

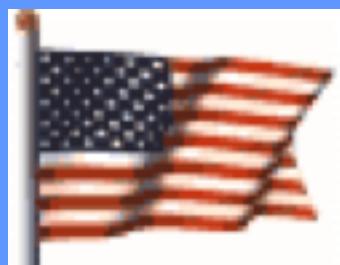
R E S I D E N T S '

# Journal

A publication for and by Chicago public housing residents August-September 2001 /Volume 5/ Number 6

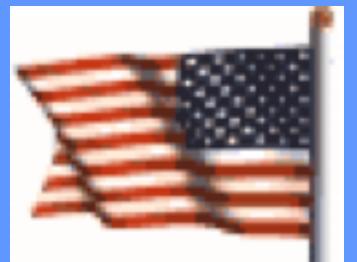


Back to School



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Stop the Violence Pg. 18*



***RJ WISHES PEACE FOR ALL IN THIS TIME OF CRISIS***

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# **Haymarket House AD**

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## FRONT PAGE

The front page photo by Mary C. Johns depicts a student marching in this summer's Bud Billiken parade

# Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli

threats of terror and war are something I have carried with me since the first time I saw a bomb shelter underneath my family's home in Tel Aviv, since the first time my older brother went off to the battlefield.



I had hoped – naively – that I would never have to experience that fear in the United States. That hope was wiped away as I made frantic phone calls across the country after Sept. 11.

But residents of public housing and other low-income communities in Chicago and throughout the country also have an understanding of the threat of terror.

Those same mothers with brave sons in dangerous places overseas have to walk

through a daily gauntlet of fear through not-so-brave young men toting military weapons in the lobbies and hallways of their buildings. Rather than protection and security from police and other elements of our government, these mothers

Residents also certainly will be involved in the "War on Terrorism" that was declared by President George W. Bush. With our military preparing itself for armed conflict in remote parts of the globe, my thoughts turn to Residents' Journal Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns, whose son and nephew are enlisted men in the U.S. Army.

These young men are preparing for this task with bravery and professionalism.

"I knew what I was getting into when I signed up," Mary's nephew Marcello told her recently when she spoke to him from a military base.

Mary and other mothers among the residents will spend their days and nights

## The Terror Within

in public housing developments are more likely to be subject to harassment from the authorities.

Despite occasional pronouncements from police and other City officials, armed gang members sell drugs in open air markets within sight of the city's police headquarters.

I certainly do not begrudge the U.S. military the tens of billions of dollars that will be necessary to safeguard our nation from future terrorist threats. I also will not protest the tens of billions of dollars that will go to rebuild the business district of New York City or that may go to bolster the airline industry.

(Continued on Page 4)

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*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 (773) 624-4890 (TDD), or fax us at (773) 285-2853 with your ideas, comments and concerns. Residents' Journal is available in alternative formats, such as braille or large type, upon request.*

Layout Design by Mary C. Johns

# 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.

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*Residents' Journal and the Urban Youth International Journalism Program are supported by the Chicago Reader, the Wieboldt Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust, the Albert Pick Fund, the Woods Foundation of Chicago, the Polk Brothers Foundation and the Mayer and Morris Kaplan Foundation.*

# Transforming CHA

## City Gets CHA Funds Update

by Mary C. Johns

ith the clock ticking for many Chicago Housing Authority residents receiving government assistance, CHA officials failed to implement a much-needed welfare-to-work program for over one year, a continuing *Residents' Journal* investigation has found.

In 1999, CHA won a \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to service residents receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), a federal assistance program. But in recent interviews, CHA officials admitted the program had been held up for one year after city officials took over the agency in spring 1999.

During numerous public meetings since the city takeover, residents and their advocates asked CHA officials what happened to the funds the agency previously used for social services. Residents' advocates had specifically asked what CHA did with the \$5 million welfare-to-work grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.

CHA was to service the TANF residents beginning January 1999, according to the grant agreement award notification from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration.

The document states, "The period of performance shall be 30 months from Jan. 4, 1999 to June 30, 2001."

The grant was extended in January 2000 until December 2001.

CHA officials explained the program had been held up "due to lag time," wrote CHA spokesperson Francisco Arcuate.

"When the CHA reform started in '99, the program was put on hold. For a year, no services were delivered."

### Funds Go to City

esidents' Journal has learned CHA allocated \$3.8 million from the \$5 million welfare-to-work grant for a subcontract with the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) to recruit and enroll 900 CHA residents receiving TANF funds.

Shortly after the city takeover, CHA began transferring federal dollars to other city agencies. The funds previously had been used for the Authority's educational, sports and recreational, police, jobs-train-

ing and welfare-to-work programs for residents.

CHA's agreement with MOWD states the agency was to begin servicing the TANF residents in January 2001.

### Further Delays

Already more than one year behind, the welfare-to-work program is facing further delays, MOWD admitted.

According to the Intergovernmental Agreement with CHA, MOWD was subcontracted to "provide the transitional employment assistance needed to move (hundreds of) hard-to-employ CHA residents who are recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) into lasting unsubsidized jobs that provide good career potential for achieving economic self sufficiency."

CHA spokesperson Francisco Arcuate said 5,031 CHA residents in family, senior and City/State buildings are in the TANF program. Of those residents, 4,290 are from family developments.

Despite those thousands of residents receiving TANF, MOWD spokesperson Liz Libby explained that her agency is experiencing difficulty in securing the 900 CHA TANF residents.

"Not to say that it's been hard but there are a lot fewer people on TANF than there are CHA residents," she said.

"There are fewer TANF recipients who are CHA residents than we originally thought. So it was challenging to reach just that group of people because we didn't want to send the wrong message to everyone at CHA."

"There aren't really that many people who meet the eligibility requirements of this particular grant."

MOWD is responsible for placing 600 of the 900 CHA residents into jobs. But in August, MOWD spokesperson Libby said only 342 people were enrolled in the program and just 106 people had been placed in employment since January.

"That's the figures as of July. The August figures aren't in yet," Libby said.

"Pyramid Partnership, which is one of our contractors, just opened up a new location at the South Side Robert Taylor Homes to identify people there. There are three contractors right now. Abraham Lincoln Centre and Career Works as well," she said.

Couldn't just a few of those billions going to safeguard the nation and rebuild Wall Street go to ensure that tens of thousands of poor families have decent homes in safe communities?

I think that supporting public housing residents and other low-income Americans is a matter of justice. But our homegrown terrorists also are noticing the neglect of their neighborhoods by the government. Like terrorists anywhere, they are young men with little to lose and convictions born of desperation and isolation. Some of the gang members actually believe they are defending their communities from other gang bangers in the next building.

Libby expressed optimism about recruiting the correct number of CHA TANF residents.

"The recruitment has really stepped up in the last few months but it was fore-going for the first couple. But now, we've sort of hit a stride. We're confident that a good referral mechanism is in place and that we'll get the numbers that we need," Libby said.

As to whether MOWD will fulfill its obligation within the contract time period, Libby said that CHA would soon ask U.S. Department of Labor officials for an extension.

"We're looking to get an extension for a year," Libby said.

"We're seeking an extension so that

helps and that is where you get the momentum from.

"If you are on public aid, you have to go to your public aid office. They will be able to tell you that there is a program that will help you get a job that is located right in your residence."

Libby said one way MOWD will find residents is by using information from the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the agency that administers public aid.

"It's something that ultimately IDHS has to identify the people who come to us for the program," said Libby.

**D**espite those thousands of residents receiving TANF, MOWD spokesperson Liz Libby explained that her agency is experiencing difficulty in securing the 900 CHA TANF residents.

### Follow Up Services

**T**he Intergovernmental Agreement with CHA also requires MOWD to follow up for up to one year with the 600 residents who are placed in jobs.

The agreement states MOWD should "provide referrals for post-employment education and training opportunities such as GED, EDL or occupational skills training, based on the needs of participant and employer" for up to one year.

Libby said MOWD was supporting the CHA TANF residents that had been employed.

"We offer support services like transportation and clothing and employer visits. All kinds of sort-of wrap-around services to help people while they are in their jobs," she said.

"Part of it (follow up) is calling the individuals (the working residents) and the employers. It's a two-way street because they (the working CHA TANF recipients) also call us. And they call the people who helped them get into their jobs in the first place. So it's a really personalized relationship that's kept up for a length of time to ensure that person is successful in their job."

### Resident Recruitment

**L**ibby said MOWD is recruiting CHA residents primarily through Local Advisory Councils (LACs), word of mouth and referrals from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

"It's been primarily in conjunction with the LACs. They try every creative strategy that you can think of to get the word out. They've done flyers, raffles and newsletters within each LAC."

The next thing is word of mouth really

One day, they may get bold enough to take their tactics to the next neighborhood or throughout the metropolitan area.

If the events of Sept. 11 have taught us anything, it's that lawlessness and desperation will eventually spread like cancer. I hope our national and local leaders will use some of the funds being dedicated to the War on Terrorism to stop the local outbreaks of that global disease.



Rabbinical Jewish Council Visits Taylor Homes

Robert Taylor resident Patricia Baldwin talks to Jewish Rabbis during a visit at the CHA development in August.

Photo by Beauty Turner

## Publisher's Box

### (Continued from Page 3)

But let's consider for a moment that the Chicago Housing Authority is spending just \$1.5 billion over 10 years to build housing for its current residents.

Most serious analysts don't think CHA will have enough money or time to build even enough replacement units for those families that live in CHA today. CHA definitely won't have enough money to build any housing for the tens of thousands of families on CHA's waiting list.

# Transforming CHA Harold Ickes Homes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

## The Good The Bad The Ugly

Our hopes and dreams will always have a place in our children's faces as they make their first achievement of success - from their first graduation from their earliest formal educational experience.

Picture this, a beautiful balmy sun shiny day, powder blue sky, soft white clouds, hundreds of blue and white balloons dancing on strings grasped in the tiny hands of some 70 pre-school graduates. Parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins and friends gathered in groups for pictures. The graduates were excited, shouting, pointing, running, grinning, and hugging gifts of teddy bears, flowers, boxes of candy, etc.

What a sight! An all-good visual experience that recorded the beginning of an educational journey that will take place in the newly constructed Cermak Teacher's



Henry Booth House Head Start program graduates.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

Academy, which formed the background for this stimulating community affair. If the City does not believe there are children waiting excitedly to fill each new classroom, let me assure them. The goodness of our lives is in our children and we patiently have prepared them to be ready for the doors to open.

The calmative scene described above features the pre-school students of Henry Booth House Head Start programs at their graduation on July 13. The place: the Chicago Housing Authority's Harold L. Ickes Homes. The mood: all joy!

The **Bad** reared its devastating face in the form of a horrendous apartment fire that took the lives of two people, a small child and an adult. The agony of the experience injured 12 other people, including two children, four fire fighters and five more adults.

Sadly, fires occur much too often to overplay the facts of this one. However, for some of those that stood by outside the fire, the bravery of Chicago's firefighters who did what we could not do augmented the depression and the helplessness accruing among the residents who are experiencing untold disappointments. For many residents, the sadness stemmed from the 'Back to Square One' syndrome, which causes any improvements in our living situation, when and if they are made, to be undone. The syndrome furthers the misunderstandings between Ickes' new managers and the residents.

The tears the crowd shed also brought home the alarming fact that children do 'play' with matches and this is something that can be and should be prevented. The lessons learned from this tragedy should be taken seriously. Necessary steps in each home should be put in place to prevent more occurrences.

The **Ugly** blighted an otherwise annual

day of community rejoicing in itself and its families.

In the past, our celebrated Fun Days have created lasting joys and friendships among the residents. This year, it just didn't quite develop into a fully pleasurable outing.

This year's Fun Day was negatively affected by all the changes made within CHA's work force and the construction of the new school on the very grounds formerly used to stretch out and accommodate all ages in games, rides and exhibits. A cramped feeling marred the interest usually applied to the day.

Even the pinnacle of the day's excitement, held in the basketball arena, fell short of all expectations. At the request of Ickes Local Advisory Council President Gloria Williams, CHA Director of Programs Gil Walker put on the entertainment. The groups were good because children performed. The youths showed perseverance and practice. However, the directors of these groups should have projected a more positive mes-



Paramedics attend to a young fire victim at the Harold Ickes Homes in August.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

showed too much pleasure at the moves the young girls made. For me, it was disgusting.

I had a talk with Dwayne Holmes, the dance director, who was open to my objection of the presentation's specific error in communication. He promised to educate

**T**he tears the crowd shed also brought home the alarming fact that children do 'play' with matches and this is something that can be and should be prevented.

sage to our youthful audience.

The tumbling team's performance lacked a little luster but the participants were well coordinated and put on a skilled exhibit.

The dancers, however, used dance moves indecent for the total audience's viewing experience. The majority of young people watching had to ask questions that should only be discussed by adults. Adult males

himself in proper African American cultural dance routines and apologized for the mistakes. I look forward to an improved group next year.

The food was the bomb! Sacks and bags delighted the children and fed the adults with nourishment. Hopefully, the activities can be rethought and redesigned next year to the betterment of all.

## CHA Family Service Connectors

by Mary C. Johns

Chicago public housing residents in need of a job, child care, GED classes, after-school programs or help with substance abuse problems and domestic violence situations now have a new place to turn.

In July, five agencies were chosen as "Service Connectors" to link CHA residents from 27 family developments with city agencies.

The Service Connectors are clustered in six geographic areas throughout the city:

### The North Cluster

In August, Employment and Employee Services, the Service Connector for CHA's North Cluster, began working with residents from Cabrini Green and Lathrop Homes.

Marvin Garth, the North Cluster Manager and a former Cabrini Green resident, said each site will have resident service advocates. Garth said his agency

would be working with the Resident Management Corporation at Cabrini Green, the Local Advisory Councils (LACs) and the private management firm for the two CHA developments.

Lee Diffey, vice president of the Service Connector Program for Employment and Employee Services said his agency was initially contracted for 7 months to service the residents.

"We're contracted from June 1 to December 2001. The maximum contract amount is \$465,496.00," Diffey said.

Diffey said as many as 20 residents had already become employed.

The Service Connector on-site offices are located at 911 N. Hudson for Cabrini Green residents and at 200 W. Adams for Lathrop residents.

### Madden Park/Wells/Lake Park Place Cluster

The Abraham Lincoln Centre is the lead agency for the Service Connector Interim Program for the Madden Park and Ida B. Wells developments on the South

Side.

The agency will provide referral assistance to residents of the two CHA communities in the following areas: lease compliance, education, employment, substance abuse, child care, counseling and domestic violence.

UJIMA, a not-for-profit organization located at 710 E. 38<sup>th</sup> St., will also provide services to residents. UJIMA is operated by CHA Commissioner, Wells LAC President and We The People Media Board member Sandra Young and Madden Park LAC President Eunice Crosby along with Wells resident Leroy Square.

UJIMA was the former pilot Service Connector Program for Madden Park and Ida B. Wells developments.

UJIMA will work, free of charge, in partnership with the Abraham Lincoln Centre with resident outreach and will



CHA resident David Wilson was hired to be a service connector for the Robert Taylor Homes. Rasheedah Hyman is a resident coordinator for the development.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

monitor the center's service performance.

The Lake Park Resident Management Corporation (RMC) will service residents of Lake Park Place.

The Abraham Lincoln Centre's Service Connector office is located at 631 E. 37<sup>th</sup> St. The office number is (312) 674-3968.

(Continued on Page 5)

# Transforming CHA

## Don't Rock the Boat

by Wateka Kleinpeter

Is it a coincidence or do Chicago Housing Authority residents experience a lot of hassles when they challenge their landlord?

Many residents believe that if you speak out against some of the actions of CHA, your living status may be threatened. As a resident of CHA, it is hard to be outspoken. Many residents, especially the community activists who fight for residents' rights, have found that out.

Lakefront Community Organization (LCO) Executive Director Izora Davis (also a board member of We The People Media) has now joined that illustrious group.

Davis recently had to go to court because CHA tried to evict her under the controversial "One Strike and You're Out" law. One Strike, signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1996, states that a public housing resident can be evicted for the criminal activity - or even the alleged criminal activity - of a family member.

Davis faced One Strike because of an incident involving her son, who does not and never has lived with her in her current unit in Lake Parc Place. Her son was never on her lease. He is authorized to come to her apartment and check up on her because she has health issues.

CHA declined to comment for this story but Davis explained that her son lives with her daughter and has all of his identification at that address. Davis went to court and submitted proof of her son's address and stressed that he is not a public housing resident. Davis said that if her son had been living with her, his income would have been included in her rent.

"Management knows that he does not live with me," she said.

On Sept. 4, Davis returned to court and the One Strike case against her was dropped. Although she was elated by the victory, Davis said, "My name was scandalized. It is unfair." She said she spent unnecessary money for attorney's fees.

Over the past 15 years, Davis has spent a lot of time in court as executive director of LCO. Davis has been fighting for the hundreds of former residents of the four Lakefront Properties buildings that were evacuated in 1985, stood vacant for 12 years and were imploded in 1998.

Davis suspected that the One Strike case was an effort to

discredit her and stop her from fighting back. If she was forced to move, then the battle with CHA would die down.

Davis said what CHA tried to do was "not business. It was personal. Deal with me. Do what is right. Give residents services entitled to them. The replacement units were supposed to be built unit for unit."

A long time resident of CHA told me when you have a gripe with CHA, watch and see what happens. Especially when CHA had its own police force, "the police will be at your house for some reason," she said.

"One Strike gave them the legal recourse to throw out a lot of residents."

But the One Strike case against Davis did not even slow her down.

### The Struggle

Early one morning in December 1998, four CHA buildings were imploded on the lakefront. CHA and HUD officials called the event "Promises made Promises kept."

However, the former residents of those buildings were not satisfied. Many of them were there with picket signs protesting the demolition. They said that when they moved out of those buildings in 1985 and 1986, CHA promised to repair them.

As long as those boarded-up buildings stood there, the residents thought they would remind CHA that they had not done what they agreed to.

The residents originally lived a six-building development called the Lakefront Properties. They moved out with the promise that all six buildings would be repaired. What they got instead was Lake Parc Place - two buildings just north of the imploded ones at 3939 and 3983 S. Lake Park.

Some of the former Lakefront Properties residents live in Lake Parc Place, a mixed-income development. Others moved to other CHA properties or took Section 8 vouchers.

The former residents are represented by the LCO and the outspoken Davis. Davis is a former resident of 4040 S. Oakenwald Blvd., the one building of the four that were imploded that stood by itself. The other three buildings were situated in a horseshoe.

To date, Davis has a database of the former residents - "relocatees" - who are still eligible to move into replacement units. Over the 15 years since the relocatees moved out,



Lake Parc Place

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Davis has held regular meetings and maintained thorough records. She had over 100 signatures from a meeting she held in April and there have been several more meetings since then. Davis said that the people who attend are still very interested in living in the Kenwood-Oakland area.

According to Davis, CHA is saying that they cannot find the relocatees or there are not many left.

"CHA just wants the relocatees to forget about it," Davis said.

The LCO and CHA are still fighting a battle in court. According to Davis, CHA signed an agreement but they keep trying to make changes. Davis has a copy of every petition or letter that was ever filed in court or signed, including the agreement signed by then-CHA Executive Director Joseph Shuldiner when the buildings came down. Davis wants CHA to stick to the agreement LCO signed with CHA and not try to make changes. That agreement was for 302 Section 8 certificates, 241 units in North Kenwood Oakland and 200 units outside the area.

To date, nothing has been built on the land where the four Lakefront Properties buildings once stood. Just a few units have been built in the Kenwood Oakland area.

scattered site and Section 8 families.

"What they (United Way) want to do is a mass mailing to all scattered site families making them aware of who they are, where they are and how they can access services."

Hunter said the 800 number would not be a recorded referral message for city services.

"You have to do an assessment so you can't have a recording on an assessment," Hunter said.

"United Way will also have a follow up service."

### Director of the Service Connector Program

Mattie Hunter is director of the CHA Service Connector Program.

Hunter, a former resident of Robert Taylor Homes, said she was hired because of her familiarity with CHA and resident issues.

"Since I was a former resident of Taylor, I had a very clear understanding of not only about CHA but what the needs of the residents are. I'm one of the founders of the CHA Alumni Association and I've been involved in a number of CHA activities in the past."

Hunter said she worked for a not-for-profit organization that operated programs about CHA issues and that she also ran several programs at CHA sites, including a shelter for battered women, an outpatient alcohol and drug clinic at Taylor Homes, a homeless shelter in ABLA, and an outpatient alcoholism program in Altgeld Gardens.

Hunter said her responsibility as director is to ensure that CHA residents' needs are linked up to the appropriate services that will provide program evaluations, identify any kind of training needs and identify any gaps in services that are not being provided to residents.

## Service Connectors

(Continued from Page 5)

### The West Cluster

Marcy Newberry Association is the Service Connector for the CHA West cluster that will service residents of the Henry Horner, ABLA, Rockwell Gardens, Lawndale Gardens, Ogden Courts, LeClaire Courts, Harrison Courts, Loomis Courts and Maplewood Courts.

Ray Bentley, Marcy Newberry Association's director of the Service Connector program, said the agency was contracted for \$522,000 to service residents from June 1 to Dec. 31, 2001.

The agency began servicing residents on Sept. 1.

Bentley said the agency would do more than case management. He said they would also help residents put a plan together to quickly move them towards permanent housing and achieve full-time, permanent employment.

Of the 23 jobs they will fill, Bentley said each site would have a resident service advocate and a service coordinator. Larger sites like ABLA will have 2 resident service advocates and 2 service coordinators.

Bentley said it would be the service coordinators' responsibility to make sure that residents have been provided the services needed.

"Their job is to follow up with their families to make sure that they go to their appointments and get registered with the service providers," he explained. "And then make sure that the service providers provide those services in a timely fashion."

"And if that service provider is not responsive, then it's our job to make sure that we find a service provider that is," said Bentley.

### South and Far South Cluster

The Woodlawn Organization is the Service Connector for the CHA's South and Far South cluster. TWO will service residents of the Lowden Homes, Trumbull Park Homes, Altgeld Gardens, Bridgeport Homes, Archer Courts, Hilliard Homes, Harold Ickes, Prairie Courts, and the Dearborn Homes.

### The Greater Grand Boulevard Cluster

William Moorehead and Associates will be servicing CHA residents of the Greater Grand Boulevard cluster, which are Wentworth Gardens, Stateway Gardens, Robert Taylor Homes A and B, Randolph Towers, and the Washington Park Homes in the Oakland and Kenwood communities.

### CHA Section 8 and Scattered Sites

CHA families living in scattered site units and those participating in the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program will have to call a toll-free referral number that will be operated by the national organization United Way for linkage to city agencies for social services.

Mattie Hunter, director of the Service Connector Program, said CHA would be working with United Way to reach out to

# Transforming CHA

## ABLA News

by Karen Owens

Many times when a person thinks of residents of public housing communities, they think of them as down trodden, hopeless and uneducated, people who have no plans, opinions, or ideals as to how they want to live as individuals or families. The stereotypes are that residents are isolated from society.

The ABLA Local Advisory Council (LAC), along with its president, Deverra Beverly, other concerned residents of ABLA and various city agencies are working hard to erase these negative stereotypes.

Various meetings have been held to keep the residents informed. At these meetings, residents have been allowed to make major input and educated choices as to things that will make the future of the ABLA community a viable one. These things are needed as the transformation of public housing takes place in the years to come.

We're here with the full weight of every City of Chicago agency to say that the isolation of public housing residents is coming to an end.

--Mayor Richard M. Daley

### Steps

In an informational Town Hall meeting of the ABLA Hope VI Revitalization Plan was held at the ABLA YMCA. The session was sponsored by Telesis, the company that's helping ABLA residents plan a viable community.

Warm weather didn't stop large crowds from attending this important event. Many residents of ABLA as well as the community as a whole were present.

The plans were presented detail by detail. The plans

are that the new ABLA will resemble the residential character of other mixed income neighborhoods, with an individual unit for each unit and more open space.

After discussing the overall image, the facilitators branched off into smaller groups to give more information and listen to statements from the attendees.

Some of the main topics were health care, employment, education and recreation programs. Residents as well as the youth of ABLA were knowledgeable and spoke very fluently with great concern on these areas. The facilitators listened patiently, taking down all information.

"Adamant" is the way LAC President Beverly described her feelings towards this huge endeavor.

### Another Program for Residents

At a recent press conference at Fosco Park near the ABLA Homes, representatives from various city agencies, along with many ABLA residents, and Mayor Richard M. Daley unveiled the Service Connector Program, which is being administered by the Chicago Department of Human Services. The program is funded by a \$5.9 million grant from the CHA and a \$1.5 million dollar grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust.

Daley said, "This program will link residents within public housing communities citywide to take advantage of job training, day care and after-school programs with specialists who can help them maintain stable family environments, where all (city) residents are one and the same, not isolated. When you isolate one community, that community falls behind. Today, we're here with the full weight of

every City of Chicago agency and numerous community organizations to say that the isolation of public housing residents is coming to an end."

### Good Times

Sunny skies, good food, dancing, and fun were just some of the things that made this year's 9th annual neighborhood festival at ABLA a success.

The festival, held at Adams Park at 15th Street and Loomis Avenue - AKA Deverra Beverly Street - was sponsored by the ABLA LAC, HJ Russell, the Duncan YMCA as well as various city and other on-site agencies.

There were activities for children, adults and our seniors. There were dance contests, train rides, games and more. The surprise was a Michael Jackson impersonator who always entertains the crowd with his fantastic stage persona.

The raffle was the event that everyone looked forward to. Over \$10,000 in prizes were given away, including televisions, bicycles, back-to-school gear and microwaves. One lucky resident was so excited that she jumped and hugged everyone near her when she won a 13-inch television with a built-in VCR. As dusk fell over the crowd, some were still dancing. The whole day showed that ABLA still knows how to throw a party.

### Back to School

Proud grandma, long-time LAC member and ABLA resident Loretta Mason is ecstatic about her granddaughter, Candice Mason. The young Ms. Mason, a graduate of Rich Central High School, will be attending Arkansas State University in Pine Bluff this fall. Congratulations to Mason and best wishes for a successful college career.

# Squatters In CHA

by Bobby Watkins

Residents of CHA hear a lot about being lease compliant and so many people are afraid. It seems that lease compliance will keep us from receiving a Housing Choice Voucher or coming back to our own development after relocation. Whether it's in a big or small way, almost everybody is in some way non-lease compliant.

What made me bring this up is a recent phone call to the **Residents' Journal** office from a resident. She was furious about squatters in her development. The squatters were people who just took over a vacant unit and moved in. The squatters acted like they had a lease agreement, putting in curtains, furniture and the whole nine yards. They had a rent-free home. The resident's management company was notified and the lock on the unit was

my own development, our former manager would try her best to rid the development of squatters. But the squatters' presence just seems to be an ongoing situation.

I spoke with another resident who is angry about an unauthorized person in her building who not only has taken over the unit but now is selling drugs from the unit at night. This person has been told not to come back on CHA property. The blame doesn't lie with the management company because they have gone to court and boarded this unit up.

In these times of relocation, residents who are lease holders

cially with so many government cut backs.

What is the legitimate lease holder to do?

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In these times of relocation, residents who are lease holders would like to know why it is so easy for a lease holder who tries to be lease compliant to be evicted but the squatters seem to be moving in more easily.

changed. But the squatters found another unit in the development.

This time, the police were called. The squatters were taken to jail but got out in 48 hours even though management pressed charges.

Management pressing charges is a new situation. In

would like to know why it is so easy for a lease holder who tries to be lease compliant to be evicted but the squatters seem to be moving in more easily. It seems as though this situation is going to be worse, espe-

# Transforming CHA

## In Search of Scattered Site Housing

by Mary C. Johns

Inquiring minds want to know: When will Chicago public housing residents relocating from Chicago Housing Authority developments be able to move into the scattered site units that are currently available for occupancy?

Under a decades-old federal court decree known as the Gautreaux case, a judge ruled that new public housing should be scattered throughout the city, creating several thousand scattered site units. The units are low-rise town house-style structures in generally better condition than the high-rises. Twenty-five percent of CHA's scattered site units are four bedrooms or larger, and 75 percent of the units are three bedrooms or larger.

And yet, residents are not selecting scattered site units as a relocation option. CHA officials contradict each other about whether the scattered sites units are available to the relocating residents. And relocation officials apparently are not informing residents about the scattered site units. Instead, the officials are focusing on available units in other CHA developments and Housing Choice (Section 8) Vouchers.

According to the CHA Plan for

**T**here is a lot of information regarding Scattered Sites that needs to get out  
- CHA Official Dwayne Bailey

Transformation Year 2 Moving to Work Annual Plan 2001, of CHA initially planned to rehabilitate 400 of its 2,922 scattered site units in 2001. The document states "site assessments revealed that the majority of scattered sites are in better physical condition than originally estimated....Therefore, the rehabilitation schedule of the scattered sites will be substantially accelerated. 800 units should be rehabilitated by the end of 2001."

\$77 million was allocated to rehab the scattered site units, which should be completed by 2003, according to a March 29, 2001 CHA press release.

But CHA has moved only a small number of residents so far and none are moving into the scattered site units. Many of the relocated residents have received Section 8 vouchers and the rest have moved into other CHA developments, according to a not-for-profit group which is monitoring the plan and CHA's own documents.

As of January 1, 2001, just 181 residents had been relocated as a result of redevelopment or building closure, according to the Metropolitan Planning Council. Eighty-four of those residents moved into the private sector with Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers by March 31.

CHA's own projections show that no resident will get to move in to the rehabbed or vacant scattered site units in 2001. In 2002, CHA predicts it will move 2,684 resident households but only 200 will be moved into scattered site units.

According to CHA officials, very few residents relocating from CHA family developments are choosing scattered sites as one of their permanent housing choices on the

Housing Choice Surveys.

Maybe residents aren't choosing scattered sites because, in at least some developments, CHA residents undergoing relocation are being told that scattered site housing is not a temporary relocation option. Scattered sites are listed, however, on the Housing Choice Survey as a temporary relocation option.

The Housing Choice Survey asks residents to "indicate 1 (one) housing site preference for temporary moves....Identify a temporary public housing development/scattered site region."

The Housing Choice Survey asks residents to make three selections for permanent housing after redevelopment. Scattered sites are one of the options listed. Residents may choose a Section 8 Housing Choice voucher as a temporary or permanent housing option.

But during a Housing Choice Survey Clinic this past June, I and other Madden Park residents were told that scattered site units were not an option for temporary housing.

I asked Sonya Franklin, one of the presenters at the Housing Choice Clinic from CHA's Section 8 Relocation Department, why residents couldn't choose scattered sites

as a temporary relocation option since it was listed on the form.

Franklin said CHA officials told her and other presenters that relocation into a scattered sites unit was not a temporary option.

"We were told that scattered sites were not being offered as a temporary choice," said Franklin. Franklin added that residents could choose scattered site units as permanent choices.

Franklin said Madden Park residents' choices for temporary relocation were Section 8 vouchers or relocation into one of three other family developments – Ida B. Wells, Dearborn Homes or Harold L. Ickes Homes.

This was the third housing choice survey that I had filled out since being told by the property managers in September 2000 that I had to move out of my building.

### CHA Explains

CHA CEO Terry Peterson contradicted Franklin and said that he didn't have the authority to offer scattered sites units as an option for relocating residents at all.

In late June, I asked Peterson why scattered site units were not a temporary housing choice option.

Peterson said that CHA would have to meet with Alex Polikoff, the lead attorney in the Gautreaux Decree, before the Scattered Site units could be an option for any relocation – permanent or temporary.

"Scattered Sites falls up under Gautreaux. That is what Alex Polikoff governs," Peterson said.

"As it relates to scattered sites, we would have to get sign-off and work with



**CHA says at least 50 scattered site units like this one on the North Side are available for occupancy. When will relocated residents get to move in?**

Alex Polikoff in order to do that.

"And that is not something that Alex has agreed to do in terms of allowing scattered sites at this point in time to be used as a relocation source right now," Peterson said.

### Gautreaux Lawyer Explains

Polikoff said the Scattered Sites units could be used for those who want to make them their permanent home.

In early July, I asked Polikoff why scattered site units were not a temporary relocation source.

Polikoff said, "Residents would have to move again" if the units were a temporary housing source.

Polikoff said that scattered site units could be agreed upon as a temporary choice only if no resident chose scattered sites as a permanent housing selection on the Housing Choice Survey.

"If there aren't people who are seeking scattered sites units for permanent residence, then we have no objections to their being made available for temporary.

"But if there are people who want them as permanent, they should go first," said Polikoff.

Polikoff informed me that some scattered site units may also be available other than those scheduled for rehab.

"It's not only if they are rehabbed. There are other scattered sites that become available on a turnover basis...when a family moves out. So rehab isn't the only way they might be available for permanent families," Polikoff said.

### Far Behind

In mid-summer, CHA was far behind in fulfilling its own goals for rehabbing the scattered site units.

In July, I asked CHA spokesman Francisco Arcuate if any scattered sites were available for occupancy.

"Yes," he said. "We have 50 units completed so far scattered throughout the city. And 40 which should be completed shortly."

Arcuate said 2,400 of the 2,922 scattered site units were occupied. He added that CHA planned to rehab 750 by the end of the year.

In late August, I asked CHA Chief of Operations Dwain Bailey why residents who chose the scattered site units as a permanent housing choice were not relocating into the available scattered site units.

Bailey maintained that residents did not know much about CHA's scattered site housing.

"There is a lot of information regarding Scattered Sites that needs to get out," he explained.

"(Scattered Sites) has not been a resource that a lot of residents are selecting."

Bailey said CHA was currently figuring out what units would be available for residents relocating from CHA redevelopment sites.

"The process is still being defined," he said.

"The way that we're doing this is the people who have identified scattered sites as a permanent selection will get first priority to go into one of these rehabbed units.

"We'll have to make sure that they get to these units," said Bailey.

Because Madden Park is being redeveloped now, Bailey said he thinks those residents will be in a prime position for occupancy of scattered sites units.

"So, with this first group coming out of Madden Park, what we're going to do is, there will be a meeting and we will have before you all of the addresses that have been rehabbed that are currently available to be occupied by relocates from Madden Park," Bailey said.

As more residents are relocated, Bailey expects there will be competition for the available scattered sites units.

"The pool of people competing for scattered sites will also increase," he said. "So it's going to be kind of a competitive thing, I'm sure at some point, because a lot of people are going to want to go into scattered sites."

### What's the holdup?

Since redevelopment began this year, several Madden Park residents in buildings scheduled for closure in 2001 have received Housing Choice vouchers and moved into the private market or into the Ida B. Wells development.

I am among the few who have asked for a scattered site unit. To date, I have yet to receive word about the availability of any scattered site housing for me to view.

But last fall, I was asked to view a unit in the Ida B. Wells development. I declined to look at the Wells unit since I did not select Wells as a relocation choice on any of the housing choice surveys that I filled out.

# Senior Issues

## CHA Seniors Protest Electric Bills

by Lorenzia  
Shelby

"How many dead elders and infants does it take before President George Bush, Gov. George Ryan and Mayor Richard Daley stop blocking the summer cooling program?"

That's a question being asked in a petition by presidents and vice presidents of the Chicago Housing Authority's North Side senior buildings, and Curly Cohen, from Affordable Power to the People. Together, they are working to maintain the CEDA summer cooling assistance program. On July 13, they protested at Gov. Ryan's office at the James R. Thompson Building in the Loop. They had another march on July 30.

Each time, Ryan was unavailable and the coalition spoke with one of the governor's assistants, according to Otta Henderson, vice president of the Larabee Apartments. Henderson said they postponed a trip to Washington, D.C., to talk with President Bush, hoping to convince him to allocate \$6 million to revitalize the CEDA energy programs, especially the summer cooling program.

Henderson was asked what her coalition wanted from Ryan?

"We want him to restore CEDA energy program, the summer cooling assistance program," she said. "We are not asking for help year round, just for the months of July, August and September. There are seniors afraid to use their air conditioners so they can maintain a low electricity charge."

"When I began to use my air conditioner this summer, my electricity jumped from \$60 to \$130. Now that's a huge increase to me and I'm working. Can you imagine how devastating that

would be to senior citizens whose monthly income are less than \$200 or \$300 a month.

"I think Commonwealth Edison should take this into consideration and lower their rates. It's an injustice and insult to the seniors in the Chicago Housing Authority."

Beryl Clemens is the president of Dickens and Burling Apartments. She plays an active role in the energy programs and protests hoping to restore the CEDA summer cooling program. Clemens said, "If Gov. George Ryan and Mayor Richard Daley can offer the Boeing Company \$50 million to come to the City of Chicago, surely they can come up with \$6 million for the CEDA energy programs."

Georgiana Compos, the president of Clark and Irving Apartments, also participates in the energy protest marches and the North Side Local Advisory Council. The energy protest marches were planned and executed by Curly Cohen, the spokesman for Affordable Power to the People.

"We must continue with the protest marches and pursuing our legislators until the CEDA energy program has been rejuvenated," Cohen said.

The petition signed by Cohen and the other protestors reads, "Con' Ed charges us just about the highest rates in the country. When we want to spell relief, it only happens when people die. In the heating holocaust of '95, 733 people died; in '99, 129 people died. Last year, with no big death count or real hot weather, we had the summer cooling program. We thought we would have it every summer because as soon as the air conditioner goes on, our \$30-\$40 bills become \$100 and \$120."

"The gas company created a crisis by charging so much money that the last 35,000 people who applied for CEDA are still on hold.

100,000 people face shut off based on their outstanding bills. Now there is no money left for summer cooling. To make matters worse, the gas and electric company will get \$25 million public aid/corporate welfare. We believe the summer heat and bad air threaten our health, safety and comfort. We have a right to be cool in summer! We demand relief. It's spelled: CEDA NOW!"

Willie Greenleaf, a resident at the Racine Apartments, said, "The CEDA program should be restored. The people in the senior buildings are sick. They need the summer cooling program. There's a limit to their endurance. The firemen come here several times a day, treating people for heat exhaustion. Not every time they come here it's heat related but the summer cooling program would eliminate a lot of visits."

Responding to my inquiries to Gov. Ryan, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs wrote me a letter on Aug. 1.

According to the letter, members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate are asking the president for funds for a summer cooling program, which would give Illinois \$8.7 million.

The letter confirms the senior protestors' claim that high winter gas prices have jeopardized the summer cooling program:

"The State of Illinois last summer provided funding for a summer cooling program but that was as a result of excess funds from the winter of 1999-2000. The winter of 2000-2001 was much more difficult due to harsher weather conditions and extremely high natural gas prices. The state of Illinois has spent \$181 million to date for LIHEAP winter heating assistance and this has reduced our flexibility in being able to meet summer cooling demands."

When contacted, Commonwealth Edison



**Willie Greenleaf, senior resident of the CHA Racine Apartments.**

Photo by Lorenzia Shelby

provided a fact sheet listing a few of their services.

ComEd listed LIHEAP, the state program that aids low-income families and seniors to pay their energy bills. LIHEAP also can provide emergency assistance grants if a household's electric service is disconnected.

Through the Com Ed LIHEAP Energy Arrearage Reduction (CLEAR) plan, households can pay off past-due bills. "Through this pilot program, Com Ed, the state of Illinois and customers of the utility will each pay one-third of the amount on past due bills to bring them to zero," reads the brochure regarding the CLEAR program.

ComEd also offers Budget Billing, which spreads a household's payments evenly over the whole year so each month's payment will be the same.

Com Ed also provides a service to their customers by training their meter readers and representatives to observe any unsafe conditions and report them to the proper agencies.

## Protestas Contra Costos Eléctricos

por Lorenzia  
Shelby

"¿Cuántas personas mayores y bebés tendrán que sufrir para que el Presidente George Bush, el Gobernador George Ryan y el Alcalde Richard Daley dejen de bloquear el programa veraniego de refrigeración?"

Ésa es la pregunta que se está planteando en una petición por parte de los presidentes y vicepresidentes de los edificios para personas mayores del Norte de la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) y Curly Cohen, de la organización Affordable Power to the People (Energía Asequible para la Gente). En un esfuerzo conjunto, todos ellos están cooperando para mantener el programa veraniego de asistencia de refrigeración de la Asociación de Desarrollo Económico Comunitario (CEDA). El pasado 13 de julio, ellos protestaron ante la oficina del Gobernador Ryan en el Edificio James R. Thompson en el Loop. También realizaron otra marcha de protesta el 30 de julio.

En ambas ocasiones, Ryan no se presentó a responder y esta coalición habló con uno de los asistentes del Gobernador, según Otta Henderson, vicepresidenta de los Larabee Apartments. Henderson afirmó que ellos habían pospuesto su viaje a Washington, D.C., para hablar con el Presidente Bush, contando con convencer al Gobernador Ryan para que asignara \$6 millones y revitalizara los programas de subsidios energéticos de la CEDA, en

particular el programa veraniego de refrigeración.

Le preguntamos a Henderson qué esperaba obtener de Ryan esta coalición.

"Queremos que restaure el programa de subsidios energéticos de la CEDA, el programa veraniego de asistencia de refrigeración", respondió ella. "No estamos pidiendo ayuda todo el año, sino únicamente para los meses de julio, agosto y septiembre. Las personas mayores tienen miedo de usar sus equipos de aire acondicionado porque no desean aumentar el costo del servicio eléctrico."

"Cuando comencé a usar mi equipo de aire acondicionado este verano, la factura del servicio eléctrico pasó de \$60 a \$130. Eso representa un enorme aumento para mí; a pesar de que estoy trabajando. ¿Se puede usted imaginar lo devastador que sería para las personas mayores cuyo ingreso mensual es menos de \$200 ó \$300 al mes?"

"Yo pienso que Commonwealth Edison debería tomar esto en consideración y reducir sus tarifas. Es una injusticia y un insulto para las personas mayores residentes en viviendas de la Chicago Housing Authority (CHA)."

Beryl Clemens es la presidenta de los Dickens and Burling Apartments. Ella participa activamente en los programas de subsidios energéticos y las propuestas dirigidas a restaurar el programa veraniego de refrigeración de la CEDA. Clemens asegura que "si el Gobernador George Ryan y el Alcalde Richard Daley pueden ofrecerle a la Boeing Company \$50 millones para que se radique en la Ciudad

de Chicago, seguramente también pueden conseguir los \$6 millones para los programas de subsidios energéticos de la CEDA."

Georgiana Compos, la presidenta de los Clark and Irving Apartments, también participa en las marchas de protesta reclamando estos programas y en el Consejo Asesor Local del Norte. Las marchas de protesta fueron planificadas y ejecutadas por Curly Cohen, la portavoz de Affordable Power to the People (Energía Asequible para la Gente).

"Debemos continuar las marchas de protesta y reclamar a nuestros representantes en el Congreso hasta que el programa de subsidios energéticos de la CEDA sea restaurado", advirtió Cohen.

La petición firmada por Cohen y otros manifestantes dice así: "Con Ed nos cobra casi las tarifas más altas del país. Cuando queremos recibir auxilio, ese auxilio sólo llega cuando la gente muere. En los holocaustos causados por la ola de calor en 1995 murieron 733 personas; en 1999 murieron 129 personas por esa misma causa. El año pasado, en el cual no hubo una cifra significativa de muertos ni tampoco tuvimos un clima realmente caluroso, sí tuvimos el programa veraniego de refrigeración. Pensamos que lo tendríamos todos los veranos puesto que al encender el equipo de aire acondicionado nuestras facturas del servicio eléctrico pasan de \$30-\$40 a \$100-\$120."

"La compañía de gas creó una crisis tan grande al cobrar tanto dinero que las últimas 35,000 personas que solicitaron participar en

la CEDA todavía están esperando respuesta. 100,000 personas se enfrentan a la suspensión del suministro eléctrico debido a las facturas pendientes de pago. Ahora no hay dinero para el programa veraniego de refrigeración. Para empeorar las cosas, la compañía de gas y electricidad obtendrá \$25 millones de asistencia pública y ayuda para el plan corporativo de previsión social. Creemos que el calor del verano y las malas condiciones del aire amenazan nuestra salud, nuestra seguridad y nuestra comodidad. ¡Tenemos derecho a vivir a una temperatura soportable en verano! Exigimos auxilio. Esta auxilio se describe con dos palabras: CEDA AHORA."

Willie Greenleaf, un residente de los Racine Apartments, pidió lo siguiente: "El programa de la CEDA debería restaurarse. Los residentes de los edificios para ancianos están enfermos. Necesitan el programa veraniego de refrigeración. Su aguante tiene un límite. Los bomberos vienen aquí varias veces al día para dar tratamiento a la gente que sufre postración causada por el calor. No todas las veces que vienen aquí el problema es causado por el calor, pero seguro que el programa veraniego de refrigeración eliminaría muchas de estas visitas de rescate."

En respuesta a mi solicitud de información al Gobernador Ryan, el Departamento de Comercio de Illinois y Asuntos Comunitarios de Illinois me enviaron una carta fechada el 1 de agosto.

(Continued on Page 19)

# Senior Issues

## Seniors Quality of Life on the Rise

by Jacqueline Thompson

Living conditions in Chicago Housing Authority homes for senior citizens may have just taken a turn for the better. Just in case you have not heard about it, the authority is in the process of renovating four aged senior citizen high-rise buildings.

They are located in different parts of the city and scheduled to be renovated by Dec. 15. Each building is home to many seniors as well as those who are not senior age but are there due to some type of disability. The addresses are 116 W. Elm St. on the north, 3030 W. 21<sup>st</sup> St. on the west, and two buildings at 730 East 43<sup>rd</sup> St. on the south.

The plan is to devote three years to renovate the 50 CHA senior buildings.

I spoke with Martha Marshall, president of the Senior Central Local Advisory Council and a resident of 3030 W. 21<sup>st</sup> St., who assured me the city is taking the steps to

We had a meeting and learned that ours was one of the model buildings and should be completely finished by December 2001.

-Larry Ware, CHA senior resident of 116 W. Elm

accomplish the best possible job. Marshall said the reconstruction of the first four senior buildings is being done on a "first track" to set standards for all 50 fully completed senior buildings.

RJ: "What is the deadline for the completion of the first four."

MM: "Mayor Daley has selected Dec. 15, 2001."

RJ: "Do you think that the date is going to be reached successfully?"

MM: "We expect to be finished on time; however, we will not sacrifice quality for the deadline requirement."

RJ: "How are things progressing with one-on-one assistance to the residents?"

MM: "Project managers have been put in place to oversee the moving. HOME

(Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly) and the Department of Aging are just two of a large group of agencies ready, willing and able to work hard to achieve the ultimate goals of the project, a better quality of life for seniors."

RJ: "Do you think that the success of this 'first track' experience will help residents in the family dwellings welcome their turn to be moved around and unsettled for a time? They've been disappointed before."

MM: "If they would just dare to stretch their minds and look and see what's going on around them, they can gain some confidence that we are going to get the job done."

Marshall's comments were encouraging indeed – except for one thing. I learned from Marshall that the first move into newly renovated apartment will be about the middle of September. But Marshall also found out some persons may have to move twice.

I next spoke with Donna Dixon of the Chicago Housing Authority. I asked her for some feedback from the residents as to how

RJ: "What other special housing requirements will be added in the renovation?"

DD: "There will be 504 compliance in each building. 5 percent of the units in some buildings and 8 percent in larger buildings."

RJ: "Just what does 504 compliance mean?"

DD: "In these apartments, all doorways, front, bedroom, and bathroom and showers will have wider dimensions. All the elevators will be new with wider entrances and longer door holding times."

RJ: "Are there any plans to enlarge any apartments by adding a bedroom?"

DD: "No. Because sometimes the kids want to come back. However, these are the golden years and they (the seniors) deserve a complete, improved quality of life."

RJ: "Will the residents have to move once or twice?"

DD: "We're trying not to have people move twice two times. That would be too much."

My next interview was with some residents from 116 W. Elm. From the standpoint of those who are directly affected, it seems all is not "peaches and cream." I spoke to Larry Ware.

RJ: "How do you feel about the move?"

HW: "It seems as though they are trying to do too much at one time. The water is shut off all day Monday-Wednesday and Friday. This makes it hard to cook, clean and be refreshed in this heat."

RJ: "I noticed the new overhead elevator floor level digital signal. How are they running?"

HW: "Have you noticed the number 13 showing? (The elevator's) been up there all afternoon. It stays broke because the construction company uses it for supplies. It took them six months to rebuild it and it has been broken down all day four times in two weeks. They built an outside elevator but never used it."

RJ: "That sounds serious. What do people do in wheel chairs do when that hap-

pens?"

LW: "It got broken the other day and three or four people were stranded until past 11 p.m. It took hours for the repairman to come but it just took a few minutes to repair."

"Last week, we had a meeting and learned that ours was one of the model buildings and should be completely finished by December 2001. "They held a lottery because dissatisfaction among the residents was widespread.

"Like I said, all is not 'peachy.' Some people are having to take smaller units. U.S. Dwellings Management, under the direction of Ms. King, did the best they could. I have hope, though, that things will come out even."

I was very interested in the fact that Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (HOME), a not-for-profit organization, was working closely with the Chicago Department of Aging to give services directly to these senior residents who need all they have to offer.

"The Chicago Community Trust gave us a grant to work with the Senior residents in the CHA," explained Bobbie Steiner, the executive director for HOME.

"With these funds, we will be able to fulfill our goals of multiple services during this revitalizing of public housing."

HOME helps seniors in every walk of life who need them and in all areas of the city. These services include maintenance, household repair and help with finding some furniture. They have been in operation since 1982 and have "focused on providing safe and affordable quality living situations to the city's low-income elderly," according to their information brochure.

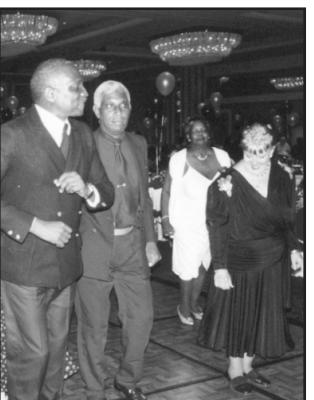
Lastly, I interviewed Arneada King, US Dwellings' manager from 116 W. Elm. She expressed her confidence in the renovation process. Her opinions summed up the positive outlook that is being expressed by the many overseers of what could be a rise in the quality of life for CHA's senior residents.



### CHA Tenant Patrol Awards Ceremony

Photos depict residents of CHA's family developments and senior buildings dancing and posing together after being honored during the CHA's Annual Tenant Patrol Awards Ceremony at the downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel on July 27.

Photos by Mary C. Johns



# Structural Justice

by Michael Ibrahim

With many low-income Chicagoland residents being affected by a housing crunch, a number of government officials, housing developers, bankers, clergy and community activists put forth proposals and strategies for protecting already available affordable housing and to develop new housing at the "Valuing Affordability" conference at the Palmer House June 27-29.

The conference was sponsored by the Chicago Rehab Network. All the participants were not on the same level in terms of what they already knew and what they had yet to learn. Therefore, the first days' workshops centered around training and focused on a variety of subjects.

At my first workshop, "Asset Management: Managing your Manager," the facilitator explained in detail the complex financial mechanisms supporting urban housing in America and some of the associated problems. The presenter was Lynn Bergstrom, director of consulting services at Lakefront SRO. At her post for 14 years now, Bergstrom said she played a key role in the development of many different kinds of programs, working closely with property owners and helping them to meet a variety of social support and fiscal goals of their properties.

We learned about Funders and Lenders, Asset Managers and also Property Managers. We learned how to differentiate between them and how they function as three aspects of one organic whole.

Funders and lenders provide money to Asset Managers, who make a profit making sure the funders and lenders make a profit. Asset Managers also hire Property Managers, who protect their investment by collecting rents, maintaining the buildings and safeguarding the property from damage.

Although most of the people in the room had invested large sums of money in properties, I felt this workshop on Asset Management had a lot of information that could empower activists. Every great strategist will tell you of the importance of knowing your opponent.

Plan is a written statement that explains to funders and lenders how their money will be utilized in the property in which the asset manager wants to invest. Funders and lenders usually will not give the necessary or even the initial funds needed to acquire a property without this plan.

The Operations Manual is written primarily for the sake of property managers. It is a statement of a property management organization's basic policies, procedures and forms. I found the Operations Manual to be awesome in its complexity because it contains every kind of tiny detail, from knowing what every employee is doing to making sure every task is completed – from shampooing the rug and mopping the lobbies to keeping the back alleys clean to making sure the property is free of pests. Above all, the Operations Manual emphasizes to the property manager that rent must be collected on time to aid the asset manager in meeting the deadlines of their payments to the funders and lenders.

The information at the conference could be used by activists to understand some of the problems in dealing with property owners and their managers and suggest direct routes for tackling these problems.

The conference presenters said that housing, like health care and education, was critical for a family's as well for a community's success. Speaker after speaker encouraged the participants to think that the availability of affordable housing is in all of our best interests.



Lynn Bergstrom, director of consulting services at Lakefront SRO.

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

"People are the foundation - solid ground or sand," said the cardinal.

"Housing is the roof. Covered or exposed. Family is the frame - joined together or divided. Community is the walls. Build or separate. Opportunity is the door, opened or closed."

"It is not just about affordable housing. It is about structural justice. In short, if we truly respect human dignity, protect basic rights, support families, foster community, and promote opportunity, we should value affordability."

"Why should we value affordability in Chicago's changing communities? For me, the basis for valuing affordability is one, valuing people. Every human being is created in the image and likeness and image of God. Therefore, everyone is endowed with dignity that should be respected.

beings, we all have individual needs that must be met."

Another topic of general interest at the conference was the so-called real estate boom. Many conference presenters said the current expansion in real estate sales is singularly responsible for Chicagoans being priced out of their neighborhoods. After years of decline, Chicago's population is growing again, fueling a booming real estate market.

The conference presenters said this economic growth is not benefiting those who need it the most. Throughout the city, rental housing is being lost and/or converted to condominiums which many residents throughout the area are not equipped to take advantage of.

The presenters said most people have lived in "affordable housing." Many vibrant and thriving communities have a range of housing opportunities for a variety of people: seniors, families, tradesmen, service professionals and young adults.

Many people at the conference want to add to that list the disabled, those in transition and those struggling to make ends meet. Yet, throughout the state, fewer and fewer renters

## Costos Eléctricos

(Continued from page 9)

Según esa carta los miembros de la Cámara de Representantes de Estados Unidos y del Senado de los Estados Unidos le estaban pidiendo fondos al Presidente para un programa veraniego de refrigeración, que le daría a Illinois \$8.7 millones de ayuda.

Esta carta confirma la reclamación de las personas mayores en el sentido de que los elevados precios del gas han puesto en peligro el programa veraniego de refrigeración:

"El verano pasado, el Estado de Illinois suministró los fondos para un programa veraniego de refrigeración, pero ello fue posible gracias a unos fondos que sobraron del verano de 1999-2000. El invierno del 2000-2001 fue mucho más difícil debido a las condiciones climáticas más severas y a los precios

extremadamente altos del gas natural. El Estado de Illinois ha gastado \$181 millones hasta la fecha en el suministro de la asistencia de calefacción de invierno del Programa de Asistencia Energética para Hogares de Bajos Ingresos (LIHEAP) y esto ha reducido nuestra flexibilidad para poder satisfacer las demandas de refrigeración en los meses de verano.

Cuando hablamos con la Commonwealth Edison (ComEd), allí nos dieron una hoja de datos comprobados en la que se mencionan algunos de sus servicios.

ComEd incluye en esa lista al Programa LIHEAP, es decir, el programa del estado que ayuda a familias de bajos ingresos y personas mayores a pagar sus facturas de servicio energético. El programa LIHEAP también puede suministrar subvenciones de

asistencia de emergencia si se desconecta el servicio eléctrico de una vivienda.

Mediante el plan CLEAR de Reducción de Deudas de Energía del Programa LIHEAP de ComEd, los residentes pueden ir pagando poco a poco sus facturas atrasadas de servicio eléctrico. "Gracias a este programa piloto, ComEd, el Estado de Illinois y los clientes de la compañía eléctrica pagarán un tercio de la cantidad de las facturas atrasadas hasta reducir la deuda a cero", se afirma en el folleto sobre el programa CLEAR.

ComEd también ofrece la alternativa Facturación según Presupuesto (Budget Billing) que distribuye los pagos de facturas eléctricas de la vivienda a lo largo de todo el año, para que haya uniformidad en los pagos cada mes.

ComEd también presta un servicio a sus clientes entrenando a sus empleados encargados de la lectura de medidores para que observen y detecten cualquier condición insegura en el servicio o las instalaciones eléctricas y las reporten a las agencias correspondientes.

R E S I D E N T S '

## Journal

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

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# Access Report Housing for the Disabled

by Michael Ibrahim

People with disabilities will be interested to know there are many officials at city, state and private agencies who are supposed to find affordable housing for the disabled in Chicago.

People with disabilities are treated unfairly in many community-based housing programs. Forcing a person to participate in a program simply because he or she is a tenant is discriminatory and many advocacy groups are questioning the legality of the practice. People with disabilities must be able to choose where they wish to live and the services they need," said Karen Tamley, an activist for the disabled who works at Access Living.

In September 1988, then President Ronald Reagan signed the Fair Housing Amendments Act, which became law on March 12, 1989.

According to Alberto Barrera, the housing team leader for Access Living, the Act (FHAA) was authorized by the U.S. Congress in order to strengthen enforcement of Fair Housing requirements, not only in public housing projects funded and governed by the state, but also in those pri-

vately owned. It was intended to extend civil rights protections for families with children and persons with disabilities.

This year, I have attended at least three conferences concerned with the availability of housing throughout the city, Cook County, state and the nation. However, I cannot recall a single incident where there were activists focusing on the availability of housing options for people with disabilities. With many activists discussing a housing crunch, the need for housing for people with disabilities will be particularly great.

Searching around, I was able to locate a number of agencies working specifically with the disabled dealing with issues directly related to their housing needs.

One such agency is the Disability Rights Action Coalition for Housing (DRACH). DRACH describes itself as "a national grassroots housing network of individuals with all types of disabilities, disability activists and customers of federal housing programs." Their strategies include offering workshops on housing issues and taking direct action, mostly in the exercising legal avenues to ensure housing rights. One of their main strategies is to actively participate in local housing boards, committees, working groups

and public forums.

The contact person in the Chicago area is Darrell Price. His office is located at 614 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL 60617 and the phone number is 312-253-7000, or 253-7002 (tty).

Later on in my search, I found Janice Finney. Finney is knowledgeable about housing in general and she works for the Chicago Department of Housing as a chief research analyst. Finney said her office is ready to serve the destitute and those with immediate housing problems. Finney assured me that her office was one of the few bureaucratic vehicles capable of acting swiftly for the homeless and those citizens in dire need.

Her contact information is as follows:  
Janice Finney, Department of Housing, Executive Division, 318 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604. Telephone: 312-747-9000.

The disabled have housing rights and concerns which are in many ways different from those of the general population. The disabled are found in public housing and privately owned residences. Some persons with disabilities are being institutionalized and some against their will.



**Janice Finney, chief research analyst for the Chicago Department of Housing.**

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

I live in the Del Prado, which is on the list of those buildings currently opting out of affordable housing for the financially disadvantaged. Many in my building are disabled and are stressful about the thought of returning to institutions if the building fails to make improvements. If many or a few of the apartments do not pass stringent and detailed CHAC inspections, many could lose the residences to which they have become accustomed and in which they have been living for 10 to 20 years.

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# Access Report

## Overcoming Obstacles

by Beauty Turner

Many public housing residents I speak to feel that their lives are like a race in which they are constantly running uphill and getting nowhere fast. They are faced with many obstacles in their way, such as being poverty stricken, uneducated, and suffering from low self-esteem.

I recently had the pleasure of inter-

Reynold modestly said, "I received my bachelor's degree in 1998 but I found confidence to continue my study due to a program that CHA sponsors called Family Self Sufficiency.

"By attending this program, it made me want to go farther and obtain my master's.

"You don't have to have sight to see that too many of our young men and young women are self centered. They can't see

blind man.

"I learned early on in life that people will help you hate you if they pick up on the fact that you don't like yourself. They will become rent-a-friends. Otherwise, you write your own scripts in life."

I asked him, "What is your main motivation in life?"

"Pain was my initial motivation," he answered.

"I think it is very important to have a good concept of one's self. It's paramount."

**School was my tool that I saw that could make me a productive member of society. I always say that you have to stand for something or you will fall for anything.**

*-Eugene Reynold, a Section 8 resident*

viewing a pleasant young man by the name of Eugene Reynold. Reynold may be legally blind but he is one resident who didn't let a lack of sight stand in his light. He saw a future through the darkness. He jumped many hurdles and swiftly overcame every obstacle in his way after joining CHA's Family Self-Sufficiency program.

Reynold achieved his master's degree even while he sported a cane. He is standing firmly on his own two feet and is now a director at Chicago State University.

the forest for the trees. Many of them want gratification right here and now and end up on drugs, selling drugs or in prison, or dead. School was my tool that I saw that could make me a productive member of society.

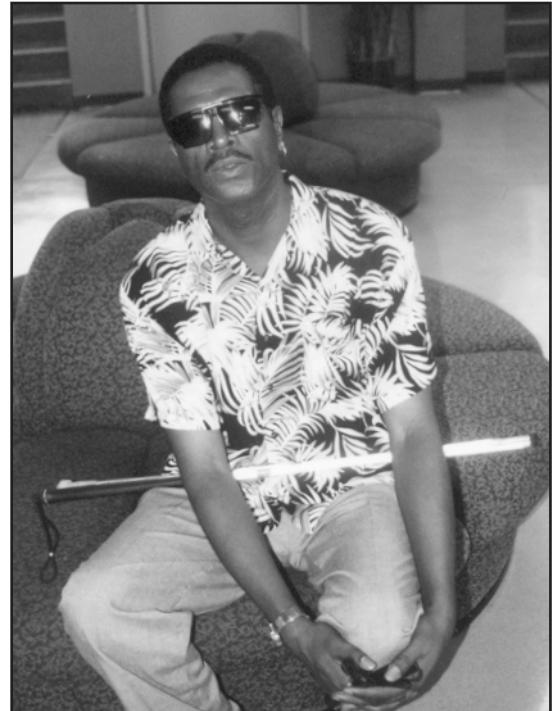
"I always say that you have to stand for something or you will fall for anything.

"On my path to self sufficiency, I had many barrels and hurdles and hoops to jump through and many obstacles to overcome, such as being skinny, Black and a

"The feeling of not being a part of something.

"The CHA program, plus a host of others, made me want to be a counselor so that I could let other people know that the biggest room is the room for improvement.

"I need to let people know that the journey is not over. With receiving a master's degree, I'm no longer confused by this point. I would like to be a motivator to all people.



**CHA Family Self-Sufficiency program graduate Eugene Reynold.**

*Photo by Beauty Turner*

## RUSSIAN TRANSLATION

# A New Vincennes Plaza?

by Beauty Turner

I am sure many of our readers remember the story I wrote about Vincennes Plaza in the August 2000 edition.

Vincennes Plaza is a development that stands in the shadow of the new Lou Rawls Cultural Center on the dusty trails of 47<sup>th</sup> Street, also known as Tobacco Road.

Vincennes Plaza consists of 59 units of low-income housing in a five-story brick

Vincennes' halls to get answers to the questions I had, such as, "Do the residents still have to leave?"

If they do have to leave, "Where are they going?"

On Aug. 20, I went to Vincennes Plaza, where I encountered a new management company, Creative Designs.

Creative Designs' staff includes Ibrahim Shihadeh, Vicki Barclay and Billye Harris, who is the father of Ryan Harris, a 12-year-old girl who was murdered in the

who reside in the community.

"Our goal is to clean this building up. No drugs, gangs or prostitutes. We will make major improvements on the walls, kitchens, exterior and interior. It will become a landmark in this community."

Vicki Barclay said, "We are the management company that took over Madison Park Homes. We made it a showplace and that's what we have plans to do here."

"Come back in three months and see the difference that we will make."

Many current Vincennes residents such as Janice Chew and P. Bradford are skeptical. They do not wish to lose their vouchers.

If Creative Designs does not fix the building's electrical problems and leaks, many residents are wondering how it will be able to pass an inspection from CHAC, the company which administers the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program in Chicago.

Chew moved from her former apartment on the fourth floor to the third floor thinking that she had made a better choice. But she soon found out that the apartment she now resides in has electrical problems. She showed me a light in her closet that comes on when and if it gets ready, no matter how much you pull the string.

She spoke of her neighbor's outlets which shoot out sparks. "It's a fire hazard as of right now," Chew said.

"I'm hoping they can change this building around. It's a beautiful, spacious place



**Vincennes Plaza resident P. Bradford points to a hole in the tile floor of her unit, which may not pass CHAC's housing inspection.**

Photo by Beauty Turner

building that is home to many young single mothers and senior citizens.

In my last article, I described the Vincennes as a tourist attraction, a building that you might come across on the soggy streets of London. The building's beautiful craftsmanship and graceful, elegant workmanship highlight the scenery of the plaza.

At that time, many of the Vincennes residents were pissed off by the possibility that the building would be closed and they would lose their apartments. Much of the residents' venom was aimed at Ald. Dorothy Tillman (3). The Vincennes residents protested long and hard around her office, chanting slogans such as "Dorothy Tillman sold us out."

Well, many things have occurred since the last update on Vincennes Plaza. So I decided to take a step back into the

Englewood area in the summer of 2000. Creative Designs also hired a community representative supervisor for Vincennes Plaza.

Shihadeh, who had been manager for only one week when I interviewed him, said "We are the new faces of Vincennes Plaza. We plan on making this building a show place for the residents by having a safe, decent and affordable home, a place that people will be glad to call home."

"When HUD had the place, they didn't run it right. But now, we are being privately funded and we will do it right."

"We are accepting Section 8 vouchers from current residents and we also rent to private market tenants too."

"When we came in, we didn't fire anybody. As a matter of fact, we hired people

and I would love to stay if it's safe and descent. But I don't want to lose my Section 8 voucher if they can't deliver.

"(The Voucher) is only good for 180 days. That's only six months. If I haven't found a place in that amount of time, I lose out."

Bradford, a young mother, complained about the carpet on her floor, a bathtub that never looks clean no matter how hard she scrubs, and a sink that needs fixing.

"How will this pass Section 8?" she asked.

"I hope they can change this building around. After all, once it's fixed the right way, it will be beautiful. And I wouldn't mind staying right here."

## CHINESE TRANSLATIONS

# Stop the Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

## Remembering Eric

**D**uring the earlier part of June, I was covering a court case related to the 1994 death of Eric Morse. The little boy's mother, Toni Morse, filed suit through her attorney, Christopher Millet, on the CHA and two private companies for the death of her son on Oct. 13, 1994.

In the lawsuit, the Morse family attorneys charged the CHA and the companies responsible for Eric's death because they failed to secure the vacant 14th floor apartment from where Eric was dropped by two other boys. Morse was seeking an unspecified amount of money.

The trial lasted for about three weeks and was held in the Cook County Circuit Court. The first couple of days, they selected the jury. I began going to court for the testimonies given by the witnesses. The mother was drilled for hours.

One of the attorneys for CHA, Elizabeth Knight, tried to accuse the mother of abuse and neglect. Knight suggested some of the blame should be on the mother's history of drug use.

**W**alsh also was working on the case of Diamond and Tionda Bradley, the two sisters that disappeared on July 6. Anyone who has information should call 1-800-CRIME TV.

At first, the family asked for \$60 million. The lawyers for CHA remarked that the figure "was enough to rebuild the entire CHA."

The death of this child and any other deserves no laughter. My son's death wasn't given enough care or time for an investigation. I was told since there was no eye witness, nothing could be done.

The two children held responsible for the death of Eric Morse were 10 and 11 at the time. It is alleged that they both signed confessions. They were found guilty in Juvenile Court in 1995 and were sentenced to a maximum of 5 years in a special juvenile detention facility.

One of the kids has been released but the second remains in custody because he sexually assaulted another inmate while he was being held for murdering Eric.

On the day of the killing, the mother was going from house to house, according to her testimony, looking for her two sons, Eric and 8-year-old Derrick Lemon. The two boys were together. She has 8 children in all.

Toni Morse explained that at 6:30 that night, she decided that it was time for them to come home. An hour later, Derrick found her at a relative's home and told her



## A Prayer Vigil

**N**eighbors and friends join the mother of Diamond and Tionda Bradley (far right), in prayer for the safe return of the missing girls. The two have been missing since July 6.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

"Eric had fell."

Morse testified that she ran across the field to a high-rise at 3833 S. Langley Ave. Her baby was on the ground with people standing around him. He was still breathing. An ambulance came and they took him to Wyler's Children Hospital. Thirty minutes later, he was dead.

The mother testified for over 40 minutes, allowed to rest for a while and then testified some more. She said the boy was her favorite. He was the youngest and he just kept her laughing all the time. When her testimony was over, after she had pleaded with the lawyers that she didn't want to keep reliving the incident, she looked up as if talking to her dead son and said, "I miss you, Eric."

## Stop the Criminalization of our Communities

**A**march took place June 19<sup>th</sup>, starting at Douglas Park at 19<sup>th</sup> Street and California Avenue. The people gathered together and proceeded to march to 26<sup>th</sup> Street and California Avenue, the location of the criminal courts building and the many new and old jailhouses here in Chicago.

They marched to bring attention to the problems of the people who are not free, those who are not free to pursue life, liberty and justice in Illinois.

They marched on that day - called Juneteenth - because on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas, enslaved African Americans were given their freedom - some two years after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

They marched because many African Americans feel they still are not free because of public policy that keeps them imprisoned in poverty, minimum wage jobs and low-class housing. They marched so people of all races and religions can come together for better wages, affordable housing, a good education and full-time jobs. They were marching for freedom and rallying for justice.

They rallied to hip the people to the fact that once the ex-offenders have served their time, they should be given a second chance to contribute to society and to their families.

The ex-offender should be able to get his/her records erased after a proper amount of time has passed. Their records should be expunged of certain non-violent crimes and crimes where children were put in no harm.

The marchers wanted to bring attention to the over 400 men and women who are "C-numbered prisoners." These prisoners are just in there. They have no release date. Prisoners who have served their time or those who have been in jail for a long period but are model prisoners should be given a second chance, the marchers said.

The marchers were there for all African Americans and their Hispanic brothers and sisters and all areas throughout the state to stop the criminalization of our families and communities. They invited us all to come out at the next march to let our voices be heard.

Our own Wateka Kleinpeter was one of the hosts this year. Here are a few of the many co-sponsors: Youth Services Project Inc., TASC Inc., Residents' Journal, Rainbow PUSH, the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, Prison Action Committee, Paternal Involvement Project, Outreach Church of God in Christ, National Task Force for Political Empowerment, Kuumba LYDX, Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, Centro Sin Fronteras, Black United Fund of Illinois and the African-American Family Commission.

## Job Fair



**R**esidents' Journal managing editor Wateka Kleinpeter and a community activist during the Juneteenth March.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross

**U.S.** Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-7) had his very own job fair on June 16. Davis convened the event to discuss all the issues including drug and substance abuse counseling and health care. Held in cooperation with the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District's Ex-Offender's Task Force, this town hall meeting was held at the Westside Baptist Ministers conference Center, 325 S. California Ave.

## Stevie Perry

**O**n Aug. 14, Stevie Perry was shot in the head while sitting in the living room of their home. Stevie was 10 years old. I first heard this news on the television news the following day.

The same night, there was a march against violence on the West Side, my side of town. The march took place in front of Stevie's home at Lawndale and Ohio. The marchers said they were tired of the killing.

The next day, I went to the Area 4 police headquarters, 3141 W. Harrison St., and learned police had arrested a suspect in the killing. He had been apprehended and confessed to the crime. He had a bond hearing on Aug. 16.

John Walsh, the star of the television show called "America's Most Wanted," was in Chicago recently. Walsh's show gets the people to help catch criminals by calling in and getting involved. Walsh was in Deerfield signing copies of the book he wrote on the death of his son.

Walsh also was working on the case of Diamond and Tionda Bradley, the two sisters that disappeared on July 6. No one has heard from them since. Walsh said someone knows something and expressed his thought these two children are in trouble. Anyone who has information should call 1-800-CRIME TV.

Let's all do what ever we can do to stop killing the children.

**The Chicago Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation (CMHDC)** is a non-profit housing development corporation providing housing in mixed-income buildings to families of limited financial resources.

We have units available throughout the City of Chicago that have been allocated for CHA families who choose Section 8 assistance. CMHDC

also manages the HOME OWNERSHIP program for CHA. If you are a public housing resident, you may qualify to own a unit at the Wentworth Gardens Annex development. All dwelling units are available on an equal opportunity basis. Please contact us at (312) 422-1680 for a list of available units.



# A Teenage Muslim

by Shanell Jackson  
(Fatima Abdullah)

My name is Shanell Jackson and I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a "Muslim" as "one surrendered to God," the definition of the word.

My Muslim name is Fatima Abdullah. I'm 14 years old and I attend John Farren Fine Arts School. My friends and many others want to know about my life as a teenage Muslim girl, so I'm writing this article to hopefully answer some of their questions.

The name of the religion of Muslims is Islam, which means "peace." One of the beautiful names of God is that He is the Peace. It means more than that: submission to one God and to live in peace with the creator, within one's self, with other people and with the environment.

Islam is a total system of living. A Muslim is supposed to live in peace and harmony with all these segments.

Muslims believe Allah is the name of the one and only God. Allah has 99 beautiful names such as: The Gracious, the Merciful, the Beneficent, the Creator, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, the Lord of the Universe, the First, the Last and others. Muslims put their trust in Him and seek His help and His guidance.

Muslims are required to respect all those who are faithful and God-conscious people, namely those who received messages. Muslims believe in Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ismail, Jacob, Moses, David, Jesus and Muhammad. The prophets of Christianity and Judaism are indeed also the prophets of Islam.

It is clear that the concept of worship in Islam is a comprehensive concept that includes all the positive activities of the individual. It regulates human life on all levels: individual, social, economic, political and spiritual. It is a very encouraging element when someone realizes that God as acts of worship considers all their activities. This should lead the individual to seek Allah's pleasure in his actions and always try to do them in the best possible manner whether he is watched or he is alone.

One thing I like to make clear is that I

choose to be Muslim. My parents didn't make me. My friends didn't influence me and no one forced me.

I choose to cover my hair. I choose to fast. I choose not to eat pork. I choose to pray five times a day and I choose to go to the mosque three times a week.

It was my choice to commit to all of the Islamic things. Being a teenager and a part of Islam at the same time is a big responsibility. It takes commitment and time. Islam is the most important thing in my life. Islam has taught me a lot of things, such as respect and discipline. Having manners and knowing how to respect people has taken me far from where I started. Now I'm a better student, daughter and citizen.

Many questions surround me every day. Questions such as, "What is life like without showing your beautiful hair?"

The answer: I pretty much don't worry about my hair.

"What is the reaction of your friends when you tell them you can't eat certain things?"

When I tell my friends I can't eat certain things, they say, "Girl, you need to taste this. Nobody will know but us."

"Why do you cover your hair?"

I cover my hair to keep my humility.

"Do you get to go to parties?"

Yes, I get to go to parties. I just don't go to parties other than birthday parties.

"Why do you fast?"

The main function of fasting is to make the Muslim pure from 'within,' as other aspects of Shariah make him or her pure from outside.

Living as a young Muslim teen is fun but also very challenging for me. I have to deal with discrimination and people often single me out. Sometimes I'm prejudged in a good way. Other times, people think differently. I don't like it nor do I or should I approve of it. I know peer pressure comes with being a teen but this is a different kind of peer pressure.

People pressure me to think and believe differently. I'm questioned about my beliefs and many more things. Isn't everyone entitled to his or her own beliefs? Doesn't the First Amendment cover that?

Some of the questions I'm asked often affect my daily life. I'm not trying to say being a teen-age Muslim girl is a horrible thing or I don't like it but what I am trying to say is that I think I should be treated just like a Jewish teen, a Buddhist teen, a Christian teen or a teen who doesn't practice any religion at all.

Overall, all of the pressure and attention makes me try harder to succeed and become a better Muslim.

# Sexual Assault

by Madelyn Santiago

A sexual assault is any time either a stranger or someone you know touches any part of your body in a sexual way when you do not want it. Sexual assault includes situations where you cannot say no because you are drunk, high, unconscious or have a disability. Rape is a form of sexual assault that involves forced penetration that is unwanted.

"If you feel like you were raped, you probably were," said Ana Maldonado, 35.

Rape and sexual assault are about power, not sex. One form of sexual assault is date rape, which typically occurs when a woman is alone with a man. Alcohol and drugs are sometimes a significant factor in date rape. Many victims later say that they drank too much or they took too many drugs, so they didn't realize what was going on until it was too late.

Sometimes a woman passes out and awakens later to find a man having sex with her or her clothes off. But some date rape occurs when the victim has had little or nothing to drink.

Women, please do not give mixed signals.

"No" is often heard as "maybe" and even a strong protest can be ignored under the illusion that women say no when they mean yes.

"Some men find it sexually exciting to have a woman struggle. So if the woman is only protesting mildly, the man may think he is persuading her, not forcing her, to have sex," said Mindy Cruz, 39.

Sometimes a woman might not be clear in her own mind what she wants or she may think she will make up her mind as she goes along. If the woman changes her mind at that point and decides not to have sex, men can feel cheated, rejected and angry. He may be interpreting her nonverbal message, such as enjoyment of kissing and caressing, as meaning that she wants to have sex with him. At that point, he may decide he has been teased or misled and deserves to get some satisfaction, regardless of the woman's wishes.

Men can also be victims of date rape and sexual assault.

"Most people think of women as the victims but men can also be raped," said Ruben Flores, 23. "When men are raped, it causes all sorts of problems and guilt."

In most cases when males are raped, it goes unreported, even though the rapes are often more physically violent than

what is now Kennedy King College; in the 1940s, it was called Wilson Junior College.

He only went there for two years. After the two years were over, he furthered his education by finishing up at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, where he majored in public speaking. Morris always loved listening to recordings of public speakers such as Paul Robeson, Martin Luther King Jr., Jesse Jackson and others.

After college, he said that he retained an abundant amount of intelligence from the "old heads," as he referred to them.

He is now retired and resides on the 6300 block of South Langley with his little brother. He

when women are raped. Few men get help after being sexually assaulted. For most men, the idea of being a victim is hard to handle. They are raised to think they should be able to defend themselves.

While not as serious as rape, sexual harassment is another serious problem for both men and women.

Every year in the U.S., thousands of students are sexually harassed. Many don't report the harassment. Harassment includes touching, punching or grabbing in a way you don't feel is right, as well as comments.

"Reporting sexual harassment makes the victim feel scared and isolated," said Cindie Hernandez, 16.

"Sexual harassment makes students not want to attend school."



**Students and teachers from Orr High School at the release party for their new magazine.**

Photo by Beauty Turner

is not married because he said he prefers to be single.

During the interview, I asked Morris if he could give the world one piece of advice, what would it be.

He replied, "Live in peace."

After that, I asked him what he felt were the world's biggest problems. To my surprise, he replied, "The world's biggest problem is financial."

When asked how he would go about solving it, he said, "Give everyone equal shares."



# Mr. Morris

by Verezz Yeager

Dah Veed Morris is a 67-year-old native of our very own Chicago. He went to Dunbar Vocational High School in the 1940s and by the time his four years there had gone past, he was labeled "Most likely to succeed." He grew up on West 23rd Street, which is now Chinatown. He has one younger brother.

In high school, he was a star player on the varsity football team for all four of his years. He also ran track. After high school, he attended

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# Life Back Then

by Monique Walton

Some people say that a lot of things have changed since they were little. And it's true. The things that happen now are a lot different in lots of ways. I sat down and talked to my grandmother, Audrey Walton. We talked about what things used to be like when she was a teen.

On Sept. 23, 1942, my grandmother was born in Cook County Hospital in Chicago. She

has been in Chicago ever since. She told me that she was raised by my great grandmother and that she had her going to church until she was 18. Dating for her was not a thing to do.

Now-a-days, most teens don't go to church and they seem to start dating at the age of 13.

At the age of 19, my grandmother got married. She never had to ask for permission to date. Now most people get married between the age of 21 and 25. And today, many people don't think highly of marriage at all.

My grandmother told me that she didn't have many clothes so her grandmother showed her how to sew and she made most of her clothes for school.

Back in the early days, my grandma said

the only jobs that were available were factory jobs. They were getting about \$3.25 an hour. She worked in a mailing and sorting factory. She also said that it was different for men and women. Women didn't have to work as hard as men.

She also pointed out that there were not many gangs or drugs around the schools then. No one would fight or shoot each other back then, she said, and students could relate to most of their teachers. They would help you out when you needed.

My grandmother had one sister and four brothers. Her mother, my great grandma, worked at a printing factory and her father worked at a packinghouse.

The things she told me she did for fun are

a lot like what we do today. She went out dancing and out to movies on the weekends. But during the weekdays, she was in church.

She said that people don't know the meaning of "love" today. She said that's all that was taught to her: love yourself and your family and friends.

She thinks there is too much hate in the world today.

"Most people don't know it takes a lot to hate and kill someone but it doesn't take too much to love someone," she said.

# Peer Pressure

by Mia Dunlap

Being pressured by your peers is a huge issue, especially for this generation. Children really don't know which way to turn. If they aren't being guided at home, they seem to get into a lot of dramas.

For example, 16-year-old Delice (not her real name) dropped out of DuSable High School because she says no one made her go. Children know when they need direction or a little extra push. It is so easy for children to be led astray. Parents really need to monitor their children's friends and "hang out" spots.

Drugs are one of the leading problems caused by peer pressure.

"Just try it." "You're a wimp." "No one will find out."

These are some of the phrases used to get kids hooked on that stuff. Many children are becoming addicted today. First it is cigarettes, then weed, next crack and then it is death. This is a big disgrace. Children do this to soothe their at-home pains or to forget about the past. 16-year-old James (who didn't want his last name to be used) said, "I started smoking weed to get a new feeling. I got tired of being depressed and lifeless. Weed gave me

a new way of letting things go. No one wants to hear about your problems. So instead of talking about them, I just get high. My momma doesn't care, so why should I?"

When asked how he got started, he said, "One of my cousins was smoking when I came in. They were laughing and stuff. So I asked for some because it looked like fun. Surprisingly, they gave me some. From then on, I smoked it."

Sex is also a result of peer pressure. Many teen pregnancies result from sex caused by peer pressure. Sometimes it is even the result of a dare.

14-year-old West Side resident Kasha, who asked that her last name not be used, said, "My friends and I were playing truth or dare and they dared me to lose my virginity to one of their brothers within a week or they'd never speak to me again. By the next day, I did it and got pregnant. Neither he nor they were around.

"If I'd known then what I know now, I would have told them they weren't true friends from the start. My mother whooped my butt and I got an abortion." That is a sad story. Losing your virginity is a big step. It is something so precious, a part of you that can never be given back. Something that isn't worth all the money in the world could be taken or stolen from you. Your virginity is like a secret. You give it to no one unless you are old enough to trust them with it.

which was segregated. There were only three classrooms and only 12 students in her class.

Dating back then was a big thing. You needed to have permission from your parents in order to go on a date and they needed to meet your date first. The most you would spend on a date was \$5 and you had to dress up.

After finishing high school, Peggy answered an ad in the paper for a job in Boston.

"My mother didn't know until the day I left," she said. "I knew that if she knew, she would cry and I would never get anywhere."

Her job in Boston was taking care of children and she stayed in a boarding house. She stayed there for nine years. Then she joined the civil rights movement in Mississippi. She came to Chicago in 1966 to work with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. She ended up staying in Chicago and working for the civil rights movement doing research for community organizations and demonstrating.

Since then, Peggy has gotten three master's degrees

"Hit it and quit it" is a leading phrase girls use to describe boys having sex with them and then being nowhere to be found. It is most certainly disgraceful to be so young and not out of school yet and to have a baby or even a boyfriend, for that matter. The blame for this is peer pressure.

Peer pressure is one of the leading causes of depression, suicide, loneliness and other problems suffered by teenagers. When you can't fit in but you want to, it becomes a problem. When your friends reject you, you feel guilty and feel like no one cares about you, like you are worthless. It's hard to have friends yet want something more out of life. In order to do that, you must be a leader. But everyone isn't a leader and that's quite alright.

The point isn't to be led astray of your goals or dreams.

21-year-old Lynette said, "Peer pressure causes teens to sell drugs and drop out of school." She also stated that peer pressure caused four of her eight pregnancies. Her first pregnancy was at the age of 13. She regrets getting pregnant but is happy she has the girl she had.

That's what peer pressure does; it causes you to do things you wouldn't normally do. Children need encouragement more than anything. Every once in a while, someone should tell them to do good. Strive for your own goals. Because if you don't, who will?

and a doctorate in adult education from Northern Illinois University. She also works at the New Horizons Center on 39th and State streets.



**Tyesha Keaton interviews Peggy Ann Griffin**

# Ecstasy

by Larry Moore

The drug MDMA, better known as "ecstasy," was first introduced in 1912 by a German company to suppress the appetite of humans. It became most popular in the 1970s, '80s, '90s and today. It has been used at raves, parties, night clubs and bars. Even high school and grammar school students are getting their hands on it. MDMA use and distribution is increasing.

"Over a six year period, seizures of MDMA tablets submitted to DEA laboratories have risen from a total of 196 in 1993 to 143,600 in 1998," states a report from the Drug Abuse Warning Network.

People who have tried ecstasy have died in the last few years in the Chicago area because of overdosing or taking different drugs at the same time.

"An MDMA overdose is characterized by high blood pressure, faintness, panic attacks and, in more severe cases, loss of

consciousness, seizures and a drastic rise in body temperature," according to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

"MDMA overdoses can be fatal, as they may result in heart attack or stroke."

The penalty for getting caught with ecstasy is tough. People report that for a small number of pills, you can get three to five years in the federal penitentiary. The government is not playing around with this drug.

How is ecstasy used? It is most often taken orally. Some people snort it or inject it. The high lasts about four to six hours and leaves you with a feeling of extreme relaxation.

The effects start about 20 minutes to one hour after you take the first pill. This is the "rush" period, followed by a calm and sense of well-being to those around you and a heightened perception of color and sound. Some people feel sick, with nausea or stiffness in the arms, legs and jaw along with a sensation of thirst, sleeplessness, depression and paranoia.

"I tried a pill called Metro (a type of ecstasy)," said Alex Quilez, 20. "The high kicked in 20 minutes after I popped it in and wore off like two to three hours later."

Other students and teachers at Pedro Albizu Campos High

School said they had never taken ecstasy and that they thought taking it was stupid.

My first time trying ecstasy was about four months ago. I was with four of my friends just driving around. My friend had two pills which we ended up splitting five ways. It took about 45 minutes. At first, we were saying it was no good. Then it crept up. It felt like I could do anything I wanted to do. Then I felt a little depressed and paranoid, then sleepy, then I had energy again out of nowhere. I tried it once and that was enough. I wouldn't try it again.

Ecstasy has short- and long-term effects. While many people use ecstasy with no long-term effects, it can be a very dangerous drug. It can cause brain damage two to three weeks after use.

A study by the National Institute of Mental Health in 1998 found that "recreational MDMA users may be at risk of developing permanent brain damage that may manifest itself in depression, anxiety, memory loss and other neuropsychotic disorders."

# Prisons Today

by Erica Martinez

What is the purpose of a prison?

The first concept of a prison 200 years ago was to have a place where - through Bible study, work and penitence - offenders would rehabilitate themselves and return to society. But all of that has faded away.

Today, 81 percent of all state prisoners have criminal histories that include previous incarceration or probation. 37 percent of state prison inmates reported at least one family member had been incarcerated at some time. Seven percent said a parent had served time in jail or prison. 31 percent had a brother who had been incarcerated and four percent had a sister who had been incarcerated. This shows that rather than rehabilitating people, prisoners and their family members keep returning to prison.

Prisons in the U.S. are overpopulated. More prisoners enter prison each week than the existing cells can hold. In 1992, one out of every four prisons in the U.S. was under a court order to reduce crowding. The federal prison system was 26 percent over its stated capacity

in 1995. Over-crowding in prison contributes to the spread of disease. That includes tuberculosis and AIDS. AIDS is 20 times higher in prisons than the national average. In New York, 14 percent of inmates were HIV positive in 1992.

States with overcrowded prisons often force prisoners with shorter sentences to stay in county jails. In most states, jails are designed to hold offenders awaiting trial or with sentences of a year or less. The overcrowding in jail can lead to riots and other problems which threaten both prisoners and guards and staff.

The ones that end up behind prison bars are African American men, who in 1993 made up 12 percent of the U.S. population but 44 percent of the inmates in federal correctional institutions. Whites make up 44 percent of the U.S. population but only 36 percent of the federal prison population. Hispanics make up 10 percent of the population and 18 percent of the prison population.

The nation's War on Drugs is a major cause of the increase in our prison population. Almost two thirds of the \$12 billion annual federal anti-drug budget is spent putting thousands of drug offenders into the criminal justice system, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Studies by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services show that African Americans make up only 13 percent of drug users but the Federal Bureau of Investigation

(FBI) reports that African Americans make up 39 percent of people in prison for drug crimes. 74 percent of drug users are white, according to the Department of Health. Yet, whites are not in prison as much as African Americans.

Drug use is common in prisons. Inmates maintain their addictions with the help of corrupt prison employees and visitors who smuggle in small amounts of drugs.

Politicians claim that the reason prisons cost so much to taxpayers are that they are providing such things as cable television, weight-lifting equipment and law libraries to prisoners. The fact is that four out of every five dollars spent for prison operations go to employee salaries and facility maintenance. Nationwide, spending on correctional facilities has increased in double digit rates, from \$2.3 billion in 1971 to \$24.9 billion in 1990.

These figures represent construction and operations.

Prisons are dangerous places. Every day, an inmate is subject to an environment where they risk their life to survive. Prisons are segregated, with inmates choosing to stick with their own race for safety. Rape is common, especially among inmates who are serving long prison terms. The worst place to be is Death Row, where inmates are usually in their cells 23



**The three Cyber Youth graduates from the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center's A-Plus Certification Class.**

Photo by Mary C. Johns

hours a day.

If prisons are supposed to be a place for rehabilitation, why is it that there are so many repeat offenders coming in and out? That shows there is a problem with the whole concept of prisons. Politicians seem to believe that the answer to the growing prison population is constructing bigger, more high-tech prisons, when in fact they should concentrate more on preventative measures to keep the youth of today from becoming the criminals of tomorrow.

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# Youths' Summer Job Experiences

by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Many young people from low-income neighborhoods throughout the city, including youths of the LeClaire Courts public housing development were introduced to the world of employment this summer.

This summer, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development hired 15,211 youths for summer employment. 1,100 were public housing residents, according to B.J. Walker, the city's chief of human infrastructure.

The city granted these young adults ages 14 to 21 the opportunity to make an income for six weeks. Some of the more common summer jobs were clerks, tutors, artists, recreational workers and day care workers.

The employers did not require the young people to pass any tests for the different jobs. The young people were paid a minimum of \$5.15 an hour and worked 4 hours a day Monday through Friday with weekends off. Their working hours ranged from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

One day of each week was reserved as a supervised workshop. The workshops were designed to educate young people on topics including job training, resume writing, hygiene and crisis management. Guest speakers presented them with different strategies for job interviews and other topics.

At LeClaire Courts, the Employment Employer Services contracted with the Jane Addams Hull House Association - LeClaire Hearst Community Center to place 50 young people. Hull House focused on 14 and 15 year olds. The young people were assigned to various jobs at several different social agencies at LeClaire Courts. They worked as receptionists and clerks as well as janitorial and child care workers.

Several young people at LeClaire said the program provided them with invaluable work experiences. Most importantly, they said they got a chance to develop more marketable skills that would spearhead future career opportunities.

Latrese Rutledge, 15, will be a junior at John F. Kennedy High School this fall. Her ambition is to become a doctor.



LeClaire Courts summer youth workers Porsha Golladay and Latrese Ruthledge .

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

Rutledge worked as a receptionist and child care worker.

Rutledge said the job allowed her to be more conscious and enhance her communications skills. Working at the LeClaire Hearst Community Fieldhouse, Rutledge answered incoming calls, did light filing and sometimes small cleaning jobs.

"It was a nice experience," said Rutledge.

Later in the summer, she became a counselor working with toddlers in day care.

Porsha Golladay, 15, will be an incoming freshman this fall at John F. Kennedy High School. Golladay had the opportunity to work as a clerk and youth counselor for the summer.

Golladay said, "I enjoyed making sure that the children were happy."

Golladay said she wants to become a nurse.

Staff Supervisor Dana Bryant said, "Latrese and Porsha were very good at working with the children. But for many, it became a problem."

Many young people lack the patience it takes to work with the children, Bryant explained.

"It would be better in my opinion to ask the summer youth workers if they like working with children," she added.

Incoming John F. Kennedy High School sophomore Leong Crawford, 15, worked for PM 1 Management, the firm managing LeClaire Courts.

Crawford said, "My job for the management was doing janitorial duties. I learned how to rake the lawn properly without destroying people's property. The most important experience for myself is that it taught me how to improve my people skills. Learning how to work with other individuals and having a good rapport with them."

Crawford said he learned what it takes to maintain a property while doing maintenance at LeClaire Courts. By beautifying the grounds in the developments, he learned how to keep and respect other people's property.

Dennis Ragland, a 16-year-old Collins High School student, also worked as a janitor for PM 1. It was a "bittersweet experience," recalled Ragland.

The first three weeks into the program were a nightmare in the daytime. Being stopped by Chicago Police officers is nothing new for Ragland and his friends, he said. But usually, police stop them after they have finished playing basketball and are returning home.

Working during the summer was another experience altogether. Ragland said the police stopped him at least three days each week on suspicion that he and others were selling drugs.

A supervisor explained that police often stopped the youths if 3 or 4 of them were standing together.

"We were asked to empty our pockets and a body search was conducted," Ragland said.

"Even though we would inform the officers that we were working for

the management company, we could not produce identification cards to prove it and it generally took a supervisor to verify it."

Ragland felt having an identification card could have helped them avoid being constantly harassed by the police.

Ragland said he learned discipline while cleaning and sweeping trash and garbage in hot, humid weather as well as working with the public.

"It was sometime annoying," Ragland said. "But in the end, it was well worth it when you received your pay check from your hard-earned efforts."

Ragland's ambition is to become a rapper and computer technician.

All of the young people seemed to echo the same importance of earning their own income. All said they would use the money to buy their school clothes for the fall semester and help eliminate financial stress from their mothers.



LeClaire Courts summer youth worker Leong Crawford.

Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad

"In the past, we always used all our federal money for youths in the summer time. But now, the federal government

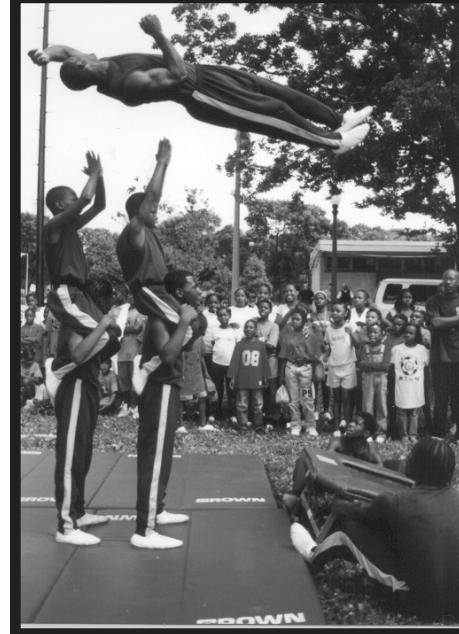
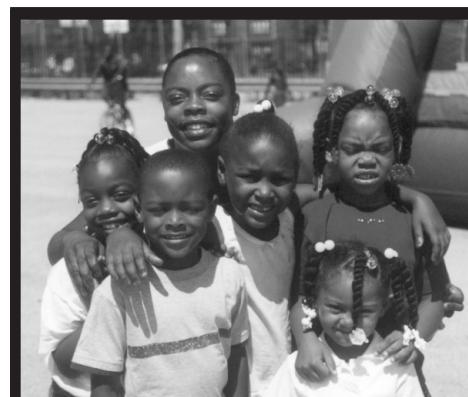
Ragland said the police stopped him at least three days each week on suspicion that he and others were selling drugs.

Chief of Human Infrastructure B.J. Walker said, "Mayor Richard M. Daley and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) is committed to every summer finding and hiring our young people. We are committed to expanding the number of jobs, looking for every possible way we can to increase the number of jobs we have available."

According to Walker, the federal government last year changed its rules about how federal money could be spent.

says we have to spend that money on programs that last all year long. So there are some youth in the programs all year long with the federal dollars.

"But what that means is that we don't have federal dollars to use for summer. So the program that we used to have \$5 or \$6 million of federal money for in the summer, now we have zero. So we have to try and figure out how to fill that gap ourselves."



## CHA Family Fun Days

In the top left photo, a Rockwell Gardens resident takes time out from the activities to pose with her children. The right photo depicts a Lathrop Homes youth in a potatoe sack race. In the photo below, the Chicago Boyz Acrobatic Team perform for residents of the CHA Dearborn Homes.

Photos by John "Popcorn" Sampson, Arminta Clark Muhammad and Mary C. Johns

# Child of the Pack Saddle: Part VI

by John "Popcorn" Sampson

I stood in Judge Schuller's courtroom waiting for my fate to be decided.

As the judge spoke, Miss LaNora walked over to where I stood, took my hand in her hand, and said to the judge in French, "Your honor, if I may speak: I would like to say a word for this boy, if I may, please Henry."

The judge said to Miss LaNora, "Do you know this boy Granny? But before you tell me what you have to say, let me find out a little about this boy and I'll get back to you, Granny."

"And the first thing I have to tell you, son, is this: It is bad luck to tell a lie to a judge in a court of law. Do you understand what I'm telling you?"

"Yes, sir," I answered. "I understand, sir."

"Good," the judge said. "That's one step in the right direction. Now then, tell me what is your name, where did you come from, what are you doing in Alexandria, and why are you here before me? Can you tell me or can you answer those questions, sonny?"

Taking a step closer to the bench and releasing Miss LaNora's hand, I said, "My name is Earnest J. Sampson but everybody calls me Popcorn. I'm from Mansura, Louisiana, and I came to Alexandria to find my mama. But I don't know how come they put me in jail."

Placing his elbow on top of the bench and leaning forward, the judge said to me, "You from Mansura, Popcorn?"

"Yes sir," I said.

The judge said, "Do you know where Grand Bayou is?"

"Oh, yes sir," I said. "I been there a heap of times fishing and hunting rabbits."

"Good for you, Popcorn," said the judge. "Grand Bayou is where I was born and I got some cousins in Mansura. Maybe you know the Balzares."

"I sho' do know Mr. Claude Balzare. He got a lot of pecan trees and a big watermelon patch in Mansura," I said.

"You know him alright," said the judge. "Now tell me about why you came to Alex. To find your mama, did you say?"

"Yes sir," I answered. "I don't know her 'cause I ain't seen her since I was a baby and that's why I come here looking for her."

"Don't you worry yourself none, Popcorn," the judge said to me. "If she is in Alexandria, we will find her for you. We got a colored man by the name of John Henry who keeps the court house slips in shape and John Henry knows everybody in Alexandria, colored or white, and whatever they say you did or did not do, you are pardoned forthwith. And I am doing that because I know all too well Mr. Joe Billy's tactics."

"Going to give you a pardon and place you in the hands of John Henry in hopes that he get you to your mama if she's in this town. But I want you to promise me that you will not go back to Holly Street for no reason whatever! Do you hear me?"

"I hear you, sir, and I promise you that I won't go back on Holly Street no more, not even to see Miss LaNora," I said while my heart beat a resounding boom against the wall of my bosom.

The judge added, "But I wish you would answer me just one more question, Popcorn. Everyone that has a nickname has that nickname for one reason or another. What is the rea-



I took a liking to John Henry from the jump, not only because of his homeboy personality and the careful way he had of choosing his words before he spoke.

son why you are called Popcorn?"

I said to the judge, "My cousin who is named Pooch named me Popcorn because I have a love for Popcorn balls. You ever eat any popcorn balls, Mister Judge?"

"Ha ha ha," Judge Schuller laughed out loud. "Popcorn, it would appear that you have just given me my first nickname. 'Mister Judge.' That's a good one! One that I can't forget to tell my wife. She is always telling me I act more like a Creole than I do a Cajun. I guess now she'll have our cook fix more gumbo for me. And yes, I do like popcorn."

"Now Popcorn, I want you to take a seat in the front row behind you there until I finish with the court's business, after which I'll take you down to the basement to see John Henry."

Once Judge Schuller finished, he gave the latter-day John Henry all the particulars surrounding me and my desire to find my mama. Then, as everyone was making ready to go their merry way, Caroline and Granny walked over to where John Henry and I stood.

As Granny reached out and placed her arm around my neck, it was Caroline who said to me, "Popcorn, Granny told me to speak to you on her behalf and tell you that I don't think we will be seeing each other after today. But I want you to know that I think you're a wonderful little boy, a very smart little boy, too."

"If only I could have had a chance to do so, I would have seen to it that you went to school and studied law or something on that order. But it seems like that was not to be. Take care of yourself. May the Lord be with you always. Bon jour mon shad (good day my child)."

That said, the joy of my heart turned and walked away, leaving me with one of the most grief-stricken days of my life. Because when Granny turned and walked away, she left behind her a love-sick little boy whose memory of a beautiful old Cajun lady shall never, ever be removed from this heart, not only so long as he shall live but throughout the endless reign of death and evermore!

The memory of Granny's long, flowing, silver hair, the melodic tone of her voice and her Cajun dialect, along with her heart-warming smile, shall remain in my heart-warming reveries and in my soul throughout all the days of my life-

time.

I took a liking to John Henry from the jump, not only because of his homeboy personality and the careful way he had of choosing his words before he spoke. But most of all, I could dig every inch of Blackness that he portrayed in his words and actions.

The ways and actions that are inherent in all people of color sometimes are favorable and sometimes are unfavorable but they are readily recognized by all people of color at all times. And that's because Black people harbor a deep feeling of being responsible for the win and loss of our people. In other words, we celebrate with our winner and help our loser bear the cross.

At least black folks did when I was a boy. And all that was as it should be!

But as I was going to say, John Henry and I hit it off real good after I explained the nuts and bolts of my flight from home.

After I finished, John Henry said to me, "So they call you Popcorn, right?"

"Yes sir," I said.

John Henry then said to me, "Well, Popcorn, you can save all your 'yes sirs,' 'no sirs' and 'misters' for the white folks. They like all that jive. Me, I don't. Everybody that know me call me Hammer, the same as they did the man that I was named after. Hammer, you think you can remember that?"

"Yes, si...I mean, I sho' do Hammer!" said I.

"Now then, the judge told me you came to Alex looking for your mama. That right, Popcorn? What is your mama's name?"

I said to Hammer, "My mama's name is Virginia Johnson." Hammer said to me, "I don't know any Virginia Johnson. Where did you say she was from, this Virginia, er, er, did you say her last name is Jones or Johnson?"

I said to Hammer, "My mama's name is Virginia Johnson. And she is from...where did you say, Popcorn? Mansura. She is from Mansura, same as me, Mr. Hammer."

"There you go again with that 'mister' crap. Look, son, you ain't talking to a white man so forget your 'mister' jive. Is that alright with you, Popcorn?"

"I'm sorry, Hammer," I said. "I won't say it no more." Hammer said, "That's OK, Popcorn. Get up off your knees. Like I said, Popcorn, I don't know any woman named Virginia Jones."

"The name is Virginia Johnson, Hammer," I said.

"OK, OK, Virginia Johnson then," said Hammer. "Anyway, the only woman I know with a name close to Virginia is Indian, Vi, and she's from Bunkie, Louisiana, not Marksville. I'll tell you what," Hammer continued, "We will go down Lee Street on our way to my house. I live in the Sonja quarters and that won't be out of the way none."

"Then we will stop in a couple of places on Lee and ask a few questions. That way, maybe we will run into someone that knows your mother. That beans and corn bread with you, mister Popcorn?" said Hammer, extending his right hand, then saying to me, "Put err there, pal!"

To Be Continued...

The Lord is Near  
Poetry  
by John "Popcorn" Sampson

A non-believer once posed this atheistic question to me.

Said he to me: "How can there be a God that no one ever did see nor has anyone ever heard him speak a single word? A God that no one has ever seen awake or in the wildest dream. Pray tell, how can one deem that there was ever a God that reigned over Earth and sky and yet, no one knows if ever he lived or if ever he died?"

Said I to this ill-informed guy, "I

know my God is near because I can see his face in yonder blue high. I hear his voice in the birds winging across the sky, His eyes in a baby's smile, and in the glow of the morning sunrise. Yes, I know without a single doubt that my Lord God is here and about." I know my Lord God is near because He speaks to me in the whispering summer breeze, and through the chanting leaves on the waltzing trees, I know, my Lord is near because I see his creation in a little sleeping tot in the crowing of the cock, in the frolicking puppies at play and

in the setting sun at the end of day.

"I know my God is near because I can clearly hear his voice in the words the little red Robin brings to herald the birth of spring, and I hear the love of God in the lullaby that the Angels sing, and I now too the joy and the serenity that The Lord Prayer often lends whenever my heart, and soul discover that the Lord God is with me to the very end. Oh, Hallelujah, Hallelujah! I know my God is near."

# Touching The Human Spirit

by Arminta Clark Muhammad

**M**embers of an Englewood church hosted a recent gospel festival as part of their efforts to turn the neighborhood around.

The Greater Mount Tabor Missionary Baptist Church hosted their 2nd Annual Community Gospel Festival in their parking lot on July 21 from noon to 4 p.m. Brenda Davis coordinated the event for the church, as she has coordinated similar events for the past nine years. Davis has been a member of the Greater Mount Tabor Church since she was 9. She attended elementary and high school in Englewood. Davis is also actively involved in other community affairs as well.

This year, a number of other churches participated in the gospel fest. The Emanuel Christian Church Choir, Greater Mount Tabor Praise Dancers, New Calvary Church Choir, God Harbor For All Souls Choir, the Chosen Tabernacle Church Choir as well as the Greater Canaan Church Praise Dancers and their all-male chorus all performed. The Soldiers for Christ, a group of young men, did their stumps routine. The crowd was delighted by the inspirational performance they received from the guests and their emcee, Sandra Gillespie.

Greater Mount Tabor's pastor, Julius Washington, said the festival's purpose was for the members to come out from behind the church's walls and minister in the open to the community. Admission to the event was free and the church offered free food and soft drinks. There were games for the children and a raffle for gift baskets for the adults. Washington has been the pastor at Greater Mount Tabor for 3 years.

"This is the first time that the church has ever done this," Washington said.

With the community being mauled by drugs and crime, Washington said it is the church's duty to become more

involved. Washington noted that historically, the Black church has been the strongest institution in the Black community. The Black churches were involved with the civil rights movement, which often held meetings at churches to plan their strategy.

Washington said most churches preach the gospel of Christ and that they cannot be a part of the community without having a powerful, positive impact on that community.

"It is time for the church to play an intricate part in the community," said Washington. "It's time for us to show and support and address the issues that are pertinent to the community. The church can no longer sit within the community idle without being affected by the community."

Washington recalled several incidents in which parishioners leaving church after their Bible study course were caught in the midst of gunfire.

"There have been times I've been in my office and could hear the drug transactions taking place using profanity in a loud overtone manner right in front of the church. Gangs fighting literally in the community with no regard to others.

"This is part of the community today. It's part of the reality in which we live in and we have to join forces with the other residents and community representatives that are looking to address these issues and to help turn them around."

In order to have the impact he wants, Washington realized it is extremely important to be an active participant in community activities, including block club meetings and any event that is uplifting and helps to rid the community of its ills.

Washington said he wasn't aware that there were over 200 released sex offenders listed in the 60621 zip code, which is in the Englewood community.

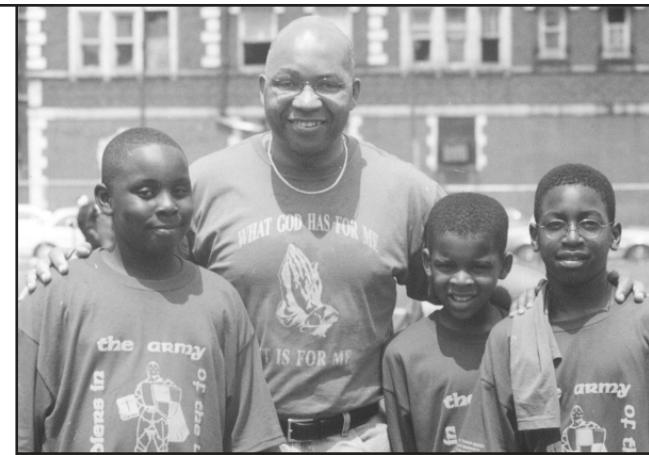
"I didn't know it was that high," Washington said.

"I knew that there have been a number of deaths in the community."

Washington was troubled by that number.

"These are the kinds of things and trends with those astounding numbers that we need to turn around," Washington said.

"Any time you have issues like that, we have to address them. We cannot continue to walk around like we don't know



**Pastor Julius Washington with Greater Mount Tabor Missionary Baptist Church youth during the 2nd annual community Gospel Fest.**

**Photo by Arminta Clark Muhammad**

they exist. We can no longer act like we are blind or like we don't hear it because it exists and we have to be concerned about our children. We have to be concerned about our women, our little girls, our youth period. We must change things and be very much involved in capturing those sex offenders and those who are perpetrating these type of crimes against the community."

Rosa Taft, who attended the gospel festival, felt the event was important. Taft said that with so much negative activity in the area, it's good to see and hear about positive events. Taft has been a member of the Englewood community for over 40 years. She said attending the event gave her and others the opportunity make announcements about her organization and hear from different groups.

Taft is a member of the Legions of Mary. The Legions of Mary has six members that go out and minister throughout the community. They visit the sick and shut in, nursing homes, hospitals and individual homes. They give communion and pray with the people they visit.

"Some might just need someone to talk to," said Taft. Every week, these ladies go out and reach convalescents, no matter what their religion or race. The members are Anniebelle Gaines, Jessie Bolar, Margaret Bowens, Elvie Ross and Carrie Lindsey, who is the group's president. They have been doing this for over 25 years.

## Korean Translation

# Letters to the Editor

## Youth Complaints

**Dear Residents' Journal,**

I think the summer program is boring because we don't get paid on time and we don't get to go on many trips. I think it can be

improved. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development can give kids more money for taking time off for the summer.

- **Felicia**

**Dear Residents' Journal,**

My name is Jeanie Pittman. I'm the instructor at Lathrop Homes during the Mayor's Summer Youth Initiative Program. I am also completing supervisory tasks which subsequently I'm not getting paid for. MOWD - the Mayor's Office

of Workforce Development - has delayed some of our hires up to two weeks, leaving us discouraged and frustrated. This program needs structure and hopefully writing this letter will be a good start in the right direction.

- **J. Pittman**

**Dear Residents' Journal,**

My name is Rosie Linzy and I've been working for the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development as a participant for the past 4 weeks. During this time, we haven't received any supplies such as workbooks, notebooks, pens, etc.

In the participant handbook, we're supposed to

**Dear Residents' Journal,**

I think that this summer program is boring because of the fact that we don't have any supplies, such as pens, workbooks, etc. So far, we went on a few trips, which is OK. The Mayor's summer initiative is unfair. I say this because we only get one check. We are supposed to get our check for \$400, which is a stipend for the whole

get \$5.15 an hour, 4 hours a day, 5 days a week for 6 weeks. We're receiving our paycheck 2 weeks after we stop working.

This program has left us angry and frustrated. I wrote this letter to share what was going on here, not to shut the program down. I just hope it will improve for future participants.

- **Rosie Linzy**

program. The paycheck was going to be given to us on Aug. 17 but the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development pushed it back to the 31st of August. I have to go to school Aug. 21 or 27 and I have to buy clothes and pay for school. If you can reach the mayor, tell him that we need to talk to him.

- **Jermaine Washington**

## Poetry Corner by Sylestine McKay It Takes One

It takes one to walk away,  
It takes two to have a fight,  
It takes one to meet their problems  
face to face,  
It takes one to lie,  
It takes one to tell the truth,  
It takes one to join a gang,  
It takes one to cry and feel the  
pain.  
It takes one to kill someone,  
It takes one to go to jail for life,  
It takes one to straighten up your  
life,  
Especially, truthful men do not  
play games with life.

## Try to Remember

Try to remember that my love is  
your love.

Try to remember that my tears are  
your tears.

Try to remember that my pain is  
your pain.

Try to remember that the mistakes  
we've made are a part of life.

Try to remember when things go  
wrong, I'll be by your side.

Whether you think you're right or  
wrong,  
Just listen to your heart and try to  
remember.

## Keeping Your Car Safe

**Dear Editor,**

I am submitting this e-mail to provide some important information to your readers

Theft of and from autos is a prevalent problem within the housing developments of the City of Chicago. In regards to the 21st District, which includes Hilliard Homes, Ickes Homes, the Dearborn Homes, Prairie Courts and the Madden Park Homes, theft of and from autos has been categorized as a priority problem.

Several prevention tips, to combat this ongoing problem, are as follows:

Park in well-lit areas.

Do not leave anything of value in your car that can be seen.

Place any valuables in the trunk.

Do not keep loose change in sight.

Lock your car and remember your keys.

Close all windows and lock any storage compartments.

If possible, install and activate an anti-theft device.

Never leave your car running.

Never leave children alone in a car.

These are just a few prevention tips to hinder a person into becoming a victim.

To address concerns within your community, please attend your regularly scheduled beat meeting.

For any additional information concerning the 21st District, please contact the 21st District Community Policing Office at (312)747-2930. And please be safe.

- **Sgt. Scott A. Oberg**  
**21st District Community Policing**

## Crystal Clear Views

**Dear Crystal:**

I'm very distraught. I'm 17 years old and I just had my first son a couple of months ago and his father doesn't want anything to do with him or me. We were together seven months before I got pregnant. Those couple of months were great. I thought I had the perfect boyfriend until I told him I was having his baby. He told me he wasn't ready for a baby and he wouldn't be here for too long anyway because he was moving to California to stay with his father, so I might as well have an abortion. When I told him I didn't believe in abortions, he started to say the baby wasn't even his and left anyway. I haven't heard from him since. This upsets me because my son looks just like him and I'm very hurt because I believe that my baby deserves a daddy.

- **Hurt Lil' Mama**

**Dear Lil' Mama:**

This is definitely a very tough situation that many women face today in our society. Being a young, single mother is never easy. But you must remember that some women have done it before you and some will do it after you. Just as long as you have the love, patience and dedication to be a mother and father to this child, the both of you will be just fine.

The one and only way to deal with this Dead Beat Dad is to take him to court for child support. He may not have wanted this baby but the court will make him pay for the part he played in making the baby. This young man and every other man that denies these children need to know that taking responsibility for their actions is mandatory! Don't worry if he has left the city because believe me, they will find him. And don't worry if he says the baby isn't his because a paternity test will clear that

right up.

Being a new mom is not easy for a lot of women, even if they do have the father around. You will feel overwhelmed and being in a scenario like this can really put a strain on you emotionally. So take care of yourself. Look around and see what kind of support system you have for yourself and this child. Is your family there for you to lean on? What about good friends? Keep these people close.

If you don't have people like this in your life or even if you do, a good kind of support is to seek counseling. Counseling is not just for people who are mentally ill. It is for people who have stressful lives and need someone to talk to.

Some people think going to counseling won't solve anything and is a waste of time. But as an expectant mother myself, I can tell you that it will help you to sort through your thoughts and emotions and

help you cope with your "new life." In the long term, it will help your baby because your baby only has you to depend on. If you're not happy and satisfied with what's going on in your life, you won't be able to make anyone else happy either.

Think about it: If you're distressed, who do you think you will take it out on?

Take care of yourself physically also. Try not to repeat this experience in your life. Abstinence is always the best way to prevent unwanted pregnancies. If you don't want to abstain, there are several methods of birth control. It is always best to plan a family.



**Crystal Medina**

Residents' Journal welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters to our new address: 4859 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60615. You may also call our office at (773) 285-0200 x 3372 to discuss your ideas for submission.

# Dear Resident

by Patricia Johnson-Gordon

I write this column today from a perspective different than the one I had prior to Sept. 11, 2001, the day that thousands of lives and America's sense of security were lost in the attack on the New York Trade Center. For me and many others, I'm sure that watching the events of Sept. 11 unfold was surreal, like something out of a movie. A scary movie, to our dismay, that has come true.

Nothing will ever be the same again. As males and females, adolescents and adults, Black, White, Indian, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, Muslim Americans, we will never be the same again. For many Americans, there's a heightened sense of fear. A heightened sense of vulnerability. But there is also a heightened sense of American pride and unity. And again, for me and many others, I'm sure that there is a sense of surrealism, like something out of a movie.

I could say that as public housing residents, we have lived with fear and vulnerability, without a sense of pride and unity for so long that anything else is unimaginable. But I don't believe

As a human being, I am fear-stricken by the violent loss of human life, most likely as it reminds me of my own mortality (the nature of man, as having eventually to die).

As a mother, daughter, sister, friend and neighbor, my heart is heavy knowing the grief of those who have lost loved ones so tragically. But as an American, I feel somewhat surreal, removed, because I have never felt a part of the America that was attacked. Perhaps if I

America. As President Bush speaks of the attack against humanity, the fight for freedom and the loss of life, I am taken back to what it must have been like for my ancestors in America.

And suddenly, I feel America's resolve (determination) to stand against those that would oppress them (to keep down by the cruel and unjust use of power and authority). I feel their anger and taste their outrage but it doesn't bring me any closer to

**s things become more difficult for the heart of America, they will become more difficult for us.**

**A**

were in New York and not watching television, it would seem more real. I now fear that the reality of our America can be likened to the effect on the rest of a body when it suffers a heart attack.

As the heart of America suffers, so will we. The loss, unlike the gain of America, will run, not trickle down. If the heart of America loses, we will lose, too. It may seem impossible because it would appear that we have nothing to lose but we will lose. As things become more difficult for the heart of America, they will become more difficult for us. As they lose jobs, we will lose jobs. As they have less, we will have less. And as their America comes together, our America must come together, too.

We must become aware, conscious of our surroundings, what we do and what we say. For as America moves to protect its heart (airports, public buildings, etc.), it leaves the rest of its body vulnerable. Whatever American we may be, we cannot fall back into a false sense of security, hoping, thinking that it is someone else's responsibility to keep us safe. From Sept. 11, 2001 on, it is everyone's responsibility to keep safe.

I wish that we felt a sense of

their America. For my America is the result of theirs.

My chest tightens and my heart is heavy but suddenly, I feel closer to America. I feel closer because I now know that they must understand the anguish of my America. An anguish that is consciously for some and unconsciously for others still with us today.

As I turn my attention to the future, I would hope that they would give my America the retribution\* that they now seek, thus finally making our two Americas one.

May God bless us all!

-Pat

\*Retribution in the form of reparations has been put before America.

Retribution: something administered or exacted in recompense;

Recompense: to give compensation, pay for;

Reparation refers to the making of amends, specifically the paying of compensation (money), for some wrong or injury; compensation by a nation for crimes committed against individuals:

Websters' New World Dictionary

I submit these pictures in tribute to the fallen heroes of our America. This is the last in a series of pictures presented over the past four years that were posted at 440 W. Division St., home of the Tranquility Marksman Memorial Organization.

Photos by Patricia Johnson Gordon

**F**or many Americans, there's a heightened sense of fear. A heightened sense of vulnerability. But there is also a heightened sense of American pride and unity.

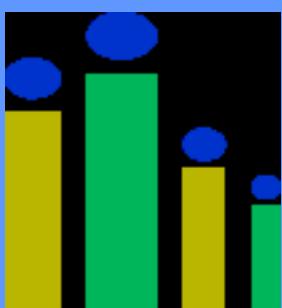
that it would account for our sense of feeling as if we were watching a movie versus watching the America that has been shaken to its very foundation.

The New York Trade Center attack has been described by the media as having hit the heart of America. I follow as much of the coverage as I can bear via the newspaper, television and Internet, looking at pictures and reading names, but not seeing anyone from our America.

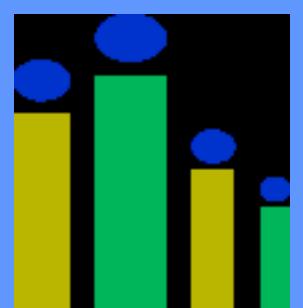
unity and pride in our America. It is the best that could come out of such a tragedy. We must, however, avoid an increased attitude of hopelessness as these things may occur. Such an attitude would only lead to an increase in the problems that already plague our America.

Tonight, Sept. 20, 2001, as I sit watching President George W. Bush address the nation, I look around the room and again, I see no one from our

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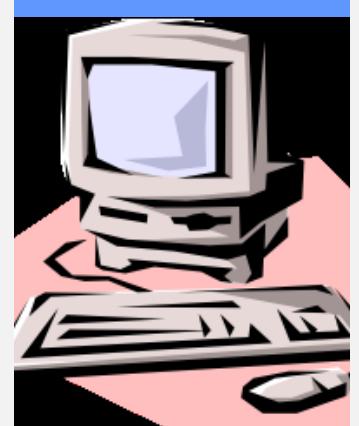
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**African Entourage Visits the FIC**

Julie Driscoll (from left), director of Chicago Sister Cities; Zenobia Johnson-Black, President and CEO of the Charles Hayes Family Investment Center; Mayor Mlaba of Durban, South Africa, a Chicago Sister City; Kheto Mathansi, City of Durban manager of mayoral projects; Julie Stagliano, international program coordinator of Chicago Sister Cities; and Monica Stewart of the Illinois/African Trade Office take time out to pose after a tour of the Family Investment Technology Learning Center Aug. 9.



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