

R E S I D E N T S '

# Journal

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Chicago, Illinois  
Permit No. 5398

A publication for and by Chicago public housing residents May - June 2003 /Volume 7/ Number 1



## *AMERICA's WAR At HOME*

### Inside

*The Shocking Truth About CHA Pg. 4*

*Making CHA Accessible Pg. 5*

*HOPE VI on the Chopping Block Pg. 6*

*Urban Youth International Journalism Program Pgs. 12 - 15*

*War with Iraq: A Personal Perspective Pg. 19*

# Haymarket House AD

# Contents

PAGE 4: The Shocking Truth About CHA...by Beauty	PAGE 17: Positive Residents of CHA...by Bobby Watkins
PAGE 5: Newsbriefs	Ogden Courts Management...by Cenabeth Cross
Making CHA Accessible...by Lorenzia Shelby	PAGE 18: Stop the Violence...by Cenabeth Cross
PAGE 6: HOPE VI on the Chopping Block...by Mary C. Johns	PAGE 19: War with Iraq: A Personal Perspective...by Mary C. Johns
PAGE 7: Thomas P. Sullivan Report Update...by Beauty Turner	PAGE 20-21: Making CHA Accessible...by Lorenzia Shelby (in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Korean)
HOPE VI Continued...by Mary C. Johns	PAGE 22: Letters to the Editor
PAGE 8: Homeless not Hopeless Continued...	PAGE 23: Dear Resident...by Patricia Johnson- Gordon
PAGE 9: Lathrop Homes News...by Bobby Watkins Medicare...by Bobby Watkins	<b>FRONT PAGE</b>
PAGE 10: Debating Affordable Housing...by Michael Ibrahim	The front page photo depicts "Many Mansions," a 1994 painting by Kerry James Marshall which is owned by the Art Institute of Chicago. "Many Mansions" depicts springtime in Stateway Gardens. "We think of projects as places of despair," he explained to the Art Institute's web site. "All we hear of is the incredible poverty, abuse, violence, and misery that exists there, but there is also a great deal of hopefulness, joy, pleasure, and fun." For full title of the piece, "In my mother's house there are many mansions," Marshall chose to adapt a Biblical passage to refer to the large number of women-headed households in public housing. This painting is reprinted with the permission of the Art Institute of Chicago.
PAGE 11: Harold Ickes News...by Jacqueline Thompson	
PAGES 12 -15: Urban Youth International Journalism Journalism Program Section	
PAGE 16 CHAC Update...by Michael Ibrahim	

# Credits

Publisher	Ethan Michaeli
Editor-in-Chief	Mary C. Johns
Assistant Editor	Outreach Director
Beauty Turner	Gabriel Piemonte
Editorial Assistant	Crystal Medina
Circulation Crew Supervisor	Bobby Watkins
Layout Design	Mary C. Johns
Satin Crable	
RJ Correspondents	
Earl Battles, Clemlyn "Penny" Brinson, Deborah A. Britton, Cecelia A. Clark, Cenabeth Cross, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Michael Ibrahim, Crystal Medina, Alicia McNeal, Cheryl Murphy, Karen Owens, Lorenzia Shelby, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins	
Photographers	
Clemlyn "Penny" Brinson, John Brooks, Cenabeth Cross, Michael Ibrahim, Mary C. Johns, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Crystal Medina, Karen Owens, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins	
Residents' Journal is published by We The People Media, 4859 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60615. All Chicago Public Housing Residents are welcome to contribute to Residents' Journal. Please call (773) 285-0200 x3372 or fax us at (773) 285-2853 with your ideas, comments and concerns.	

# Our Mission

This publication is committed to the journalistic principles of fair representation and free speech. Above all else, this publication will strive to fairly and accurately represent all sides of the issues that the editorial staff chooses to investigate. In maintaining an unwavering guarantee of editorial independence, this publication will contribute to the American media's mission of faithfully providing balanced, truthful accounts and information. Residents' Journal strives to be accessible to all communities, regardless of income, ethnicity or disability. We The People Media is committed to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the Freedom of the Press. The views expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of We The People Media or its staff.

# Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli

despite CHA's responsibility to house every relocated resident.



A total of 725 families were relocated out of their homes in public housing. Many of these families - 298 to be precise - went to other public housing units in developments that are not slated to be closed, like Dearborn Homes

## Homeless not Hopeless

recently released numbers of residents who were relocated during 2002. According to those figures, a significant number of residents ended up outside of the public housing system altogether -

(Continued on Page 8)

### We The People Media Board of Directors

**President**  
Eugene Scott, Publisher, Chicago Defender  
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
Stelios Valavanis, Founder/CEO, On Shore  
Maner Jean Wiley, LAC President Hilliard Homes  
Sandra Young, Commissioner, Chicago Housing Authority  
Francine Washington, LAC President, Stateway Gardens  
Danny K. Davis, U.S. Representative, 7th District/Illinois  
Judith Kossy, Senior Consultant, CAEL Associates  
Dr. Sudhir Venkatesh, Columbia University  
Dr. Nathaniel Deutsch, Swarthmore College  
Jamie Kalven, Author,  
Sunil Garg, CEO, IRT Inc.  
Izora Davis, Lakefront Community Organization  
Jonathan Rothstein, Attorney at Law  
Barbara Moore, LAC Vice President, Robert Taylor Homes

### Thank You to Our Sponsors

Julia Stasch, Vice President of Human Community and Development, MacArthur Foundation  
Christine M.J. Oliver, President/CEO, Chicago Dwellings Association  
Susan Popkin, The Urban Institute  
Patricia Wright, UIC Vorhees Center  
Robin Snyderman, Housing Director, Metropolitan Planning Council  
Joseph and Judith Shuldiner  
WIX Auto Company, Inc.  
Al McCowan, Senior Vice President, Habitat Company  
Kenneth Dunkin, 5th District State Representative  
Jesse D. Granato, 1st Ward Alderman  
Rickey Hendon, 5th District State Senator  
Kathryn Haines, Community Consultant, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs  
Rufus "Bud" Myers Jr., Executive Director, Indianapolis Housing Authority  
Robert Blazejowski, Attorney, Jenner & Block  
Dorothy Brown, Cook County Clerk, Circuit Court  
Kathleen Clark, Executive Director, Lawyers Committee for Better Housing  
Peter Holsten, President, Holsten Real Estate Development Corp.  
Robert B. Lifton, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs  
Henry Morris, Executive Director, Joliet Housing Authority  
Mary Pattillo, Associate Professor, Northwestern University  
Stelios Valavanis, On Shore Inc. Media Technology Experts  
Sudhir Alladi Venkatesh, Professor, Columbia University  
Gregory Washington, President, Grand Boulevard Federation

Residents' Journal and the Urban Youth International Journalism Program are supported by the Chicago Reader, the Open Society Institute, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the Albert Pick Fund, the Polk Brothers Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

# Transforming CHA

## The Shocking Truth about CHA

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

Residents in the Robert Taylor Homes are being judged as non-lease compliant due to their electric utility bills and may lose their right to return to public housing units in the new mixed-income communities which are planned to replace the current developments.

CHA's relocation contract stipulates that if a resident is not current or on a payment plan concerning their utilities, they will not receive replacement housing, a Housing Choice Voucher or have the right to return to public housing.

But the shocking truth is that CHA may itself be responsible for making many residents non-lease compliant. Back in 1998, CHA dropped the ball when it came to registering buildings in Robert Taylor Homes for electric utility service, according to an *RJ*

**B**ut the shocking truth is that CHA may itself be responsible for making many residents non-lease compliant.

investigation.

I talked to former CHA officials and Commonwealth Edison representatives and no one is willing to accept the blame for this problem. An earlier *RJ* investigation revealed that many Robert Taylor residents had high electric utility bills which they denied accumulating. One year ago, CHA CEO Terry Peterson promised to resolve this issue but apparently has not done so.

And now in 2003, as CHA continues to demolish public housing high rises and make way for promised mixed-income communities, many Robert Taylor residents are dealing with enormous electric bills which may stop them from getting replacement housing or a Housing Choice Voucher, and may stop them from moving back to their neighborhoods. These bills are ruining many residents' credit ratings and might even prevent them from getting into a private market

apartment.

In recent months, residents from the Robert Taylor development at 4946 S. State St. - one of the buildings in the so-called "Cluster" - lit up my phone with a surge of calls concerning their high utility bills. Others called to say they were not receiving bills at all. The residents in 4946 S. State were energized over this issue because the building is due to be closed by September of this year. Of the approximately 100 families left in the building,

about one-half are non-lease compliant, the majority due to overdue or unpaid electric bills, according to the research I have been conducting in the building with Columbia University sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh. Yet another source of confusion for the residents is that some of the residents who are lease compliant have outstanding light bills. Many of the residents were highly charged and upset when they received letters saying they were non-lease compliant due to their electric bills.

"CHA is saying I'm not lease compliant

because of my electric bill. I don't even have a meter. How's Commonwealth Edison billing me anyway?" one resident yelled into the receiver. This is one of the many residents who were referred to me while I was doing research about the residents of Robert Taylor.

Darnell "Bull" Montgomery, a longtime resident of Robert Taylor who is working with me on the research, explained the history of the problem.

"Back in 1998, when CHA rehabbed the buildings in the Cluster, they didn't contact Commonwealth Edison regarding establishing meters or electricity in the new residents' names.

"After all, the 11th to the 16th floors in the 4946 building had been closed down for years before CHA rehabbed them," Montgomery continued.

Commonwealth Edison spokesperson Todd Banks confirmed Montgomery's story. Somewhere on the playing field, CHA dropped the ball.

"CHA never let Commonwealth Edison know that they were rehabbing those units (meaning in the Cluster). Never did they register for electricity, nor did they ever install meters in the residents' names," Banks continued. "Somewhere along the line, they dropped the ball."

I brought this dilemma to the attention of the current CHA, to Duwaine Bailey, who's over CHA Operations.

"This matter will be investigated further and if it is found out to be true, then we will do all that's necessary to help our residents," Bailey said.

I investigated further by calling Joseph Shuldiner who was the CEO of CHA in 1998 and who is now a consultant to the Gary, Ind., housing authority. I talked with Shuldiner about the dilemma concerning the installation of the electrical utility meters in the Cluster when they rehabbed the buildings back in 1998.

I explained to Shuldiner that Commonwealth Edison said that the meters were never installed nor were the residents ever registered.

"That has nothing to do with me," Shuldiner said.

"You need to look at the people who were over the rehabbing process of those buildings at that time," Shuldiner continued.

I asked him if installing the meters and registering tenants was the responsibility of David Anderson, who worked at CHA at the time?

"Yes, but it goes farther than us. Other entities were involved," Shuldiner said.

I tracked down David Anderson, who is now working at the Chicago Department of Housing, and asked him about whose job it was to install meters and electric utility hook ups in the Robert Taylor Cluster back in 1998-99.

"The responsibility lays on the residents. CHA provides heat and water, and by the way we had constant meetings with the residents and with Commonwealth Edison in those days," Anderson said.

This comment left me wondering. Banks told me that Commonwealth Edison didn't have any records of meeting with CHA or residents at that time.

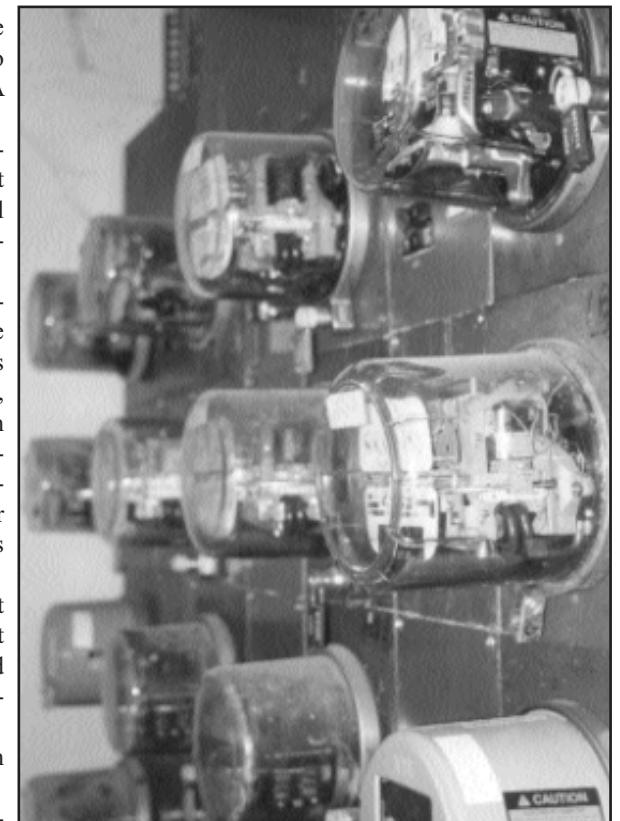
I called Local Advisory Council President Mildred Dennis in Robert Taylor (B) and informed her about the big problem concerning the electric utility hook ups dilemma in the Cluster.

"If this problem happened back in 1998, then I believe that the past management is at fault," Dennis said.

I called Interstate Realty, the firm contracted by CHA to manage Robert Taylor, and spoke to Peter Levavi, a developer with Brinshore-Michaels, the company contracted to build the new mixed-income community on the ground where Robert Taylor now stands. Brinshore-Michaels is closely affiliated with Interstate Realty.

I called them to see who or what establishment sent out the non-lease compliant letters to the residents.

Levavi confirmed the story provided by residents as well as Commonwealth Edison: CHA never installed the meters or registered the residents in the units they rehabbed in 1998. Levavi said the problem may even be larger than the Cluster. Levavi gave me many



**Although scheduled to close this September, in late May ComEd workers installed these new meters in the 4946 S. State St. CHA building at the Robert Taylor Homes. Residents received huge electric bills even though CHA had not arranged for meters to be installed since 1998, after units were rehabbed.**

Photo by Beauty Turner

numbers to call, including Interstate's main office in New Jersey. Interstate's representatives never returned my calls.

After weeks of investigating this matter, Commonwealth Edison spokesperson Banks called me on April 17, at 7 p.m. on my cell phone, and informed me that about two weeks prior, current CHA officials finally registered the meters in 4946 S. State.

Banks said, "The building on 49th and State has now been IDed by our Engineering Department.

"I know that there was an order put in about a couple of weeks ago to have meters put in at that location, and basically our Revenue Management folks - the people who manage the money - are aware as well.

"We are not going to do anything about disconnecting the services. This is in our Revenue Services [Department's] hands and any issue that they have in respect to money that is owed, they have the information to get in touch with CHA, and they have dealt with CHA extensively before. That's going to be a process to get our arms around. I just wanted to make sure you know that it's going to be a work in progress."

Banks didn't explain why Commonwealth Edison was installing meters in a building that is just months away from closing. He also didn't explain what Commonwealth Edison was doing to clear the bills which already had accumulated.

When this issue about the residents' high electric bills was brought up about a year ago, CHA CEO Peterson pledged at that time to resolve this issue. The residents who are having this problem are wondering why it is taking Peterson so long to make the right connections.



**Partnership to End Homelessness**  
**RJ Assistant Editor Beauty Turner chats with Mayor Richard M. Daley shortly after the Partnership to End Homelessness annual meeting in May.**

# Transforming CHA

## Making CHA Accessible

### Newsbriefs

#### Administration Change Proposed in the Housing Voucher Program

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is proposing to shift funding for housing vouchers into block grants and away from the country's approximately 2,600 public housing authorities.

If the U.S. Congress passes HUD's proposed Housing Assistance For Needy Families (HANF) program, states will receive the funding instead of the public housing authorities. States will then be able to contract with others to administer the program.

"In the former Housing Certificate Fund, more than \$2.41 billion has been recaptured over the last two years from the Housing Choice Voucher program. The unspent money has resulted in a denial of appropriated housing assistance for thousands of families," according to HUD's Budget Summary for its fiscal year 2004.

Under the new program, HUD would manage fewer than 60 grantees compared to the approximately 2,600 grantees today.

Public housing authorities would continue to receive the housing voucher funds directly for fiscal year 2004 while states prepare to administer new program. The funding for both incremental and renewal vouchers will be contained in the HANF account.

#### Funding For Youth Program Threatened

U.S. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-7) and youth services advocates are sounding the alarm over proposed cuts to a program that provides low-income and at-risk high school students with assistance to stay in and succeed in school and to develop employment skills.

The Department of Labor and President George W. Bush have proposed the total elimination of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program for in-school youths.

Since 2001, the number of youths 16-24 who are both out of school and jobless nationwide has swollen to 5,500,000, according to Davis.

"Legislation concerning WIA is now in committee and waiting to hit the floor," Davis' spokesperson in Washington said recently.

#### Diversifying Social Sciences

The Chicago Board of Education recently approved an educational outreach program that will begin to focus on diversifying the social science curriculum.

The program uses African American historical experience to increase teachers' preparedness and to provide mentorship for students.

Also at the same meeting, the board approved the re-naming of three schools and a child-parent center. The new Dawes Area School located at 3434 W. 77th St. will be named after a legendary jazz artist, Lionel Hampton. He was the first jazz vibraphonist.

Other CPS facilities that will be renamed are Simpson Alternative High School, located at 1321 S. Paulina St., to Simpson Academy for Young Women; Davis/Shields School, located at 4520 S. Kedzie Ave., to Columbia Explorers Academy; and John Farren Child Parent Center, located at 5165 S. State St., to the Edward Beasley Center.

by Lorenzia Shelby

Access Living, located at 614 W. Roosevelt Road, is a center for services for people with disabilities. Their mission is to promote self-esteem, and assist the disabled in their efforts to live an independent life. They have personal assistance programs that help the disabled with their grocery shopping and dressing and bathing. They teach people with disabilities how to ride the CTA buses and trains. They also have programs for people dealing with domestic and sexual abuse. They teach young people with disabilities how to take control of their lives.

Access Living's staff feel they are leading the charge in the fight for the rights and respect long overdue to people with disabilities. Legislation related to the efforts of Access Living include the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Amendments Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

People with disabilities are also discriminated against when it comes to housing. Finding a place to live can be a very difficult task for anyone. Finding a place that is accessible to people with disabilities is almost impossible, in public or private housing.

In mid-1998, Access Living presented a claim to the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) and the Habitat Company requesting several housing options for people with disabilities. The suit alleged that CHA was discriminating against people with disabilities by not making their housing units more accessible.

Accessibility is defined by guidelines or technical requirements, based on the Fair Housing Act. The following information was made available by Access Living:

Prerequisites to a living space being defined as accessible include an accessible entrance, accessible route, usable door, accessible route into and through the dwelling units, accessible electrical outlets and environmental controls and reinforcement walls in bathrooms. Other components include useable kitchens and bathrooms, including a drinking fountain or water coolers, closet racks and grab bars in bathrooms.

Among public housing developments, Access Living specifically targeted the new units that replaced Henry Horner Homes, saying those apartments were inaccessible to people with disabilities, according to Karen Tamley, the Access Living program director.

"It is therefore critical that new public housing developments, like Henry Horner Homes," Tamley said, "be built consistent with federal civil rights laws that ensure access."

On Feb. 24, 2003 a settlement agreement among Access Living, the Chicago Housing Authority and the Habitat Company was finalized. Marca Bristo, the president of Access Living, had this to say in an Access Living press release: "This settlement will make it possible for people with disabilities who depend on public housing to live at Henry Horner. We hope that its impact resonates among public housing providers throughout the country."

The following is an interview with Alberto Barrera, housing team leader with Access Living. The interview began with him talking about Access Living:

A.B.: "There are 23 centers like this one.

Our main goal is to empower people with disabilities to live independently in the community, and we do that with any means that we can. There are 400 [centers] in the country. We happen to be among the top five. We have a budget of about \$3 million annually. We have about 60 people working here.

"Our main goal is to have some housing choices, to try to reform some of the existing housing regulation for people with disabilities, and try and create choices for people with disabilities, and stay away from the mentality that we might build houses just for those people. What we do is in the mainstream of housing, urging the CHA, HUD, urging the state housing authority to create and develop housing for all, not housing just for those type of people. Just stop segregating people."



**Access Living Claim and Settlements Housing Team Leader Alberto Barrera.**

Photo by Lorenzia Shelby

R.J.: "Are you supported by any organizations, by the city or government?"

A.B.: "Yes. We are a private not-for-profit. We receive federal funds under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and we also get state funding. We write some government agencies and we have friends at local levels and we receive money from different private foundations. This is how we accumulate some of our funding."

"We have developed a department here and their main responsibility is to raise the \$3 million it takes to run Access Living annually."

R.J.: "Who's the president or CEO of Access Living?"

A.B.: "Marca Bristo. She is the founder of Access Living."

R.J.: "Tell me something about public housing."

A.B.: "Now, in reference to public housing, the city of Chicago housing transformation plan is the talk of the nation. Chicago is being observed on how we are doing with our transformation plan [but] there are other cities that have been transforming their public housing authority. You have California, Philadelphia - you see Chicago is not alone in the bullpen transforming public housing."

"It's a large sum of federal funds to do so. It's leading the way innovating programs to renovate and transform public housing"

R.J.: "Tell me about the claim Access Living filed against CHA."

A.B.: "The Habitat Company was assigned by a federal court to be the corporation to construct public housing for CHA. CHA didn't want to do it, so they assigned the Habitat Company to redo public housing. Any construction work to be done or rehabilitating was going to be in the hands of the Habitat Company."

"Henry Horner Homes was one of the first projects. They had to redo Henry Horner Homes on a court order. The Habitat Company didn't comply with certain accessibility requirements under federal law."

R.J.: "So they didn't build any low-income housing?"

A.B.: "They did build low income houses. What they did was create barriers for people with disabilities. They put one step where they shouldn't have done so. They violated accessibility requirements they were supposed to comply with when building."

R.J.: "Can you be a little more specific about those requirements and what they are?"

A.B.: "Yes. The basic requirement is to have an accessible route into the units, have an accessible entrance to the units, have a 36-inches-wide hallway to the units, have accessible environmental switches that shouldn't be any more than 48 inches from the ground and to have outlets no less than 15 inches from the ground. It is also very important to install reinforcement behind bathroom walls in case you want to install grab bars."

"Those are some of the requirements. There's another one under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504. Section 504 states that any entity that is receiving public funds will have to give equal access to the disabled. Certainly the Chicago Housing Authority and Habitat make their money with public funds. When they were building, they were supposed to include 5 percent fully accessible units."

"Now in the future, we are going to go beyond the seven requirements required under the Fair Housing Act. We are going to create bigger and larger - more accessibility. We received a call from one of the residents at the Henry Horner Homes. They were having problems getting in and out of the Henry Horner Homes units and asked if we could convince CHA to set up a little ramp to be used."

R.J.: "This is the way you found out about the Henry Horner Homes' inaccessibility? Because a tenant called you?"

A.B.: "Right. So when I went there, I found out that they were not supposed to put a step there in the first place. The Habitat Company did it and CHA let them build it, in violation of the federal requirement. We sat down and talked to all the parties involved - HUD, CHA, Habitat and their architects. Of course, the meeting was a little uneasy because we were accusing them of violating a federal law."

"It came to a point when they accepted the facts. It took them a while to say yes, they had made a mistake and they were going to correct it. They started to negotiate in good faith because they knew that we had the power and the proof that they were in violation and any court of law would side with us."

"So we started working in good faith. After three years, they signed a settlement that they were going to rectify."

R.J.: "You had a settlement with CHA?"

A.B.: "No. With Habitat."

R.J.: "You never went to court?"

A.B.: "No. We didn't have to. We had an out-of-court settlement."

Lillian Fuentes, an attorney for the Chicago Housing Authority, said, "After the settlement, I took a tour of the Henry Horner Homes and all of the requirements are being met."

# Transforming CHA HOPE VI on the Chopping Block

by Mary C.  
Johns  
Editor-in-Chief

The HOPE VI program - which has been the federal government's main source for redevelopment of public housing projects for a decade - is on the chopping block.

HOPE VI "has served its purpose," wrote U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Mel Martinez in early March. Martinez made the statement in commenting on the Bush administration's proposed budget for the upcoming year. HOPE VI had been funded at approximately \$600 million annually.

**A**n RJ investigation has found that millions of dollars dedicated to social services for tenants in HOPE VI developments have sat unspent. In one case, social service funding has sat unused for five years.

Martinez provided a number of reasons for why he wants to eliminate the program in 2004. He cited billions of unspent dollars and public housing authorities' failure to accomplish their goals in creating new mixed-income housing communities in a timely fashion.

Martinez cited Chicago as one of the main cities in which projects have been slow to complete and money has been unspent. And an **RJ** investigation has found that millions of dollars dedicated to social services for tenants in HOPE VI developments have sat unspent. In one case, social service funding has sat unused for five years.

## Unspent Billions and Incomplete Housing Projects

**H**OPE VI (HOPE stands for Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere) began in 1992 as an urban revitalization 10-year "demonstration project," according to HUD data. The federal housing program was established to revitalize 100,000 of the nation's most severely distressed public housing units with physical improvements, management improvements, as well as social and community services to address resident needs, according to HUD's summary of the program.

Now, President George W. Bush wants to uproot the program in 2004. According to written testimony by Martinez that was repeated to federal elected officials at a March 2003 Senate Banking Committee hearing on HUD's fiscal year 2004 budget, the program has come to its end.

"It's a program that has had a beginning, middle and has now come to the end of it. It is time to look to the future and pursue new opportunities, such as those I have noted, which can more effectively serve local communities," said Martinez to con-



**Mary C. Johns**

gressional leaders, many of whom were opposed to the proposal to whack HOPE VI.

HUD admitted that the HOPE VI program has been successful. But the concerns about the rate in which the housing projects had been completed and the unspent billions of dollars outweighed the successes, they argue.

"\$2.5 billion...has been obligated to PHAs (public housing authorities) but is unspent. And \$500 million in 2002 funds and \$500 million in 2003 funds...is yet

\$5 billion. The Chicago Housing Authority has received eight of those grants totaling \$257.8 million.

CHA, with the third largest public housing stock nationwide, is currently undergoing a 10-year, \$1.6 billion plan to transform its properties into mixed-income communities.

There are currently 23 Chicago public housing family developments that formally housed 16-story high-rise buildings. HOPE VI has primarily targeted high-rise structures.

CHA CEO Terry Peterson said after an April Tenant Services meeting that the housing agency was a little concerned about HUD's proposal to eliminate the HOPE VI program. But he expressed confidence that the elimination of HOPE VI wouldn't affect the redevelopment plans for the city's public housing stock.

"We think that the HOPE VI program is a very good program. We've had a number of successes here in the city of Chicago with the HOPE VI program. But I think it's also important to know, as part of the Plan for Transformation, if you take a look at it, we've got the HOPE VIs that were promised to us," Peterson said.

"So, in terms of what HUD is proposing, it really doesn't impact Chicago because those HOPE VIs that were committed to us under the Moving To Work (MTW) agreement we've been able to get."

HUD Secretary Martinez said during the Senate hearing that cities that received HOPE VI funding for small housing projects are apparently doing well. But plans to rebuild and complete public housing redevelopment projects in "cities such as Chicago are going very slowly, and some have had problems with lawsuits, including those from 'self-appointed representatives of the tenants,'" he stated.

Peterson didn't agree or disagree with HUD's assessment. He said, "(Martinez) mentioned why that was happening. He talked about the reasons for that. Lawsuits. Right?"

Peterson gave no specific number about how many mixed-income communities have been established to date on sites where former CHA high-rise buildings

once stood but said that the housing agency had used HOPE VI funding to purchase units in mixed-income developments.

Not all of the 23 CHA family developments were targeted for demolitions and mixed-income communities, according to Peterson.

"Not all the developments. The only developments that were impacted by the HUD 202 viability test were those that were gallery style high-rise buildings. The 16-story 202 properties. Those are the only ones impacted by this in terms of redevelopment.

"Not all of the programs are going to go through mixed-income. We're going to rehab Wentworth Gardens, Trumbull/Lowden and Bridgeport Homes," Peterson explained.

Section 202 of the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996 requires public housing authorities "to identify certain distressed public housing developments that cost more than Section 8 rental assistance and cannot be reasonably revitalized."

CHA has 13 family properties that are subject to the Section 202 viability test of which eight contained gallery style high-rises and five were low-rise properties, according to a CHA document dated January 2000 titled "Commitments, Waivers and Requests" and which was attached to the agency's application to HUD for approval of its Plan for Transformation.

The document also states "The Section 202 viability requirements result in the demolition of more public housing units in Chicago than in any other City in the country."

Peterson also professed that CHA accomplished many things under the leadership of Mayor Richard M. Daley since the mayor took control of the housing agency back from the federal government in 1999.

**(Continued on Page 7)**

Development	Amount Awarded	Year Awarded	HOPE VI funds spent on construction of new public housing units to date	Construction Funds remaining	HOPE VI funds spent on community support services to date	Community Support Services Funds remaining

# Transforming CHA

## Thomas P. Sullivan Report Update

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

The problems with the city's ongoing, ambitious plan to transform its public housing are weighing heavily on the city's so-called "Big Shoulders." The Chicago

attorney, analyzed Phase II of the CHA Plan for Transformation and presented his results to the CHA and the Central Advisory Council. In a report which hit the Windy City like a tornado, Sullivan found that residents with Housing Choice Vouchers are moving into predominantly African American areas that have a high concentration of poverty. Sullivan reported

For those that moved into the private market, mobility counselors didn't provide tenants with information to move into 'opportunity areas' - neighborhoods and suburbs with access to good transportation, schools, jobs and other resources. Sullivan also reported that the CHA Service Connector, a program that is supposed to benefit residents with opportunities, is not making connections for tenants with resources such as drug rehabilitation, job training, day care and education.

Sullivan made a number of recommendations that CHA officials say they are taking to heart. Sullivan made recommendations concerning the CHA relocation process to make sure that the process runs smoother for the residents.

I called CHA spokesperson Kathryn Greenberg to see what recommendations the agency kept or threw away concerning the relocation process.

"There are many recommendations that Sullivan made that we took into consideration, such as the timing in which a resident is moved, and also the make-ready units," Greenberg said. "When it comes to the Tom Sullivan report, we have worked closely with Sullivan and with the CAC concerning the 54 recommendations and we plan on implementing at least 60 percent of them we agree with."

I called Sullivan concerning what he thinks about CHA taking his recommendations to heart. Sullivan said he was "happy" that CHA is considering his recommendations concerning relocation.

The CHA board of commissioners approved in May an eight-month, \$520,000 contract with Sullivan to monitor Phase III of the Plan for Transformation. At press date, however, CHA had not released Sullivan's scope of work, what his tasks will be and into what he will be slicing.

We have worked closely with Sullivan and with the CAC concerning the 54 recommendations and we plan on implementing at least 60 percent of them that we agree with.

-Kathryn Greenberg, CHA spokesperson

Housing Authority is trying to lift some of that burden by implementing some of the recommendations made by Thomas Sullivan, the independent monitor of the transformation process.

Last year, Sullivan, a former U.S.

that some residents moved into CHA temporary replacement units in "deplorable" conditions. Sullivan observed the presence of gangs and drug dealers in many of the developments into which people are being moved.

### (Continued From Page 6)

"In two years, we've closed 12 mixed-financed deals here in the city of Chicago," Peterson said. "And I think that HUD will even tell you that under the Mayor's leadership we've closed more deals in 2 years than were closed in the previous 10 years."

Peterson said that the U.S. Congress will vote in October on whether to keep HOPE VI alive.

### CHA's Unspent HOPE VI Dollars

A recent *Residents' Journal* investigation found that a portion of the HOPE VI money CHA receives from the federal government for demolition, rehabilitation and new replacement public housing units, among other things, is supposed to go toward a Community Support Services Program. CHA officials state that HUD's Community Support Services Program provides basically the same services as CHA's Service Connector Program. But an *RJ* investigation found that some of the HOPE VI Community Support Services money hasn't been utilized to date.

CHA received HOPE VI funding for eight sites from 1994 to 2001. For the ABLA Homes, CHA received a \$35 million HOPE VI grant in 1998. But thus far, none of that money has been used for community support services. Nor was any of the money for community support services spent at three other sites for which the housing agency also received HOPE VI money in 2000 and 2001. These sites were Madden Park-Ida B. Wells, from where I relocated in March 2002, Rockwell Gardens and Robert Taylor "A," according to CHA data provided by spokesperson Jennifer Chhatlani.

CHA official Danielle Bell said that the funding was unspent because the HOPE VI process at the developments was not yet finalized.

"We are trying to finalize the process and trying to revise the plan so that the services are aligned with site-specific criteria. We're trying to finalize the process according to the closing schedules for each of the sites so that we have final service plans and an implementation schedule for each of those sites before the closing dates hit," Bell explained in a phone message.

"We're implementing the plans at ABLA and funds are being spent on the '96 grant first. So, for Taylor, Rockwell, and Madden Park, those plans we hope to finalize in August and begin implementation shortly thereafter."

Through its Service Connector program, CHA currently pays social service agencies to assist residents with job training and referrals, childcare, substance abuse counseling and other social services during relocation.

But Tom Sullivan, an attorney hired by CHA to audit Phase II of the progression of the Plan for Transformation, reported in January that the Service Connector Program was "woefully inadequate" and "grossly underfunded."

Sullivan's criticism raises the question of whether the unspent Community Support Services funds can go to assist the Service Connector Program. In response to this question, Bell said that CHA is currently working towards that goal with some of the Service Connectors.

"It is a possibility that these funds can be used to support the Service Connector. As we address service gaps and we find that the Service Connector has issues that they would like to address, we can look to try to support the Service Connector by

using some of the HOPE VI funds," Bell said.

To date, Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor Homes and Henry Horner Homes are the only developments for which new public housing replacement units have been built with HOPE VI funds since 1994.

### Keep HOPE VI Alive

The HOPE VI program was developed as a result of recommendations by the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing. HOPE VI has undergone many criticisms throughout the 10 years of its existence.

Critics of the program have reported over the years that even though inner cities are being revitalized by HOPE VI projects nationally, they are also increasing the need for affordable housing for the poor. They also say that only a small percentage of residents that were displaced ever return to the few public housing units available in the mixed-income communities.

Nevertheless, supporters of HOPE VI nationally are saying that it is a program worth keeping. They are saying the funding from the program is vital in assisting the transitions of old, decrepit public housing into new, modernized housing for the

poor. They say that funding provides former public housing families with a better way of living, and provides youths with alternatives to gangbanging and drug dealing, and also helps residents overcome obstacles to employment, and reduce crime and violence in public housing.

Several housing authority officials are planning to lobby Congress to re-fund HOPE VI, according to a news report by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in March.

Also, North Carolina Rep. Mel Watt (D-12) recently introduced a bill that would reauthorize HOPE VI through 2005.



### Tempers Flair At NE Scattered Sites Meeting

This angry CHA resident of the NE Scattered Sites area was among a number of other public housing tenants who complained to CHA officials about the rehabbing of their apartments during a Town Hall meeting in April.

Photo by Crystal Medina

# Homeless Not Hopeless

(Continued From Page 3)

The largest group of relocated residents, 374 families, moved into the private market using Housing Choice Vouchers (commonly known as Section 8s).

Twenty-seven families moved into what CHA is calling "unsubsidized" housing. That word, "unsubsidized," stuck in my

**T**wenty-seven families moved into what CHA is calling "unsubsidized" housing. That word, "unsubsidized," stuck in my mind.

mind. The average public housing family lives on less than \$6,000 per year, or \$500 a month, leaving them with much less than what it takes to rent the average apartment in the city. Apart from CHA, there are very few affordable apartments in the city, as indicated by the 30,000 families that are on CHA's own waiting list.

So where are these "unsubsidized" tenants ending up? In our last issue, Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns reported on the case of Lobeta Holt, a former resident of Robert Taylor Homes who needs to carry an oxygen tank. Holt was forced to stay on her aunt's couch after she was denied a Housing Choice Voucher and CHA was unable to find an apartment in another development accessible to people with disabilities.

CHA claims that all of the "unsubsidized" tenants have chosen not to live in CHA. Holt, however, made no such choice.

If she didn't have her aunt's couch, Holt might have ended up in one of the city's unofficial housing programs. The City of Chicago spent tens of millions of dollars rehabbing Lower Wacker Drive and building Millennium Park, and though city officials didn't call them housing programs, homeless men and women quickly moved in.

The city also doesn't call the viaducts underneath the major roads and highways housing programs. But that's what they are, as even the city's own employees are aware.

Last month, I noticed a crew of city employees and workers from the Illinois Department of Transportation working in

the viaducts on the periphery of the Wicker Park/Bucktown neighborhood on the Near Northwest Side. I've seen homeless men and women living under the viaducts there for years. They have beds and other furnishings stashed in the ledges, garbage cans near the sidewalks and even grills.

On this day, though, all of those items were being tossed unceremoniously onto the

backs of government trucks, headed for the trash. A worker from the city Department of Human Services explained to me that the residents of the neighborhood occasionally complain about the presence of the homeless and then the crews come out. He lamented that the city and state workers don't have much to offer the people under the viaducts.

"The guys you see up in bridges are not wanting to get into the shelter system," the city worker explained to me.

"These are the chronically homeless. They've been through the system many times."

These homeless people tend to avoid the shelters because of the curfews, strict rules and crime that pervades those places, he explained. Many of the homeless men and women have an income through odd jobs or social security. The city can offer the men drug treatment services as well as some short-term assistance with rent or a security deposit.

The most important services, however, are not part of the city's offerings. Many of the chronically homeless are mentally ill and the city doesn't offer mental health care services or affordable apartments for the long-term. The federal government used to provide money for both housing and mental health care but these services were cut in the 1980s during the administration of President Ronald Reagan, the city worker explained.

"There's a lack of affordable housing out there and to have an apartment, you need a stable income and follow-up services," he said.

"When you find a guy, you just try to plug them in whenever possible."

"I won't be out of work for a while."

Sure enough, the city worker was right in predicting that he will be busy for the foreseeable future. Just a few weeks after the clean-up, the homeless men and women were back under the viaducts.

Twenty-seven families might not sound like a lot. But it was 7 percent of the total number of families CHA moved out of the authority last year. The agency's lack of concern indicates that hundreds, maybe thousands of other families will end up under the viaducts and in the city's other unofficial housing programs.

The CHA's lack of concern over creating more homelessness is not a surprise, of course. A major problem during the Great Depression of the 1930s, homelessness virtually disappeared after government housing programs were created. In the 1980s, when those programs were cut along with services for the mentally ill, homelessness reappeared. Even the word "homeless" had to be created to describe this new phenomenon, since the old words "hobo" and "bum" are now thought to be derogatory.

Much of the nation was in angry mood in the early 1980s and many people blamed the homeless for not working hard enough, just as they blamed single mothers using welfare for not working.

By now, however, we should know bet-

I do believe that one day, our national mood will change and we will recognize that it is both better and cheaper to prioritize housing, education and health care over tax cuts, prison construction and military adventures.

ter. By not creating enough affordable housing, we have only succeeded making it harder for middle-class families to find appropriate housing. By not properly funding education, job training programs or welfare programs, we have produced millions who are ill-prepared for the workforce.

We also should have learned that failing to care for everyone in our society costs

all of us dearly. Each mentally ill person who is left untreated is a potentially productive citizen who will not find his or her way into the workforce and who society will take care of, when their illness erupts and sends them into our public hospitals and prisons. Each incarcerated youth requires more dollars to keep him or her in prison than it would cost to send him or her to college. Given the overall lack of concern - even contempt - for those in need, the CHA's indifference over its creation of more homelessness is predictable. But there is a critical difference between Chicago public housing and the other issues I mentioned. While there is no law requiring us to house the homeless, the CHA is legally required to house its residents.

CHA is one of the few places left where compassion is not optional. The CHA's failure to take responsibility for adding to the homelessness in the city, therefore, is worse than just our society's everyday failures to take responsibility for taking care of those in need. CHA's failure is a blow to all of those who respect the laws of our land.

I do believe that one day, our national mood will change and we will recognize that it is both better and cheaper to prioritize housing, education and health care over tax cuts, prison construction and military adventures. It's better and cheaper for middle-income Americans most of all, since they are the main ones whose taxes currently pay for

those military adventures, prison construction as well as the emergency mental health services, police officers, social workers and other institutions which handle crises.

The question for CHA residents is whether our society will come to a new consensus before today's residents find themselves sleeping on couches or under bridges.



In photo to the left, two new *RJ* readers wait in line for food distributed at the St. Paul Missionary Church on Dearborn and 47th streets in May. The gentleman seated on the milk crate suggested that we print job ads in *RJ* and let people in wealthy communities know that conditions in many neighborhoods are getting more desperate. *RJ* readers feed their minds as they wait to fill their stomachs in a free food pantry line. The right photo depicts (from left to right) CHA Board of Commissioner Sandra Young, Mary Stewart, executive director of Mid-South Planning and Development Commission, 4th ward Ald. Toni Preckwinkle, and Amy Hallie, another CHA Board Commissioner at the 2003 Chicago Senior Citizens Hall of Fame event that was held at the Chicago Cultural Center in May.

Photos by Beauty Turner

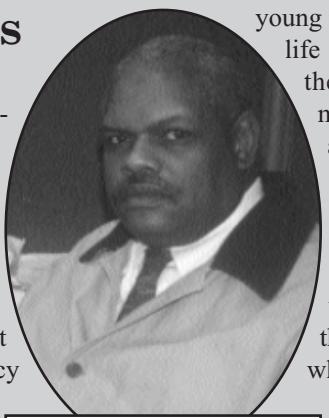
# Lathrop Homes News

by Bobby Watkins

## Dark in the Development

On Wednesday, April 9, residents of Lathrop Homes experienced a major power outage which shut down electricity throughout the whole development and shut down most offices. Residents had lights out for days.

U.S. Dwellings, the management company for Lathrop, put an emergency plan into effect. Lending a hand were Commonwealth Edison along with CHA representatives from headquarters. They walked around the development to determine what had caused the



Bobby Watkins

young residents lost her life in a fire. Then there was more media attention, and CHA representatives from downtown returned.

Electricity would be out for the next 24 hours, while management staff were in the process of getting more generators to add to those in place.

often.

We regained power – the generators are gone and transformers are in place - by press time. Throughout the blackout, most residents felt management and its janitorial staff did a very good job of trying to help keep things normal.

Some residents are upset that they have not been compensated for food they lost when they only receive food stamps once a month. Again, let's remember that this is downtown.

But if you've lived in the development as long as I have, you will see management is doing the best with what they have and is keeping the residents informed as to what is happening. After all, the current management company only recently came in, and we have experienced these black outs - although not as long - in the past.

Also to be praised are the staff of the service connector and all the interagency people who helped out. For now, many residents are thankful that nothing much worse happened.

Resident leaders are urging residents to get and keep a united front and make CHA accountable for its own mistakes. We need a united front because with numbers you can make things work.

**R**esident leaders are urging residents to get and keep a united front and make CHA accountable for its own mistakes.

problem. Management's janitorial staff worked late into the night to be of whatever assistance they could be to residents. They were knocking on doors and checking on those known to have oxygen tanks or any illness that might require immediate attention as a result of the blackout.

During the power outage, one of our

But all in all, many residents looked at the good side of things: offers of helping with food, and the assistance provided by the Red Cross and the Illinois Department of Human Services.

This was an accident waiting to happen. Most residents feel CHA should inspect its electrical equipment more

Those who are lucky enough to get Medicaid now have to pay a co-payment, which a big problem for some who just don't have the money.

For them, the only alternative is to go Cook County - now John Stroger - Hospital, and then you are getting generic medicine, which not everybody can take. And even if it is proven that someone is among those who can't take generic medi-

cine, you have to wait until you can get approval from the state.

There is a proposal in the works now that would give states the power to reduce, eliminate or increase aid to the low-income, disabled and some elderly. If approved, it can result in higher co-payments, and some benefits can be cut.

There will be no cuts for those currently receiving welfare, poor children and

some other groups who are automatically eligible for aid. Since guidelines are different for different people, the eligibility criteria vary.

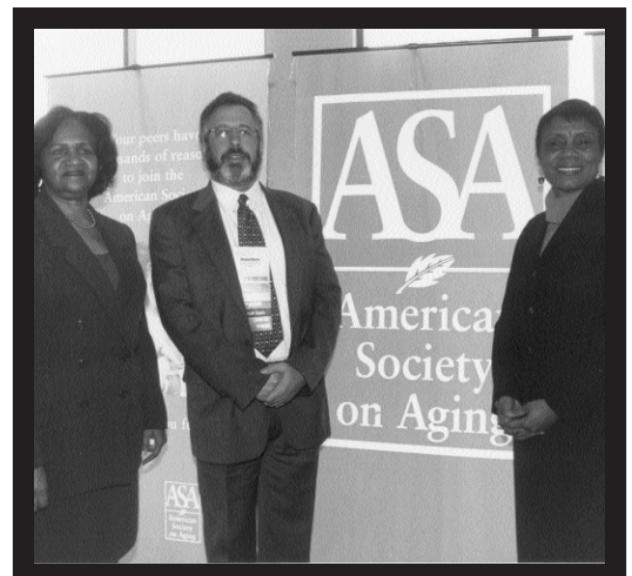
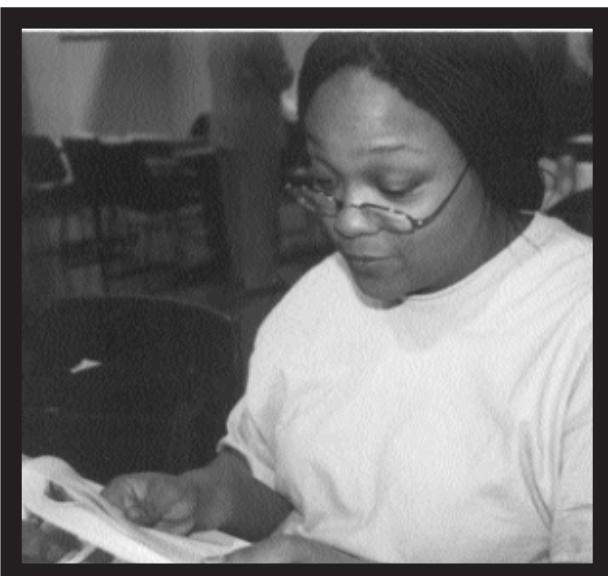
And that's not all. Medicaid is currently providing care to about 45 million people, and is financed with state and federal dollars. Since states are experiencing many budget cuts and a decline in revenue, many have chosen to cut Medicare.

# Medicaid

by Bobby Watkins

**I**t seems that there is just one nightmare after another when it comes to the poor, elderly and disabled.

## In The News



In the left photo, LaTresha Green, LAC president for the CHA Harrison Courts public housing site reads some information on how to budget money during Money Smart week at the Charles A. Hayes FIC in April. In the middle photo, former death row inmate Arron Patterson joins family members of Adam Sanders to protest the alleged police beating of Sanders and others at the Cabrini Green CHA housing site in April. In the photo to the right, Chicago Department on Aging Commissioner Anna L. Willis (pictured far left) poses with Michael Marcus, Senior Program Officer for the Chicago Community Trust, and B.J. Walker, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Office of the Mayor, at the National Conference on Aging that was held at the Sheraton Chicago Hilton and Towers in March.

Photo to the left by Crystal Medina, middle photo by Beauty Turner and the right photo courtesy of the City of Chicago

# Debating Affordable Housing

by Michael Ibrahim

**O**n April 9, the Chicago City Council passed Mayor Richard M. Daley's version of an affordable housing ordinance. Many activists are concerned that the mayor's ordinance does not go far enough to alleviate the affordable housing crisis in Chicago.

According to Fourth Ward Ald. Toni Preckwinkle, "We think that this is a good beginning and we're looking for consideration of our [alternative] ordinance which would apply to the private development community and involve the creation of a lot more units. Our ordinance is still in committee and we are hoping there will be a point at which it is heard, and we will have an opportunity to provide testimony for its support."

I next asked Preckwinkle how effective the Mayor's affordable housing ordinance would be.

"I was there when the Commissioner of Housing (Jack Markowski) testified in favor of the ordinance, and what he stated at that time was that the ordinance would provide 500 to 1,000 units of affordable housing per year," said Preckwinkle.

Based on figures also asserted by the councilman, at that rate, it would take at least 50 years even to begin to make a dent in the affordable housing need citywide.

**B**ased on figures also asserted by the councilman, at that rate, it would take at least 50 years even to begin to make a dent in the affordable housing need citywide.

Preckwinkle had figures showing the present need set at about 50,000 units for the Chicago area alone. Many housing advocates are certain those figures will grow incrementally over time.

Afterwards, I immediately called the Mayor's Department of Housing to see if someone might amply explain the ordinance to me and was directed to Stacie Young.

Young is the director of policy and research in the Department of Housing.

RJ: "I have some really important questions related to those often asked by our readership. Most of our readers are really interested in Ald. Preckwinkle's suggestions for affordable housing and exclusionary zoning. We understand that the City Council actually accepted Mayor's Daley's affordable housing plan instead."



**Michael Ibrahim**

SY: "The mayor put out an ordinance; actually, there are a few initiatives that he talked about last fall in terms of affordable housing. This is one piece of it. Another piece of it is density bonuses for downtown. We know that Preckwinkle's ordinance is out there but, when you said instead, well, I wouldn't put it that way. They never actually went head to head, and this is just one of the things the mayor is doing for affordable housing."

RJ: "Well, I understood that the mayor doesn't care that much for Preckwinkle's city-wide inclusionary zoning proposals, that he favors an alternative. That's why I used the term, 'instead of.' Right now, it seems like the City Council is agreeing with the mayor. Last week (April 9<sup>th</sup>), they chose to positively affirm the mayor's position by their vote. The vote was overwhelmingly yes, with only one dissenting vote."

SY: "I would explain the ordinance to you this way. Simply, what it says is that the developers who receive city financing would be required to provide 20 percent of the units as affordable housing or developers receiving city owned land at a discount, then you must set aside 10 percent of your units as affordable. The affordability level in a for-sale development is 100 percent of area median income and that translates to a family of four with an income of \$75,000 a year. In the case of a rental development, the affordability level for a family of four comes to \$45,000 a year or 60 percent of area median income.

"If a developer purchased city-owned land and the city wrote down the price of that land and gave it to the developer at a discount, they have to set aside 10 percent

of their units as affordable.

"It's a standard way that we gave affordability levels. I believe that HUD annually puts out a number that reflects the median income of households in the area. They look at incomes for households in the area and figure out what the median is - in other words, what's right in the middle. "That's what they found for their median, so that's \$75,000, or 100 percent of median. Next, they look at different proportions on that level, and so \$45,000 being 60 percent of \$75,000 is the affordability level on a rental property.

"The ordinance requires that the developers' affordable units stay affordable for 30 years. Now, when you ask about the Preckwinkle ordinance, on the other hand, it is asking for a citywide mandate - a requirement on every single development. Our concern is that, since this

idea has not been tested in this city, whether requiring this type of mandatory set-asides would discourage investment in Chicago."

RJ: "In my research on the Internet about inclusionary zoning, Boston comes up as a model city."

SY: "However, Boston is not mandatory. It is an executive order and relates similarly to developments that are receiving city financing and city-owned land and developments receiving administrative changes - that is to say, zoning changes and the like."

RJ: "What did Preckwinkle model her plan after?"

SY: "There are other cities that have citywide mandates. Those cities tend to be much smaller or include a whole county and are therefore less urban. In that way, they are different from the kind of metropolitan environment one encounters in a city like Chicago."

"Montgomery County, that's a whole county and [the policy] was imposed 25 years ago. There, developers were dealing with, primarily, large parcels of land in a decidedly less urban area."

RJ: "What is the mayor proposing and why are his initiatives much better for our purposes here in Chicago?"

SY: "We believe that incentives are the way to go. For those developers who want to receive the incentives, they can include the affordable housing discount when they go before the city seeking permits and other business."

RJ: "Why are incentives the way to go?"

SY: "Incentives aren't going to discourage investments. Developers can figure out on a case-by-case basis whether the incentives work for them. From what we understand, the other mandatory programs across the country have not really been tested in an urban area like Chicago. The closest in population is Boston and it is not a citywide mandate. There the subsidies are only for administrative changes, state financing and city-owned land."

"The other cities are much smaller. If the developer needs some change from the city such as zoning variance if they are receiving an administrative change, then they have to include the affordable housing in their develop-

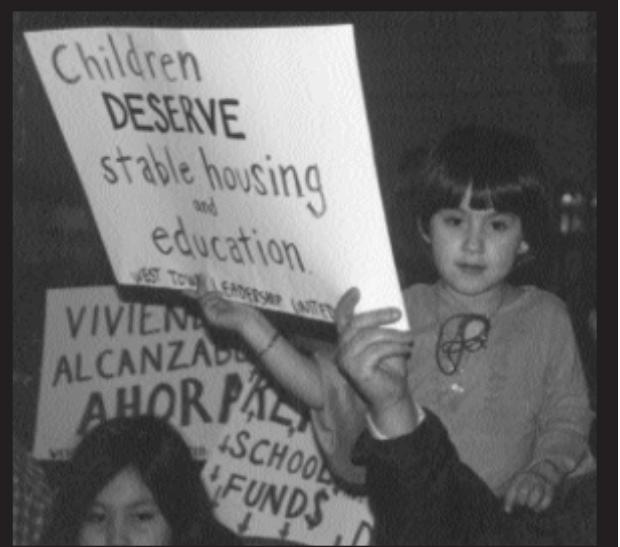
## Corrections

The photo that appears on page 7 of the January/February 2003 issue of *Residents' Journal* was mistakenly listed as being taken by Mary C. Johns instead of Beauty Turner.

### West Town Leadership United Community Meeting on the Loss of Affordable Housing

Residents of the West Town, Wicker Park and Humboldt Park communities jam packed the Gym at Andersen School in late March to express their concerns about the loss of affordable housing and the loss of school funding in their communities. 27th ward Ald. Walter Burnett, 1st Ward electoral candidate Manny Flores, and the Department of Housing officials were on hand to hear the residents' concerns. The meeting was sponsored by the West Town Leadership United, Onward House, and the Westside Education Reform Coalition.

Photos by Mary C. Johns



# Harold Ickes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

**W**e residents of the Harold L. Ickes Homes too were affected by the Feb. 17 E-2 nightclub tragedy which took so many lives just blocks away from our development. It all played out like a television movie series, with sounds and scenes of a make-believe catastrophe.

The prelude was a definite, insistent, unknown, ghostly wail that emanated from a mysterious place that had residents wondering just what type of alarm had invaded our peaceful Sunday night. It began about 8:30 p.m. and sounded at about every 60 seconds. If you've ever heard a foghorn, the sound on that night evoked that same eeriness. We never found out exactly where that ominous warning signal came from but it put us to sleep only to be awakened by the real deal.

**S**ome of the young adults who live in Ickes were at E-2 on that fateful night. Many left early but were still shaken by the outcome of the evening.

What seemed like hundreds of ambulance and police sirens disturbed the sleep in one way or another of the many residents of Ickes Homes, which is located on State Street between 22nd Street and the expressway, just two blocks from the E-2 night club, which is at the corner of 24th Street and Michigan Avenue.

This reporter tried in vain to count the incoming moving emergency vehicles and frantic police sirens. As the noise built up, I got the picture: as each ambulance and squad car came to a halt, drivers failed to turn off their sirens. Looking east along 23rd Street from the buildings, all you could see were white spotlights creating a day light atmosphere and red and blue flashing emergency lights that seemed to be purposely left on to emphasize the depth of the actual tragedy.

It wasn't long before the news media got their first call and their helicopters

took up positions right above our housing complex, waking up many of the soundly sleeping children.

One child made sure she told me about her experience.

**G:** Miss Jackie, the helicopter woke me up and I thought that it was Osama Bin Laden and another 9-11 happening before I saw the TV was still on.

**RJ:** What did you do?

**G:** I went and woke up my mother. I was so scared.

**RJ:** When you went to school the following day, did your teacher talk to you about it?

What's your teacher's name and room number?

**G:** Yes, Ms. Fisher, room 410.

**RJ:** What was the teacher saying?

**G:** That they feel sorry about what had happened. At school (the New National Teachers Academy) we have a Monday morning meeting to talk about what hap-

pens in our lives over the weekend.

**RJ:** Did your teacher say more?

**G:** She said that she too had seen it on the television and at the time [no one] knew how many people had died. Then she listened to all of us talk about what happened.

There's no telling how many children had a similar experience.

In the fullness of the light of the day that E-2 became a household term around the country, this reporter felt the helplessness of being close by but almost totally uninvolved. Twenty-one club-goers died and many more were injured at E-2 as a panicked crowd tried to leave the nightclub.

I wanted to throw my arms around the bereaved families. Prayer being my only power, I latched on to the news that a prayer vigil was planned for later that day, at 5:30 p.m. There was my opportunity to

go into the heartbreaking site and join in on the prayer vigil, maybe see and offer my condolences to family members of the ones that died.

My mission was accomplished by being able to talk and listen to first cousins of one of the girls who died and hug and express condolences to her father.

It was also gratifying to hear the powerful pleas of the reverends Al Sharpton and Paul Jakes for comfort and light to descend on all who were part of the tragic event.

Some of the young adults who live in Ickes were at E-2 on that fateful night. Many left early but were still shaken by the outcome of the evening.

go visiting her cousins.

I talked to Tanessee Preston who said she did not plan anything, and really didn't want to do anything.

**RJ:** Tanessee, what is different about your new school for you?

**TP:** You can't chew gum. You have to say "Yes ma'am, yes sir, no sir."

**RJ:** What about swimming?

**TP:** I don't go swimming. I don't like it.

They all spoke of homework.

I spoke to a group of older students who didn't like the new school because now they call your house when you do wrong. I spoke to one child who had been made to transfer because he misbehaves too much.

One thing about this year's spring break, the weather was just about perfect. Friends are free to play long hours out of doors and relax and help their mothers and younger siblings over longer periods. The older students have what they call juke dances at someone's home and they say all the young teens try to go there in the evening.

One teen said, "Ms. Jackie, you ought to say something about that."

I said, "Their parents ought to say something about that."

And parents, if you are reading this, it would be a very good idea to look into this before it is too late!



An E-2 victim's father and other family members weep for their lost one in February at the Epitome where CHA residents and others lost their lives in a stampede at the nightclub.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson



A child advocate spends time reading to Harold Ickes children during spring break in April.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

## Students Speak Out

**N**othing can take the place of spring break! This is the first of its kind for the students and the staff of the National Teachers Academy, so I took to the playgrounds and front porches to talk to the children about their new kind of educational experiences and what they will do while they are out of school.

Keywani Evans was one of the first children I spoke to.

**RJ:** What are you going to do with your spring break?

**KE:** Play video games, play with my friends, help my mother cook.

**RJ:** What can you cook?

**KE:** Mac and cheese, fried chicken.

**RJ:** How do you like the new school over your old school?

**KE:** Here we have a swimming pool. There we did not. We swim on Wednesday and have gym on Tuesday.

**RJ:** How's the food?

**KE:** A lot of pizza. Fried and barbecue chicken. We also see videos at lunch on the large screen. Stories about other schools, drawing and painting - it's fun.

I talked to one child who planned to

## CPS Creates E2 College Fund

**O**n Friday, March 14, Chicago Public Schools officials announced the creation of the Children First Fund, a college fund for the surviving children of those who died at the E2 nightclub this past winter.

Chief Executive Officer Arne Duncan and the principal of Hefferen Elementary School, along with Yasmin Bates, executive vice president of the Harris Bank, and Children First Fund board member Alan King held a recent news conference at Hefferen Elementary School, 4409 W. Wilcox St., to announce the fund.

The Chicago Public Schools teamed up with the Harris Bank and Community Bank of Lawndale to help establish the college fund.

The funds will be available to those who lost their fathers or mothers at the E2 nightclub accident on Feb. 17.

The scholarship recipients will be eligible to receive the scholarship after they graduate from high school if they are planning to attend a two- or four-year college, university or vocational school.

CPS hopes to raise enough money for every child that lost a parent at the E2 tragedy.



## **Getting Off on the Wrong Foot**

**by Iesha Griffin**

In the world today, many teens have been locked up or something is causing them to not have clean records. Now it's happening at even younger ages. Our nation's teens are messing up their lives as well as their records, and it will make things even worse for them in the future. Most of them do it for attention, or because they think it's cool. Well guess what - it's not!

Most of the teens who commit crimes are those from low-income families, such as those who live in the CHA. It's mainly our boys who are now out there doing everything like having sex at a young age and selling drugs. Even being in a gang at age 12 or 13.

## **Some views on racism**

**by Nicholas Minor**

In the past year, can you honestly say that you have not been racist or ever stereotyped another race for something as small as the way they wear their clothes, the way they speak or even the food they eat?

Racism is formally defined as a belief in the superiority of a particular race. According to many sociologists, prejudice is based on this feeling in supremacy. Blacks are racist against whites for their speech, the way of dress, and even their way of life. Yet whites are also prejudiced against other whites and against blacks. Blacks are prejudiced against other blacks for the same things. We stereotype Hispanics and Asians, thinking every last one of them knows karate. Could there ever not be racism? I interviewed four people of various ages and races about their views on racism.

**RJ:** "How do you define racism?"

Deon Washington, 34, said, "When a group of people discriminate against another group based solely on their skin color."

Jodi Deerfield, 28, said, "Ignorance - if someone's unwilling to learn or go beyond themselves."

Yolanda Cathey, 18, said, "I couldn't define racism,



# **Holla', If You Hear Me!**

There is a boy around my house, whose name I won't use, who is 17 and an alcoholic. He also smokes a lot and sells drugs. Sometimes he cuts up soap and sells it making it look like drugs. He says he has a brother with a lot of money who tries to help him out, but you can't help someone who doesn't want to be helped.

By starting off on the wrong foot as teens, people

**B**y starting off on the wrong foot as teens, people like this will have harder lives as adults.

like this boy will have harder lives as adults. They might end up either in jail or dead with their rough-tough attitudes. Sorry, it has to be said.

Part of the reason for this is that parents aren't doing enough. Girls are mothers at young ages, and aren't prepared to be parents. They have not even finished getting

but I'm not racist."

Todd Campbell, 35, said, "Racism is groups of people who stereotype other people."

**RJ:** "Do you think minority groups of people can also be racist?"

Washington said, "For the sake of argument I think a minority group can be racist."

Deerfield said, "Just because someone is a minority doesn't mean they're racist."

Cathey said, "Yes, because some are."

Campbell said, "No."

**RJ:** "How do you think racism affects society today?"

Washington said, "It affects it in every way, shape, form and fashion. In every aspect of life, from education to jobs, there is racism."

"It separates us and causes fighting amongst people," said Deerfield.

"It keeps me from getting a good job," said Cathey.

"It holds back certain ethnic groups of people," said Campbell. "And it continues to feed the existing ideology and way of thinking."

**RJ:** "Could racism ever be solved in this country?"

Washington said that, in his honest opinion, no.

"I'd like to think it could, but something like racism self-perpetuates," said Deerfield. "So even though racism could be resolved, it's unlikely."

"No, because different minorities have already been molded by this type of society," said Cathey.

"Optimistically yes, but realistically it would be too hard for the core beliefs of America to change," said Campbell.

**RJ:** "Is racism taught or learned behavior?"

Washington said he doesn't know.

"I think most of us are taught racism by our experiences," he said. He said ignorance causes racism.

training from their own parents!

There's also too much anger among teens. They are violent and disobedient. They are killing people - including teachers, friends and family. How, at the age of 17, could you think of taking another life? Where on earth do you get all this anger and rage?

A boy I know, who is 16 and asked that his name not be used, said that he was locked up in juvenile detention because he got caught selling drugs. He was in there from the end of the summer through November, and then he was on probation. He hasn't sold drugs since, and he said he looks at things quite differently now. When he sees his friends about to engage in trouble, he goes in the house because he doesn't want to end up like he was before.

Other people also overcome getting off on the wrong foot. Another friend of mine who is an alcoholic has been taking GED classes at Olive Harvey College. But he doesn't go everyday. He makes the excuse that he got off on the wrong foot.

Deerfield said both, while Cathey said it's taught and Campbell said it's learned.

**RJ:** "Do you see yourself as racist?"

"Yeah, to a certain extent," said Washington.

Deerfield and Campbell said no.

Cathey said yes.

**RJ:** "Have you ever been in a situation where people are racist toward you?"

Washington said, "Absolutely."

Cathey also said yes.

Campbell said, "All the time — in restaurants and grocery and retail stores."

**RJ:** "Have you seen something you would consider racist on TV in the past year?"

Washington and Deerfield said yes. Cathey said she thought the mini series "Roots" was racist. Campbell pointed out the remarks of House Speaker Trent Lott.

In conclusion, I think we as a people must get rid of racism. As long as racism exists, world peace is only a dream. The Declaration of Independence was never meant for African-Americans, because the slave owners didn't want the slaves to be free. But the declaration says, "We hold these truths to be self-evident" and that "all men are created equal."

So I say people should stop saying and start doing, stop preaching and start acting.

## **Urban Youth International Journalism Program**

**Publisher**  
*Ethan Michaeli*

**Assistant Directors**  
*Satin Crable  
Kari Lydersen*

### **Participants**

*Crystal Bland, Shelaina Bradley, Latoya Bright, Velouria Brimmer, Tieara Brown, LaTrisha Burnett, Robert Davis, Mia Dunlap, Nemayah Evans, Antoinette Franklin, Corey Gatlings, Jovan Gatlings, Anthony Glover, Iesha Griffin, Shanell Jackson, Joshua Jackson, Tyrone Jarvis Tyesha Keaton, Bryant Larkins Jr., Tiffany Larry, Darius Lewis, Kareem Lewis, Ivory Lloyd, Kea-una McGee, LaKendra McKay, Therris Morris, Andre Murphy, Mary Pickens, David Preston, Sheena Rhodes, Antoine Shaw, Felisha Swan, Anise Tatum, Carla Wells Monique*

## **Congratulations Urban Youth International Journalism Program Graduates!!!!**

**Class of Spring 2003**

**Photo by Mary C. Johns**

## Hold on to Your Dreams

### by Tiffany Young

My dream is to become a defense attorney of criminal law. I want to become a defense attorney because I want to defend people when they are being wrongly accused of something. In order for me to become a defense attorney, I am going to complete school. Then I am going to four years of law school. I have always wanted to be a defense attorney from the age of 12. My role models are helping me achieve my dream. They are my mother, Annie Young, my aunt Lucille Murdock, my sisters Pam, Brenda and Umeina, and my father James Thompson. Also my cousins and my teacher Ms. Straight are my role models. I joined an organization called the Urban Youth International Journalism Program to help me improve my writing skills because in law school you have to write a lot.

If I don't become a defense attorney, though, I will become a recruiter for a big company because recruiters travel a lot.

I asked other people about their dreams.

Christina Adams, 16, said her dream is to be a pediatrician because she loves kids. She said she is going to stay in school and do extracurricular activities to achieve her dream. She said her counselor, Mrs. Taylor, is her role model. She said she has wanted to be a pediatrician ever since she was 10 years old, but if she doesn't become a pediatrician she would be a lawyer specializing in divorces.

Mr. Northington, 55, said his dream is to have a third wife.

"I believe that I have to become somebody in life... As I get older challenges will have to be faced, just like everybody faces challenges. Life is tough but you have to be strong."

"Everybody needs a companion," he said, noting he has been married twice before.

He said he will achieve his dream through "Self responsibility, trying to improve and being more amenable as a person to live with."

He said his inspiration will be whoever he ends up with as a mate, and that it would be a gift to have a third wife. He said his other dream is to help the economy and

encourage greater responsibility within the Black community.

Marcus Childs, 15, said his dream is to make the best out of the world and to make it into the NFL.

"I am going to achieve my dream by trying and working hard in school," he said. "I want to be the best I can be."

He said his uncle is his role model, and that he has wanted to be in the NFL his whole life.

Annie Young, 51, my mother, said when she was young her dream was to be a nurse because she wanted to help people.

"But now I don't think about being a nurse much, I just function through my grandchildren and my daughter," she said.

She said she didn't achieve her dream because she didn't finish high school.

"I want you to finish," she told me. She said she will help me achieve my dreams by "staying on you and supporting you every step of the way, hoping you go in the right direction."

I believe that I have to become somebody in life because life is a struggle. As I get older challenges will have to be faced, just like everybody faces challenges. Life is tough but you have to be strong.

## Kids Raising Themselves

### by Ebony Adams

When I was nine, I had to take over the responsibility of taking care of my two younger siblings. It wasn't a choice or a decision that I had to decide if I wanted to do it; I had to do it.

My mom was too caught up in her own habits, addictions and personal life to realize that what she was doing would damage all three of her kids. In the long run, everything she did would catch up with her and hurt our lives more than hers. I have been taking care of myself, pretty much learning how to survive, since I was nine. When I was 13 we all got split up. After we got split up all I had to worry about was me, so I think about those situations everyday and a lot of kids go through things a lot worse than I did. I try to keep my complaints to a minimum because I've seen a lot worse than what I

went through.

I think kids are raising themselves nowadays because some parents have their kids at young ages and get caught up in themselves because they aren't ready to have a kid. Having a kid is a big responsibility.

A lot depends on the person and their individual situation, but overall each generation I think the problem is getting worse. Kids seem to be taking care of the other siblings more and more and the parents don't act like adults.

Rhonda Jones, 31, said, "I think that there are factors that contribute to children raising themselves. In some situations, the parents have to work sometimes two jobs in order to make ends meet, therefore the children are left to take care of themselves and sometimes younger siblings. In other situations parents may not be able to raise children due to some sort of dependency that may have a hold of them, which leads them to not be mentally capable of doing the job."

She said that in this day and age parents seem to have a harder time raising children, "with all the ills of the world today."

She feels that drug and alcohol dependency play the biggest part in causing these problems.

Mary Pickens, 18, said "More kids in the projects raise themselves because they don't have positive role models and most of their mothers and fathers are strung out on drugs."

She added, "Parents are getting worse because they don't know how to talk to their kids and kids learn what they see and live around, so if no one's there or cares then things get even worse."

She thinks that after September 11, it's even harder for people to find jobs and the economy is messed up, so parents give up and don't listen to their kids, making the problem even worse.

Earlene Lindsey, 77, said, "Children are raising themselves because they are born to young parents that don't know how to raise them, they are just babies having babies."

"Parents are getting worse because there are so many [bad] influences out there that they get involved in and parents don't have time to raise [their children]."

She thinks a lack of discipline and

lack of parents taking on responsibility plays a big role, along with drugs. She also thinks there is a problem with lack of education and morals.

"It was different when I was growing up because the environment was different and there were more two-parent homes," she said.

Karen Davis, 39, a staff member at a group home, said, "In a lot of single parents homes the mother is always working and the kids are at home raising themselves. The moms are making the money to keep food on the table, the bills paid and clothes on their backs."

She said there is a problem with teen pregnancy "and love isn't put into raising the kids. There are a lot of drugs in society and lots of parents are strung out on drugs because it's a drug society. A lot of drug babies are born. It's sad that people put drugs before the babies."

In conclusion, everybody I interviewed thinks that lots of children are raising themselves, and the biggest problem is the drug society. Everyone wants a change to this problem but it seems like no one is doing anything about it.

## Domestic Violence in Dating

### by Esther Wolf

What is the cause of domestic violence in dating?

The Encyclopedia Encarta defines domestic violence like this: abuse between intimate partners can take many forms. It may include emotional or verbal abuse, denial of access to resources or money, restraint of normal activities or freedom, including isolation from family and friends, sexual coercion or assault. In extreme cases, domestic violence may result in the death of a partner.

I interviewed a young teen parent who lived in an abusive relationship, who asked her name not be used. She said she had been in the relationship for two years.

It was going good until we had a big agreement and then he had hit me for the first

time, she said. I never thought he would do little things. And my mother was the type me. But after he hit me he said he would never the last words. When you're talking to a hit me again and I believed it. I thought he was a person, you can't have the last word. trust him but he did it again and again. There will have to be a fight. See, I love because I wanted a happy family for the my relationship. I had met someone who acted us. I do think I can do better alone, but it was like my father. He treated me good until so used to him being around and we had been together so long. I wasn't used to being my father's hand, I realized I had to live. But until I tried it and yes I went back to him but I was so scared for my life and my child being when I left the second time I didn't look back at the cold world alone. Now I look at a person knew I could be treated better and now I'm happier than I used to be.

I also interviewed Tonya Williams, who lives on the north side.

She said, I was in an abusive relationship, but I had to let that go. See I saw

all with my parents growing up. My mother and

father kept fighting and loving

each other at the same time. My father drank a lot and came home and got mad at my mother.

"After my mother died from my father's hand, I realized I had to live."  
-- Tonya Williams

order from possessing firearms. Although the law refers to women as victims, males and females are subject to its provisions.

## The Making of the Projects

### by Mary Pickens

When you say "projects," what runs through people's minds?

When you say low-income, or Stateway Gardens, Cabrini Green, Robert Taylor, Henry Horner or ABLA Homes, what race do you see?

Children are living in rat and roach infested homes

and buildings filled with stale air. Sometimes I feel like we're living in a project that was developed to experiment on mice. Like mice that end up fighting against each other when they are confined in close spaces, you see the low-income Black race shooting each other. You see dead bodies, no role models, mothers and fathers who are absent. You see boys on the corners gambling, not caring what influence they have on younger children.

I interviewed David Walker, a young man who lived in the ABLA Homes for 22 years. I asked him if he thought the projects were meant to experiment on Black people. He said, "Hell yeah. It's like a money thing to get all of us Black people out [of the more desirable parts of the city] and get the white people in."

He doesn't think the projects were built to last.

"They knew that our race wouldn't be able to survive in these conditions," he said. "They just see it as more cash while we're here. They think its cool to make housing like this for the less fortunate."

He said growing up in the projects made his life much more difficult.

"If they made it more easy to get jobs we wouldn't have to turn to drugs as an alternative to get money," he said. "Now, are they so concerned about drugs? I mean why, when they brought it in here in the first place?"

I agree with Walker that America needs to wake up and take care of this problem.

## Do Celebrities Have an Effect on the Way Teens Dress?

by Sheena Rhodes

In society today, there is always a search for who to blame for everything that goes wrong. One question is who is responsible for teens dressing the way they do.

The clothes we wear have become thinner, shorter, tighter or anything that reveals a little more than in years before. We have our own options in what we wear and make the choices in what we buy. But teenagers have this competitive instinct that is triggered by their superficial side. If everyone was once equal, it would just take one person to want to be different and more attractive, and that would trigger centuries of stretching our creative instincts to look better than others.

But teens aren't the only ones to blame. There are multiple sides to the issue. You could blame the parents, who should be monitoring what their kids wear when they go anywhere out of the house. Or you could blame the clothing industry for producing such obscene clothes. There are also our role models, the famous celebrities and music artists. They have the power to stop certain fashion statements or even create their own, less revealing lines of clothing.

Looking through two recent issues of Vibe magazine, you can see that most of the male celebrities are wearing baseball hats, du rags and jerseys (from basketball teams) while the women are wearing baseball hats, jersey dresses and high heels.

Celebrities do in fact have the most control of the situation and their effect on society is one of their many responsibilities of having stature.

A lot of teenage girls try to impress their boyfriends and if the boy says that a certain celebrity looks good in something, they will try their best to get some attention by getting the same thing.

Celebrities understand that they influence everything beneath them and can be the cause of many new trends and fashions. Some celebrities have their own clothing lines. If one person hears about a new style, it's like a chain reaction and every one automatically starts wearing that style.

When you're a teenager, if someone you know in a high position has a certain style, you want to copy them but add a little more of "you" to the image.

Right now the popular fashions for girls include miniskirts, cut out tops and jeans, extremely high heels, thongs, jersey dresses, colorful makeup, different colored hair and hip huggers. For the guys, clothes aren't revealing but very expensive: Air Force One gym shoes, basketball jerseys, baseball and basketball caps, du rags, platinum teeth, sagging pants and platinum jewelry.

The name brand clothes are really expensive - a regular T shirt might run you 50 to 60 dollars for some name brand pants and 80 to 90 dollars or more for gym shoes. If someone can't afford the name brand, they might get fake ones that look like the real one so they will fit in the crowd. If you remember, a few years ago people were getting killed for Air Jordans because they were so popular back in the day and whoever was wearing them didn't want to give them up so they'd get killed or hurt really badly. Similar things are still going on today.

Many parents are condoning this

because they don't want their child to feel left out, so they buy these things no matter how much they cost. I know a woman who buys her teenage son expensive clothes even if she doesn't have the money to pay for it. This can be a problem because people can go in debt trying to keep up with the next person.

Antonio Neal, 18, said, "I really do believe that celebrities have an effect on teens. Teens watch videos on BET and the style they see, they immediately follow."

Brandon Currey, who is only five, said he likes to dress like rappers.

"It's really cool the way the rappers dress and the way their styles are," he said.

Chris Carter, 17, a student at Howard Area Alternative High School, said, "All of the teens are insecure about themselves."

He said he sees celebrities as "fake" because they get plastic surgery to look better than their "natural" look.

Some older adults approve of the way young people dress, and some do not.

A middle-aged mother named Jasmin Franklin said that she doesn't approve of the way her son dresses because it makes him "look like a thug." Franklin also believes that her son gets the style of dressing from TV, celebrities, magazines and his friends. She said, "The way he dresses has caused him to almost get kicked out of school and he said he could care less because no one can change him," she said.

A middle-aged man named Salvador said he doesn't know why teens dress the way they do, but he likes the style. He said the way boys wear du rags and gym shoes is the main thing boys do to get dressed up. He has three children, two boys and one girl. He said he would let his boys wear the clothing that rappers wear, but he wouldn't let his girls dress like female musicians. He said he doesn't think this is favoritism

because, "The female artists dress too much like whores and hoochies; they make their clothing too revealing."

Mrs. Wright, a teacher at Howard Area Alternative High School, said celebrities definitely have an effect on the way teens dress.

"The guys spend an awful lot of their money on clothing," she said.

She noted that the clothes girls wear can also be pretty revealing. "I think that could cause a risk safety-wise," she said.

She said she can see how it would be fun for youth to dress how they want, "but just respect yourself."

Nina Scott, an 18-year-old high school student, said, "I think that celebrities have some effect but not in a bad way. If a person sees a style they like, they are going to want to get it."

Last I interviewed a security guard at LaSalle Bank named John (who declined to give his last name) who has three daughters age 15, 13 and seven.

"I think teens today do get their way of dressing from celebrities, guys from the male rappers and girls from the female musical artists," he said. "Even if these young ladies are sophisticated, they lower themselves by dressing provocatively. That can be a problem."

In conclusion, all the people I interviewed said basically the same thing: celebrities do have an effect on the way teens dress.

## Why Do Young People Have Children When They Can't Take Care of Them?

by Talanda White

I think that when you sleep with someone without protection you should prepare yourself for the consequences that you are about to face.

I also think that when you have a child, you should love and cherish that child. Every child needs a family to love and that's why it's hard for children growing up in facilities like group homes where they don't have family.

I asked Tonya Lee Brown about having children at a young age.

She said, "I made a few mistakes in my life. I had a

baby at 13 years old. I didn't like it but I had to face the facts. I'm the one who went out and got pregnant, it wasn't anyone's fault but mine."

**"[Y]ou should love and cherish that child. Every child needs a family to love."**

Next I interviewed a woman who said she had a baby at age 16, who didn't want her name used.

"I really wasn't ready at that time to have a child so

I had an abortion," she said.

I asked how it feels to have an abortion.

"I felt bad because I didn't realize what I was facing," she said. "To me it seemed like I was committing a crime, like I was killing my own baby."

When I walk down the street and see children beg for money, it makes me ask, "who do they belong to?" I asked Lakisha Michael what she thinks about the whole situation.

She said, "Really I think if you're old enough to open your legs to have a child, you're old enough to face the fact that you have to take care of a little child that you weren't ready to have."

## Affordable Housing Set-Aside by Nemoya Evans

On February 5, 2003 there was a rally at City Hall to support the Housing Set-Aside ordinance. Housing Set-Aside is a requirement that developers keep a portion of new or rehabilitated housing units affordable to people with low incomes. Other cities have adopted set-aside ordinances and inclusionary zoning to create thousands of new homes for residents.

Apartments in Chicago are expensive - for example, a fair market rate for a two-bedroom unit in Chicago is \$928 per month according to the Chicago Rehab Network. They also say that a person would need to earn \$17.85 an hour to afford housing and basic needs in the city. To meet the demand for low-income housing, the city would need 49,077 new housing units, according to the Rehab Network.

What are these families without housing in Chicago going to do? Housing advocates say there are over 166,000 homeless people living in Chicago every year, and by 2005 there will be 400,000 homeless people in Chicago. We need to urge our aldermen to support the affordable housing set-aside. At the rally, over 100 people attended. Everyone was wearing stickers, hats, shirts and buttons and holding up signs supporting the set-aside. Cards were issued for people to sign to acknowledge that they came to vote for the set aside and support their community.

"I was glad the students were able to go down so we

could tell [the mayor] our point of view," said Sister Cecilia Fandel, a community activist at Howard Area Community Center who accompanied students from Howard Area Alternative High School to the protest.

However, there was a limit to how many people they would let in the mayor's office. The guards told them they were not letting any more than 50 people in the office.

"They were stopped by the mayor's office and the officer said it was because of safety concerns, that we would be interrupting the flow of business," said Fandel. "I said, 'We are the business.' No one else was up there so what business were we interrupting?"

The senior citizens said they didn't agree with that judgment. They said they feel as if they are no different and that their opinions matter.

"They're supposed to be learning to be good citizens but they weren't given a voice to express themselves," said Fandel, in reference to the students. "What message does that send to our young people?"

Mayor Richard M. Daley said he supports affordable housing.

"Housing is central to everything we're trying to do in this city, because when people live in affordable, high quality houses and apartments, they work harder to keep their neighborhoods clean and safe," he said at the rally.

Set-asides work with private markets to create mixed income communities. If the set-asides had been in place earlier, activists say, the market would have created over 19,000 units. The units would be located in communities such as Near South, the Loop, Armour Square, West Town and Bridge Pointe, according to the Rehab Network.

The housing set-asides have been successful in Montgomery County, Maryland and Boston. The city of Chicago has required some developers to set aside units in exchange for tax increment financing zones, or TIFs,

which are programs that offer tax breaks to developers.

Chicagoans are being priced out of their neighborhoods. Chicago is the only large city in the nation to gain population while losing rental housing over the last 15 years. Most of the families who have lost their housing are homeless, and three out of every 10 children have lead poisoning.

Lead poisoning comes from apartments that have chipped paint. Lots of apartments in Chicago need to be rehabbed. The majority of landlords don't seem to care and some appear to hate to even pay for heat for their tenants. Some just come for the rent and say they will send someone else to fix it but never send anyone out to fix the problems.

Nicole Edwards, 26, who lives on the South Side, said her landlord shouldn't even own a building because she doesn't fix anything until the Section 8 inspectors come.

"The landlord always wants the rent on time but never fixes things when she says she will," said Edwards. "She may say she will but it will take her week to do it."

For an example she said her kitchen cabinet was loose and hanging off. She has little children in her home so her children needed to stay out of the kitchen until the cabinet is fixed.

These problems just get worse and worse. The landlord might get in trouble and eventually lose the building, but then Chicago might also lose affordable housing. Chicago needs more than just affordable housing. We need dependable landlords and support from the community. Chicagoans need to work together to make this world a better place with beautiful, affordable homes. I vote for the set-aside. Do you?

## The Secret of Yugi-oh by Roberto Del Toro

The Masked Beast, Gain the Dragon Champion, Seiyaryu and Spellbinding Circle.

Have you ever heard of these?

I think Yugi-oh will be popular in the future for years because it just came out and it's very popular. In the coming years they're probably going to have new cards.

If not, these are four of my favorite Yugi-oh cards. Yugi-oh is a popular game with many young people. Yugi-oh first came out in 1996 in a comic series. Kazuki Takahashi invented it in Tokyo, Japan. There are about 500 Yugi-oh cards in English and about 1,000 in Japanese. Some Yugi-oh packs cost \$5 and the single cards cost \$10 to \$300 depending on how rare they are.

I interviewed some people about Yugi-oh and here is what they said.

I asked Alejandro Maldonado, 13, about Yugi-oh and he said that "the show is funny" and that he likes Yugi-oh a lot better than Pokemon, another Japanese comic.

"I first found out about Yugi-oh from a commercial," he said.

He said Joey is his favorite character in the game, "because he acts like a moron." He said he used to have a lot of cards but now he only has one. He said that he traded Pokemon cards for Yugi-oh cards. He said that he doesn't like

Yugi-oh cards as much anymore because another game called Disc Dragons caught his attention because it has better monsters.

Eddie Obermeyer, 8, said he likes to collect Yugi-oh because it is fun. He said Yugi-oh is better than Pokemon. He said he found out about Yugi-oh through a booster pack of Yugi-oh cards that he got at the store.

His favorite characters are Joey and Haiba, because "Joey acts dumb and

a 'blue-eyes ultimate dragon' and doesn't take anything from anyone. Rex because he has cool monsters."

He said he had 165 cards in his collection. The first cards he got were from his mom. He likes the cards even more now than when he first got them — "because after a while I started to get a lot better at the game," he said.

Norm Ellingsen, 24, an Americorps member, said that he has heard about Yugi-oh but doesn't know how to play it. He also said he never played card games when he was young. People 18 or older like him usually don't play card games like Yugi-oh. Also, mostly boys play. There are many different cards used in the game. A monster card is one with a monster that is used to attack your opponent's monsters or your opponent's life points. There are 20 different types of monsters. In order to get a Fusion monster, you have to sacrifice two other monsters - at the bottom of the Fusion card it says which monsters you have to sacrifice. A "ritual monster" can only be summoned if you have the right ritual

magic card and monster cards to get it into the field. There are six different types of magic cards, with names like "normal, continuous trap and counter." These are all different ways to trap your opponent.

So that's what people said about Yugi-oh. I think Yugi-oh will be popular in the future for years because it just came out and it's very popular. In the coming years they're probably going to have new cards.

If you are interested more in Yugi-oh, some of the places where you can get Yugi-oh cards and magazines are: K-Mart, Toys 'R Us, Gamestop and Blockbuster. I recommend Yugi-oh to anyone who likes card games because it is fun and challenging.



**Honoring Young Black Achievement**  
**LaToya Wolfe (center), a current CHA Robert Taylor resident and aspiring writer currently at Columbia College with a 4.0 G.P.A., was recently honored during an African-American Heritage celebration sponsored by the office of State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka (right). Also pictured is Montel Gayles, CHA's chief of staff.**

# CHAC Update

by Michael Ibrahim

**M**any *RJ* readers might have heard there is a new program to help people with Housing Choice Vouchers buy their own homes.

*RJ* readers are familiar with what used to be called the Section 8 Program. That program was phased out of existence in October 2000. What were referred to as the Voucher Program and the Certificate Program have now both been merged into the Housing Choice Voucher Program. There has been a bit of re-structuring and overhauling of the rules of eligibility.

It is always good to keep our information current by checking in with a few of the people responsible for running certain programs. In the case of the Housing

**A**lso, the program guidelines stipulate if you have a conviction or are a registered sex offender, you have a lifetime ban; or have been convicted of manufacture or distribution of metamphetamines, you have a lifetime ban.

*-Kenneth Coles, CHAC Intake Manager*

Choice Voucher program, many of the old rules are still applicable. For example, there continues to be a waiting list for vouchers. One new thing that CHAC offers is a home ownership program.

Recently, I interviewed Kenneth Coles, who since the summer of 1999 has been manager of the Intake Department for CHAC, the private company which runs Chicago's Housing Choice Voucher program.

"The happy story, of course, is, when we came in '95, the program along with Section 8 had not been run as well as it could have been run. First, we had to bring the program into compliance. It was necessary to re-certify every client and inspect every unit. Our initial trust was to do those two things in 18 months," said Coles.

"Next, we had to update the waiting list which [consisted of] 47,000 applicants...when we walked through the door,

and the list had not been open in about 10 years," said Coles.

Coles explained how in 1995 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) came into Chicago and took over CHA, in part because of the way the voucher program was being run. HUD privatized some functions and programs within the CHA. Quadell, a consulting firm out of Washington D.C., got the contract to administer the CHA program. Quadell started CHAC to run day-to-day operations.

"CHAC is who we are," said Coles. "CHAC" is not an acronym; it is the company's full name. Explaining how "CHAC" became the organization's permanent name, Coles said, "The state of Illinois said no private, for-profit company can use the term housing in the title."

Coles updated me on his company's progress. "The first couple of years was

show that about three to four percent of applicants are found to be ineligible because of the criminal background check."

CHAC has a well-laid-out and sophisticated World Wide Web site at [www.chac.com](http://www.chac.com). There, CHAC invites you to explore its Home Ownership Program. Although HUD sets the final rules associated with the program, each housing authority nationwide develops its own home ownership program.

According to Coles, "We partnered with several organizations. The only requirement for the Home Ownership Program is you have to be leased up somewhere with a voucher and join the Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program. The FSS is a goal-oriented program [in] which as you progress through this process, you graduate.... As a component of the Home Ownership Program, to get into home ownership, you have to join FSS. Classes are held 4 nights a week, where they talk about budget and how to get your credit in order. As you progress, you are introduced to the associated lenders and real estate folks.

The Spanish Coalition for Housing does courses also. What happens is that you are checked at each step along the way.

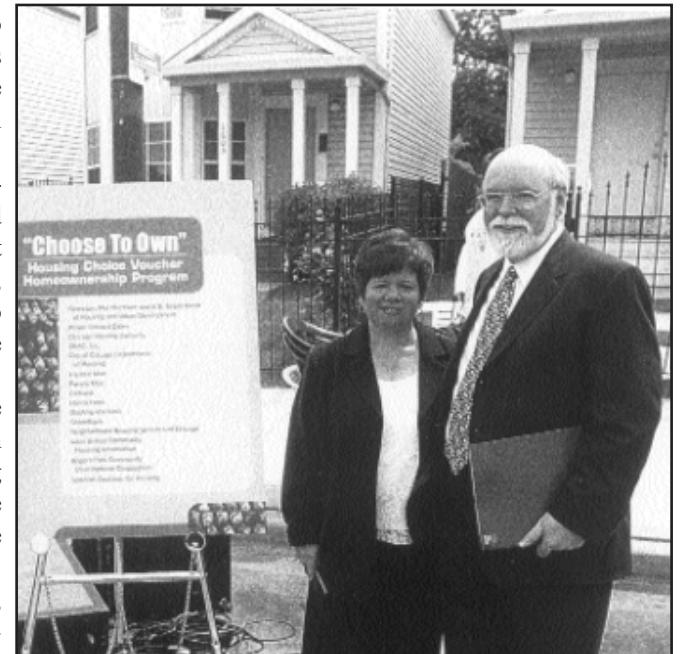
"Another

requirement is that the applicant must earn at least \$10,000 a year."

Rose Ann Zona heads the Home Ownership Program at CHAC. Zona said they had their first orientation meeting for the program in December 2001. By January 2002, they began running credit checks on people that completed applica-

tions to the program. Then by February 2002, they were able to start referring the applicants who passed their credit checks to the eight to 10 hours of homebuyer's counseling, which is mandatory. And in June 2002, they had their first closing.

Zona said, "To date, we have had 25



**CHAC, Inc. Home Ownership Coordinator Rose Anne Zona with CHAC Executive Director William T. Riley.**

*Photo by Michael Ibrahim*

successful closings and eight contracts pending. CHAC chose to do this program. However, we had to come up with a plan and develop it within our existing programs. One of the requirements is to join the FSS program and that is a work-related, goal-orientated program."

"Normally, it is a volunteer program - however, to come into home ownership it is mandatory," said Zona.

Primarily, the subsidy for the home ownership program is for a maximum of 15 years. However, for persons with disabilities and seniors 62 and over, there is no maximum. Seniors and persons with disabilities are entitled to the subsidies until they pay their entire mortgage.

FSS is a five-year program, Zona explained. Each applicant must start out with three goals. They are obligated to fulfill their goals. Some add on to their goals. For some, it may be starting a business, saving money, credit repair or acquiring a GED. The FSS will link them up to services that can assist them in obtaining those goals. FSS will even connect participants to driver education classes, whether or not a voucher holder is interested in the Home Ownership Program or other services provided by FSS.

"In order to obtain a mortgage for a home, the most important is you have good credit," Zona said.

"The bank is going to loan you thousands of dollars. They want to know you can handle credit.... What the banks want

**A**lso, an arrest or a conviction within the past two years for drugs, guns or violent criminal activity would make someone ineligible.



**From left to right, Abaa Baker, a CHAC FSS client service representative, assists FSS program participant Dorothea Rounsville with information regarding homeownership.**

*Photo by Michael Ibrahim*

# Positive Residents of CHA

by Bobby Watkins

It feels very good to be able to continue to write about people who are still doing good things in Chicago Housing Authority developments, especially the men, because we don't hear about the positive things residents do from the other media. But let something bad happen in a public housing development and they are all over it.

Time after time, I've been able to come up with some very positive people right in our own developments - people who like keeping things straight and making things happen where we live. Some are no longer residents but still give back to the community in ways such as mentoring to the youths and in any other way they may be able to help with positive works in the development. Here are the positive people for this issue:

Dora Noble

Noble has been a resident in ABLA Homes for 34 years and has been involved in many ventures, be it the summer lunch program or tenant patrol or the many programs focused on working with the youth and trying to keep them on a street called



ABLA Homes resident Dora Noble

straight. There are so many of our young people going down the wrong road, but thanks to Dora and others like her in ABLA, some will be saved.

She is also on the board of CHAMP, which is an organization that helps people with HIV and AIDS. We truly need more people in the developments working for such a great cause. To Dora, we say, keep up the good work, for it is needed.

Joyce Ross

A resident of North Central

Scattered Sites housing, Ross has been a hard worker and volunteer since moving there. She works a full-time job but still finds time to work with young people through the summer food program, and she serves on the local advisory board as vice president.

Ross most recently started working with the 4H Club in North Central Scattered Sites along with Raul Velez and is putting all her effort into making this one of the best 4H programs around. She is looking forward to being as much of a pos-

itive role model and mentor as she can.

Her goal is to keep as many of our youths focused on education and develop a willingness to work and be productive in society.

Alexander Hall



NC LAC member Joyce Ross

thought he was just a concerned resident. Recently, I discovered that he has been a resident of the Dearborn Homes for 32 years and is currently vice president of the local advisory council - which is just one of the many hats that he wears. And this is a young man that could be hanging out or just doing things for himself and his family.

But instead, he is concerned about the well-being of others. In addition to being the local advisory council vice president, he serves on the local school council and is involved with development of a master plan for St. James Church. He also works with the High Five junior NBA team and sits on several of U.S. Rep. Danny Davis' (D-IL) task forces. And last but not least, he is involved with a ministry called the Brothers and Sisters of Love. He always tries to reach out to our youths with a positive message. We truly need more strong young brothers like Hall. Keep up the good work.



CHA National Crime Victims' Rights Week Judge Slater Homes Tenant Patrollers at the CHA recognition ceremony for the housing agency's National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April.

Photo by Bobby Watkins

## Management At Ogden Courts

by Cenabeth Cross

We the residents of 2710 W. Ogden Ave. were summoned to a meeting on March 19. It was a home management seminar. We were told at the seminar that when we are relocated, it will help us if we have our Certificate of Completion, which we received the same day. The certificate states that we have completed to their satisfaction the Good Neighbor Workshop. Our attendance was required as a part of us being lease compliant. The speaker was Phyllis Davis. She, along with Senior North Local Advisory Council President

could not find any help afterwards. She couldn't get in touch with the alderman or anyone else.

On Monday, April 7, management put up a notice that the heat would be shut off from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Many residents laughed when they saw the notice because the heat hadn't been on all weekend. It snowed on that day.

At Ogden Courts, we have had many complaints about our living conditions, but things are getting better. Some of the residents have gotten brand new apartments, completely rehabbed with new stoves and refrigerators.

Some of us are happy now but there are some who didn't get the move they were looking for. One of the people over-



A C & C Waste Truck pumps sewage from a basement of one of the buildings in the West Side Ogden Courts public housing development site in March.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

wires. Once, I was allowed to go into the basement with the janitor, where I saw for myself the condition it was in.

On April 11, the garbage in the building's chutes caught fire. There was smoke coming out the chutes on each floor. I wasn't allowed to go and look.

Security is another issue in our building. I found that we have tenant patrol in our building. I was offered the job but I had to refuse. They want to pay me \$25 for 32 hours of work. The work consists of spying on neighbors and keeping the hall clear of wild children. There are other duties, of course.

The elevator broke down again. The lights had been out inside the elevator until the whole thing broke down completely on March 29. It was rumored that someone disabled the lights to use the elevator as a make-out spot.

I was walking up and down the stairs anyway. When the elevator would come to the first floor, the door would open and the elevator would still be four feet up in the air. I had seen this happen numerous times.

When it happened, a young man jumped out, got under the elevator and fixed it himself. The last time it happened, one of the kids fell out but did not suffer any serious injury. Management shut the elevator down until they investigated, I was told by the head janitor on Tuesday.

The Com-Ed truck came the following Monday and fixed the wires outside. They replaced the front of the elevator's door and started it running again. On Monday, April 14, it stopped working again.

I found that we have tenant patrol in our building. I was offered the job but I had to refuse. They want to pay me \$25 for 32 hours of work.

Shirley Hammond and Senior Central Local Advisory Council President Martha Marshall, explained to us how to be good neighbors.

Davis asked us, "What would we do if our neighbor was sick and her house were in disarray (dirty)?" One resident replied that she would go into the friend's house and clean it for her. This resident is a young lady who organized a petition when the heat was off in our building for three weeks straight. She told Davis that she

looked is Rena Jones. She was the lady I wrote about in a recent issue who has children with records from Mt. Sinai Hospital which show that her two youngest children have high levels of lead in their systems. Even though management didn't move Jones, they did give her a job helping the janitors clean the building.

On March 20, management officials called in a sewage truck to suck out the debris in the basement. The rats in the basement are the reason I don't have a phone; the rats have bitten through the

# Stop The Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

## PUSHed Too Far

I recently attended the 7th annual Cook County Jail Town Hall meeting at Operation PUSH headquarters, 930 E. 50 St. The purpose of the meeting was to have police, jail guards and ex-offenders meet face to face to discuss the conditions in the jails and the inhuman treatment inmates often have to endure. The former inmates spoke of beatings and rapes.

The place was packed when I arrived. There were people on the walls, both sides and the back, too. I was given a seat on the aisle, about the fifth row back. I found it to



Cenabeth Cross

inmates and not taking them to the hospital right away. One officer stood up and began to holler that if the ex-offenders would wait their turn and "act like humans," they would talk to them in like manner. In the commotion, the officer began to shout to be heard. He got excited and had to be restrained. Then a woman police officer got up shouting. When she became emotional, other officers took her outside.

The speaker asked everyone to exercise some self-control and called them "heathens." Then one ex-offender spoke out from across the room and told them he had no intention of screaming and getting too loud as he started to walk toward the front of the room. He then explained that regardless of to whom they send ex-offenders for jobs,

**T**he speaker asked everyone to exercise some self-control and called them "heathens."

be a spot where I could see everything.

The speaker began to introduce the dignitaries that sat up front: Gale Smith, representing incarcerated mothers; Chip Cobrin, for prison reform; Bill Ryan, who works for the probation office and works to abolish the death penalty; and Leroy Owens as well as a Rev. Harris, from the prison task force.

The newly appointed John Walsh started the dialogue saying, "If we treat people like human beings...in most cases they will act like it."

At that moment, one young man interrupted and said that PUSH founder Jesse L. Jackson Sr. wasn't concerned with their issues, that all he had been doing is "pimping the system."

"These meetings have been going on for seven years and the beatings have been going on for over 40 years and Jesse Jackson has done nothing," the young man said.

He went on to say that members of the same task force represented at the meeting are among those who are beating the

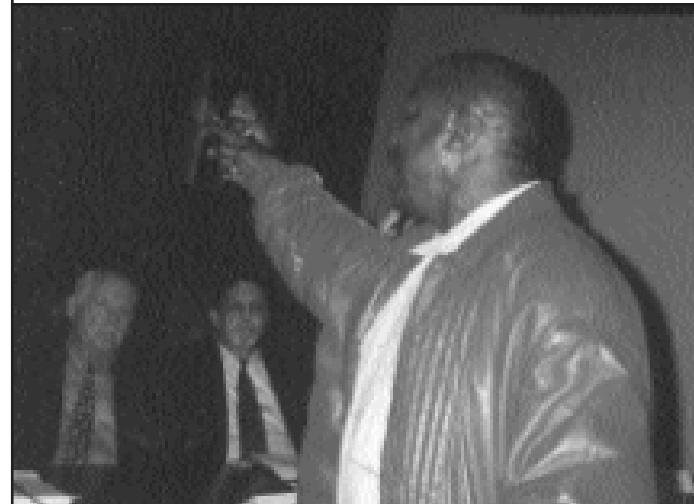
even when they become employed, it only lasts for a short while. His name was Omar Thomas.

Thomas was near tears as he explained that he only wanted to feed his kids. Thomas explained that he was from Kublai Khan Mohammad Toure's group, Amer-I-Can. The promises that were made concerning help on the outside had been lies, Thomas maintained.

At times, I couldn't hear anyone because of the deafening noise audience members were making when they clapped. I soon found out where the police were sitting. To drown out the speakers they didn't want to hear, they would take a cue from a large dark man in the corner who would start to clap and they all would follow his lead, the same way they do it in television studios when the audience needs a little help.

Then the ex-cons came out with a megaphone. They told Jesse Jackson that he didn't have the right to talk because he was a "liar."

Everyone shut up when the sister of Nathan Fields told how



Omar Thomas, an ex-convict talking to law enforcers during the Cook County Jail Town Hall meeting at Operation PUSH headquarters in April.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross



Formerly incarcerated women who performed in late 2002 in a traveling exhibition "30 Days of Art & Education On Women's Incarceration Tour," a story telling of their time and experiences in prison through artform.

Photo courtesy of Beyondmedia Org.

her brother had died in the Menard penitentiary and had his organs removed before he was shipped home to his mother. The family wasn't notified right away. When they asked what had happened, they were told he died of natural causes. When the mother requested the organs to be returned to her, they were told that they had been melted down.

Fields' sister made a plea for the families of the inmates to take time to see about them.

I have had the chance to see the officers from the inmates' side of the fence. My three brothers were in and out of jails for different reasons. My oldest is dead, while the youngest is still in a mental hospital from the shock treatments he suffered in the Menard institution.

The head of the jail system tried to talk but the ex-cons wouldn't let her speak. They all began to talk at the same time, until the officers in the front all quietly tipped out of the back door. The meeting was over.



Chicago Police Public Relations Director Dave Bayless.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

## Women in Prison

**T**he total number of women in jail in Illinois has increased 246 percent in the past decade, according to Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers (CLAIM).

The incarceration of women affects 25,000 children each year. Many women who are incarcerated are the sole caretakers of their children. When mom is removed from the home, the children are the ones who suffer most. In prison, the pregnant women only keep their babies for a day or two before they are taken away from them.

Just like poverty, prison seems to be the place for women of color. Ninety percent of the women are charged with non-violent crimes. Thirty-seven percent of the women are sentenced for property crimes and 44.6 percent are sentenced for drug offenses.

Some of the women who have served time in prison are telling of the injustices they experienced and the pain they feel

through artwork. Beyondmedia has given them a chance to tell their stories and show their creative talents to the world. The group offers education services and media empowerment workshops as well as media services to community organizations, schools and agencies that offer services for women and girls.

Beyondmedia and Northeastern Illinois University, along with CLAIM, recently took their show on the road. They started at the DePaul University Cultural Center and went on to the Carter G. Woodson Library, Center for Inner City Studies, Bethel Cultural Arts Center and finally to the Chase Espresso and Juice Bar between Oct. 30 and Dec. 1.

Beyondmedia is putting together a book of the women ex-offenders' stories. It is called "Women in Prison: A Toolkit for Resistance." In 2000, Visible Voices, a support group run by and for the women who were in jail, worked with Beyondmedia Education to create a video, "What we leave behind." This is part of a larger project to raise awareness of the issues that face imprisoned women.

Some features of the exhibit include an artistic recreation of a prison cell filled with women's things, and women telling stories about the conditions in jail and the statistics surrounding them.

I had an interview with Kim Allen when she was released from Dwight prison. She said that the women are treated harshly. Women do not have to worry about being raped by the other inmates, Allen said, because all inmates know they will have to serve more time if they are caught. But this is not the same with the prison guards, Allen said.

Allen went to prison on drug-related charges. While she was incarcerated, her oldest son was allowed to live with his father. The rest of her children, three girls and one boy, were adopted by her sister. She was not allowed to see them when she got out.

Last time I talked to Allen, I found that she was allowed to see her children for Christmas. She said she has to be happy with the way things are and take care of her problems one day at a time.

# War with Iraq: A Personal Perspective

By Mary C. Johns  
Editor-in-Chief

There are many children and other family members of public housing tenants nationwide currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Some are fighting in the War with Iraq, and others are on active duty maintaining the peace in other countries at home and around the world, while some are being prepared for land, air and sea warfare at various basic training camps nationally.

My two sons, nephew and brother are part of this military effort. I am a 42-year-old single parent of six children - three boys and three girls, ages 24 to 11, who were reared from 1989 to 2002 in the infamous Chicago public housing "projects."

My soon-to-be 21-year-old son Antonio Johns is an Army Specialist by rank and a welder by trade. He is part of the maintenance crew from Fort Riley, KS. He was scheduled to go to Kuwait but since the war ended, that plan is now on hold.

Antonio enlisted straight out of Englewood Technical Academy, a high school on the South Side, in 2000, where he attended ROTC for 4 years as an honor roll student.

My 18-year-old son Alonzo Johns is a Seaman Apprentice in the U.S. Navy.

Alonzo attended Hyde Park Community Academy in 1999 but completed the Lincoln's Challenge Academy program for high school dropouts in June 2002, earning his General Educational Development (G.E.D.) diploma. He enlisted soon thereafter, and graduated from basic training in Great Lakes, IL this January. He is currently undergoing submarine training at the naval base in Groton, Connecticut.

My 19-year-old nephew Marchello DeeLuchiarono is a private first classman with the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, TX. He is part of the reinforcement crew that was ordered for battle in late March.

Marchello also enlisted straight out of high school in 2001 after he graduated with honors from South Shore Technical Academy in Chicago.

He scored high on the Armed Forces' mandatory educational test for newcomers, which gave him the option of working in the personnel department. But that was somehow changed to tank training when the talk of war with Iraq began. After completing tank training in South Korea for a year, he was assigned to Fort Hood, TX and immediately given his command papers to leave for Iraq as a Tank Operator.

My 37-year-old brother Harry W. Youngblood Jr. is Specialist Sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division. He is part of the 50th Medical Company, a paratrooper that rescues the wounded during combat.

Harry has been serving in the military for about 17 years. He served in the first Gulf War and is back again for this conflict.

Before the War with Iraq began, very few people asked me why I let my children enlist in the Armed Forces.

When they found out, their response was, "That's great. That will help them down the road. I wish them well."

Since the war started, however, people have on occasion asked me why I didn't stop my sons from enlisting in the military.

To keep it real, I respond, "What's out here for them?"

I don't agree with U.S. President George W. Bush, who vowed to dethrone Saddam Hussein in

income families who have attended public universities could soon face increasing college costs.

Colleges are even expecting cuts in their budgets, which could mean the loss of student jobs and elimination of popular freshman courses.

My sons said they wanted to join the Armed Forces for reasons like the ones I'm sure many of the other soldiers have said to their loved ones. It will take care of a place to live, provide for all other living expenses, contribute greatly with the college financing and they could travel the world. And with

hugs killed appeared to be more unbearable for him than to die on the battlefield.

This really threw me for a loop, and caused me great concern. So, to keep Antonio, Alonzo and Marchello encouraged while being in the military, I've sent them little fictional comic strips that I created, featuring them as the main hero during warfare and using their nicknames as the title characters such as "U.S. Super Ninja Tony 'Main Love'" for Antonio, and "Mister, The Mighty Naval Conqueror" for Alonzo, and "U.S. Super Cott Man, The Notorious Outlaw," for Marchello.

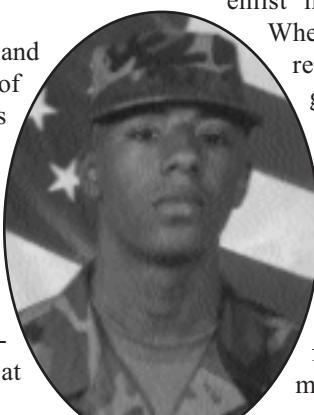
I'm currently working on a comic strip for my brother Harry, who is in Mosul, Iraq right now. I recently received a letter from him in which he provided me with the information on where to send him letters and other items that remind him of home. It took a while for me to receive the letter. It was dated March 20 and stamped March 22, but I only received it on April 4. In the letter, he asked me to send him some Hot Stuff potato chips, some Fabreeze to guard off the odor that is steaming off his clothing that he has worn since the war began, and some sunflower seeds.

I also think about the other brave and courageous young men and women currently fighting in mortal combat.

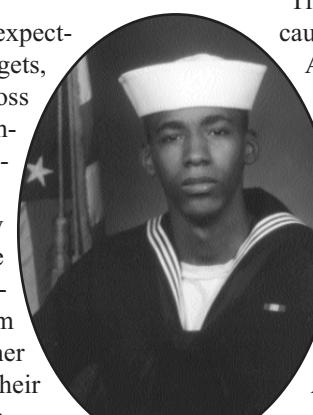
Many of them are straight out of boot camp and have young children at home.

Whenever possible, I remind my sons, nephew and brother to not only pray to the God of all creation for themselves during these trying and dangerous times, but to also remember their fellow comrades in arms.

I pray for them as well and include my children at home in my daily prayers, too. After all, you can just as easily die on the mean streets of Chicago as anywhere else, for that matter.



**U.S. Army Specialist Antonio Johns**



**U.S. Navy SA Alonzo Johns**



**U.S. Army PFC Marchello DeeLuchiarono**



**U.S. Army Sgt. Harry W. Youngblood, Jr.**

order to supposedly "liberate the Iraqi people" from Saddam's longtime fear tactics and tyrannical actions, such as using chemical weapons on many of his own people, and killing thousands of them during the 1980s War with Iran.

But I don't see why I should have stopped my sons from enlisting.

They are young Black men from a low-income background who wanted to work and go to college to better themselves. But the opportunities for them outside the military - at least the opportunities they could access in the time they wanted - have proven to be slim to none.

I've made a successful transition from welfare to work, but not from welfare to rich.

With two of my children still at home, family members in need and an ever-increasing flow of bills, I knew - and my sons knew - that I wouldn't be able to handle the expenses of college tuitions, books and class courses, and trying to assist with paying back student loans to keep them out of debt.

Jobs are scarce for many these days, and the ones that currently have employment, their jobs are threatened as companies and corporations fold and declare bankruptcy because of the economy. People continue to be laid off from their jobs and are seeking unemployment at a fast pace.

Nothing but cuts, cuts and more cuts in low-income programs.

Even now, middle-class students attending private universities are finding it hard to pay for attending college.

Experts on the subject of colleges and universities fear that a growing number of students from low-income to middle-

the above in mind, I agreed without reluctance.

I'm sure that even though it was explained to them that they might have to engage in mortal combat, I don't think that they fully contemplated the real danger of warfare until now.

But that is a choice that they made and I agreed to.

Frankly, I see similarities between fighting in military combat trying to escape flying bullets with living in Chicago's infamous public housing "projects."

Living in the "Jets," there is a constant threat of being hit by enemy crossfire. You never know when bullets will be flying past you while trying to get home from work, school or wherever. Your nerves are constantly on edge while waiting at the bus stops near public housing sites that are in the vicinity of ongoing gang warfare over drugs and property that doesn't belong to them.

My thoughts are constantly with all of the courageous men and women who have put themselves in harm's way during these dangerous times of warfare.

My son Antonio recently told me during a phone conversation in early April that he would not be taken prisoner.

He said, "I am not going to be a POW. They will just have to kill me."

The thought of being captured, tortured and per-

## Iraqi War Song

Hail! Hail! The 'tyrant's' regime is dead!  
Haven't you heard? Haven't you read?

But is it so? Is it true?  
Or are they really fooling you?

Hussein vanished out of sight?  
Did he die? Or did he take to flight?

Talk is, he had many doubles.  
Could he be laying in wait to create future troubles?

If proven that Saddam is deceased,  
Will Iraqi people truly live in peace?

Hail! Hail! Is the 'tyrant's' regime really dead.

Time will tell. So don't be misled.

By Mary C. Johns

# Problemas de acceso

por Lorenzia  
Shelby

**A**ccess Living, una organización ubicada en 614 W. Roosevelt Road, es un centro de servicios para personas con discapacidades que tiene por misión fomentar la autoestima y facilitar los esfuerzos de las personas discapacitadas en pro de una vida independiente. Con este fin se ofrecen programas de asistencia individual que ayudan a las personas discapacitadas a realizar sus compras, vestirse y bañarse. Se les enseña, además, cómo viajar en los autobuses y trenes de la Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Asimismo, Access Living ofrece programas en favor de las personas afectadas por la violencia doméstica y los abusos sexuales. Gracias a estas iniciativas los jóvenes discapacitados aprenden a asumir el control de sus vidas.

Las personas discapacitadas también son víctimas de discriminación en el ámbito de la vivienda. Encontrar un lugar donde vivir puede ser una tarea muy difícil para cualquiera, pero hallar una vivienda accesible para personas discapacitadas es casi imposible, tanto en viviendas públicas como en privadas.

A mediados de 1998, Access Living presentó una demanda contra la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) y la Habitat Company en la que reclamaba diversas opciones de vivienda para personas discapacitadas. En dicha demanda se alegaba que la CHA estaba discriminando a las personas discapacitadas al no tomar medidas para lograr que sus viviendas fuesen más accesibles.

El pasado 24 de febrero Access Living, la Chicago Housing Authority y la Habitat Company llegaron a un acuerdo formal.

A continuación presentamos una entrevista con Alberto Barrera, jefe del equipo de viviendas en Access Living. Al inicio de esta entrevista, él nos describe los objetivos de Access Living:

A.B.: "Nuestros principales objetivos consisten en poder ofrecer varias opciones de vivienda, tratar de reformar algunas de las normas reguladoras actuales sobre viviendas para personas discapacitadas y oponernos a la idea de que deberíamos construir viviendas especiales para este tipo de personas. Nosotros construimos viviendas dentro de los lineamientos normales de construcción e instamos a la CHA, al HUD y a las demás autoridades encargadas de construir viviendas en el estado a crear y desarrollar viviendas para todos, no sólo para este tipo de personas. ¡Ya basta de segregar a la gente!"

R.J.: "Dígame cuál es su opinión acerca de las viviendas públicas."

A.B.: "Ahora, al hablar de las viviendas públicas, en todo el país hay considerables expectativas en cuanto al plan de transformación de viviendas de la ciudad de Chicago pues se sigue con mucha atención lo que estamos haciendo aquí con nuestro plan de transformación, aunque también hay otras ciudades que se han dedicado a cambiar radicalmente sus autoridades de viviendas públicas. Así, podemos mencionar algunas ciudades en California o la propia Filadelfia; por tanto, como puede ver, Chicago no es la única ciudad que está en el proceso de transformar sus viviendas públicas.

"Hace falta una enorme cantidad de fondos federales para esta transformación; pero Chicago está abriendo caminos mediante programas innovadores dirigidos a renovar y transformar las viviendas públicas."

R.J.: "Hábleme acerca de la demanda que Access Living presentó contra la CHA."

A.B.: "La Habitat Company fue designada por un tribunal federal para que se encargase de la construcción de viviendas públicas para la CHA, pero la CHA no estaba de acuerdo con estas construcciones, así que le encargó a la Habitat Company la remodelación de ciertas viviendas públicas. Todos los trabajos de construcción o remodelación deberían ser realizados por la Habitat Company.

"Las residencias Henry Horner Homes fue uno de los primeros proyectos. Una orden judicial les obligó a remodelar esas residencias. La Habitat Company no cumplió ciertos requisitos de accesibilidad estipulados por las leyes federales."

R.J.: "¿Entonces ellos no construyeron viviendas para personas de bajos ingresos?"

A.B.: "Ellos sí construyeron ese tipo de viviendas; pero al construirlas crearon ciertas barreras para personas discapacitadas; por ejemplo, ponían escalones donde no debían ponerlos. Violaron los requisitos de accesibilidad que se supone deben cumplir en sus obras de construcción."

"Recibimos una llamada de uno de los residentes de Henry Horner Homes. Al parecer las personas discapacitadas estaban teniendo dificultades para entrar y salir de las unidades de vivienda de Henry Horner Homes y se nos pedía que persuadiésemos a la CHA para que se instalase una pequeña rampa de acceso."

R.J.: "¿Así fue como ustedes se enteraron de los problemas de acceso de los residentes de Henry Horner Homes? ¿A través de la llamada de un residente?"

A.B.: "Correcto. Por eso al llegar allí nos dimos cuenta de que, entre otras cosas, no debieron haber puesto un escalón en determi-

nado punto, pero la Habitat Company puso ese escalón y la CHA lo consintió, violando las normas federales. Nos sentamos a discutir esto con todos los interesados, es decir, representantes del HUD, de la CHA, de Habitat y sus arquitectos. Por supuesto que había ciertas tensiones en el ambiente durante la reunión, porque los estábamos acusando de violar las leyes federales.

"Las cosas llegaron hasta el punto en que tuvieron que aceptar los hechos. Se tomaron su tiempo para admitir su falta y decir "sí, cometimos un error y vamos a corregirlo". Comenzaron a negociar de buena fe porque sabían que nosotros teníamos el poder y la prueba de que ellos habían incumplido la ley y que cualquier tribunal nos daría la razón.

"De ese modo, comenzamos a cooperar de buena fe. Después de tres años firmaron un convenio en el que se comprometían a rectificar."

R.J.: "¿Ustedes llegaron a un convenio con la CHA?"

A.B.: "No. Con la compañía Habitat."

R.J.: "¿Nunca llegaron a los tribunales?"

A.B.: "No, porque no hizo falta. Llegamos a un acuerdo extrajudicial."

Lillian Fuentes, una abogada de la Chicago Housing Authority, lo confirma: "Después del convenio, hice un recorrido por las residencias Henry Horner Homes y comprobé que se habían cumplido todos los requisitos."

## CHINESE TRANSLATION

**KOREAN TRANSLATION**

**RUSSIAN TRANSLATION**

# Letters to the Editor

## Crystal Clear Views

The war on Iraq has affected me in ways I have never felt, it has brought to me new fears I've never known. In this issue I have decided to do things differently and share my feelings with my readers and hopefully you can find comfort in my words.

My television and radio have become my telescope to the current events. I watch and listen in anticipation. I await good news and become more saddened with every press of the button. I have always believed that human life is the most valuable existence on this Earth and we're losing so many lives. What people fail to see is that these soldiers are someone's son, father and brother, mother and so on. These are people who have laughed and cried like the rest of us and when they die defending their country, their families will be left with their pain to

grieve while the rest of the world moves on.

So, I understand where the protestors all over the world are coming from, but we as decent people must show our support and respect to the men and women in Iraq and their families by trying not to be negative. Whether you agree or not, protest or not, they are overseas and they are not coming home until it's over. Take comfort in knowing that they are over there protecting America and Iraq's innocent.

I am also saddened by the innocent civilians that have died in Iraq. According to The Chicago Tribune Online Edition, a restaurant in Baghdad was bombed because Saddam Hussein was said to be meeting there with his sons. Although it is not proven that the target (Hussein) is dead, Iraqi rescue workers recov-

ered three bodies - those of a small boy, a young woman -

whose head had been severed from her torso - and an elderly man. The death toll could be as high as 14 but is Saddam Hussein dead? These people were innocent. What if these bombings became a way of life here in the States? It's painful enough that the date 9-11 will forever be a scar over

America's heart that will never heal. The troops are protecting us from this happening again and

they are trying to make a better life for the Iraqi people. If you weren't able, wouldn't you want someone to defend your family?

As a young woman with a family of my own, it's hard enough trying to raise my daughter to be a decent human being, considering the pressures of everyday life. I can't imagine, living in a place and time where I can't tell my daughter she can be what she wants to be if she puts her mind to it. I feel blessed to have been born in a country with so many different opportunities and the freedom to pursue them.



**Crystal Medina**

## Poetry Corner

### Domestic Violence: A Point of View

Looking from the outside just leave many will say,

to the victim they think they have to stay, The abuser controls the mind of the victims

with a image so low, the victim thinks that this is the only life they know.

The victims loose a style of their own, the abuser treat the victims as if they are not grown.

The abuser tell the victims what to eat, what to wear.

The abuser even tell the victims how to style their hair.

The abuser mentally hurts the victim causing them to have many tears.

The life style of the victim is hell on earth living with fears.

The victims even loose their rights to express their spiritual point of view,

The abuser act as if they are "God" to the victim telling them everything to do.

No social life the abuser keep the victim out of sight not letting them get out.

No family no friends the victim have no freedom to roam about.

The abuser beat the victim black and blue, Inside of an hour the abuser demands from the victim sex too.

The abuser take the victim long-loved pet.

Do harm to it just to keep the victim upset.

The child or the children of the victim used by the abuser as bait.

To make the victim fear leaving for good through of the gate.

How much more can the victim bare,

At what point do the victim realize that someone do care.

Then come the honeymoon phase with romance all about.

Moments later the beating returns that when hell on earth breaks out.

Are you or someone you know a victim of domestic violence too?

Does this poem describe them or you?

If you choose to stay that is your right.

But in the end who will win the fight?

If you choose to leave for good yes you can,

Start with a pray for God for a plan.

The best time to leave for good through the gate,

Through the honeymoon phase it's worth the wait.

God will open the door look for the clue.

Have faith in God, God loves you.

Domestic violence a point of view,

My grandmother

and I were victims too.

She made the choice to stay, Her abuser took her life away.

I made a choice to leave through the gate for my unborn child and me.

As a single mom of a healthy child I have a victorious testimony.

Note- This was written solely on my experience as a victim myself- I left my abuser on August 14, 1992 and "I will not return!"

-by Cheryl Murphy

### A Homeless Mother From CHA

You are sticking it to me from both ends, and want me to smile and display a nice warm grin.

You are taking all that I ever had, and don't want me to wake up mad.

You are taking my livelihood, and say to me you're doing it for my own good!

My baby is turning to sticks and bones, and look for his father, he's no longer here, he's gone!

The system say he can

not stay, those welfare stamps they ain't gonna pay, The Government say they ain't Burger king.

You can't have it your own special way!"

I'm barely living in society on my own, little education and young when I left

home.

Any little money that I may make, the government takes,

leaving me poor helpless and prone and they say I'm wrong.

A new millennium, a new era, a brand new day, the CEO's of public housing say.

A new CHA but not for the poor to stay!

They took my apartment and gave me section 8 but on the street is where I wait.

You tell me is this the way life supposes to be?

Feel like slavery-LORD SET ME FREE!

I look into my baby eyes, tell him everything gonna be all right, ain't noth-

ing but lies!

Other people from foreign land say, your government can't be that bad."

But I'm homeless on the street with nothing but rags,

Judge for yourself.

There's nothing in me left!"

-by Beauty Turner

### A Note of Appreciation

Dear Editor:

I just read the article about Residents' Journal in Chicago magazine, and wanted to pass along a note saying I think what you are doing is

valuable.

Keep up the good work, especially as the change in housing strategy unfolds.

You're providing deep coverage

found in few other places.

-Thad Rueter

**Residents' Journal** welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters and poetry 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.

## Watch Residents' Journal Television

Tuesday nights beginning April 1 thru June 24 on Channel 21 (Cable Access Network CAN-TV). The staff of **Residents' Journal** will host a live call-in show from 7:30 p.m. - 7:55 p.m. Topics will include housing, welfare reform, security, Medicare and a range of other issues that we publish. We encourage all viewers but particularly Chicago public housing residents to tune in and call our hotline number at (312) 738-1060.

# Dear Resident

**Patricia Johnson-Gordon**

## A Time for Everything

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up and a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace."

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 Holy Bible, New International Version



**Patricia Johnson-Gordon**

feel for the men, women and children of our public housing community. I have been here my whole life. I have seen the spring of public housing with newly constructed buildings holding the promise of decent housing for Chicago's poor at long last.

And like the flowers that once grew around each building in beauty and splendor, so did the children and families of our new community grow in the 1950s.

## Then Came Summer

The summer of public housing, like the summer of my life, strikes me as the longest season. Public housing began to grow and change rapidly, like crops planted in the spring. Unfortunately, once established, public housing was not given the attention it needed and was left unattended to whither and die.

From the riots of the late '60s to the epidemic drug use of the '70s,

will come..."

- Ecclesiastes 9: 11-12.

## What Will Winter Bring?

It's hard to give thought to winter when spring is just outside the window, screaming, "I'm here!" While I have many plans, hopes and dreams, I don't know that I will see the winter of my life. But obviously, public housing will pass away with its winter.

Many of us who started out together in the spring of public housing are gone and many more will go before the last building falls. And I, just as many who have gone on before me, want to leave those that I love the most important lessons that life has taught me.

There are many things that I want to say but it would take too long and they have all been said before in some shape, form or fashion in previous columns. So I will leave you with the most important: You can't hurt anyone else without hurting yourself; Never miss an opportunity to help someone else because in some way, you will help yourself; Never let anyone abuse you and don't abuse yourself; Do what you need to do, when you need to do it (I'm still working on this one); Get and stay physically fit because your body is a temple. It houses your heart, soul and spirit. And most importantly, during all the seasons of your life, seek God, the creator of life.

"Seek the Lord while he may still be found..."

- Isaiah 55:6

Thank you all very much for the many kind words, gestures and thoughts that you have shared with me over the years. Take care.

A time to be silent...

- Pat

**Editor's Note:** We will continue to commission the work of Patricia Johnson-Gordon, a life-long resident of the Cabrini-Green development and author of Dear Resident since Residents' Journal's founding in 1996. Look for future articles under her byline as well as under the "Dear Resident" headline.

## CONDOLENCES

RJ sends regards to the family of Robert Taylor Homes resident Willoneal Guy who died in mid-May. Condolences to Leclaire Courts LAC President Ruth Todd on the recent passing of her mother, as well as to Hillard Homes LAC President Maner Jean Wiley on the recent death of her husband. Regards also to the families of ABLA residents Renay Johnson, Fredrick Davis and Robert "Shake Bag" Brown who passed in March, and condolences to the family of 10-year-old Elicia Miller who was killed in a fire at the Lathrop Homes in April.

## Ode to Longtime Residents' Journal Staff Members



**Julio Martinez**



**John "Popcorn" Sampson**

RJ extends its deep regards to the families of RJ staff members John "Popcorn" Sampson and Julio Martinez who both succumbed to their illnesses in April.

**Attention: ALL CHICAGO PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS**



**FREE!!!**

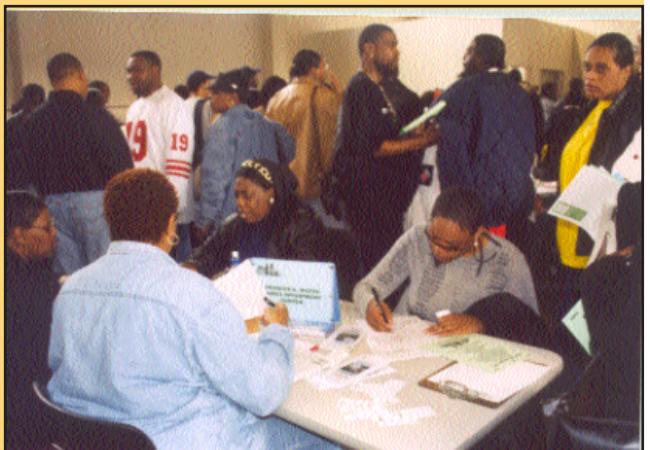


## **COMPUTER CLASSES**

**SIGN UP NOW ...FIRST COME FIRST SERVE. HOURS M-F 9A-12P; 1P-4P; 6P-9P**



In the left photo, Paul H. Knappenberger Jr., president of the Adler Planetarium (left) presents Zenobia Johnson-Black the president and CEO of the Hayes FIC, with an "Outstanding Community Partnership" award in May. Posing with them is Donald C. Clark Jr., Chairman of the Adler Board of Trustees. In photo to the right, health educators share information about the myths and facts about Asthma to various community residents during "World Asthma Day" at the Charles A. Hayes FIC that was sponsored by the University of Chicago Asthma Center and Grand Boulevard Federation in May.



**TECHNOLOGY  
LEARNING CENTER  
4859 S. Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60615-1008  
Phone: 773-285-0200  
Fax: 773-285-1150**

**TO REGISTER CALL:  
773-285-0200  
Web Site: [www.thefic.org](http://www.thefic.org)**

**GED PREPARATION CLASSES**

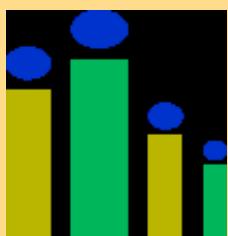
**"HOW-TO WORKSHOPS"**

**CISCO CLASSES**

**MICROSOFT OFFICE SPECIALIST**

**MICROSOFT WORD, EXCEL,  
POWERPOINT, AND ACCESS**

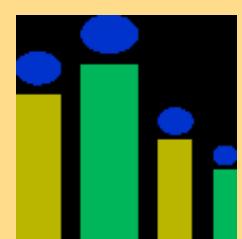
**INTERNET ACCESS AND  
FREE EMAIL**



A Technology  
Learning Center

**CHARLES A. HAYES  
FAMILY INVESTMENT CENTER  
4859 South Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60615  
(773) 285-0200**

**Zenobia Johnson-Black, President & CEO**



A Technology  
Learning Center

