentes:
Asesoramiento
Ayuda para la mudanza
Pago de las facturas de los servicios públicos y la conexión de televisión por cable
Pago de los costos razonables de traslado y mudanza
- (b) Los residentes que eligen participar en el programa *Housing Choice Voucher* recibirán los siguientes servicios adicionales:
Pago del depósito de garantía

Acceso al fondo de préstamos para mejorar viviendas (es decir, fondos para llevar a cabo modificaciones de acceso como rampas, elevadores, pasamanos, sistemas de luces de alarma, timbres y otras modificaciones facilitadoras del acceso que usted podría necesitar en su residencia según la Sección 8 de la Ley de Vivienda.)"

Los directivos de la CHA no respondieron a nuestras repetidas peticiones de comentarios e información adicional sobre este asunto.

Making Connections?

by Bobby Watkins

The Chicago Housing Authority recently put out a large contract to the City Department of Human Services to run the Service Connector program, which is supposed to start this summer.

But the Service Connector program started last November. Residents who applied to the Service Connector program were supposed to be trained by AmeriCorps. The program aimed to hire two residents from each development. Two residents from Lathrop Homes, for example, went into the AmeriCorps training program.

After completing training, an office is

supposed to be set up on the development this summer. The two residents hired were supposed to work with other residents to make the relocation transition easier and to help with social issues, jobs, educational programs, family statistics and anything else that might benefit residents.

I spoke with one resident who was with the AmeriCorps program. She had applied to work with the Service Connector program. She was trained at one of the City Human Services Department centers. She felt she would have been qualified to really benefit residents at the end of their training. But she left before the end of the training because

she felt she was lied to.

She was told at the beginning of the program that she would be paid \$750 every other week. But during the training, she was only given \$391 twice monthly and a \$4,800 scholarship at the end of the

Let's hope that this will better prepare residents for the new change.

program.

Now I understand the program is about to get off the ground. If it works the way it is proposed, the Service Connector program will coordinate services, help residents with economic and self-sufficiency,

lease compliance, employment, and family stability.

These are just a few of the services that will be available for residents under the provisions of the CHA transformation. As well as these services, there will be

case managers and resident service advocates and service coordinators for each development. Let's hope this will better prepare residents for the new change.

Transforming CHA Senior Only Buildings

by Lorenzia Shelby

The Chicago Housing Authority is making all of its 58 senior citizen buildings seniors-only by excluding new people with disabilities under the age of 50.

CHA's Management, Analysis and Planning Department (MAP) wrote a Senior Designated Housing Plan. The overview of this draft plan reads, "The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) has submitted a one- and five-year plan that calls for the designation of all 58 CHA senior buildings as senior only. The CHA designated 20 buildings as seniors only in 1996 and planned to add 38 buildings as a result of this request...."

"This means that persons under 50 (non seniors) with disabilities will no longer be admitted to seniors-only buildings.

"This does not mean that you will be excluded from public housing. It does mean that you cannot be admitted to a CHA senior building."

People with disabilities have been living in CHA's senior citizen buildings for many years. Robert Richards, a long-time resident of the Racine Apartments, was asked about these buildings becoming seniors only. Racine Apartments will become a seniors-only buildings under the CHA plan.

Richards said, "I think that is the way it should be, seniors only, or no one under fifty should be admitted."

Bea Allen, also a resident of Racine Apartments, said, "Sometimes a person or persons with disabilities, they are a little too young to be living with seniors. From the age of 21 years old to 40 years old, they bring with them a group of undesirables. Some are violent and associate with gangs. People with disabilities of this type shouldn't be admitted." Who is eligible for the seniors-only buildings? It is stipulated in the CHA's draft plan that the

**he senior-designated buildings will not house any T
one below 50 years of age with disabilities.**

Maria Reyes, the manager of the Racine Apartments, said, "I wish CHA would follow through and put their proposal into action. The senior housing buildings have women with children who have applied for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program but nothing has happened. I guess they are still on the waiting list."

The CHA draft plan continues, "What happens to applicants on the list below 50 years of age with disabilities? Applicants below 50 years of age will not be housed in a senior designated building. However, the applicant will have the right to remain on the waiting list according to their date and time of application. Applicants will be sent a letter of interest advising them of their option to be placed on the waiting list at a family sight or obtain a Section 8 voucher. The applicant will not lose their place on the waiting list provided that their date of application is prior to June 1, 2000."

The draft continues, "What happens next? If you don't respond to this letter, your name will remain on the senior site based waiting list. However, when your name reaches the top of the senior-site based waiting list, the private management firm will send a second letter to you in writing advising you of your housing options. If you do not respond to the second letter, your name will be withdrawn from the senior site-based waiting list."

Bessie Roger, the building president of the Racine Apartments, was asked her thoughts about people with disabilities under 50 not being admitted to the seniors-only buildings.

Roger said, "The building should be seniors only. There's a generation gap between older and younger people that always causes friction among them."

Racine Apartments resident Kermit Moore said, "They shouldn't have changed the seniors building in the first place. The word 'disability' is the problem. Just using that word brought in a lot of drug addicts and alcoholics.



Racine Apartment senior resident James Bates spends some solitary moments playing cards.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

only because young people create problems."

From the draft of the CHA plan, residents with disabilities under 50 years of age have the following options:

"All lease compliant residents of senior buildings have the right to remain in their current unit. Non-elderly persons with disabilities affected by the designation have the following three (3) options:

Remain in the building;

Voluntarily transfer to an accessible unit in CHA's family or scattered site housing

Choose the section 8 housing choice voucher program.

What Services Will Be Provided To Me If I Transfer Or Choose A Section 8 Voucher?

(a) For all residents:

Counseling

Moving assistance

Utility and cable connection paid

Reasonable transfer and moving costs paid;

(b) Residents choosing a Section 8 voucher will receive the following additional services:

Security deposit paid

Access loan improvement fund (funds to provide accessibility modifications such as ramps, lifts, grab bars, flashing alarm warning systems, door bells and other accessibility modifications that you might need at your Section 8 residence.)

CHA officials did not respond to repeated requests for comments and additional information on this matter.

seniors-only buildings are open to "elderly applicants and elderly applicants with disabilities 62 years of age and older. If there are no seniors 62 years of age and over, CHA will then house nearly elderly applicants with disabilities between 50 and 61 years of age. The senior-designated buildings will not house anyone below 50 years of age with disabilities."

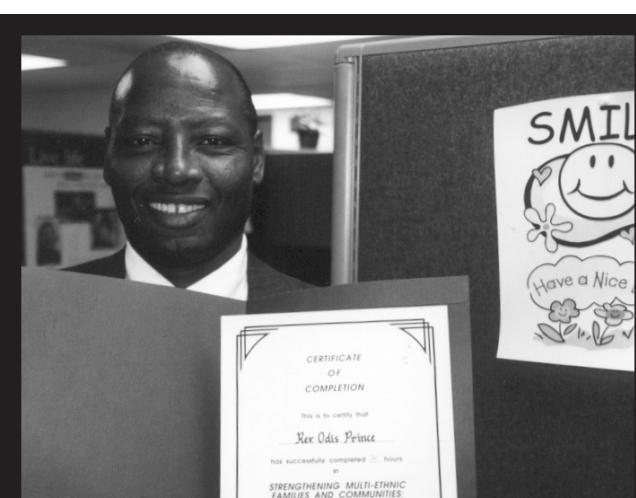
They were not physically ill. They were just drug abusers."

Betty Staten resides in the Woodlawn Resident II building, a structure for low-income residents of different ages. She was asked her views about the seniors-only buildings. She said, "I think they should be for seniors only. The people under fifty are still having parties, talking loud and playing loud music on their radios. My building once was a senior only building. I wish it was still that way."

Robin Jones, a tenant at the Racine Apartments who is under 50, said, "Some seniors are all right. Some are not. I really don't like it here. I applied for a transfer for family housing and I am still waiting. That was one year and seven months ago. I hope they will do something soon."

Racine Apartments senior tenant Josefina Torrey said, "I think the buildings should be seniors-only. A few years ago, the Racine Apartments had a lot of young people. With it came a lot of prostitution."

Milta Alegria, also a senior from Racine Apartments, said, "This building should be seniors



Congratulations Graduate

Robert Taylor resident the Rev. Otis Prince proudly displays the award he received upon completion of the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities and Violence Prevention parent training program on February 22.

Correction

In an article entitled "Washington Park Wants Answers" in the February 2001 edition, a statement attributed to Washington Park Local Advisory Council President Mary Wiggins requires correction. Wiggins would like the resident-managed Randolph Towers at 62nd Street and Calumet Avenue to remain open. Wiggins also would like the Chicago Housing Authority to rehabilitate row houses and walk-ups that are scattered throughout the Washington Park neighborhood.

"I want all the row houses and walk-ups reopened because they're closing everything in public housing," Wiggins said during a recent interview.

Transforming CHA Chowing Up Tobacco Road

by Beauty Turner

The stores on Tobacco Road are losing business because of the relocation of residents of the low-income areas surrounding the stores.

As I walked down the legendary 47th Street, better known as Tobacco Road, in early March, I noticed a lot of boarded up stores. The Michigan Garden Apartments, better known as the Rosenwald complex, lay barren.

The Rosenwald once housed approximately 500 low-income families. Now it's a ghost town. No children are outside playing; no one is standing outside of the once very busy dwelling.

I was waiting for a tumbleweed to brush by my dusty boots as I continued to walk down the long road of despair. I couldn't help but wonder: If all the stores that were located in the Rosenwald closed down, then how are the other businesses in the community doing?

What effect is the relocation and displacement of low-income people from the Rosenwald, Robert Taylor Homes and other nearby properties having on the community businesses?

The first store that I went to was the Community Mart, 53 E. 47th St. I asked the manager, Abdul Mizyed, how business was now that the Rosenwald is closed.

Mizyed said, "There's a big difference concerning our business since the closing of the buildings. Our profits are down but there are still a lot of houses in the commu-

lot of business."

Grewal added, "One bad apple spoiled the whole bunch. Every body that lived there wasn't bad. There's bad and good in every community and in every race."

I asked him about his plans for the future.

Grewal said, "These are our jobs, our livelihood. We are going to stay."

As I continued on my journey for answers, I couldn't help but notice the smells that were now lingering in the air: freshly baked donuts and cakes hot off of the oven rack and the strong, freshly brewed black coffee. It was a heavenly aroma coming from the Abundance Bakery, 105 E. 47th St.

It seemed to me the aromas took on hands and pulled me into the bakery. My eyes continued to roam. Like a kid in a candy store, I couldn't stay focused from looking at all of the sweet treats that lined the shelves. I mustered us enough willpower to ask Billy Ball, the general manager, how business was going.

Ball replied, "I've been in business for 10 years and this is the slowest I have ever seen it. I guess it's slow because of the closing of the Rosenwald and all the other people being relocated."



This food store on the ground floor of the Michigan Gardens Apartments building on the corner of 47th Street and Michigan Avenue closed down when approximately 500 low-income residents moved out of building last year.

Photo by Beauty Turner

there are no plans to re-open it.

I asked him what his plans were for the store's future.

Yasin said, "Hopefully, to keep my job. My boss said if business doesn't pick up, there's no need for a salesman. Hopefully, the people will come back. We were good to them. We gave them 50 percent off. Not many stores will do that. They will charge them the full 100 percent price for their clothes."

I decided to stop in one more store that has been around for almost 30 years. Most of the people's watering hole is a store called 200 Liquor, 204 E. 47th St.

I asked the owner, S. Michelis, how business was going.

He said, "Business is great. I'm selling more grocery than liquor these days. I guess with the closing of other stores, like Al Finer Foods, people come here for their groceries."

"Plus, it has a lot to do with how I treat people. I treat people good and no matter where they go, they seem to come back here. The secret is to treat people nice."

I walked down to Ald. Dorothy Tillman's 3rd Ward office and I asked her about the city's plans for the 47th Street area.

Tillman said, "The city's plan for the 47th Street area is to designate this area for a blues spot for African American culture."

I telephoned the city's Department of Planning and spoke with Yvonne Gonzalez. I asked Gonzalez how much money is being spent to turn 47th Street into a blues spot for African American culture.

Gonzalez said, "The redevelopment plans are still in draft form and are waiting to be adopted at the Community Development Commission meeting, which will be held on May 22 in the City Council Chamber."

he city's plan for the 47th Street area is to designate this area for a blues spot for African American culture.

-Ald. Dorothy Tillman, 3rd ward

nity that are keeping us somewhat afloat - at least so far."

"Big Pun," the assistant manager, said, "I'm finding it quite difficult concerning business but I'm optimistic concerning the future. I do believe that whatever the plan that the city has will come into play and our business will pick back up and everything will fall back into place as long as the community continues to support us."

As I continued to walk down the long, dusty Tobacco Road, I came upon the Marathon Gas station at 4700 S. Michigan Ave., the gas station that seems to have been there ever since my feet hit the soil of 47th Street 9 years ago.

In the Marathon's store, I asked the owner, P. Grewal, how business was going.

He looked down at the floor as he spoke to me: "Sliding down hill fast, sinking. I'm one person who is not glad that the city closed the Rosenwald because we lost a

I asked Ball what his plans were for the bakery's future.

Ball said, "I'm trying to hang in there until the neighborhood makes its transition."

I built up enough strength to pull myself away from the sweets in the bakery and went right next door into the Parkway Barbershop, where I saw a young man cutting another young man's hair.

"Excuse me," I said. "Are you the owner?"

He looked closely at my press pass and said he would answer my questions only if I used his initials. I agreed to do that.

I asked, "How's business?"

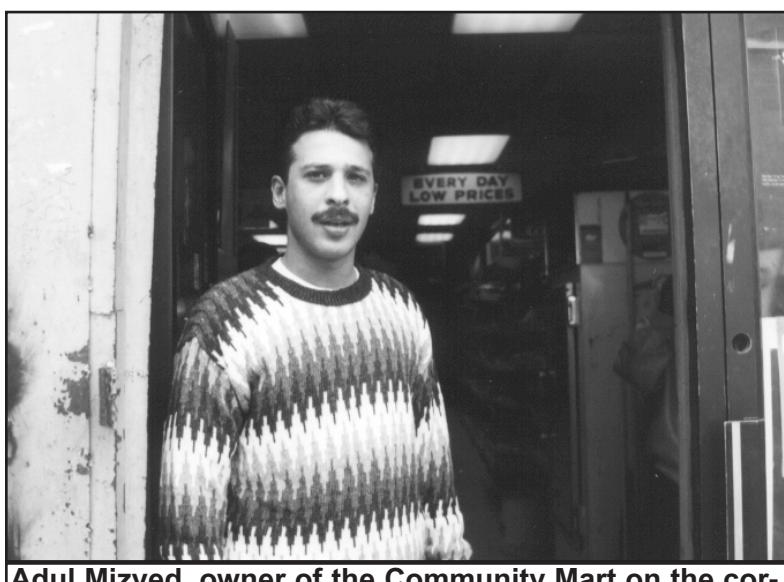
M&M said, "Business is nil to none. I am trying hard to keep my head above water to keep from drowning. I'm trying hard to stay on the raft and keep afloat but it is a bear market out here. If one thing doesn't get you, the utilities will."

"The big businesses don't want to give the small businesses a break. Small businesses are like a small guppy fish swimming in shark-infested waters. Otherwise, the big fish eats the small fish." Next, I went a store on the west side of the street called My Style, a men's-clothing store, 104 E. 47th St.

I asked the salesperson, a young man name Khan Yasin, how business was going.

He said, "At a snail's pace. Very slow. I heard that they closed the Rosenwald because of a gas problem. I guess when they fix it, the people will return. At least I hope so."

I didn't tell him what was really happening with the Rosenwald. The building was closed in January of this year and



Adul Mizyed, owner of the Community Mart on the corner of 47th Street and Wabash Avenue.

Photo by Beauty Turner

Robert Taylor Homes HOPE VI Meetings

CHA is planning to submit a HOPE VI Application to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on June 22, 2001. This application will be to obtain funding for the revitalization of the Robert Taylor Homes. Meeting times and places: Resident/Public Meeting on May 10, 2001 at 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. TBA Resident Workshop on May 24, 2001 at 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Charles Hayes Center FIC, 4859 S. Wabash Resident Public Meeting on June 7, 2001 at 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Charles Hayes Center FIC, 4859 S. Wabash For more information, call Anthony Alvarez: (312) 791-8500x4502

Transforming CHA Ickes' 'New' Management

by Jacqueline Thompson

Under new private management, in the case of Harold L. Ickes Homes, is truly a play on words; the management company that replaced CHA employee managers is a well-known established organization that has a reputation for managing good and lasting housing, social and other community services on the South Side of Chicago - The Woodlawn Organization, known as TWO.

At our first town hall meeting, the new general manager, Deborah Mallory, handed out fully prepared packets giving details of the history of the new management and just how organized they really are. They also had a pictorial display of community activities involving block clubs, churches and other groups outside of public housing that showed their involvement was truly impressive.

Seated at the meeting, I had the feeling that at last, some caring for the community might take place right here in Ickes.

For this reporter and other residents, it was the first knowledge that we had of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation, the real estate management and community development arm of TWO. WCDC has been managing Prairie Courts since the early 1990s.

We just didn't find it necessary to investigate the job they were doing. Mallory's promise to engage the residents in commun-

filled. Dark stairwells and floor lobbies still plagued the buildings and frustrated residents complained of bad marks for "new management."

The second town hall meeting was held two months after the first one. This time, a more important subject was explored and explained - the residential lease agreement.

Due to illness, Gloria Bertin took Mallory's place representing the new management team. She carefully and concisely brought up the subject of residents' lease compliance and/or non-compliance.

Katherine Slaughter from CHA's Occupancy Department was introduced and the residents were invited to stay after the meeting to talk to her if they desired to move from their present location to another one within CHA. Slaughter said the Occupancy Department was being slowly but surely dissolved. Its present and prioritized function would be to assist residents faced with the scheduled demolition of their present housing to find decent housing and further assist them in their relocation. She was very sure they will not be doing any new transfers in or out of CHA.

With an open and refreshing twist on subject matter, Bertin revealed that one of the new management's dilemmas was the fact that "so many people who live in the Harold L. Ickes do so without a lease." This is where the questions about the lease began to be fired from the floor.

One resident asked, "What do I have to

Realizing that maybe we could get some other older issues responded to, this reporter asked about a budget for fixing up the apartments that we occupy: "How often do you expect new money from CHA, as in a budget, for the up keep of the property?"

Bertin said, "CHA gives no more money. What money we have to use comes from rent money collected in Harold L. Ickes only."

With that knowledge under our hat, what can we look forward to in the future? asked many of the residents at the meeting.

This reporter was unsatisfied with this information so I went to Ickes Local Advisory Council President Gloria Williams to see if I could get more information on the budget situation.

I asked her, "Can you give me any information about the budget for services and work orders for us at Ickes?"

Williams said, "Housing (CHA) didn't give the new management enough money.

M



These Chicago public housing youths of the Harold Ickes development are scheduled to attend the new state-of-the art Teachers Academy that is being built on site.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

every day but not Ickes."

I asked, "Why not?"

Williams said, "They (CHA) said, 'We are not allowed to use the machines because of minor plumbing problems and since they have not done the repairs, the laundry mats have not been made accessible.'

I asked, "Where do you think this property will go from here?"

Williams said, "What they (CHA) have been doing is either selling or long-term leasing to the private management companies.

"We are being squeezed out. Chinatown is moving east. McCormick Place is moving west and real estate is moving South."

With the uncommon pressure that seems to exist both inside and outside of public housing, and little or almost no budget for simple improvements or upkeep, frustration rules among many residents. The uncertainty of how long before we are individually notified that we too will be facing the demolition of our homes is alluded to in a newly available drafted packet containing a schedule for the demolition of Harold Ickes and other family properties by the year 2004.

This 'draft of improvement' of information is titled "Plan for Transformation Year 2 - Moving to Work Annual Plan FY 2001. On page 28, you will find a five-year demolition schedule summary. Residents can pick up a packet from the new management's office.

The packet does not contain all bad news though it is fully structured to cover plans for all age groups' future housing possibilities - especially for seniors. Beginning in January 2001, they can look forward to housing without the fear and discomfort of living with younger, less concerned neighbors with disabilities.

Here at Ickes, residents are looking at the skeleton of what was once family housing and realizing that the new school is taking its place. Many residents are overwhelmed by the thought there will be no Phoenix of reborn advantages and education for our children.

After the year 2004, there will be no homes in this area for the children who presently live here. But, coincidentally or not, there are homes being erected constantly for more affluent families in the area who will demand that their children attend this new state-of-the-art school.

And the squeeze out goes on.

any residents are overwhelmed by the thought there will be no Phoenix of reborn advantages and education for our children. After the year 2004, there will be no homes in this area for the children who presently live here.

do I want to put my son out because he doesn't respect me or my house?"

Bertin said, "You and your son or any other person you would want to put out would have to come to the office and sign papers to that effect. You cannot just put him out. He would have to sign an agreement to be taken off your lease."

The resident responded, "Suppose he doesn't want to be taken off the lease and still causes problems for me and the other members of the family?"

Bertin answered, "Documentation of incidents over a period of time and/or police intervention documents can be used as a lever for the removal of an individual from your lease."

Another resident questioned the status of so-called squatters: "I feel as though I can withhold my rent if 'they' can continue to live beside me while not paying rent."

Bertin said, "Many of these same persons are in court with CHA for non compliance by having a current lease. We are working toward resolving this issue."

They had promised more money for Ickes for winterizing, for some rewiring to be done, and for broken windows to be fixed. But they didn't do it."

I asked, "Well, has CHA just abandoned us without notice?"

Williams said, "They have sold Archer Courts and Hilliard Homes and Prairie Courts was sold to TWO and it's to be torn down and rebuilt. Parts of Prairie Courts are collapsing. The building at 2822 (S. Martin Luther King Drive) has concrete slabs falling off of it and the incinerator is caved in.

I asked, "Are they going to fix it so that no one gets hurt?"

Williams said, "They don't make the necessary repairs anymore. Just like they shut us at Ickes out of our own basements."

I continued, "I know. But isn't there something dangerous going on down there?"

Williams said, "No. There's nothing wrong with our basements. The tenants could use them for washing. CHA closed them down for us and used them for storage. Old refrigerators and stoves.

"We have two fully equipped laundry mats in 2240 and 2430 (S. there is more than \$20,000 dollars in brand new equipment there. The new company that put the washers in never came back.

"Even the coin exchange machines were available. It took two to three years to get them and they were never used. It's been over a year now.

"I worked to get this equipment for the Ickes and Prairie Courts. They're using theirs



These hired CHA Harold Ickes residents are hard at work in the lot where the construction of the new Teachers Academy is underway at 23rd Street and Federal Avenue.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

Transforming CHA

The New Teachers Academy

by Jacqueline Thompson

The Cermak Teachers Training Academy is being built at Cermak and Dearborn Streets within the boundaries of Harold Ickes Homes. It has been in the planning stages for the last two years and the residents of the Ickes public housing development are awaiting the fulfillment of the promise that the children who live within the boundaries will attend the school.

For the past 20 years, the federal, state and city governments have all staggered under the weight of global comparison of our educational systems and the results of so much failure to produce better readers, mathematicians and scientifically astute students. So the powers that be for us - the City of Chicago or, more specifically, the Chicago Board of Education - took a look at what the causes for such widespread academic failure could be and what they could do to make a change.

Well, since the characteristics of the causes are too numerous to count, to focus on, to try to correct and, in some cases, seriously beyond correction, the city focused on what it could do toward solving the problem.

The idea of a teacher's teaching academy was conceived, nurtured and funded. The school is expected to open for classes for the 2002-2003 school year. The concept of the

state-of-the-art school is so new that many of the residents of Ickes do not have a clue of the enormity of the character of the curriculum to be offered to all of the school's participants in this innovative educational experiment.

"This school is a teaching school like some hospitals are teaching hospitals," Mayor Richard M. Daley told reporters who were privy to be at the ground-breaking ceremonies held on Wednesday, March 14.

There is to be a separate building for a part of the Teacher's Teaching Academy campus that will house more facilities for the residents of Ickes. To be more specific, the building will house an indoor swimming pool, a full gymnasium and a day care center. During the day, the students attending the academy will go to the gymnasium for classes.

There will be an enclosed crosswalk for personal safety. After school hours, the door to and from the gym will be closed off to the community center.

The new school project has had a generally good impact on the community. So far, two of our residents are working with the construction crew. After a certain phase is finished, more will be hired. While speaking to construction employee Linda Liggins about working conditions, I asked her these questions:

RJ: "Was it hard to get the job?"

LL: "No. Not really. I applied at the city mobile employment center across State Street at 23rd."

RJ: "How did they treat you?"

LL: "They treated us great. No different than the others. They are friendly."

RJ: "How many children will you have attending the new school?"

LL: "Three adopted children and two grandchildren."

RJ: "What do you think of the new school?"

LL: "I think it's going to be great if we get to use it."

RJ: "Did you know that it will also be a school to teach teachers?"

LL: "Oh. I didn't know that."

This reporter took time out this past weekend to talk to some of the youngest children who will be going to the school. While interviewing the youngsters, they were very open about how they felt about the new school.

RJ: "What do you think about the new school that will be opening right here where you live?"

Jewel Gates, 7: "I like it. I want to go to there. I go to John C. Haines now. It's a long walk."

Antionette M. Rattcliff, 6: "When I think about the new school, I think about how I will play, have fun and listen to my teacher."

Leon Livingston: "I really want to go to that school because my teacher now is mean to me. I think they'll be better over there."

De Sheen Johnson: "I used to go to Gentry Center. I want to go there, to the new

school. It's close too."

Taking advantage of the great weather on a recent weekend, some parents talked about the new school while outdoors with their children.

Joann Williams: "I guess it's a good idea. They'll probably get a better education than at Williams. They need something better than they have now at Williams. This new school will probably have better teachers who will care about the children."

Idella Ross is vice president of the Ickes Local Advisory Council: "I just realized that it (the new school) is for teaching teachers. They first said that it is for 700 children. Now where are the teachers going to be? I really don't like it because it should be just for kids. When I tried to get my son into the new school, South Loop, I was refused flatly. But if they let other kids from other areas come in other areas come in front of the Ickes kids, that will be totally wrong."

Janet Crofton: "My nephew lives here and he needs special classes for stuttering. I hope he can get in the new school to benefit from new teaching methods. A lot of kids from here have the same problem."

"The residents of Harold L. Ickes face a future of great expectations built on promises for new and exceptional educations for their children. I hope they keep in mind how they can support their local LAC, building presidents and their children as this new day in education is born to them."



City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Comprehensive Clinics

All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated.

Comprehensive Clinics

Englewood	641 West 63rd Street	747-7831
Lower West Side	1713 South Ashland	746-5157
Roseland	200 East 115th Street	747-9500
Uptown	845 West Wilson	744-1938
West Town	2418 West Division	744-0943

Maternal/Child Clinics

Grand Boulevard	4410 South State	747-0005
South Chicago	2938 East 89th Street	747-5285
South Lawndale	3059 West 26th Street	747-0066

Public Health Clinic

Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV	530 East 31st Street	747-0102
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Affiliated Clinics

Circle Family Care	4909 West Division	(773) 921-8100
Komed Health Clinic	4230 South Greenwood	(773) 268-7600
Lakeview Neighborhood Health Center	2849 North Clark	(773) 528-1188
Lawndale Christian Health Center	3860 West Ogden	(773) 521-5006
Mile Square	2045 West Washington	996-9000
Woodlawn Adult Health	6337 South Woodlawn	(773) 747-7700



Key Public Health Telephone Numbers

All telephone area codes are 312, except where indicated

CDPH General Information	747-9884
TTY	744-8599
Addictions Services	(773) 476-0622
Outpatient Program	850-0080
Residential (Women/Girls)	(773) 737-4600
Residential (Men)	747-9825
Prevention	744-3796
Birth Certificates of Newborns	747-9875
Board of Health	1-800-4-CANCER
Cancer Information	747-8816
Case Management	746-5380
Communicable Disease Reporting	744-3800
Death Certificates	747-9810
Epidemiology	747-FOOD
Food and Dairy Protection	747-9726
Health Surveillance	747-8820
Hispanic Affairs	747-AIDS
HIV/AIDS	1-800-243-AIDS
Statewide Hotline	746-5380
Immunization	746-6122
Chicago CareVan Program	http://www.ci.chi.il.us
Internet Address	747-LEAD
Lead Poisoning	747-9768
Mental Health	747-9140
Nutrition Services/WIC Program	747-9822
Public Health Nursing	747-9805
Public Information/News Media Requests	747-5400
Sexually Transmitted Disease	746-5380
Tuberculosis	747-8787
Violence Prevention	1-800-603-HELP
Crisis Hotline	747-9569
Volunteer Services	

May 1999



Chicago Dept. of Public Health
John L. Wilhelm, MPH Commissioner

We Serve With Pride, We Treat With Compassion.

Transforming CHA

Project-Based Section 8s Threatened

by Michael Ibrahim

All low-income Chicagoans will have less housing to choose from if a coalition of Section 8 tenants, lawmakers, grassroots organizations and activists is not able to save thousands of subsidized housing units by 2005.

The Chicago Rehab Network, Tenants United for Housing and the National Housing Law project held a briefing March 16 on the "State of Project Based Section 8" at the Palmer House Hotel in downtown Chicago.

The event's speakers included activists and people in the forefront of a desperate struggle to save the only homes they know. The speakers also included state Senators Barack Obama (D-Chicago) and William Peterson (R-Long Grove) and Cook County Commissioner Bobbie Steele and city Housing Commissioner Jack Markowski.

An immigrant to this country, Olga Kipnis explained that she left the former Soviet Union after enduring the constant

e are human beings and we should not be tossed out of our apartments.

threat of violence due to anti-Semitism, and other hardships, including the Chernobyl nuclear plant explosion.

"We had to save the lives of our children and grandchildren," Kipnis said. "America gave us a new home, a new life and means for a decent living. We are...thankful to this country. We repeat every day 'God Bless America.'"

Kipnis now lives in the Rienzi Plaza, a Lincoln Park building with 140 Section 8 units. Rienzi Plaza is a Project-Based Section 8 building, which means the building owner has a contract with the government to provide low-income housing in exchange for low-cost loans. The length of the contracts usually was approximately 20 years. Many of the contracts are expiring now and others will expire within the next five years.

Kipnis is worried she will have to move if the owners of Rienzi Plaza don't renew the Project-Based Section 8 contract.

"But the housing problem is not solved," Kipnis said. "We are not sure where we will live in a year. The owners of our building would not have built it at all but for the Section 8 subsidies and federally insured mortgages. When the owners needed us and got their money from the government to build here, we were valuable for them. Now

they don't need us.

"The owner has never answered our letters...refuses to meet with us....We have not received any answers to our questions. In the article in *Crain's* newspaper, the owner says that he cannot predict the future of the building. He says, 'If I am a nice guy and keep the tenants, me and my partners will lose \$10 million.'

"The owner wants more money, so we ask the government to give programs that will benefit both the owners and the tenants," Kipnis said.

"My family was in a similar situation several years ago when we lived at 4827 north Sheridan. The contract expired so we moved to (Rienzi Plaza). (At the time) nobody warned us about the expiration of the contract. And now we have a surprise letter about the end of the contract in September 2001.

"We are human beings and we should not be tossed out of our apartments. We ask you to contact the owners and influence them to keep us here.

conflict.

"The way the situation stands now is: Those landlords who choose to opt out of the program yet decide to accept enhanced vouchers from anyone must continue to do so as long as the tenant wishes it to be renewed. So, at the present time, we have been successful in getting some protection for tenants, as far as enhanced vouchers are concerned, though some loop-holes continue to exist on the side of the owners.

"Already there have been over 100,000 residential units lost.

"Furthermore, the continuation of the enhanced voucher usage is not at all guaranteed. Every year, the Section 8 contract we have with the present stipulations and added benefits must be renewed at the federal level. Another loophole is that the owners still have the option of either accepting or rejecting the enhanced vouchers from the tenants. Other guidelines to be followed before the complete use of the enhanced vouchers can be successfully accomplished are as follows: The living space must be re-certified as habitable. Tenant and landlord need to agree on the higher rent.

"There is also underway a proposition or proposal that should allow Section 8 tenants to purchase their units if the owner decides to go condo.

"This could possibly happen under the Section 8 Home Ownership Program."

Later, we were to hear from Senators Obama and Peterson. Obama spoke on the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits: "Donation tax credits exist but not enough. The state needs to provide increased subsidies."

Both Petersen and Obama addressed the need for Senate Bill #1135 to pass. Peterson said the Bill was needed not just for the inner city but to provide assistance in suburban areas also. Peterson is a Republican from Long Grove.

The legislators said the tax credits would be a tool for generating more resources for affordable housing. Altogether, the tax credits would allow for \$26 million to be utilized for affordable housing. This would be the first legislation of its kind for affordable housing and the first state response for affordable housing since the 1980s. Customarily, the state has not been in the practice of allocating specific budget dollars for affordable housing.

After the conference, the bill was passed by the State Senate and sent on to the House. In the House, the Bill is identified as HB #1979. Peterson said Mayor Richard M. Daley and the Chicago delegation are actively pushing for the passage of these bills in the House and the Senate.

Daley, tenants and other groups are also behind a property tax relief program in the works at the county level to change the way affordable housing is taxed. At the briefing, this issue was addressed by Daniel Burke from the City Clerk's Office and Cook County Commissioner Bobbie Steele.

Steele explained: "The purpose of the Property Tax Relief Program is to provide an incentive attractive enough to Section 8 land-



Activist and attorney Jim Grow from Oakland, California at the Section 8 Preservation briefing on March 16.

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

lords for them to consider maintaining their Project Based Section 8 status rather than opting out."

Who is being affected?

Joyce Probst, a spokesperson for the Chicago Rehab Network, said approximately 30,000 Project-Based Section 8 units will expire across Illinois by 2005. In Chicago, 21,000 units are at risk. Of the 21,000, Probst said several thousand units are not likely to opt out of the program because the developments are owned or not-for-profit organizations or have other incentives to stay in the program. Many of these developments are in neighborhoods with many low-income tenants.

"They're in communities where there's little incentive to opt out. This is guaranteed income," Probst said.

"Some people, for a lot of different reasons, are renewing."

5,000 units are the most threatened because they are located in Lincoln Park, Lakeview, Hyde Park or other high-rent neighborhoods.

"These will be impossible to replace," Probst said.

If neighborhoods experience a lot of new wealthy people moving in, Probst said the landlord might easily decide to opt out of the Project-Based Section 8 program.

"We've lost the stability of the housing," Probst said.

"We haven't lost the housing yet."

According to a 1999 UIC Regional Rental Market Analysis, most Section 8 units are occupied by minorities in minority communities. 84 percent of Section 8 tenants are minorities (72 percent African Americans, 8 percent Hispanics and 4 percent Asian American). Additionally, the local communities that surround the buildings are 78 percent minority. 73 percent of units have female heads of households. 27 percent of the units are headed by a single parent with at least one child. The average length of stay for Section 8 tenants is over five years.

The tenants at the briefing stressed that the units are valuable to the tenants and their communities. Potential opt-outs and voucherizing out of project-based buildings will hurt tenants and their communities through the loss of stable housing stock.

Many suburban communities are already struggling to meet the demand for scarce rental apartments, according to the Chicago Rehab Network's Probst. The loss of valuable Section 8 units will only make matters worse.



Housing activists Andrea Daniels (back row, from left), Vickie Stapleton and Olga Kipnis (center) at the Section 8 briefing at the Palmer House on March 16.

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

High Cost of Gas

by Bobby Watkins

This past winter was rough on a lot of us - and not just because of winter and the frigid cold that came with it. But this winter, for a lot of people, came a big problem and that was due to the high increase in gas bills.

The high gas bills really presented a big problem for some residents who pay their own heating bill. There are some programs that offer help but what residents fear most is becoming lease non-complaint: All Chicago Housing Authority residents who pay gas and electric bills know

that they can't be behind in these utilities or have the bill in someone's name other than the lease holder. If they are behind, they must be in some type of payment plan, the problems of which I will write about a little later in this article.

Some people cannot even afford to pay other bills because of the high price of gas. Some are worried about losing their CHA unit or Section 8 apartment. Many residents feel they are facing problem after problem: The relocation plan is hitting most of us. Combine that with the 5-year welfare reform plan and many residents

are wondering if this is all one plan to hit the poor all at once. Here is how some of the residents I spoke with feel:

Angie, a Resident of the North Side

"With two small children and two in high school and a job that pays just a little over minimum wage, it is hard to try and be on a payment plan.

"You have to pay the same amount for one year and you must not get behind in this plan or you default the plan. And then here comes the worry about losing your unit because you can't pay

your bill. And you can't pay your bill because you have a child graduating from high school. There are fees that must be paid and you have the only income. Plus you still have your other bills.

"What is one to do because the help you do receive from CETA is a one-time payment for the year? I just hope that housing will understand."

G.S., a Hyde Park Resident who has a Section 8

"I was living in one of the high rises before moving to my current residence.

"I am a working single parent and what has me really worried is I have

but its own."

E.J., a Resident of Scattered Site

"How much more can we as residents of public housing take? I know this problem with the high gas bills is not just with residents of Scattered Sites and Section 8 but it seems like all of these cuts and increases are hitting us at the same time. First the 5-year plan with welfare and the new TANF (Transitional Assistance to Needy Families) program.

"So I go back to school and get my GED, then find a job paying a little bit more than minimum wage, think I am about to get ahead and now here comes

ome people cannot even afford to pay other bills because of the high price of gas. Some are worried about losing their CHA unit or Section 8 apartment.

S

applied to the CETA energy assistance program twice and have been denied twice.

"So how am I supposed to remain lease compliant if I can't afford to pay my utilities? And it is not like when I lived in the development.

"Some of my neighbors who moved in this area, along with myself, will not attend a community meeting. They don't want friends who they have met moving here to know that they are Section 8 residents and not homeowners.

"So it seems like I am fighting alone and I know I can't pay market rent. What am I and others like myself to do when it seems our government can help everyone

this increase in the utilities. I go to one of the energy assistance offices to apply for help and I am denied.

"They say my income is too much. Then the gas company wants to put me on a payment plan, which will put me in more debt than I am in already. With my bill going from \$543.68 to \$1,1476 (for one month), it is too much to deal with.

"When will we see a brighter day?" So now you read how some of our residents feel. There are reports about help being sent to the communities but many residents feel this help was sent to areas outside of public housing.



Homeless Prevention Fund Rally

These men rallied in Springfield this March along with others from the Coalition for the Homeless for money to prevent people from losing their homes.

Photo by Beauty Turner

Korean Translation

Child of the Pack Saddle: Part IV

by John
“Popcorn”
Sampson

Two hours after I got into the Model T Ford a few miles north of Marksville, five Cajuns and myself pulled into a yellow two-car garage in the rear of a yellow duplex house on Holly Street in Alexandria, Louisiana.

The interior of the garage was much larger than it appeared from the outside: the floor was covered over with wall-to-wall concrete, there was a two-pane window on one side of the garage, and at the far end, there was an iron bed. All in all, the place was neat and well kept for a garage.

After everyone had gotten out of the car and removed the fishing gear, Caroline said to me, “Popcorn, you wait here while I go in the house and get some bed clothing for the bed in the corner there where you’re going to sleep. That will be your bed. You wait here and I’ll be right back.”

I guess I waited out in the garage something like 25 to 30 minutes and was getting a little uneasy when Roland walked in and said to me, “Popcorn. Uncle Johnny told me to tell you to come in the house. Grandmother wants to see you. Come with me.”

The distance between the garage and the back porch was about ten yards or so. It was one of those screened-in porches with a couple of chairs, a couple of buckets, a mop and a couple of brooms at the far end of the porch.

The kitchen door was half ajar when Roland pushed it all the way open and as we walked into the kitchen. My eyes were met by a bright white light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Facing the door was a full-length window with a red and blue curtain covering the four-pane window. The blue wall-to-wall linoleum glowed as brilliantly as a new moon in the month of June.

Directly across from the kitchen door was a huge black iron stove with four large burners and a small burner for the coffee pot. At the bottom of the stove was a large oven with a glass door in the middle of the door and lording above the stove was an oven for keeping prepared food warm. Overhead and directly opposite the stove, a row of varnished cabinets lined the wall. Below those cabinets was a small breakfast table. A little farther down from table sat a kitchen sink and hovering over the sink was a window bearing white-laced curtains.

I was completely fascinated by the order and the arrangement of the kitchen from the moment that I laid eyes on this eye-catching scene. I thought to myself, “What a way to live. It must surely be heavenly.”

When Roland and I walked into the kitchen, Johnny and Caroline were cleaning the fish and Jesse and his wife were busy unpacking the fishing gear. Upon entering the kitchen, Roland walked over to the breakfast table where a white-haired



True love is infinite. It is immeasurable. It is ageless and unpretentious....And he who finds true love has, indeed, found a treasure....

woman sat sipping from a coffee cup. He placed his arm over the shoulder of the pretty white-headed woman seated at the table with her back to the kitchen door and said to her - in French – “This is Popcorn, Granny. The little colored boy that aunt Caroline was telling you about.”

The lady turned toward me, looked up and down for a moment, and then said to Roland, “Why, this boy is too young to be out hitching...how do you say?”

“The word is hitchhiking, Granny,” said Roland. “He was walking out of Marksville when Uncle Johnny picked him up on Highway 1. He say he come from New Orleans from Alex searching for his mama who lives somewhere in the colored neighborhood here in Alexandria.”

“What is his mama doing in this town when her child is in New Orleans?” the woman questioned.

“I don’t know, Granny,” Roland said. “Don’t start me to lying!”

“Come closer to me, boy,” the old woman said to me. “Now tell me the truth: Can you speak French? And if you can, who teach you to speak French? Your mama, is she a Cajun woman? I kin see you ain’t all Black ‘cause you no have big mouth like most colored folks have. You got Cajun blood in you, ain’t you? You talk good French.”

“Take that chair over there and bring it close here. I want you to tell me how come you out in the world all by yourself. And I don’t want no lies! You hear me? I know you little colored boys will sugar coat the truth.”

After I had complied with the lady’s order to pull the chair closer to where she sat, she touched me on my knee and said to me, “I want you to tell me how come you out here on the road at night coming from New Orleans all the way to Alex to find a mama and you don’t know for sure where she stay.”

“Look at me when you talk. I don’t like when people look at the floor when they are supposed to be talking to me. Do you understand what I’m saying to you...er,er...What is your name?”

“They call me Popcorn miss, miss...”

“My name is La Nora but you can call me Granny. Everyone calls me Granny and I don’t see no reason how come you

shouldn’t. Just call me Granny and I’ll call you Popcorn. And I don’t want you to forget that when you talking to Granny, you look she in the face. That is how I kin know when you tell a lie or you tell the truth. Now, tell Granny: Who is Cajun in your family? Where is your home and how come you come to Alexandria?”

I have gone through a lot of experiences but never, ever have I had an experience that equaled the kind of ordeal that I had with that white-haired old lady called

Along about that time, Johnny and Caroline walked over and Johnny said, “What is going on over here with all this shouting and squeaking, Granny?”

Pulling me into her lap, Granny said to Johnny, “You will never believe what this child called me, John.” “Oh, no!” said Johnny. “Well, I hope and pray he didn’t get indecent with you, Granny. Then I’ll be forced to cut his throat and I’d hate to have Black blood all over your new waxed floor.”

Caroline said between chuckles, “Don’t do it, Johnny. Please. Because if you do it as close as Granny is to him when you swing at him, you’ll cut her throat too.”

The next two weeks were the happiest days that I had known in all the length and width of the 12 years that I had been on this God-given Earth. I was happy for the very first time. I had peace in my soul, joy in my life and love in my heart. My past was completely and totally obliterated from my memory. It was as if I had never lived a single day beyond the present day and time.

There is song that says, “Joy comes with the morning.” But not so with this little Black Creole. My joy came with the morning, with the noon and the night! Yes, I was in love for the very first time and what truer love can there be in this world than that of love that is as innocent as the heart of a baby boy.

True love is infinite. It is immeasurable. It is ageless and unpretentious. True love is unselfish, non-biased and honorable. True love is the pride and the joy of the heart. And he who finds true love has, indeed, found a treasure that makes the treasures housed in Fort Knox seem like a piggy bank in comparison.

My lodging in the garage was a night of joy and unrivaled comfort, to say the very least. I slept like a baby the live-long night from the moment that I had laid my head on the big white pillow that Caroline blessed me with on into the sunbathed morning when I was awakened by Johnny’s baby sister, Bettie, whom I had met the night before due to the fact that she had gone over to her sister’s house Anne on a weekend visit.

A couple of weeks following my arrival at the Torque household, Miss La Nora, my true love, and myself were out in

What truer love can there be in this world than that of love that is as innocent as the heart of a baby boy.

thing, Granny?”

“Sure you kin,” said Granny. “Ask me. I know you told me that everybody call you Granny but, if you don’t mind me doing so, I would like to call you Miss La Nora. Can I?”

“Well, bless your heart!” said Granny, squeezing my hand with her two hands. “It’s wonderful to hear you say that, Popcorn. I ain’t been called La Nora in many, many, years. My husband used to call me La Nora. You is a good boy, Popcorn. A good, good, boy!”

the front yard. I was watering the lawn and Miss La Nora was planting flowers when a squad car pulled up at the front yard.

The policeman got out and walked over to where Miss La Nora knelt planting flowers. At first, I assumed that what the two were talking about was no concern of mine. And so, ignoring the whole affair, I continued with the task of watering the lawn and humming my little tune. But I could not have been more wrong, awry or amiss had I been attempting to extinguish a burning house with an eye dropper.

Voices and Music

by Arminta Clark
Muhammad

On a warm winter evening this past December, over 500 people packed the Hothouse, a downtown club on Balbo Street.

The night's show featured the amazing tenor saxophone player Pharoah Sanders with the Ritual Trio and Mexican American poet and spoken word artist Susanna Sandoval. On piano was musical genius Ari Brown, who also played the tenor saxophone, Malachi Favors on acoustic bass, and Kahlil El' Zabar, who plays traditional drum kits, flute, vibraphone and mimbra, the African xylophone, along with many different soft-sounding percussion instruments.

El' Zabar has been playing for a quarter of a century. He is no ordinary musician; El' Zabar has been acclaimed nationally and internationally. El' Zabar has played in many clubs and revues around the city. He started the Underground Jazz Festival and arranged for all the musical groups for the African Art Festival held in Washington Park during the last part of the summer.

El' Zabar's talents extend well beyond playing music. Lofton "L.A." Emenari, jazz radio deejay at the University of Chicago's WHPK radio station, said, "El' Zabar tries to

capture the best of Eastern and Western traditions of music. He's had many different, diverse groups including small ensembles, large ensembles and big bands."

El' Zabar has composed music for the motion pictures: "Mo' Money," "Love Jones," and Chicago's own director Daryl Roberts' picture, "How You Like Me Now." El' Zabar also has worked for many theaters as well, including award-winning director Julie Taymoore's the "Lion King" Broadway play in New York City.

El' Zabar also composed all the music in the various bands he has put together, including the Ethnic Heritage Ensemble, the Ritual Trio, Join Universal Breathe Ascending (JUBA). He is a former member and chairperson of African American Creative Musicians (AACM).

During an interview after the Hothouse show, El' Zabar said it was a "great opportunity and a great honor" to have a special jazz legend like Pharoah Sanders playing with the Ritual Trio. El' Zabar teamed up with Sanders on the Ritual Trio's new CD, "Africa N'da Blues."

"Sanders has represented for years the kinds of things I attempt to represent," El' Zabar said. "He focuses spirituality first in the music. (Sanders) has a relationship to culture and hopefulness and honesty in the projection of that," said El' Zabar.

El' Zabar added, "I don't know of any better example than him (Sanders) in terms of his

El' Zabar said the legacy he's looking forward to leaving is "to focus on the idea of empowering our opportunities to control the direction of our culture. To control the economics and reality of that culture. In the past, that wasn't there. And the ability to transmit a strong history to our children so that we can have great artists in the future."

El' Zabar said the type of music he plays is "Great Black Music Ancient to the Future."

"It is beyond genre because the industry uses those titles to separate people from the music," El' Zabar said. "We believe that all the music is great. Blues, jazz, rhythm and blues and funk. These labels are not really important. It is the idea of the music having a lot of feeling being intelligent and being spiritually focused."

Susanna Sandoval is a Mexican American Chicago native. Sandoval considers herself more than a person reading poetry. She considers herself a spoken word artist and a writer.

After the Hothouse performance, Sandoval said, "The difference between a poet



Internationally acclaimed musician Kahlil El' Zabar.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

arts arena," Sandoval said. "To be on stage with an artist like Sanders is beyond words of expression. I am extremely, truly overwhelmed for this opportunity."

Sandoval's parents are both from Mexico and she was born and reared on the South Side of Chicago. Sandoval said she was inspired by poet Nikki Giovanni and fiction writers like Ana Castillo, Gloria Anzaldua, Sandra Cisneros and Toni Morrison, just to list a few.

Sandoval said, "My mother used to tell us stories in Spanish. It's called 'Flor y Canto,' which means in English, 'flower and song.'"

Sandoval feels being a person of color and a woman artist working with others allows her to share and combine different art forms. She appeared recently at the Hothouse and performed the poetry of Chilean Pablo Neruda with musicians El' Zabar, Fareed Haque, Goran Ivanovic, Ami Saraiya and Kalyan Patak as well as poet Leon "Douglas" Leiva Gallardo.

African Americans had the Jackson 5. Latinos had Menudo, of which Ricky Martin was a member. Sandoval wants her work to give recognition not only to the Latino community but to the African American community as well. She believes both cultures share a lot due to their common history. She is looking to put out a lifetime of work.

Sandoval said, "To be a writer and to be able to use words that sound empowering for a positive movement is a mission that was established earlier in my life. When you share your work with people as far as the spoken word, an artist is like a faith healer. I think there is some healing power to the art of spoken word."

e believe that all the music is great. It is the idea of the music having a lot of feeling being intelligent and being spiritually focused.

-Kahlil El' Zabar, international Jazz musician



Spoken word artist and writer Susanna Sandoval.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

consistency in doing that. So I have tried to follow that same path. Sanders has been an inspiration to me so to work with Sanders has been an enormous happiness."

Sanders worked with John Coltrane, the avant-garde legend. Coltrane became known for his works during the mid-1960s. Sanders made the popular tune, "The Creator Has a Master Plan," featuring the late vocalist Leon Thomas, "Love Will Find a Way" with the late Phyllis Hyman, "You Got to Have Freedom," "Thembi" and "Astro Traveling."

"It's given me a lot of excitement," El' Zabar said of playing with Sanders. "Our band, the Ritual Trio, which is the reason why we came up with that title - it is that we try to represent a ritual in the form of the music."

and a spoken word artist is a poet is one who writes poetry where a spoken word artist hears words instead of music and makes the words sound like music with or without musical instruments."

Sandoval has played with many different local artists since she started 8 years ago.

"It's been a real privilege to perform and record 'Africanos/Latinos' with the Ritual Trio and Pharoah Sanders," she said.

"Africanos/Latinos," a collaboration with El' Zabar, is Sandoval's first recording. Sandoval delivers poetry in exotic, passionate, sultry, dramatic vocals in the "Africanos/Latinos." The tune is spoken in Spanish and translated into English. Sandoval describes this tune as a new American anthem because it bridges two cultures together.

Sandoval said being able to work with the Ritual Trio is "great," predominantly due to the fact they are Chicago musicians.

"Chicago being a major city in this land mass has enabled different artists' movements to evolve with their creative expressions in the

Smashing Stereotypes

(Continued from Page 3)

Seventy-two percent of the readership has one or more children in their household.

These brave families are making it on an extremely low income: 36 percent of **Residents'**

Journal's readers survive on an annual income of \$5,000 or less; 32 percent have an income of between \$5,000 and \$9,999; and 14 percent have an income of between \$10,000 and \$14,999.

Despite their extremely low incomes, **Residents'** Journal's readers shop in the same stores as everyone else. They go to Walgreen's (80 percent), Jewel (76 percent), and Aldi's (72 percent). Readers also eat monthly at chain restaurants such as McDonald's (64 percent), Popeye's (36 percent), White Castle (32 percent) and KFC (32 percent).

After rent, residents probably have \$500 or less to spend every month. But residents spend what they have feeding their

families. Fifty-two percent spend between \$100 and \$299 on groceries monthly; 22 percent spend between \$300 and \$499 on groceries monthly.

More than one-third of residents work at least part-time: 22 percent work part-time and 14 percent work full-time. Residents are nevertheless extremely interested in enhancing and updating their skills: 54 percent are interested in computer training, 44

percent are interested in job training and 24 percent would like to receive nursing or health care training.

The study had a lot of great news for the staff of **Residents'** Journal. Our readers told us they read the paper to get "Neighborhood News" (84 percent) and "CHA Stories" (80 percent) "Citywide News" (62 percent) and "Health Stories" (62 percent). Nearly every respondent to the study (96 percent) said they wanted to see **Residents'** Journal printed more often.

Residents have good reason to trust us: Last year, we pre-

dicted that shifting over to private managers wouldn't improve conditions for residents. As Peterson himself must now admit, we were right.

In the last few months, we've been chronicling the problems with the 'Plan for Transformation.' Now, resident leaders and advocates for residents are noting those same problems. We will use the results of the readership study to get advertising from those businesses that don't think that CHA residents aren't a "viable market." We'll also use the results of the study to give our readers more of the news they need.

But I suggest that Peterson and the CHA crew also use the results of our study. I hope our numbers will educate them that residents are a courageous bunch who have been doing all they can to rear their children with only the most meager resources. Our Study provides further evidence that residents deserve real service and respect from the government agency on which they depend. Press conferences, proclamations and political stunts won't cut it.

92 percent of residents voted in the last election



Youth Views



Don't Give Up by Twanda White

Today in this world, many people give up on many things. People give up on jobs, schools, programs, house hunting, their lives, children, reality and other things. When will people learn when to stop giving up?

One day, people will see that giving up is a waste of time. I would like to say, "Don't give up."

Why do people give up? Some people give up because they feel that they can't do a certain thing. People sometimes even give up on their jobs. That is a problem, because how can people keep paying their rent if they have quit their job?

Don't give up!

People give up on their children as well. For example, if their children stop going to school, the parents say they don't care. They might say, "I don't care. Do whatever. You make me sick." Then they wonder why their children talk back to their parents or get taken away from the parents by the government.

Another reason why people give up is drugs. When a person starts to do drugs, their whole life becomes messed up. People on drugs start to look bad and they can't get off drugs.

Don't give up! The worst thing to give up on is school. School is knowledge and knowledge is power. People need to go to school to get an education. How can a person drop out of school? One reason a person would give up on school is that they are being teased. They might get teased because they don't know how to do math problems or

because of the way they dress or talk. But you shouldn't drop out of school just for these reasons. When you are a parent, you don't want your child to ask you a question that you wouldn't know the answer to.

Don't give up!

Sometimes people give up on house hunting. That's a problem because people can't live in a shelter their whole life. With the redevelopment of public housing, many people are having trouble finding housing where they can use their Section 8 vouchers. They need to not give up on house hunting.

Don't give up!

Sharon Smith, 28, said, "The reason why I think some people give up is that they don't have any hope or they are scared." Yolanda White, 12, said that sometimes drugs cause people to give up, or people give up on their children because they put their boyfriend

or husband ahead of their children.

"That's wrong," she said.

People also give up when they listen to what other people say rather than what their own hearts and minds tell them. People don't have enough hope and belief in themselves. But giving up isn't going to solve anyone's problems.

Don't give up!

I believe people give up on their lives because they feel they have nothing to live for. Especially when someone gets turned down by someone they really care for, they might feel like turning to drugs and feel like they have nothing to live for. I want to tell those people that is not true. There's someone out there who really cares.

I think that people shouldn't give up on anything. You should always try and try harder.

Enough Violence by Iesha Griffin

What's up with all the violence around? I mean, can't we all just get along? It seems like every time I go somewhere or watch the news, they are talking about violence. If it's not a hit and run or a drive-by shoot-out, it's a fire, a rape, a gang-banging, a fight, a stabbing, a homicide, a suicide, a bombing, gunfire or child abuse.

I am a resident of 4555 S. Federal St. I am 13 years old, and most of my life I've noticed violence. I wonder if it's a craving because it

seems people can't resist it. I am not emphasizing that I am an angel and have never used violence because I have.

I wish that guns would be taken away, even though I know the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights states that the government cannot pass laws that stop people from having weapons.

I believe that violence is bad and should be stopped. But there are too many criminals out there who will not stop using violence. The worst type of violence to me is police brutality. It just doesn't make sense. Their motto is "We Serve and Protect" but to me, they just beat, shoot and kill innocent people. I feel that this is wrong. I know that they try to help but they are too violent.

I think violence is caused by depression, anger, hurt feelings, peer pressure and temptation.

"I think violence is caused by girls fighting over boys," said Desaray Moore, 13. "The he-said, she-said causes violence."

"I think violence is caused by drugs and gangs," said Twanda White, 13. "People get stupid from drugs. People get killed every day because of violence."

Mia Dunlap, 13, said that violence is caused by "the destruction of people who don't know any better."

Sterling Davin said he thinks "violence is just caused because of disagreements between people."

"I hate to watch people go to the hospital for this," he said. "I think we can survive without violence."

If I could stop or control violence, I would. But I don't think violence will ever stop because we grow up with it and it's part of our lives. It would be a miracle if we could just

stand up and live without it.

"I don't think people can live without violence," said Moore. "They have grown immune to it."

White disagreed.

"I think there could be a world without violence," she said. "Then people wouldn't be afraid to go outside."

Living in Poverty by Mia Dunlap

Living in poverty is a waste. People lose their sanity. They don't have any fun. They don't get much of anything. They go day after day hoping to get lucky by playing the lottery, prostituting or selling drugs without getting caught. They get looked down on, accused and even lied on. Not only do some live in poverty but in addition to that, many poor people live in the projects.

In the eyes of many people, living in the projects is like living in the alley on 47th Street and Wabash Avenue. From my experience, when you live in the projects, you don't get recognized for your talent. The children that live there could be either artists, singers, poets, writers, dancers and business managers. Best of all, they could be a president. But the problem is, no one notices them.

Roaches get more recognition than the young people who live in the developments. It's a shame. People think the only thing they know how to do is fight and cuss. But those are the consequences that come with being poor.

Poverty is something that many people don't like to admit to. It isn't fun being poor. You don't dress like the average kid. You don't wear the shoes that are in style. You are teased. It isn't easy to be poor.

"It feels bad being poor because you can't

get what you want," said Michael Dunlap, 15.

"It doesn't feel good being teased because you don't have anything."

"I don't like being poor because I don't have enough money and I don't get new wrestling men like my friends do," said Jemal Hancock, 8.

As you can see, children from all ages understand poverty. It is rather embarrassing to lose friends because you don't have money to go shopping.

The worst part is children almost never hear the word 'allowance.' In fact, the only time some children have heard it is when their friends discuss it. Many people turn to Jesus as a friend. They say he will wipe all your tears away.

Some people in poverty succeed but others give up. They just can't stand being poor. But the ones that succeed never let poverty overtake them. It's just another obstacle that needs to be overcome to some people. Others need more attention and nurturing, things some people never get.

Many people feel that if you are poor, you won't have good friends to depend on. They say friends will talk about you, back bite, lie and laugh at you. Many people feel the only one they can depend on is Jesus.

If you live in poverty, you get cheated out of your education. Children don't have real extra-curricular activities in poor neighborhoods. Activities like drama, music and art. Nor do they have all of the resources that kids in richer areas have, like access to the Internet.

"Poverty has pushed me to work harder to succeed," said LaToya Wolfe, 22.

"Since I know that there are forces out there that expect me to fail, I'm not going to fall

into it like others have. Instead of repeating that cycle, like so many people do, I chose to work hard so that I'd become someone.

"I know that there are people out there who expect me to fail because I'm Black. I expect to prove them wrong. And by working as a mentor at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, I will help others to succeed and show people that despite the hardships, we should continue to take risks to succeed."

Arnold Monroe, 27, said poverty has taught him to appreciate things more.

"I work harder for more than I did as a child," he said.

He said that in the past, poverty caused him to look down on himself. But now he is not poor. He defines "poor" as "being without materialistic things, like shoes, and emotional things, like nurturing."

Several students were asked how poverty has affected their lives. They all said they were not poor either mentally or literally, though some might consider them poor.

Even if they're poor, people should make the most out of life. They should try to be as bold and determined as possible. They also need to be taught by their parents and teachers to be as intellectual and independent as possible. To get by in life, people not only have to be street smart but smart academically.

Most times, children have the opportunity to make money but are afraid their parents will take it, so they ignore that chance. Parents often threaten to take the money, so again children choose not to do what they could do to make money.

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Bronzeville Teachers Speak

by Shanna Stitts

Bronzeville Academic Center

Principal Dr. Oyo Orok Nsefik

SS: "How long have you been the principal at Bronzeville?"

ON: "Nine months."

SS: "Do you plan on making any big changes at the school?"

ON: "No."

SS: "How do you plan to make Bronzeville a better school in the next year or so?"

ON: "By recruiting good students and having a good structure and supporting the programs we have. I also plan to start effective after-school programs, innovative curriculum and more community and student participation."

SS: "What are your future predictions about Bronzeville?"

ON: "I see it becoming a very successful school and possibly specializing in theater and art."

SS: "Why don't we have any fundraisers or basketball and cheerleading teams?"

ON: "The shortage of staff. Hopefully we will get more staff and be able to get things like that together."

SS: "How do you feel the school has come along so far?"

ON: "I think we have done a good job with structure, getting results, changing the school climate and involving the community."

SS: "How do you feel about the students who attend here now?"

ON: "There are a lot of students with a lot of potential

and with our programs and structure, they will mature and develop and achieve their academic potential."

SS: "If you were offered the same job at the same salary somewhere else, would you leave or stay at Bronzeville?"

ON: "I would stay because I love it here and I want to help and see the students succeed."

Interview With Bronzeville Teacher Ms. Katrina Raickett

SS: "How long have you been at Bronzeville?"

KR: "Two months."

SS: "How did you hear about this job?"

KR: "Through a friend."

SS: "Why did you choose Bronzeville over other schools?"

KR: "Because I knew I could help the students in their weak areas and they were in need of a math teacher."

SS: "Do you have any children?"

KR: "No."

SS: "How do you like working at Bronzeville?"

KR: "I like it."

SS: "If you were offered the same job at the same salary somewhere else, would you leave or stay at Bronzeville?"

KR: "Not sure."

SS: "Do you agree that this school lacks a number of things that affect students' ability to learn? If so, what things?"



RJ Correspondent John "Popcorn" Sampson poses with a teacher and students at the Bronzeville Alternative Academic Center. Entrance Exams for the school will held Thursdays 5/3, 5/31, 6/14 at 3 p.m. Please call (773) 538-0059 for more information.

KR: "Yes, being a new school, it lacks some organization but it's in the process of being developed. There could be more instructional experience and more comfortable classrooms for the students."

SS: "How do you feel about the students here?"

KR: "I feel like some of the students don't have a vision of where they want to go or what they want to do. Due to the lack of direction, the students aren't serious or focused."

Bronzeville Experiences by Anonymous

My experience here at Bronzeville Academic Center has been less than pleasant. I have been here since Jan. 22 and have had just too many problems. The reason I ended up in this school was because I was a rape victim and my mother took me out of school.

A couple of months later, I decided I wanted to return to school. I had my son on Oct. 2, 2000, and that's when I really decided that I wanted to go back to school.

I heard of this school through my mother's boyfriend. When I finally got in, after the placement test and registration, I

had good vibes about the school.

But at this point, I am about ready to get out of here. Not just because the school has a lack of books, chairs and teachers but because the students don't make it any better by stealing and making the school's reputation look bad.

I feel that Bronzeville would be better if they would be more serious with the students and enforce the rules a little more. There are students who aren't serious about school and don't want to learn. They should be kicked out.

Bronzeville is a second chance for us and these students take it for granted. Bronzeville has different classes but I think they should get more variety, such as art and foreign language. Most of the classes I have now I've already had at my last school. The teachers here really try hard to get the students to cooperate but

they refuse.

Still, the teachers are persistent at trying to get them to pay attention.

I don't know if some of the students here think Bronzeville is a school or a game. My personal opinion about Bronzeville is that it's a very good school and the teachers here are very good teachers. It's just that the students aren't on task. If they were to get a wake up call and if the teachers were to sit down and tell you, 'If you don't do this, this will happen,' there would be more progress.

If the students don't show any progress after so many weeks, they should be terminated. After the termination of all the off-task students, maybe the other students would take the school more seriously and do what they have to do to graduate.

Even though I am not pleased with the school, I have chosen to stay because it is

easier to stay and finish the year out rather than look for another school and be set back.

I interviewed a few Bronzeville students to see their personal views of the school and they said they feel it's a pretty nice school. The school is all right due to the fact that we only have 71 students, which helps in the obedience field.

Audra Smith, a senior, said that her plans after graduating from the school are to go to a part-time community college, then a university, and get an associate's degree in accounting.

Crystal Bland, also a senior, wants to be a surgical nurse or work in labor and delivery (gynecology).

Danielle Williams, a senior, wants to be a lawyer.

Neglected Children

by Tiffany Young

Neglect of children is a form of abuse. People don't know how to deal with the problem of neglect. If I had a lot of money, I would use it to put neglected children in safe, secure homes with guardians who are responsible, ambitious and who care about the children.

When I know children who are neglected, I tell them to, "Keep your head up high and everything will be all right." I tell them to attend programs that deal with neglected children.

I am so glad that I'm not neglected. I don't

know how I would handle it. Children who are neglected are especially susceptible to peer pressure, which leads them to do things they don't want to do.

I interviewed Tiffany Jones, age 13, a student at Coleman School, Phillip Curtis, age 8, a student at St. Elizabeth's School, and A.J. Monroe, 27, a staff member at the Charles A. Hayes Center, about the problem of neglect.

Jones and Curtis don't know anyone who is being neglected but Monroe does. Jones and Curtis said they have not been neglected themselves but Monroe said he was neglected as a child.

"I felt violated and mentally abused," he said. "But it made me a better person because now I can help others who went through the same thing I went through."

"I feel sad about people being neglected,"

said Jones. "A lot of them end up living in poverty."

Curtis said he doesn't care about the problem of neglect, "because it doesn't affect me."

"I feel sorry because you have people who don't know how to deal with the situation," said Monroe. "Some people take the wrong route in dealing with the situation and the consequences can be fatal."

Jones said she would never neglect her children because she wouldn't want to start a cycle where they neglect their children.

"I wouldn't want them growing up saying they have bad parents," said Curtis.

"I don't want my kids to go through the situation I went through," said Monroe.

Many times, neglected children take their problems out on others. All three said this

is wrong.

"That would be wrong," said Jones.

"Whatever way you look at it, it's not their fault," said Monroe.

I have learned that a child of any age, sex, race, religion and socioeconomic background can fall victim to child abuse and neglect. A large number of children who are abused and neglected are never reported to the authorities.

We need to provide help and support to victims of child abuse and neglect and their parents. Neglect is a community concern. No agency or professional alone can prevent the problem. Rather, all concerned citizens must coordinate to effectively identify, prevent and treat child abuse and neglect.

Youths Rally For Summer Jobs

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Young Chicagoans debated with City officials in February and March about the provision of summer jobs.

In February, Chicago youths rallied at City Hall to protest cutbacks in the number of jobs offered through Mayor Richard M. Daley's office.

They demonstrated again earlier this month at the State of Illinois building to ask the governor and state legislature for funds to provide 16- to 19-year-old African American and Hispanic young people with employment this summer.

Quintana Woodridge, a resident of the Ida B. Wells development and a youth organizer for the Youth First Campaign of the Southwest Youth Collaborative, said the young people were rallying for the city to provide the same number of jobs as last year.

"We were telling them, 'Well, you got it last year. Why can't you get that same many jobs for the 14 year olds as well as the 15 year olds this year?'" Woodridge said.

"The city has a corporate budget of \$4 billion and they cannot take out of that \$4 billion enough to supply youths with a decent-paying job for the summer?"

Woodridge, a 19-year-old student of the Herrington Institute located in the Fine Arts building on Michigan Avenue, said she joined the Youth First Campaign to advocate for young people because they need someone to speak out on their behalf.

"The youths need someone to speak for them and need to be heard. So this is a way for them to get their opinions out and try to work with the city officials," Woodridge said.

This summer, 14 year olds - including those with disabilities and from alternative high schools - in Mayor Richard M. Daley's Kids Start Summer Youth 2001 program and the Chicago Public Schools summer jobs program will receive \$400 stipends. Youths aged 15 and up will receive minimum-wage based jobs, according to city officials.

Woodridge said she didn't like the differences in pay that the 14 and 15 year olds would receive as first-time workers.

"That's like cheating the 14 year olds out of a dollar basically," she said.

"When they're 14 now, they get a \$400 stipend and (when) they turn 15, they get \$5 an hour. What's the difference of age? They are still just now starting a job."

Woodridge alleged that city officials knew three years ago the federal government was going to cut the funding for summer jobs. Woodridge said city officials never intended on providing summer jobs for youths.

"They had a chance to get in plans to get permanent funding. The thing was, they (the city) were not going to give summer jobs at all. Last year either," she said.

"But the campaign group I run with talked and worked with the (Mayor's Office of) Workforce Development in the mayor's office. They told us they had a little money that they could work with. So last year they got some jobs paying \$5.15 and more a hour."



Englewood High School Principal Edith Sims Davis welcomes the City of Chicago chief of Human Infrastructure Beverly J. Walker (left), Ald. Arenda Troutman and CPS Chief Paul Vallas with other city officials and Englewood sophomore student Crystal Shelly on March 8 to discuss summer job opportunities for youths.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

The City's Response

Beverly J. Walker, the City of Chicago's chief of human infrastructure, said at a March 8 press conference at Englewood High School that due to cuts in federal funding, up to 4000 summer jobs for youths offered last year were lost.

"The cut in federal funding took off the opportunity to offer three to four thousand jobs we were able to offer last year," she said.

Walker said the 14-year-old CPS students working this summer would receive a \$400 stipend for four hours a day for a total of 6 weeks. This figure would be about \$218 less than if they were earning minimum wage.

"The only ones who will receive the stipends are the 14 year olds who are coming into the program and going into their very first paid internship experience..."

She continued, "However, 14 year olds will get a stipend of \$400 for this summer. That's for six weeks, four hours a day during the summer.

That's about \$218.00 less than they could get if they were earning minimum wage," Walker said.

She said the decision to offer \$400 stipends was a hard one. But by offering stipends, Walker said city officials could provide more jobs to 14-year-old CPS students.

"Here's the way we made this difficult choice: If we are able to get 14 year olds a stipend, we would serve 2000 more 14 year olds," she said.

"And when we looked at that, we faced a dilemma. Serve fewer kids or bring in 2000 more kids and they could earn the \$400 stipend."

Walker said that the 14 year olds that work this summer would be given priority for internship jobs next summer. She added that the internship jobs offered to first-time 14 year olds was a concept similar to the adult workforce.

"And then next summer, we're (the City) going to guarantee those young people that they're going to get a job at a higher level for their successful completion of this year," Walker said.

"It mirrors what the workforce does. When you go in the workforce, you go into it at an entry level. That entry level prepares you to move up. We're just introducing that concept into the mayor's internship program."

Walker said that requests for proposal

of city grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$30,000 would be available for Sports 37 programs for community-based organizations to hire young people in the community to run sports leagues and activities within their communities.

Walker said the applications for young people would be available in schools, YouthNet offices or the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development One Stop Center (Call 3-1-1 for more information).

"We're not going to stop until we've used every dime we have and every resource we have to create as many different opportunities as we can," Walker said.

CPS Jobs

Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas said at the March 8 press conference at Englewood High School that CPS would allocate millions of dollars to hire thousands of young people.

"This year, CPS is setting aside \$5 million for job initiatives. We anticipate that we will employ at the minimum 5,200 students," he said.

He said CPS also wanted to service more kids and to reward those students who have succeeded in past jobs.

"The point is: Number one, we want to serve more kids. Number two, we want to reward those students who have progressed through those jobs and have delivered in the past," he said.

Vallas said 1,000 jobs were set aside for the Clean and Green Program to clean up in and around school grounds. There are 200 ROTC jobs for students to provide ushering and monitoring services during school programs and events. 400 jobs are available for non-CPS students as well as CPS students ages 14-19 for the Gallery 37 Summer Program to work with professional artists for creating artwork towards beautification of schools.

300 jobs will be available for the Police and Fire Training Academy for students at schools with police and fire fighters cadet programs. The students will intern during the summer at police and fire stations.

Vallas said the students who qualify for the Corporate Partnership Program would intern at business establishments created or funded by CPS business partners. The students will participate in job placements and internships in the secretarial, retail, health occupation, hospitality and administrative support fields.

He said 300 jobs would be available to

students of the 50 high schools who, with their teachers, have started businesses. These businesses include culinary art catering, World Wide Web page designing, cabinet making, painting and construction work.

"We're going to be paying our student businesses, putting our young people to work and at the same time giving them a vocational technical education and experience," said Vallas.

The \$5 million CPS allocated for the youth summer jobs came by way of selling off land and obsolete equipment and materials, Vallas said.

"Every year, we engage in real-estate transactions. In some cases, we sell land that we have in our possession. We sell old equipment and old materials that we have no more use for," he said.

"So what we do is generate income and we apply that income towards our summer jobs program."

A Split Consensus

RJ asked several 14 year olds who will be looking for work this summer how they felt about receiving \$400 in one bulk sum after a 6-week job while first-time 15-year-old workers will receive minimum-wage jobs.

There was a split consensus between them. Half said it would be unfair to them that first-time, 15-year-old workers would receive more in pay working the same length of time through the wage-based jobs offered through the CPS and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD). The other half said they didn't care one way or the other.

"That's not fair," said Alana R. Bell (who happens to be my 14-year-old daughter and who will turn 15 in June).

"We should get the same amount."

Deanna Joiner, a 14-year-old student of Wendell Phillips High School, expressed little concern.

"I don't even care as long as I get paid," she said.

Ebony Borders, another 14-year-old Wendell Phillips High School student, said the different pay scales are unfair. She feels they should get paid the same amount despite the age difference.

"That ain't even fair. I feel that even though there's a one-year age difference, we should get paid the same amount," she said.

Lorna Nickson, a 14-year-old youth who lives in the Chicago Housing Authority's Robert Taylor Homes development, said she didn't care what the 15 year olds would receive.

"As long as I get paid, I don't care what they get," she said.

The youths contend that the mayor's summer jobs program is very important to them.

All the youths interviewed in general agreed with Crystal Shelly, a 15-year-old sophomore at Englewood High School, about the provision of summer jobs for any young city resident.

"I believe this program is important to a lot of people and kids. Not only to get them off the streets but, for kids who are economically deprived, to earn money and gain respect," Shelly said during the March 8 press conference at Englewood High School.

**Kennedy King
AD**

Pursuing Justice

Stop the Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

I covered the recent trial of the man accused of raping Girl X in room 400 of the federal court building downtown.

Girl X, now 14, was assaulted, raped and given some type of poison in a Cabrini-Green hallway in 1997. This incident left the girl mentally damaged and blind. She was marked with gang signs on her stomach.

Most of the time, the courtroom only had reporters present in the audience as the trial went on. The girl herself was in the courtroom. During the cross-examination, the girl was urged to answer questions by the attorneys. Though she was able to give them the information, I had a doubt in my mind whether or not the girl actually knew what was going on. The girl was so horribly assaulted that someone must pay for it. It should be the one who committed the crime.

Besides the assault, the girl was given the insect poison and sexually molested. The evidence found at the crime scene got lost and no other physical evidence has been discovered to connect the suspect to the crime. There was one witness who swore that Patrick Sykes, the defendant, was in his apartment at the time and others who said they saw him going in the building about the same time as the assault took place. But there was no eyewitness that saw anything else.

investigate him further.

The life of Patrick Sykes is at stake in this trial. The media reported the stone face that Sykes wore daily in the courtroom. I saw it another way: I saw pain.

I had a brother who was one of the bad boys of his day back in the '60s. The way he explained the face to me is that they wear the face to show the white man that they can't hurt them, that the white man can't break them.

My brother also explained to me that the way he was able to do his time in prison was to pretend that he was at a spa. Exercise was all he concentrated on inside the joint. He finished college inside the joint. He stayed in prison.

One day, he begged us to get him out so that he wouldn't lose his mind. He had never done that before. He got out and in three days he was dead from an alleged hot shot.

My second brother had to leave town to escape constant harassment. My youngest brother has been in a nursing home for 10 of the 12 years he has been out of incarceration. He was in there for burglary one time only.

The fact is that Patrick Sykes has epilepsy. It also came out that he had signed two confessions. Sykes said he had been having seizures in the station and he would have signed anything.



This burn mark reveals where fire damaged an apartment in the Ogden Courts complex.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

detective who had signed two papers that he had interviewed Sykes but couldn't remember one until the lawyers showed it to him.

The case is now being investigated by professor David Protess of Northwestern University and his law students. Protess and his students retraced the case of Anthony Porter, a death row inmate, and helped to prove his innocence and set him free.

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Marv Dyson, a radio station president who manages a trust fund for Girl-X, told the *Chicago Sun-Times* that Belinda Bolhar, Girl-X's mother, had said to him before the trial that she believed that Sykes wasn't the attacker.

Mary L. Johnson, a neighbor who testified, said that James Alexander, the first suspect in the case, had come to her door about a half hour before, asking about a tenant's apartment. Johnson thought it was unusual because she was certain that Alexander already knew where the person lived.

One more suspect was James McGee, who had answered his door with a knife in his sock and another one in the wrapped towel. The detective became suspicious that he was high on something but found no reason to

One lady testified that Sykes came to her and pulled his pants down to show her that he had shaved his pubic hair. This was to show that he wouldn't have been able to leave any hairs at the scene; this testimony was apparently aimed at the problem of not being able to find any of Sykes' pubic hair on the child or at the crime scene.

The testimony that was given said that the pubic hair found did not match Sykes'. The missing evidence was a bloody bag and clothing. The gang markings on Girl X's body did not remain.

For rebuttal, the defense brought back a

Gaining
Respect

by Dr. Bill
Miller
Haymarket

Special Health Section

Center

All of us want to be respected and held in high esteem by those around us. A In fact, we want everyone to think well of us. And when they don't, we get angry with them.

We often think up the most negative thought we can come up with

about ourselves. Then we blame the other person for holding those thoughts about us.

Have you ever done that? If you have, know that this is the way most of us respond to rejection by others.

Most often, people respond to the others according to how the other person presents himself or herself. You see, people respond to our character. Our character tells everything

Character. This is true whether we know it or not. For many of us, our life has declined to simply living a lie. Despite our wanting to be different, we find that we are all getting worse. It was when we were doing our own thing that the damage to our character is done.

How then can we get to the place where we can respect ourselves and gain the genuine respect of others? "By constant self-discipline and control"

"What does that mean?" you ask.

The basic idea is practicing or training to become a person is able to exercise firm direction, restraint and management of the various parts of our life.

Such a person knows how to appropriately respond to everyone they meet. They have learned how to communicate effectively with everyone through fitting speech and actions. As this ability grows, we find people respecting us for who we are. We find that we are respecting

Quarter Page
Provident
Hospital AD

Pursuing Justice Death Penalty Moratorium Celebrated

by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Opponents of the death penalty celebrated the first anniversary of Gov. George Ryan's moratorium on executions at a Chicago church recently.

The event was called "No More Executions: An Indoor Rally to Celebrate the First Anniversary of the Illinois Moratorium" on Wednesday, Jan. 31, at the United Church of Hyde Park, 1447 E. 53rd St.

Gov. Ryan declared a moratorium on the death penalty Jan. 31, 2000, making Illinois the first state to do this. Ryan declared the moratorium after the ninth death row inmate was freed since the death penalty was reinstated in 1977.

Eventually, 13 death row inmates were freed in Illinois. The death penalty opponents allege that many people have been wrongfully convicted due to misconduct by prosecutors and poor legal representation by court-appointed lawyers, along with a host of other errors.

Anthony Porter knows about this situation all too well. Porter came within hours of being executed for a double murder he did not commit after a trial that included eye witness testimony. Before Porter, there was Rolando Cruz, who was freed after three trials.

e must kill the idea of killing as a remedy for problems, kill the idea of killing to curb crime and violence. We must kill the idea of killing.

-Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr.

In Illinois from 1977-1999, twelve people were executed, according to the Justice Center at the University of Alaska-Anchorage.

Gricelda Ceja knows about this. Her son, Raul Ceja, is the first person sentenced to death since Ryan's moratorium and is now on Death Row in Pontiac Correctional Center. Her son was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of two young men in a drive-by shooting in DuPage County. There were no witnesses, fingerprints nor forensic evidence that could place him at the scene of the crime, according to Gricelda Ceja and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

What evidence there was points to him not being the person who committed the crime, Gricelda Ceja said at the event. She charged the prosecution with using his admitted gang affiliation and the public's fear of gangs to secure the conviction and death sentence. Ceja is definitely

against the death penalty.

Costella Cannon's son, Frank Bounds, was a member of the "Death Row 10." Bounds won an appeal for a new evidentiary hearing when he died of cancer Oct. 10, 1998. His mother alleged that he was a victim of medical neglect while on death row.

Cannon has carried on her son's memory as a leader in the fight to end the death penalty in Illinois as well as nationally. Cannon went last year to Washington, D.C., to the Redeem the Dream March, where the Revs. Martin Luther King III and Al Sharpton called for an end of the injustice.

Cannon spoke at the Jan. 31 event. Bounds was accused of raping and murdering an African American woman.

"There was no DNA evidence, no eyewitness and no physical evidence to this crime," Cannon said. "Frank was born April 14, 1952. He left three daughters and eight grandchildren that he never has laid eyes on."

The rally's speakers included the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Larry Marshall of the Northwestern University Center on Wrongful Convictions, Roland Jones, an exonerated Illinois death row prisoner, and family members of the "Death Row 10," who death penalty opponents believe



Exonerated death row prisoner Ronald Jones (left) with death penalty opponents Costella Cannon, Gricelda Ceja and Robin Hobley during the First Anniversary of the Illinois Moratorium celebration on Jan. 13.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Jackson said, "We must inform some people to become more sensitive to the values and the shadows of death. We must not become malefic to this death machine and arrogance of the death machine. Maybe all this kind of arrogance is the rich killing the innocent because you figure you might lose your power base if you don't kill them for fear must be strong."

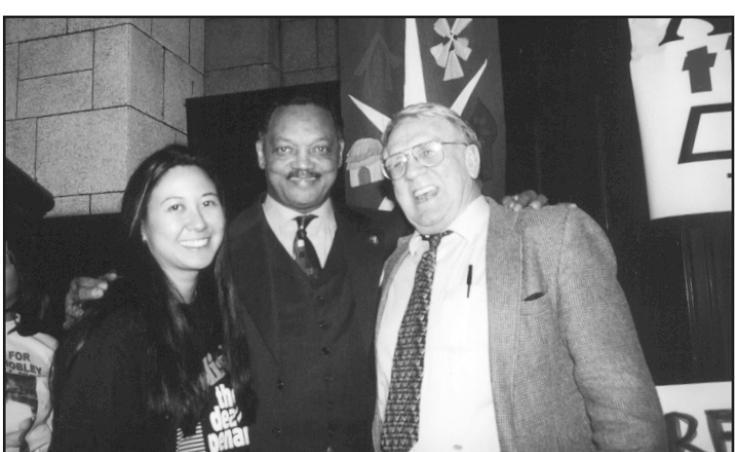
Jackson said he is going to Philadelphia to visit Mumia Abu Jamal. Abu Jamal has been on death row for over 17 years. Many death penalty opponents have taken on Abu Jamal's case.

Jackson added, "The jail industrial complex has become for profit. We know that second-class schools lead to first-class jails and first-class schools lead to universities. It is predicted early on from prenatal care - a lack of it. Head Start, day care on the front side, jail care and welfare on the backside.

"We cannot just limit our votes to the death penalty. That's too narrow, folks. The fact is we die daily while there are several thousands on death row. There are two million in American jails," Jackson said. "Two million," Jackson repeated twice. "500,000 more than China's (prison) population. We are part of a growing population with 25 percent of the world's criminal population. 1.2 million are African Americans in jails. For those in jail, 85 percent of the arrests in the rural areas are white. 75 percent of the urban arrests are white. But 55 percent that are in jails are African Americans."

Jackson said, "More importantly, the moratorium called by Gov. Ryan was the right thing to do. But when it is no longer looked at, there will be another governor and there is also a death row and facility where people will be killed.

"We must kill the idea of killing as a remedy for prob-



Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. (center) poses with death penalty activist Alice Kim and Larry Marshall of the Northwestern University Center on Wrongful Convictions during the First Anniversary of the Illinois Moratorium celebration on Jan. 31.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Roland Jones, a guest at the event, was the 12th innocent man to be exonerated and released from Illinois' death row after the death penalty was reinstated in the 1970s. Jones was convicted and sentenced to death in 1989 for a crime he did not commit.

Jones declared his innocence from the beginning, according to a press release from the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. Jones alleged that he was brutalized by police to obtain a confession for the crime he had been accused of.

Jones' request for a DNA test was denied twice by a judge before the Illinois Supreme Court ordered the tests to be done. The DNA test later proved Jones innocent.

Jones' nightmare continued for an additional 22 more months in prison while prosecutors attempted unsuccessfully to make a new case against him. Jones was finally freed in 1999.

Jesse Jackson Sr. announced at the forum that the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition would be focusing on the death penalty all over America.

CONDOLENCES

RJ would like to extend our deep regards to the family of former Central Advisory Council vice-president Helen Finner. We also wish a speedy recovery to Trumbull-Lowden Homes Local Advisory Council President Myra King's son.

Pursuing Justice Second Chance Legislation

by Wateka Kleinpeter
Managing Editor

A group of Illinois legislators believe that people who have had a brush with the law should be allowed a second chance.

Ill. Rep. Constance A. Howard (D-Chicago) was victorious on April 5 when House Bill 300 passed with very little opposition. Howard's proposed legislation would allow the automatic elimination- or "expungement" - of certain charges from one's criminal background history. Expungement would erase some negative information that is held against an individual. If passed, the bill would amend the current Criminal Identification Act.

According to Howard and U.S. Rep. Davis K. Davis (D-7), the bill would allow people with negative background information a "second chance" to get a job and get their lives back on track.

Davis testified to members of the Illinois House Rules Committee in February when Howard's bill first came up. As of November 2000, 45,617 adults were incarcerated and 29,120 were on parole in Illinois, Davis said. Citing a study prepared by Claritas and commissioned by the Stein Family Foundation, Davis said 70 percent of the men 18-45 in one West Side neighborhood are ex-offenders.

"This is my congressional district," Davis said.

A lack of employment is the number one reason offenders commit new crimes, Davis said. Howard's bill calls for an immediate expungement of the arrest and conviction records if the accused is found innocent. Cases for people accused but not convicted would also qualify.

"As these men and women transition from incarceration to freedom, what they need most are jobs. After all, having access to jobs is a basic American concept," Davis said.

"What they find instead are cold stares, unreturned phone calls and closed doors. The jobs are few and far between and in most cases non-existent for the serious and earnest men and women working to clean up their act and transition into productive citizens."

Under the current laws, it is the responsibility of the

individual to obtain consul or take whatever steps necessary to clear their own record. These criminal records have caused people to be discharged from a job, considered not a good candidate for a position they applied for, and ineligible for a lot of services and programs, including public housing and scholarships or educational grants.

Supporters of Howard's bill came to Springfield April 5 in several buses to hear the decision by the Illinois House of Representatives. One of the people on the bus was Algie Crivens III.

Crivens served eight years of a life sentence for murder one in the Stateville Correctional facility but was later found innocent. Crivens said that although he was set free, he still had a prison record, is still considered an ex-con and an ex-murderer. Although he has a bachelor's degree, he still has trouble getting a job, an entry-level job.

The Illinois House passed the bill by a vote of 115 yes votes and 2 no votes. The bill now has to come out of the Rules Committee and be passed in the Senate to go on to Governor George Ryan's desk.

"I am encouraging everyone to call their representatives, and ask them to support the House Bill," said Howard.

Many of the charges eligible for expungement are cases that were dropped, discharged or dismissed. According to Howard, those charges should not continue to cause problems.

Howard said many people come to her office seeking help with employment. She spoke with various employers and set up a mini job fair at her office.

"I thought I was doing something," said Howard.

When she followed up, she learned that many people were not hired because of negative background issues. Howard said that she started talking to more and more men and women who were having the same problems. She consulted with law enforcement officials and legal experts assessing what criminal charges could currently be expunged and the process.

Howard put together a group of concerned citizens that included attorneys, policemen, probation officers, social workers, community representatives, reporters - including this reporter - and other media personnel. Howard herself has a master's of science in corrections and criminal justice from Chicago State University.

They started meeting to strategize and see what steps to take. The meetings became almost weekly as time went on. They met at Northeastern University's Center for Inner City Studies on Oakwood Boulevard. Howard began to consult other politicians and inform them of what she was working on. She sought their help because the people that came to her live all over the city.

If Howard's bill becomes law, offenses can be expunged if the person is found to be actually innocent. But she has proposed six other bills that would expunge records for some misdemeanor convictions, some minor felonies, for those charged but not convicted, minors sentenced as adults and sentenced to probation or conditional discharge and minors sentenced to probation.

"Of course everyone won't qualify for expungement," said Howard.

U.S. Rep. Davis and members of the Illinois Black Caucus worked with Howard and supported her efforts.

State Rep. William Delgado (D-Chicago) was also



State Reps. Constance Howard (D-Chicago) and Lou Jones (D-Chicago) following the passing of the Expungement Bill on April 5.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

involved. More than 100 Hispanics attended a large meeting at Kennedy King College in late March.

Hispanics make up the other large group of individuals in our prison system. The meeting was days before the expungement hearing and many came and testified about their background situations. People signed up to go to Springfield to be there when the bill was voted on. Buses left from several locations on the North, West and South sides.

There are several agencies that assist ex-offenders with the expungement process under the current laws. U.S. Rep. Davis has an ex-offenders task force meeting at his office every month. Expungement is one of the things discussed. They are working on strategies for reintegrating ex-offenders into society. The committee has been meeting for the past two years.

The expungement is necessary for a lot of people because negative information can block a person from scholarships and grants for school, jobs and subsidized housing as well as market-rate units. Many people have been released from jobs because their employer found out they had been arrested or had some negative background information. In many cases, the employee did not know that the information existed.

Consider the case of an African American woman who attended the meeting at Kennedy-King College; she was arrested for disorderly conduct over 30 years ago. She said that she was a soldier in the civil rights battles of the late '60s and she marched with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

Sometimes a person has charges against them that are dismissed or dropped by the court. One young lady who testified at the Kennedy-King rally had a negative background that showed jail time and other charges because someone used her name. She found out about all the charges when she was discharged from her job.

Although she has hired an attorney and proved that it was not her who committed the crimes, she still is labeled an ex-offender.

Forms for expungement are available at the county clerk's office and they can even be downloaded from their website. The process takes a long time but can be done without a lawyer.

Howard said, "They would not let me go after certain convictions but next year I will."



RJ Managing Editor Wateka Kleinpeter with Queen Sister, Algie Crivens III and Raymond Moore poses in front of the State Capital shortly after the Expungement Bill was passed on April 5.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad



Domestic Violence Forum

Residents of the Chicago Housing Authority's Madden Park and Ida B. Wells developments recently listened to speeches and presentations on domestic violence.

The event sponsored by the Chicago Police Department's Public Housing Section April 10 at the Parent and Community

Training Academy.

Future forums on Domestic Violence are scheduled to be held throughout CHA developments.

Photo at left depicts Chicago Police Sgt. Judy Martin from the Superintendent's Domestic Violence unit providing a Madden Park resident with information from several city agencies on Domestic Violence prevention.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

Letters to the Editor

Democratic Page Summer Program.

Dear Editor:

I am happy to inform you that my office is eligible to nominate a Congressional Page for the second Summer session of the U.S. House of Representative Democratic Page Program.

The 2001 2nd Summer session begins with check-in on Sunday, July 8th, 2001, and

ends Friday, August 3rd, 2001. Qualified applicants need to be at least sixteen years of age prior to the start of the program. This is a paid page program. Pages receive \$1,178.17 per month. Housing will be provided based on a small rental fee. Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA and submit a 300 word essay on "What Democracy

Means To Me". The deadline for submitting an application is **Tuesday, May 8th, 2001**.

For more information or to obtain an application, please contact Ben Montgomery of my District office at (773) 533-7520, or visit us at 333 West Arlington Street, Suite 130, in Chicago.

Yours truly,

-Danny K. Davis
U.S. Representative
7th Congressional District of Illinois

Crystal Clear Views

Dear Crystal,

For the past couple of weeks, I had this feeling that my boyfriend was cheating on me. Of course, when I have a problem, I go to my best friend.

The problem is, I told her about the way I was feeling and she kept telling me to leave him alone because she never liked him anyway.

I knew she never liked him and that is the reason I'm so confused. The other day, I passed by his house when I was supposed to be at work.

To my surprise, my best friend's car was parked on the corner of his block. She has no business there. She was supposed to be at work too. I asked her about it and at first she denied ever being there.

Then, two days later, she told me she was there. She said she had gotten out of work early and decided to stop by to get some information for me.

She didn't want to tell me because she didn't want me to start thinking otherwise.

-Confused Friend

Dear Friend,

We both know that something isn't right. First of all, friends are supposed to be there to help you out and give advice, not to take over your problems and lie to you about it. You hit it right on the nose: *She has no business there*.

If she dislikes your boyfriend so much, why would she go to his house (without you!)? But let's not jump to any conclusions: Put all doubts aside and just let her know you didn't appreciate what she did.

Let her know that her lie really made you lose trust for her. Then, calmly talk to your boyfriend about what's going on and how you feel. Communication and honesty are the most important things in any relationship.

After you've talked to the both of them, you're just going to have to keep a close eye on both of them.

If you catch them together after you've talked to them, it'll make you feel like the bigger person because you gave the two cheaters the benefit of the doubt but were always a step ahead of them.

And just remember, if they are sneaking around behind your back, they are good for each other only because you are too good for the both of them!

Dear Crystal,

I broke up with my boyfriend about five months ago and I really miss him now. No matter what I do, I just can't seem to get him off of my mind and forget him. Do you have any suggestions?

- Missing Him

Dear Missing,

I'm going to keep it real with you. If you feel this way, you won't be able to forget him and you won't be able to get him off of your mind for a while because it sounds like you really cared for him.

I don't know how long you were with him and why you broke up with him but, in those hard moments, think about what went wrong. You will learn from your mistakes and more about yourself.

It will make you feel better to remind yourself of why you broke up with him in the

first place. People usually don't make a move unless they're unhappy.

After thinking everything over, if you still feel bad, you're probably just lonely, not missing him in particular. A lot of girls and even women try to hold on to memories. They can't move on because they want "what we had" back.

But remember, being comfortable isn't necessarily being happy. What you have to remember is to take the good memories that you do have, put them in your pocket and keep going.

Life is too short to live it in a dream. If you're stuck in the past, there is no way for you to move to the future.

Write to Crystal Clear Views at:
Residents' Journal
4859 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60615

Editor's Note: The above letters were drawn from the common experiences of many teenagers. The author's advice likewise represents the wisdom of teens and adults.

Poetry Corner

Life In The 'Jets

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

This is how it is!
No show-biz;
In the 'Jets.
Bang, Bang, Bang! On the Fourth of
July, Christmas Eve and New Year's Day.
You'd better duck, a bullet may be head-
ing your way!

Notice on the wall, another wake!
How many more for goodness' sake?
Mothers are cryin' 'cause their children
are dyin' In the 'jets.

Backstabbers

There are those who beg and borrow,
promising to pay you back tomorrow.
Time passed by and all you've received
was, pain, grief, heartache and sorrow.

Supposed to be friends smilin' in your
face, but it's all a front 'cause soon as your
back is turned,

you end up burned!
He said, she said constantly goin'
Sometimes innocent blood flowin'
Lyin', stealin', dope dealin' and killin'
But even so, don't be no fool and lose
your cool!

Use your head or wind up dead, in the
'jets!

Idleness

Teens hangin' 'round with nothin' to do,
Thinkin' that's cool instead of goin' to
school.

Noise by your door, open it and see,
Men and boys shootin' dice on the ramp
floors.

Drinkin' and fussin', losin' and cussin'.
Gangs, thugs, guns and drugs.
It's everywhere, but who cares?

Bad Maintenance

Garbage everywhere breeding swarms
of flies.

Go to dump the trash, they be a' buzzin'
in your ears and eyes.

Pipes in the ceiling wall showin'!

The sink's stopped up and the toilet's
overflowin'!

Dogs and cats, roaches and rats, are
among the pests that make their nests.

Try to fumigate and all you'll get is a
big headache.

Righteousness

There are those who go out of their way.
They say hey and make your day.
You'll even be greeted with a smile,
once in a while.
A display of solidarity is often seen,
especially in times when one is in need.

Warnings are often heard,
to children easily influenced and
unlearned.

Some people take time to pray
with their children every day.
They lead and guide them in the right
way

so they won't go astray.
Others share food, clothes and the use of
their phone,
and attend to the working families' chil-
dren home alone.

A kind word and good deed many dis-
play right from the start,
in temperance, with meekness and hum-
bleness of heart.

When you feel overwhelmed and under
siege and come in contact with people like
these,

you realize that, even amidst all the
gang violence, deplorable living conditions,
guns and dope, there is a way out,
there is "HOPE." Consider me, I live in
the 'jets.

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

Please send all letters to our new address:

4859 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60615.

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

Dear Resident

by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

Here we are, yet again at Spring, the beginning of another weather season cycle. Actually, it is not the beginning. What it is is the weather repeating its history. History, as defined by Webster's Dictionary, is "what has happened in the life or development of a people, country, institution, etc."; i.e. (that is), in this case, the weather.

History is also defined as an established record and the events that form the subject matter of record or history and even as an account of a person's medical or criminal background. It could be said that each day we live is a continuation of our individual history. Just like days, weeks and months historically repeat themselves, so does history repeat itself.

The Bible says that there is nothing new under the sun. And history, at times, is so strong that it seems inherent, established as an essential part of something or someone as received from one's ancestors like facial features, hair texture or mannerisms passed on from one generation to the next.

For the first time in RJ's four-plus year history, "Dear Resident" ran as a reprint in the last edition. My editor was kind enough to print a column from last year stating that I was on vacation. In addition to vacation, there are many reasons, i.e. illness, personal business, etc., to account for one's absence, but such is not the case.

"Dear Resident" ran as a repeat because I was absent due to JADING - I was tired, worn-out and disgusted by excess with people, places and things in my/your/our society. And understanding that Blacks are on the way to becoming the minority in America, for a second time, puts it right over the top: history repeats itself!

We were told, cautioned and warned that without constant vigil (watchfulness as to avoid danger) with regard to our history, our history would repeat itself. And the fact that we face becoming the minority race in America - again - gives credence (acceptance as true or real) to the Jewish community's

constant, unyielding work of keeping the Holocaust before their own, others and the world, lest (for fear that) anyone forget or devalue their history.

The question is: What must we do with regard to our history, lest it continue to repeat itself?

While I am not a historical scholar (one who has done advanced study), I have not heard of or cannot imagine another race of people who have survived more.

For some races, once they attained freedom, the killing stopped. When we attained freedom, the killing escalated (increased).

For some races, it was possible to hide or disguise that which brought wrath (strong anger) down upon

you. You cannot hide being Black.

one's family. And then one's community.

Examine your personal, family and community history as it relates to you first, then others. See what repeats itself that gives strength and continue to build upon it. See what decimates (destroys) you, your family and community and seek to struggle to fight to destroy it. I say fight because history is only changed when we engage in a fierce battle with ourselves and others.

I struggle because without spirit, one has to struggle to fight. And our first and greatest battle will always be with ourselves.

Even more important than fighting is what we are fighting for. For me and I hope for many, it's the children in our families and communities. That they may have an opportunity to become the best person they can possibly be.

But for many children in our public housing community and other communities, it is not possible. It is not possible because they bear the burden of a difficult family

and community history which they are bound to repeat as did their parents.

It pretty much works the same for children at the opposite end of things. Their parents did well and therefore, they do well.

Too many of our children must fight against a history of high school drop-outs, substance abusers, criminal activity, neglect by young parents, all leading to hopelessness or JADING.

For some of our children, it is too late. But they don't come to us this way. This is the way that they become. We don't fight for them and they are not strong enough to fight for themselves.

As for being JADED, it took only holding a small child, full of the possibility of the best to be, to reverse it. Children are unaware of what family, community and social history holds for them in their future. Look into the eyes of the children in your family.

Hold your history up to the light. If it's good, make it better. If it needs to be changed, change it. For it is the history you give your children to repeat, repeat, repeat.

Let's not let it happen again.

Pat

See what repeats itself that gives strength and continue to build upon it. See what decimates (destroys) you, your family and community and seek to struggle to fight to destroy it.

S

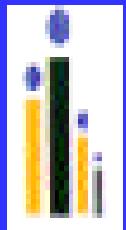
Even worse, those that hated us taught others and even some of our own to hate us too. And unlike other races, there is no common thread to bind us (to cause to bring about an emotional attachment or form a cohesive, or united, mass) other than the color of our skin.

One cannot help but conclude that slavery and segregation, which bound us together once upon a time, was our common thread broken by the attainment of some civil rights. Perhaps we believed that we had won the war when in actuality, it was only a battle that we had won.

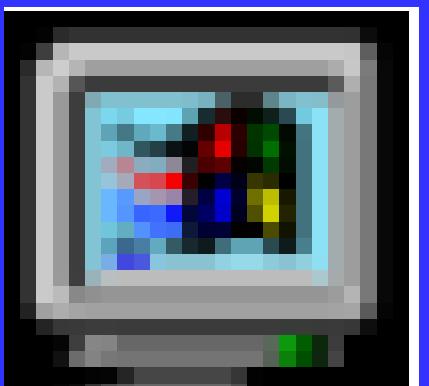
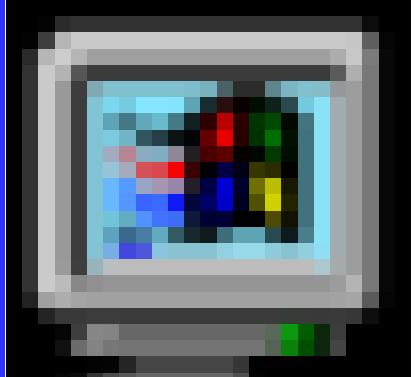
Thus, we stopped fighting and lost our fighting spirit. And without spirit, you are defeated before the battle begins. We sought to be like and accepted by those that historically rejected us without realizing that it meant rejecting us too.

So it would appear that as Blacks we became many peoples, broken and splintered into many groups, not bound by the many broken, splintered threads of each group.

So, perhaps the answer is to create a common thread to bind us together again as a race. And the best place to start? In the same place, no matter what you are starting - with yourself. Then



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