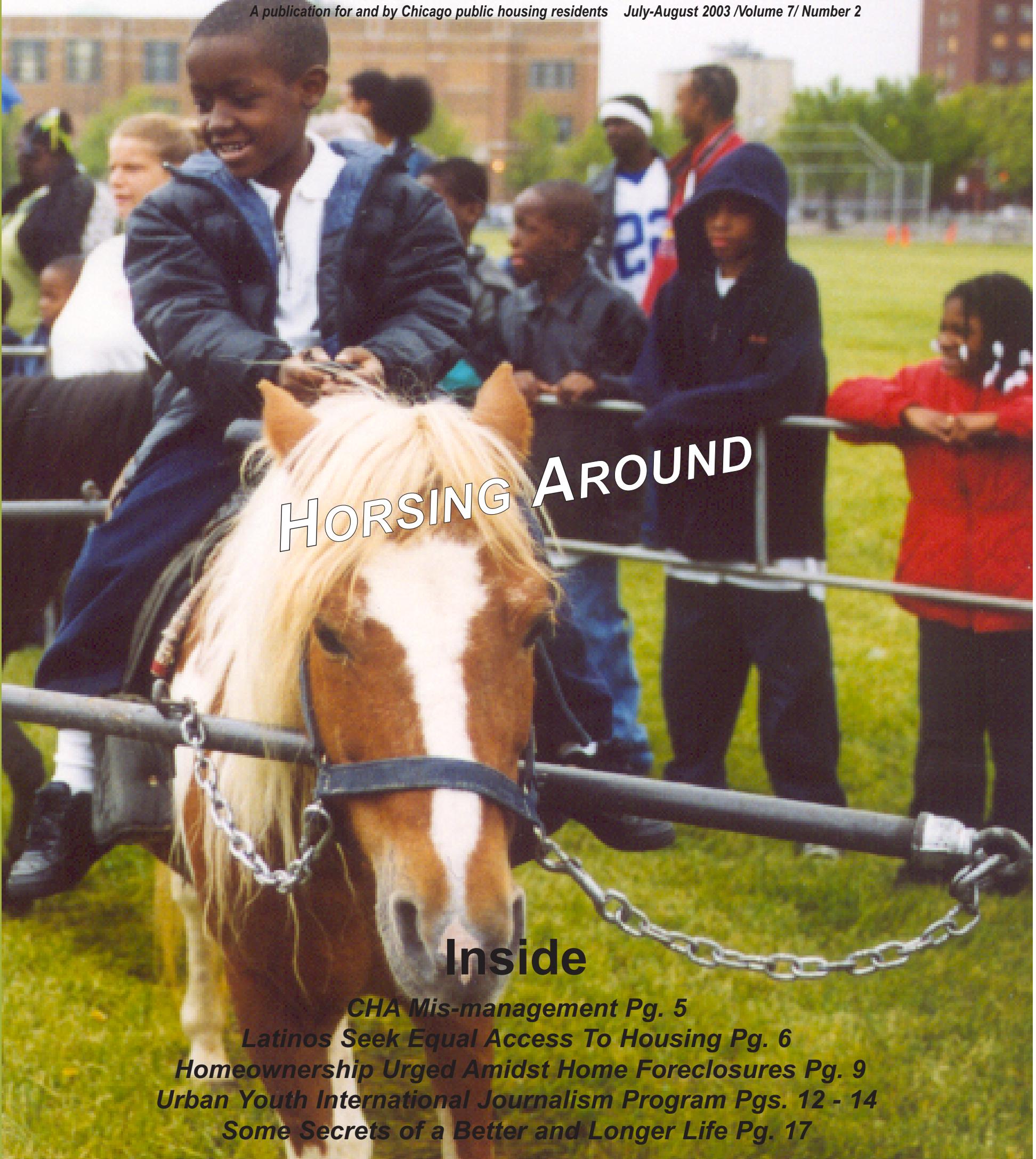


R E S I D E N T S '

# Journal

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A publication for and by Chicago public housing residents July-August 2003 /Volume 7/ Number 2



HORSING AROUND

Inside

*CHA Mis-management Pg. 5*

*Latinos Seek Equal Access To Housing Pg. 6*

*Homeownership Urged Amidst Home Foreclosures Pg. 9*

*Urban Youth International Journalism Program Pgs. 12 - 14*

*Some Secrets of a Better and Longer Life Pg. 17*

# Haymarket House AD

# Contents

PAGE 4: Harold Ickes News...by Jacqueline Thompson	Stop The Violence...by Cenabeth Cross
PAGE 5: Newsbriefs...by Gabriel Piemonte CHA Mis-Management...by Beauty Turner	PAGE 17: Some Secrets About A Better and A Longer Life...by Dr. Rodica Popescu
PAGE 6: Latinos Seek Equal Access To Housing...by Crystal Medina	PAGE 18: 2003 Puerto Rican Day Parade...by Crystal Medina Odyssey Project Graduation...by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson
PAGE 7: Getting To Know Englewood...by Beauty Turner	PAGE 19: Stop The Violence Cont... Project Safe Neighborhoods...by Cenabeth Cross
PAGE 8: Lathrop News...by Bobby Watkins Looking for Clarity in LeClaire Courts...by Beauty Turner	PAGE 20-21: Some Secrets About A Better and A Longer Life...by Dr. Rodica Popescu (in Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Russian and Korean)
PAGE 9: Homeownership Urged Amidst Home Foreclosures...by Mary C. Johns	PAGE 22: Letters to the Editor Crystal Clear Views...by Crystal Medina
PAGE 10: Housing Policy Needed...by Michael Ibrahim	PAGE 23 Restless Relocates Fight On...by Ethan Michaeli
PAGE 11: Domestic Violence Danger...by Cheryl Murphy	<b>FRONT PAGE</b>
...by PAGES 12 -14: Urban Youth International Journalism Program Section	The front page photo depicts a youngster enjoying a free ride on a pony during a school break festival in late spring in the Dusable High School track field. The event was sponsored by the Chicago Police Department.
PAGE 15 Positive People in CHA...by Bobby Watkins	Photo by Mary C. Johns
PAGE: 16	

# Credits

Publisher	Ethan Michaeli
Editor-in-Chief	Mary C. Johns
Assistant Editor	Outreach Director
Beauty Turner	Gabriel Piemonte
Editorial Assistant	Crystal Medina
Circulation Crew Supervisor/Advertising Salesperson	Bobby Watkins
Layout Design	Mary C. Johns Satin Crable
RJ Correspondents	Earl Battles, Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson, Deborah A. Britton, Cecelia A. Clark, Cenabeth Cross, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Michael Ibrahim, Crystal Medina, Alicia McNeal, Cheryl Murphy, Karen Owens, Lorenzia Shelby, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins
Photographers	Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson, John Brooks, Cenabeth Cross, Michael Ibrahim, Mary C. Johns, Patricia Johnson-Gordon, Crystal Medina, Karen Owens, Jacqueline Thompson, Beauty Turner, Bobby Watkins
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# Our Mission

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

# Our Readership

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

- \* **Residents' Journal** is the unique source of critical information for Chicago public housing residents. Nearly every respondent (92 percent) said they wanted to see **Residents' Journal** printed more often.
- \* **Residents' Journal** readers are actively involved in the transformation of their communities. Respondents ranked "Neighborhood News" (80 percent) and "CHA Stories" (75 percent) as their favorite sections, closely followed by "Citywide News" (61 percent) and "Health Stories" (52 percent).
- \* **Residents' Journal**'s readers are active citizens. 84 percent of the respondents voted in the last election while 67 percent attend religious services regularly.
- \* **Residents' Journal**'s readers shop at large chain stores such as Walgreen's (73 percent), Jewel (70 percent), and Aldi's (67 percent). Readers also eat monthly at restaurants such as McDonald's (69 percent), Popeye's (39 percent), White Castle (34 percent) and KFC (39 percent).
- \* Readers spend a large share of their income on groceries. Fifty-five (55) percent spend between \$100 and \$299 on groceries monthly; 22 percent spend between \$300 and \$499 on groceries monthly.
- \* Readers are extremely interested in enhancing their skills: 52 percent are interested in computer training, 41 percent are interested in job training and 20 percent would like to receive nursing or health care training.

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# Transforming CHA

## Harold Ickes News

by Jacqueline Thompson

**A**n eighteen-year-old feud may be the motivating factor in the latest deaths of two Ickeites, George (Bo) Holliday and Lesley Adam Coppage, according to residents of the Harold Ickes Homes.

Reports from residents of the public housing development say the reason for the recent gunfire which killed the two residents and injured a third is the relocation of residents of Prairie Courts, specifically from the building at 2822 S. Calumet Ave. Prairie Courts is one of many Chicago Housing Authority properties slated for redevelopment under the 10-year, \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation. The buildings in the development were emptied and residents relocated in 2002.

Ickes is one of the developments to which Prairie Courts residents are being moved, and it has been an ongoing topic for those of us who live there as to just what's going to happen as youth from Prairie Courts arrive at our development. It's been



Jacqueline Thompson

offer our heartfelt condolences. Everyone knew each one of them. We truly mourn for the children they were when they played on the grass and in halls of our homes.

### New Life

**I**ckes has a resilient power to create a new way of life for its many residents who need a new way of "bringing up a child in the way he should go so that when he has grown older, he will not

blend in with the rest of the world's news. I hope they stay and get a handle on the "feud" and disperse the terrible "war."

To the families of the victims of this latest atrocity, all of Harold Ickes feels your pain.

We sincerely

ous feeling of the continuation of life is to report on the most auspicious occasion of the first eighth grade graduation of the National Teachers Academy located on the grounds of Harold Ickes.

To use one word to describe the event, I chose "precious."

Nine precious students made history by graduating from this brand new school as the very first graduating class, which took place inside the building in a room coined the "lunchatorium," where the students have their lunch and where assemblies take place when the occasion arises. This is a high-ceilinged room with a spacious stage and cleverly placed backstage entry wings. The north wall is a ceiling-to-floor series of framed windows bringing in the light of the day to touch every inch of space therein. It was hard to say who was more excited, the parents, family members and friends or the teachers, the principal, the special guests or the students. The very air was charged with the magic of it all. A very important goal had been reached, and everyone present had a stake in the process. The students carried out the program with grace and pride. Each student had a part to play and they pleased an eager audience.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Barbara Williams, gave the students and members of the audience a formula that she said if followed is guaranteed not to fail one in his or her quest for a good education. It is called the ABC formula.

Attitude determines altitude. The longer you live the more you realize that attitude is a choice.

Belief. If you believe it is possible, do your best and hold to your belief.

Commitment. Actions speak louder than words. It's not what you say but what you do.

With these powerful words to guide you, your next step into the field of learning should carry you smoothly forward.

One presentation was especially touching because, the "village" (all audience members) provided the rhythm, hand clapping, for the graduate's musical group statement titled, "I know I can." This surprise rendition was adopted by Katherine Lee, who was named National Teachers' Academy's first student teacher of the year. Congratulations.

This reporter cannot resist listing the names of each graduate. I commend and congratulate each one for carving out a place in history through hard work and perseverance. And they are: Laporcha Allen, Glen Chamberlin, Shaquita Ewars, Samella Mayweather, Geneice Preston, Shawn Ramsey, Lloyd Vinson, Sierra Wallace and Antonio Wilson.

To Linda H. Ford, principal, the Graduation Committee, administration

and faculty, we salute you, we congratulate you and look forward to many years of alignment with the neighborhood to bring the best possible education experiences to our children and their families that can be had in Greater Chicago.

### New Life In New Ways

**F**inally, our hallways are undergoing new decoration. Sparkling white walls flow into pleasing thick blue/gray base board, accompanied by apartment, elevator and utility room doors of the same shade. New windows have been installed to complete a fresh new look. However, vandals still delight in breaking, removing panes and generally undoing what has been done to the new windows. Management is on the case, though. When vandalism against the windows is reported, most times, they are rapidly replaced. Hurray for management.

Bernard Gantry Center, after 35 years, is getting a face lift inside and outside. New wire-filled, glass-paned windows make up the entry wall at 2326 S. Dearborn St., replacing old faded, bullet-ridden panels of acrylic.

By the way, it's already been christened by a round of gunfire in the top most glass panel in the front. There's the beat again. Inside there is new ceiling tile, bathroom fixtures, kitchen cabinets and so much more, I'll have to report about it next issue.

But the one thing we have all been waiting for is...the new sewer system that will permanently get rid of "Lake Ickes," the five-block lake of water that creates a moat between the buildings and the fire lane and the playground terrace.

The contractors broke ground early last week. The work is moving right along. And all looks good for the protective measures to combat the breeding of the feared mosquitoes that just may have the dreaded West Nile Disease.



This memorial site marks the spot where Harold Ickes public housing resident Lesley 'Adam' Coppage died after he and another resident were shot to death, and another man wounded after an alleged long-time dispute with a CHA resident from another housing site.

Photo by Jacqueline Thompson

# Transforming CHA

## Newsbriefs

### Stateway Trials Move Forward

A pair of lawsuits alleging civil rights violations of residents of public housing development Stateway Gardens by members of the Chicago Police Departments moved forward recently according to the educational clinic representing the residents.

In one case, the city of Chicago was ordered by a judge to pay \$30,000 to Nevles Traylor for an assault two years ago at Stateway Gardens by two Chicago policemen. In the other, a federal judge set a December 1 trial date in which she will hear claims that Chicago police illegally searched 250 to 300 adults and children two years ago at the Stateway Gardens Fieldhouse, 3658 S. State St., during a late-night basketball game. In both cases, the residents are represented by the Edwin F. Mandel Legal Aid Clinic, University of Chicago Law School clinic providing legal advocacy to the community and where students are practicing law under the supervision of licensed attorneys.

On the afternoon of July 9, 2001, Officers Raymond Piwnicki and Robert Smith struck Traylor, 44, as he rode his bicycle across a sidewalk through Stateway with their squad car. Piwnicki then beat Traylor and Piwnicki and Smith arrested Traylor on felony narcotics charges. Those charges were later dismissed. Attorneys representing the city in the alleged illegal searches maintain that the searches followed a tip that several carloads of armed gang members were headed to the fieldhouse, but attorneys representing the residents in the suit reject that claim.

"The tip did not exist," said lawyer Tom Peters, who, with lawyer Craig Futterman, maintains that the searches were illegal and unreasonable invasive.

### Cabrini family of victim wins \$1.5M

Saying a pair of gang members were "more credible" than a veteran police officer, a jury earlier in August awarded \$1.5 million in damages to the family of a Cabrini Green public housing resident shot in 1998 just outside the development. "Were they more credible than the police officer? Absolutely," forewoman Dorcas Wetherspoon told a Chicago Tribune reporter. Chicago police officer Kenny Lunsford unsuccessfully claimed he shot Michael Russell in the back as Russell ran from him after shooting a rival gang member. Russell was unarmed at the time of the shooting.

Ten members of the jury had wanted to award \$2 million to Russell's family, Wetherspoon said, but lowered the amount to lure an 11th jury member to their side. A 12th jury member, having fallen ill earlier in the week, had not continued deliberations, making the decision unanimous.

### Supreme Court upholds ban

A Virginia man arrested for trespassing as he entered a development with the excuse that he was bringing diapers to his child recently lost a constitutional challenge to the law.

Voting unanimously, the U.S. Supreme Court shot down claims that the policy violated the First Amendment, but kept the door open for challenges to this and similar laws in the future.

"Whether respondent may challenge his conviction on other grounds – and whether those claims have been properly preserved – are issues we leave open on remand," wrote Justice Antonin Scalia in the decision to Virginia v. Hicks. Kevin Hicks argued that authority given to the manager was overbroad because she could prevent a person trying to pass out leaflets or fliers.

# CHA Mis-management

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

Many of the private management firms that the Chicago Housing Authority contracted are MIA – missing in action – when it comes to the residents' information.

Have you as a public housing resident ever wondered how private management companies deem you as non-lease compliant?

Well recently I unearthed a bit of dirt – I mean news – about how the private management companies are finding out if you are non-lease compliant.

Do you think it's because they do a credit check?

No, many of them don't do that.

Do you think it's because they do a background check?

No, once again many of them are not doing that.

Interstate Reality, the private management firm in the Robert Taylor Homes, only finds out by what you, the resident, tell them.

You tell them if you are lease compliant or if you are not lease compliant only by word of (your) mouth – they ask you if you are current with your electrical utilities bills, or are you behind in your rent.

Just think if you were and said no. You would receive a lease compliance letter. That's what's happened to many of the residents in the Robert Taylor Homes.

Take for example the story of one young lady who's a current resident of Robert Taylor and whose name we won't use.

The young lady is a disabled, young, single mother of four with a teenage son who's no longer on her lease and who's constantly running into head-on crashes with the law. Her family situation seems to be riddled with the many bullet holes on the project wall of troubles. The young lady suffers from an illness that causes her, when she stands up for a long length of time, to become rather dizzy and sometimes fall down. She resides in the Robert Taylor Homes in one of the high-rise buildings that are due to be closed by early September.

Two months ago, she received a letter verifying that she was lease compliant, plus a letter from CHAC telling her she's eligible for a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher from the management company.

This unnamed resident got in touch with me when Commonwealth Edison turned off her electricity.

She also sent me a copy of her \$4,041.49 electric bill and a copy of her rent statement that reads she's behind in rent, playing to the sad blue tune of \$3,072.75. This young lady left a message on my telephone asking me to help her get lights on.

With families in circumstances like this, I have to wonder where are the Service Connectors – the private companies paid millions of dollars to connect residents with social services – that are supposed to help families like hers.

To make a long story short, CHA moved this young lady and her children to another development in a beautiful, nicely rehabbed apartment.

This family was very happy and elated about the move. Everyone was pleased for about one month.



**Beauty Turner**

She called me on May 14 and told me CHA sent her a ten-day eviction notice. Once again, her smile has turned upside down to a frown.

She called again on June 3 to let me know

that CHA was taking her to court on June 30. She said she was afraid of losing her apartment and becoming homeless.

What seems to be happening is that a lot of other private management companies seem to be in this same boat racked with holes in the middle of a deep blue sea of confusion when it comes to the residents' information and rights.

Thomas P. Sullivan, who is a former U.S.

of them didn't tell the truth," explained Levavi. "That's how people received lease compliant letters when they weren't. Recently, IRM started doing credit checks. That way, they can now tell if the residents in question have outstanding bills."

In related news, bright and early Monday morning on June 9th – before the birds could chirp or gather their worms for the day – CHA officials were in Cabrini Green, a public housing development near the gold coast, closing down a Resident Management Corporation (RMC) called the William Green Home Residents Management Corporation. Reportedly, it was done with a big, steel, silver pad lock and silver chain.

CHA showed the media pictures of badly kept apartments with debris and articles of clothing scattered everywhere and said it was the management office. The photos showed records in shambles, residents' work orders laid across boxes and overall untidy house keeping.

CHA reported that residents called them

**R**ecently, IRM started doing credit checks. That way, they can now tell if the residents in question have outstanding bills.

**-Peter Levavi, vice president of Brinshore & Michaels Development**

State's Attorney and the Independent Monitor appointed by CHA to oversee the Plan for Transformation, stated in his Independent Report Number Five, issued on January 8, that "I have heard from a number of persons that the various CHA property management firms do not enforce the conditions contained in the standard CHA lease Admission and Occupancy (A&O) policy in a consistent manner: Conduct that was acceptable during one month can cause the same resident to become non-lease compliant the next month and may have no effect on a resident in another building. While property management may feel that they are doing residents a favor by not strictly or uniformly enforcing the A&O policy they may be doing them a dis-service by having them not comply with their lease terms. These residents may thereby be rendered unprepared to deal with private landlords."

I called Meghan Harte, Director of Relocation with the CHA, and asked her about CHA policy concerning being lease compliant. I wanted to ask her whether CHA makes private management do background checks and credit checks on the residents to deem them as non-lease compliant, or do they just simply ask the residents? She did not return my calls by press time.

I called Peter Levavi, who is a Vice President at Brinshore & Michaels Development, one of the major corporations on the team that was awarded the contract to redevelop Robert Taylor into mixed-income communities, and asked him about management policy and lease compliance.

"In the beginning, they relied on what the residents told them, and some

frequently about this management with complaints about work not being done to their units and condemned the "terrible living conditions many of our residents had to endure because of this company's organizing skills." CHA quickly replaced the public-housing-resident-managed William Green Homes RMC with management company HR Russell.

Cabrini Green residents recently told **RJ** that a young boy found over \$6000 worth of uncashed checks and important file documents that employees of HR Russell had allegedly thrown away.

Did all of this happen because of management mis-management or was it CHA mis-management? You be the judge.

There are many unanswered questions that just seem to linger and blow in the Chinatown wind, such as: Did CHA move the young lady in question to help her or did they move her to help their cause?



**During a recent Tenant Services meeting, this former member of the Resident Management Council at the Cabrini Green public housing site complained to CHA officials about residents' rent documents she had in a folder that were allegedly thrown away by the new managers after the RMC was removed from co-managing the development in June.**

**Photo by Mary C. Johns**

# Transforming CHA

# Latinos Seek Equal Access To Housing

by Crystal Medina  
Editorial Assistant

The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) has yet to fulfill a nearly decade-old promise in the form of a consent decree to Latino Chicagoans, according to representatives of Latinos United, an organization that fights for housing rights of Hispanic people. "Though CHA attempts to comply with the Latino consent decree, they don't seem to be seeking to fulfill the spirit of the consent decree," claims Juanita Irizarry, executive director of Latinos United. Since the 1996 settlement, the situation has slightly improved but, advocates say, problems still occur.

**Historic Lawsuit**  
A lawsuit was filed on February 28, 1994 by five Latino community residents and five Latino organizations on behalf of all



**Crystal Medina**

increase the number of Latino participants in CHA housing programs through marketing strategies.

Everyone who submitted an application between May 1997 and March 1998 at designated offices was identified as a "Latino outreach applicant" and flagged in the computer system for tracking purposes.

#### Problems Surface

In August of 1999, Arnoldson was contracted as a consultant to conduct an evaluation of the functioning in the Occupancy Office. Through the inspection, it became evident there were still stumbling blocks to Latino access to housing. Three problem areas were, first, applicants were not being placed on the waiting list in a timely manner; then, applicants were not being selected for screening in the correct order. Finally, there was no one in charge of managing the waiting list, overseeing the workflow or providing effective supervision.

In October 1999, CHA contracted Sigrid Arnoldson and Miguel Morales through Gregory Byrne & Associates, and



**Latinos United staff members.**

**Photo by Crystal Medina**

entered by the end of 1999.

Latinos United then requested that CHA account for all applications gathered during the Viviendo al Alcance outreach, posing these questions: How many Latino applicants had been placed on the CHA waiting list? How many had been withdrawn and what were the reasons for withdrawal? How many Latino applicants had been "skipped" (not housed) because their applications were not entered in the system in a timely manner?

An examination of the database revealed errors in the spelling in names, wrong social security numbers and incorrect date of applications.

In February 2001, a report given to the director of Operations by the consultants revealed there were still Latino applications that needed to be inputted, and that, among the applications that had been put in the system, there were still errors in families' information. Therefore, the applications had to be individually examined.

A follow-up report given in April of 2001 indicated the number of Latino applicants in the CHA waiting list, the number of applicants withdrawn and the reason for

withdrawal and number of applicants skipped.

In September 2001, CHA contracted the consultants to conduct a final assessment of the Latinos United and the CHA databases and to detail problems and solutions.

A final review of the Latinos United and the CHA database was conducted to review more than 1,000 CHA applicant files. Because of this review the consultants gave written instructions to the Occupancy staff to correct and change all errors. All corrections and changes were made, according to CHA, referring to the application submitted and they were all documented in the note screen of the CHA's computer system.

Access to public housing for Latino Families has come far in the eyes of CHA but, advocates say, it still has a ways to go. "There still needs to be changes within the organizational culture of the CHA such that they truly incorporate the Latino community in every aspect of their work. As things stand now, serving the Latino community often seems to be an afterthought," Irizarry said.

**T**hough CHA attempts to comply with the Latino consent decree, they don't seem to be seeking to fulfill the spirit of the consent decree...

**-Juanita Irizarry, executive director, Latinos United**

Latinos eligible for public housing in Chicago against CHA and the U.S. Dept. on Housing and Urban Development who were charged with discrimination against Latinos in Chicago's public housing programs. The organizational plaintiffs were Latinos United, Eighteenth Street Development Corporation, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation and Comite Latino.

On April 22, 1996 Latinos United reached a settlement that provided Section 8 vouchers for 500 eligible Latino Households and \$1.1 million in funding to educate the Latino community about the Section 8 program and counsel those families that receive the vouchers.

The settlement requires that CHA change its policies to give equal opportunities to Latino families in public housing. (See inset, this page)

This settlement was very important to the eligible Latino families because instead of the average 74 percent of their incomes going to housing, according to recently released statistics, only 30 percent will, which helps them better afford other essentials such as food and medicine. More food and medicine means healthier families and healthier communities.

As a result of the consent decree reached by CHA and Latinos United, an outreach effort was conducted called "Viviendo al Alcance." Its purpose was to

later through Abt Associates, to do a more thorough evaluation of the Occupancy Office.

The first finding was of a large number of applications in boxes waiting to be entered in the system. The senior manager in charge of the Occupancy Office reported that more than 3,500 of these were from the Latino outreach program. CHA claimed all of the missed applications were

**Note: The following is a list of requirements agreed to by the Chicago Housing Authority intended to increase access to public housing for Latino families:**

-Translate into Spanish all recorded messages and materials that are relevant to tenants or potential tenants.

-Have adequate bilingual staff where Spanish-speaking individuals may need assistance.

-Open two bilingually staffed site registration offices: one in the West

Town / Humboldt Park/Logan Square and the other in the Pilsen-Little Village area.

-Reinstate all Latinos who were previously purged from CHA waiting lists due to language barriers.

-Develop a remedial Section 8 waiting list composed of (1) Latino families who would have applied before the 1985 closing of the Section 8 Family waiting list if they had been adequately informed of the program; and (2) Latino elderly or disabled who would have

applied before the 1994 closing of the section 8 Elderly waiting list if they had been adequately informed of the program;

-Distribute all available present and future Section 8 Certificates and vouchers to registrants in the existing Section 8 list and the remedial (Latino) Section 8 list in such a way that the percentage of vouchers going to registrants on the Latino list shall be equivalent to the Latino percentage of Chicago's poverty level during the relevant registration year.

-Contract with a marketing firm and with organization(s) to develop and implement an aggressive plan to market all CHA housing programs.

-Employ a full-time bilingual Latino community liaison to monitor compliance with the Consent Decree.

-Meet at least quarterly with representatives of the plaintiffs and consult with them before announcing any major new initiatives or programs.

# Transforming CHA

## Getting To Know Englewood

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

Under the Chicago Housing Authority Plan for Transformation public housing residents are to be showed units in areas where there is a low rate of crime and not a high rate of poverty, plus a mixture of ethnic groups. In their new communities, according to some of the relocated residents, that has not been the case. Lithia Henderson, a young single mother of two and a former resident of public housing development Robert Taylor Homes, has been relocated for almost a year in the Englewood area, and, like many other relocatees from different public housing developments, she is finding herself on the verge of having to move again.

The West Englewood area is located on the South West Side of Chicago. It's bounded by 55th Street on the north, 75th Street on the south, the Conrail tracks and Western Avenue on the west and Racine Avenue on the east, according to the University of Illinois at Chicago's College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs.

Through my research with Columbia University Sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh, I'm finding out that rarely does a public housing resident stay in the same house or apartment that they relocated to for more than two years.

Henderson and her two children used to reside in a rat-infested, off-white concrete high-rise public housing tenement building on the outskirts of the State Street Corridor in the Robert Taylor Homes a year ago.

Now she stays in a large wooden frame home that's still rat and termite infested in the heart of Englewood.

Through CHA's ambitious \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation, Henderson relocated with a Section 8 Housing Choice voucher due to the closure of her building.

Henderson's not a bit shy. As a matter fact, she's very much the opposite, which becomes clear as she gives her opinion about her newfound area away from what she once knew for 7 years as home, Robert Taylor.

"Englewood? It's okay," said Henderson, "but the people are still doing the same things they did in the projects – there's still drug selling, and gang violence."

"As for Englewood being better than where I came from, I would have to say no."

"Some of the people are friendly," Henderson continued, "just like in Robert Taylor."

"But better than Robert Taylor? I still have to say no."

After speaking to Henderson, I decided to call 16th Ward Ald. Shirley Coleman's office and ask her views on the people relocating from public housing into the Englewood community.

"People need places to live, so whatever is available," Coleman said. "The good part about people moving in is that they know the procedure of voting. So far the most negative impact – the biggest problems that we have experienced in Englewood – is the gangs are also moving in trying to set up shop."

"But when it comes to residents moving in," Coleman continued, "I encourage that!"

Long time activist and resident of West Englewood Fred Hampton Jr, who is a member of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee and the son of slain Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton Sr, told me his views about Englewood.

"What I have been witnessing in Englewood community," said Hampton, "as well as other parts of the city – or the nation for that matter – is what the government might refer to as a rapid gentrification, but what we who reside in the colonial community prefer to call a land grab."

"The Government prefers to have us end up in the penitentiaries or in the grave



Residents of the Englewood community stand in line waiting on the food that is often administered freely to them by a neighborhood church in July.

Photo by Beauty Turner

yards," he said. CHA spoke person Jennifer Chhatlani was unable by *Residents' Journal* press time to provide the number of public

into the fine hairs of the streets of Englewood, I came into contact with other residents who used to reside in various public housing developments. Some

he biggest problems that we have experienced in Englewood- is the gangs are also moving in trying to set up shop.

-Ald. Shirley Coleman, 16th ward

housing residents relocated into Englewood as a part of the Plan for Transformation.

As I continued to comb and dig deep

have expressed to me that they like it better than where they came from and others expressed to me that they don't like it because of all the gang violence.

## Corrections

Our sincere apologies to CHAC, the agency that administers the Chicago Public Housing Authority's Housing Voucher Program, for the misprint of its website information that appeared in the 'CHAC Update' article on page 16 of the May/June 2003 issue of *Residents' Journal*. The correct website information is: [www.chacinc.com](http://www.chacinc.com)



## Bud Billiken Parade



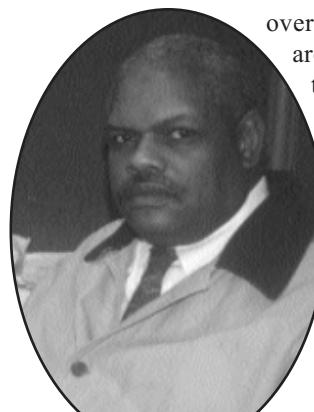
Right photo depicts the South Shore High School Drill Team performing at the 74th Annual Bud Billiken Parade earlier this month. In the middle photo, a federal subsidized housing resident and her son stands by a sign they made to encourage V103 F.M. radio to choose them as winners of contest for a free trip to Disney World. In the photo to the right, members of the reknown R&B singing group B2K perform before thousands of screaming fans after the Bud Billiken Parade.

Photos by Mary C. Johns

# Lathrop News

by Bobby Watkins  
Circulation  
Supervisor/Ad  
Salesman

Residents of Lathrop Homes are trying to understand recent delays in use of the split transfers within CHA, a policy whereby public housing families in a single unit can be transferred into multiple units as family members become adults or the number of children in the family increases beyond the capacity of the unit. We have all these vacant units in Lathrop, and right now, as I write this article, a large number of families are



**Bobby Watkins**

overcrowded and are eligible for the split transfer but aren't being moved. Why is this on hold? This delay is a problem - especially in some units where you have three adults and maybe six children in one unit. All these people are also lease compliant. It does not seem to be a management issue, which makes it a CHA issue. How long will these residents have to suffer? Lathrop residents thank CHA for the buses and other support for a recent field trip for children at Lathrop. The buses arrived in a very timely manner and a total of 71 children and 14 adults enjoyed themselves at the circus.

A second recent outing involving CHA did not go as well. We were asked to get children from our development as well as North Central Scattered Sites for the "participation parade," which was no problem. The children are always willing to help out, and we are always glad for them to do things outside of the development.



**These Lathrop Homes residents wait to hear the winners of a raffle that was held during a recent Health Fair at the public housing site.**

But we were told our children would have flags, water and some type of snack as it was 90 degrees and more outside, and they had to stand in the heat for two hours before the parade started. CHA employees responsible for providing the refreshments did not get these things. (I'm sure if we would have gone to our LAC, they would have got water or a snack!) We were not asking for lunch, just refreshments to cool down the children on a hot summer day. Then there was no float or t-shirts

for the children we brought, though everyone else in the parade had one or the other. Our children really looked sad about the fact they had neither one, and it's a shame they were treated this way, for, after all, they are the future. CHA had a float in the children's

parade just a few weeks before this one.

Let's not make our children feel less and, instead, make them be the best they can be for they are always willing to make a stand for CHA, so please, won't you stand up for them?

**L**et's not make our children feel less and, instead, make them be the best they can be for they are always willing to make a stand for CHA, so please, won't you stand up for them?

Congratulations to young achievers in the 4H Club in Lathrop and North Central Scattered Site 1224 N. Campbell. They had four members qualify to attend the state fair in Springfield by receiving Grand Champion Ribbons at the 4H County Fair at the



**RJ reporter Bobby Watkins poses with Nissar Rasim from AmeriGroup and Valarie Washington with the Lathrop Homes Service Connector during a recent Health Fair at the public housing complex.**

Chicago School of Agriculture. Also, thanks to everyone who helped in the health fair on June 20, held at the Daniel Cotter Boys and Girls Club. Special thanks to our alderman, Manny

Flores (1), the Cotter Club staff, Lathrop Homes management and staff, the AmeriGroup Service Connector, members of tenant patrol and the Local Advisory Council.

## Looking for Clarity in LeClaire Courts

by Beauty Turner  
Assistant Editor

When I stepped up into LeClaire Courts I was looking for what was once called the paramount, the Mecca, the supreme of public housing. Rows of brownish and tan brick town-

cash put in it, instead of toward it. Michael Milton, a resident of LeClaire Courts since 1974, talked about the big changes that he has seen occur during his residency. "Since I grew up here, this place [has] changed for the worse," Milton said. "There was a time that we...could leave our doors open." "When I was a child there use[d] to be

LeClaire for the last five years, ushered me into her apartment, up her stairs and into her bedroom and washroom to show me what she deemed as mold and mildew.

"I have put in many work orders and still nobody has come to fix this problem yet," Crowder said.

Many LeClaire residents said that it is now a place that is racked with at least six to seven different gangs.

When we heard something that sounded like gun shots, one resident said, "Ms. Turner, watch out because there's normally spontaneous gunshots throughout the development!"

LeClaire Courts LAC President Ruth Todd said, "When it comes to gang violences, we don't really have a lot compared to other developments. In mostly every development, there's some drug selling on street corners. Ours is no exception – but we do have security that is working with the 18th District."

Todd went on to say, "I believe that LeClaire Courts has changed for the better because of relocation. We have relocatees from Robert Taylor, Stateway and Prairie Courts, plus we have also won a \$450,000 grant for accessible space so that we can build trees, and a Peace Garden for the Seniors, playgrounds and a speed bump so that we can slow down the drivers on 43rd

houses grace South Cicero Avenue from 43rd Street to 47th Street.

Two streets separate the federal side and the city-state side of this very complicated public housing development, located on the far Southwest Side, that was filled with lovely townhomes.

LeClaire Courts is a development that many residents say seems to be tangled in a spider web of litigation with CHA and residents.

On what most of the residents call the city-state side of 44th Street, there were townhouses with white aluminum siding gracing the top of many of the buildings. Across the street on the federal side, the townhouses were all brownish-red brick. What looked like it once was beautiful could once again with a little touch of loving care place gently behind it and a little

many activities that a child could get into such as sports," Milton added. "Now there [are] not."

"There seem to be a lot of racial profiling in our community now," said another young man standing beside Milton who wished to be known as Anonymous.

"With the relocating of other residents from different location[s] with this CHA Transformation Plan there's been more gang problems," Noeamer Tate Poole, who has resided in LeClaire Courts since the early 1960s, said.

"What CHA doesn't do any more is screen the new residents like they used to," Veranque Clayborne, 17, said, "I lived here for 17 years, and there's a change here such as more violence!"

Veronica Crowder, a young single mother who told me that she has resided in



**LeClaire Courts, a CHA public housing complex on the city's Southwest Side.**

*Photo by Beauty Turner*

Street."

Many residents lured me in and made me want to hear more by telling me that they are receiving Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers. These comments left me wondering and fishing for answers. Especially when I know that this development is not slated for relocation under the \$1.6 billion Plan for CHA Transformation.

"There's a dividing line in LeClaire Courts between [the] city and state [side and the federal side]. On the Federal side the residents are eligible to receive Section 8 housing choice vouchers," CHA Section 8 Department spokesperson Sharon Glenn said.

# Homeownership Urged Amidst Home Foreclosures

by Mary C. Johns  
Editor-in-Chief

Is it a good thing for the federal government to encourage public housing residents to buy homes? Some elected officials think it is a way to gain wealth, while housing advocates for the poor are questioning whether the poor can maintain and sustain the home long term.

## Housing Advocates Decry the Push for Homeownership

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the authority of U.S.

Mobility is an important aspect of rental housing that homeownership would not allow you. If you're in a home, it's very hard if you have to pick up and move in a year or two.

-Kim Schaffer, spokesperson, National Low-Income Housing Coalition

President George W. Bush, is urging homeownership to minority families nationwide, including the poor. Housing advocates for the poor are wondering if it is a sound idea for the federal government to be encouraging low-income people to purchase homes without the money it would take to maintain and sustain the home long term.

The annual income needed to purchase a home in Chicago is \$60,535, according to a recently released report by the Chicago Rehab Network. The average teacher makes \$38,450, while a retail salesperson earns \$18,810 and janitors earn \$20,510.

The hourly wage necessary at 40 hours per week for a market-rate two-bedroom apartment at 30 percent of income is \$17.85 in Illinois, or \$37,128 per year. A low-income mother with kids may qualify to obtain a home, but housing advocates are concerned that there would be a constant threat of foreclosure resulting in homelessness for her and her family. A prime example of how difficult it would be for a low-income person to maintain and sustain a home is the case of a former Chicago public housing resident who I will call Sister.

Sister moved out of the CHA Dearborn Homes in 1996. The 30-year-old



Mary C. Johns

woman, with one child at the time, worked at a U.S. Postal Service in a suburb town, which paid her about \$17.73 per hour.

Sister saved up just enough money

to move out of the Dearborn Homes. So,

with her mediocre savings, she began looking for a house to buy. She acquired a

"But homeownership is not the only choice that's out there, and it's not necessarily the option that makes the most sense for everybody. Because, if you have a family living from paycheck to paycheck and they move into homeownership and then something happens to their furnace or their roof, or the plumbing, that's all their responsibility then that's all on them."

"And so, if they miss a payment on their mortgage and then move into the whole foreclosure process, in that case the family ends up worse off than when they started if they had remained renters. And in addition to that, people who have lower income also sometimes need to be able to move more frequently to follow job oppor-



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Mel Martinez (right), is honored with a "Homeownership Hero" award in June.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Newswire

tunities or to deal with other issues that could arise.

(Continued on Page 10)

three-bedroom, two-and-a-half story home with a low down payment and got a mortgage for under \$350 monthly. The house had a tree in the backyard that was leaning against the side of the building threatening to collapse on the roof. It finally did one day. Then, after living there about two-and-a-half years, the pipes under the ground burst, which resulted in the sewage backing up.

At the same time, Sister was suffering from a health condition which kept her going back and forth to the doctor often. This made her miss a lot of time from work with little pay and finally resulted in her dismissal. With little money to continue to pay the outstanding house notes and for medication and other bills, she lost her home to bank foreclosure in 1999. The bank refused to accept two months late mortgage payments that included late fees. Sister is currently without a job and homeless.

"I'm thinking they had accepted my checks because they took a long time sending the checks back. But they sent a letter with the return checks stating they wanted a certain amount of money by a certain date, or the sheriff will be out to put me out the house," Sister explained.

Kim Schaffer, communication director for the National Low-Income Housing Coalition in Washington, D.C., said during a July interview that their organization is concerned that the Bush administration and the U.S. Congress' push on the poor towards homeownership could likely result in more negative consequences such as Sister's.

"We're a little concerned that the (Bush) administration and Congress continue to push homeownership. It could be to the point that they make rental housing seem like a second class or a worse option. And our position is that, yes, homeownership can have its advantages," Schaffer said.

## HOMEOWNERSHIP

2001 Median Priced Home  
\$100,000



The Chicago Department of Housing set up this booth with information on homeownership in the lobby of City Hall in June.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

**Sources:** The Median Home Price data is from the National Association of Home Builders, Housing Opportunity Index (new and existing homes), Second Quarter, 2001. The Annual Income Needed to Qualify for a Mortgage is calculated using the prevailing 2001 interest rate, assumes a 10 percent downpayment and includes taxes and insurance. The Annual Income and Hourly Wage data for selected occupations are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, 2001. The Fair Market Rents and Hourly Wage Needed to Afford a 1BR or 2BR Apartment are from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Out of Reach 2001. The Housing Wage is the hourly wage that needs to be earned for housing to be considered affordable, i.e., to cost no more than 30 percent of income.

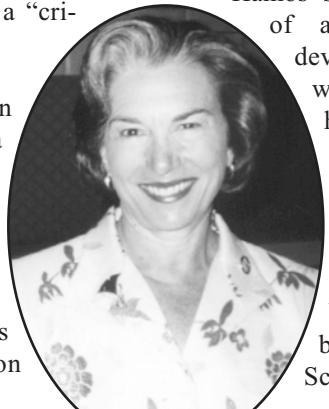
*These excerpts are from the Center for Housing Policy/National Housing Conference, Paycheck to Paycheck 2001 report.*

# Housing Policy Needed

by Michael Ibrahim

The state of Illinois is in dire need of a coordinated housing plan, a pair of elected officials on the front lines of the affordable housing debate said recently, with one describing the current state of affairs in this state as a "crisis."

"I believe we have a housing crisis in Illinois. We need a housing plan and a set of policies to get us out of it," said state Rep. Julie Hamos (D-18). Hamos, who is the Chairman of the Illinois House Committee on Housing and Urban Development, joined U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9) in calling for a "proactive" strategy for affordable housing development during a June 30 conference sponsored by the Chicago



**U.S. state Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9)**

photo by Michael Ibrahim

Rehab Network, a citywide coalition of housing advocacy groups.

"We have to awaken a sleeping giant, and that sleeping giant is the need for affordable, safe, decent housing in Illinois," Hamos said.

Calling for "a policy-driven approach to housing," Hamos said the complexity of affordable housing development combined with the traditionally hands-off approach of state legislators must be tackled in order to address current needs.

"I say this:

What we are asking for, it is not business as usual," Hamos said.

Schakowsky pointed to federal policy that is also undermining the policy priorities of all but the richest Americans.

"We continue to give money to the richest Americans in the hopes that it will trickle down and create jobs. It doesn't work," Schakowsky said.

**We have to awaken a sleeping giant, and that sleeping giant is the need for affordable, safe, decent housing in Illinois**

-U.S. state Rep. Julie Hamos (D-18th district)



**Michael Ibrahim**

"We can create jobs in this country. We can build housing. We can have health care. People can have a good education. We are the wealthiest country in the world."

As many as 18 different state agencies are involved in housing policy development in Illinois, according to Hamos, but they rarely work in conjunction with elected officials with regards to housing policy development. Hamos used the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) as

an example.

"IHDA has never been asked to come before a state legislative committee," Hamos said of the 36-year-old agency. "Customarily, IHDA would say, 'We are a finance authority and we do bonding and we have not too much to do with the legislature.'"

The result, Hamos said, is that flaws in housing policy in Illinois often go uncorrected.

"When the affordable housing trust fund passed, the dollars that came in from the real estate tax did not go directly to IHDA. They went a circuitous route and

then through the Department of Revenue and then to IHDA," explained Hamos. "Apparently, no one questioned about how the money was spent nor really looked at whether there might be improvements, suggestions or better ways of doing it, and that's why the legislature has really not gotten involved."

Hamos said the priority of the next year for advocates should be to get legislators interested and involved in developing and coordinating housing policy. Both Hamos and Schakowsky emphasized the need for voters to pressure the elected representatives of the places we live and work. The responsibility, they said, of addressing these issues should fall

squarely on legislators, since they are best positioned to get the job done.

"This I hope will be a common theme in our message of the year," Hamos said, "and I hope that's what you will be saying to legislators and teaching them about what the implications are if we don't do this well."



**U.S. state Rep. Julie Hamos (D-18).**

Photo by Michael Ibrahim

# Homeownership Urged Amidst Home Foreclosures

## (Continued From Page 9)

"Mobility is an important aspect of rental housing that homeownership would not allow you. If you're in a home, it's very hard if you have to pick up and move in a year or two," Schaffer said.

### U.S. Elected Officials Comments on Homeownership

Recent reports indicate a surge in home foreclosures nationwide. Middle class people are losing their homes left and right because of the downfall in the U.S. economy in recent years. And many home foreclosure court cases are pending, according to a recent report by the Chicago Tribune.

**I'm an advocate for low-income people. But I am not an advocate for low-income people trying to figure out how to stay low-income.**

-U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis, (D-IL), 7th District

time.

Even so, several elected officials like Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-IL, 7th District) are all for homeownership for all low-income residents, including those of public housing.

Davis, who is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus' With Ownership Wealth Homeownership Program that is steered towards the African American population, suggests that homeownership is a chance for people to gain wealth.

"The reasons that the Congressional Black Caucus is pushing homeownership so hard is because we recognize that most wealth basis with people begins with homeownership," Davis said during a

much racism now. It's not as much prejudice now. And so I wouldn't say that the times are harder. But I would say that individuals really have to develop the appropriate attitude about their condition and work their way out of it.

"I'm an advocate for low-income people. But I am not an advocate for low-income people trying to figure out how to stay low-income," Davis said.

### Public Housing Residents Dispute over Homeownership

A battle is brewing among the residents of one Chicago public housing development regarding homeownership. Several of the residents want the opportunity to own their current public housing units. But they say they are being blocked from the chance of doing so by the current resident leadership representing them at site.

LeClaire Courts resident Jackie Norwood, the mother of a 14-year-old daughter, wants to own a home there. She thinks she can obtain, maintain and sustain her home over a long period once given the chance and the proper training in homeownership.

"Yes. I'm willing to go homeownership. Because I think it's going to be a nice program," she said during an interview in late July at the public housing

complex.

Norwood, who receives public assistance and Social Security benefits to support herself and her teenaged daughter, says that she could handle the mortgage payments, utility bills, potential maintenance repairs and other living expenses needed to maintain and sustain the home. "I think that I can maintain my house," she declared.

"I truly believe that I can do this, once I get training or what have you." However, Ruth Todd, the Local Advisory Council president, said residents at the public housing complex aren't fully prepared for homeownership because of credit problems and the lack of the necessary money it would take to keep the home.

"I have no problem with homeownership. But the residents in LeClaire I don't think are ready for homeownership," she explained.

"Number one, there's a credit issue. Number two, with the maintenance job, anything that breaks down the resident would have to have that fixed, whereas now, we have a management that comes and fixes it," she said.

Residents of LeClaire Courts are in the process of being polled on who favors homeownership at the public housing site, according to Norwood.

The Tribune report named Chicago a "hot spot" for home foreclosures mainly due to predatory lending.

A report by the U. S. Labor Department stated an increase in joblessness. And other recent reports by various public organizations announced that a majority of low-income social and educational programs are being slashed big

phone conversation in July. "If you don't own anything, your chances of having some wealth are pretty minuscule."

Davis thinks that it is not as difficult nowadays for low-income people, including public housing residents, to manage and sustain a home.

"That's a defeatist attitude," he declared.

"No. It [isn't] harder. It's not as

# Domestic Violence Danger

by Cheryl Murphy

*Author's note:* The facts included in the following article can be accessed at [www.cybergrl.com/views/dv](http://www.cybergrl.com/views/dv).

## The Definition

A domestic violence relationship is when a husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend or another intimate partner totally dominates and controls his or her mate.

The methods of control include name-calling, verbal put-downs, isolating the victim from family and friends, withholding money, physical harm or threat of physical harm and sexual assault. Furthermore, the abuser often uses children as bait to control the victim. The abuser in a sense tries to play "God" to the victim without loving himself or herself.

The abuser has poor self esteem and feels very insecure. To be in control is what makes the abuser think he or she has a partner for life.

## Domestic Violence Statistics

In 95 percent of domestic violence cases, women are the victims, and those cases are widespread:

Every 15 seconds, a woman who is in an abusive relationship is beaten by her abuser. Battered women are often severely injured. 22 to 35 percent of the women who visit medical emergency rooms are there for injuries related to their partner's abuse.

The leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 is domestic violence. Battered women are more likely to suffer miscarriages and give birth to babies with low birth weight. 63 percent of young men between the age of 11 and 20 in jail for murder are serving time for killing their mother's abuser.

One out of five women in an abusive relationship is victimized over and over again by the same person. 50 percent of all homeless women and children were rendered homeless as a result of domestic violence.

## The Warning Signs

The beginning stages of domestic violence start with verbal abuse. The abuser uses the tactic to make the victim feel intimidated. In essence, the victim's self esteem begins to lower. The

abuser will attack the victim emotionally by keeping the victim from being who he or she is as an individual. The abuser will use pressure tactics by rushing the victim to make hasty decisions.

When the abuser misuses authority, disrespects the victim, violates trust, breaks promises and isolates the victim, these are very clear signs of domestic violence. In some cases the abuser will use the method of self-destructive behavior as a means of staying in control.

The abuser will harass their victims by making uninvited visits or calls. They will follow the victim, embarrass them in public and refuse to leave when asked to. The abuser wants to control even the money at all times.

The people that are more likely to be victimized by an abuser in a domestic violence relationship are those who have poor self esteem. The victim is usually a woman who came from a dysfunctional family and was abused as a child herself. The individual feels as if the abusive partner they have is all they will ever have.

One sign is when someone you know has been isolated from you and others that they normally see. The victims often are very fearful of the abuser. The victims often display an inferior behavior pattern. They are totally withdrawn and depressed.

The victim's emotional stability is often demolished. If the victim is stating that he or she gets blamed for things they are not guilty of this is a very clear indication the victim may be in a domestic violence relation. When the relationship escalates to physical violence then the victim usually has noticeable scars.

Domestic violence has no barriers. This can happen to couples of various ethnic backgrounds and economic levels. Domestic violence is multi-cultural. Men who are doctors, psychologists, lawyers, ministers and business executives commit acts of domestic violence.

## The Cycles of Domestic Violence

The cycle of domestic violence has three stages. The tension building stage is where there is yelling, screaming and threats of physical harm. The next stage is the violence stage. This is where the abuser beats the victim physically. Then comes the

seduction stage. This is the stage where the abuser apologizes, promise to change and hopes he or she can get some "sexual healing." Afterwards the cycle reoccurs.

## Recovery

The best time for a victim to leave a domestic violence relation is during a honeymoon or seduction stage.

The abuser is generally less likely to think the victim will leave. There are more shelters for animals than there are for victims of domestic violence. If you decide to help a victim of domestic violence, it is helpful to approach them in a non-blaming way.

**When domestic violence cases reach a physical beating level then the chances of staying and surviving are slim to none.**

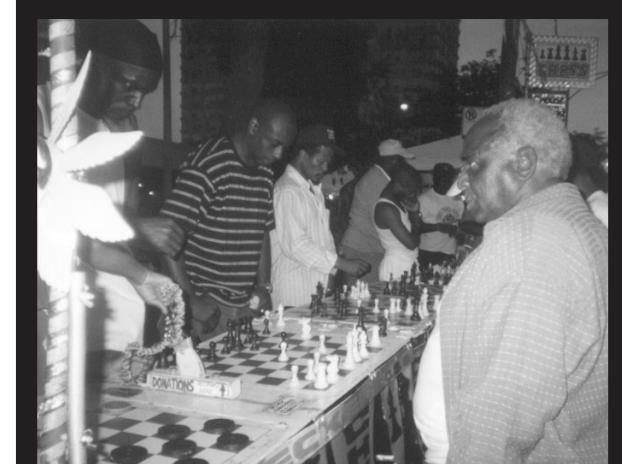
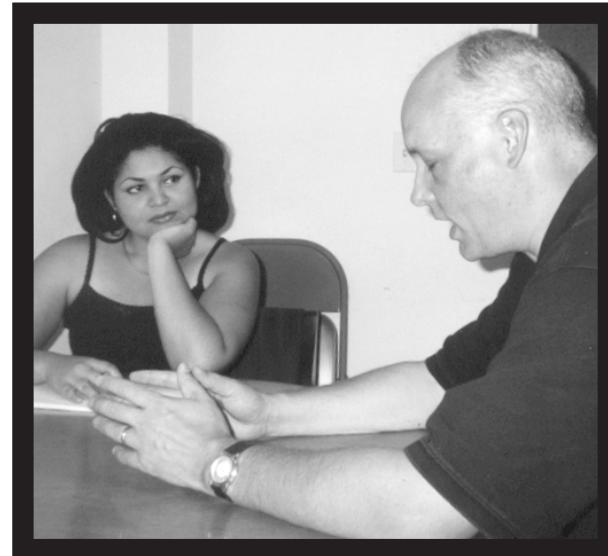
Know the victim is frightened. One must always be supportive of the victim. Find out if he or she is suffering from physical harm.

Plenty of information is available for victims. For example, [www.cybergrl.com](http://www.cybergrl.com) is a good web site for information on domestic violence. In the Chicago area, the phone number 311 is available 24/7 for victims of domestic violence. There is also protection for victims. Stalking is illegal in this state. There is lots of legal assistance the victim can receive for being stalked by their abuser. Additionally, a pair of bills have recently been introduced addressing the issue of domestic violence. State Representative Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) introduced a bill on April 3 that allows housing authorities and the federal department of Housing and Urban Development to evict perpetrators of domestic abuse. In Chicago, Mayor Richard M. Daley is seeking to pass a law that would help victims of domestic violence receive paid leave from work.

Domestic violence is a matter of great importance. When domestic violence cases reach a physical beating level then the chances of staying and surviving are slim to none.

Even more dangerous are instances where victims return to batterers after successfully leaving. By returning, these women and children increase their risk of not surviving the abuse.

## In The News



In the left photo, activist Fred Hampton Jr., and other protesters rally to free five young men who were allegedly abused before being arrested by Chicago police officers in April at the Cabrini Green public housing complex. In the middle photo, Chicago *Sun-Times* columnist Mark Brown and *Residents' Journal* columnist Crystal Medina share writing techniques at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center in July. In the photo to the right, men of the third ward took time out to play games of chess and checkers during Ald. Dorothy Tillman's third Annual "Roots" Festival in July.

Photos by Beauty Turner



# The Places We'll Go The People We'll Meet



## Do the Right Thing, Don't Water-Pollute by Corey Gathings

Water is one of the earth's most precious natural resources. Without water, life could not go on. Water takes up at least 70 percent of the earth's surface. Water takes three different forms: solid, liquid and gas. Solid - ice - is created when water reaches its freezing point. Liquid is created when ice is heated. Gas takes form when water is heated so high that it is turned into vapor, and then it evaporates. At least 60 percent of your body is made up of water, and if you lose 10 to 20 percent you can't live, according to a report by David Krantz and David Kifferstein from the University of Michigan.

But humans - not all humans but some - throw trash in the water, killing some of the organisms in it. Saddam Hussein, the former leader of Iraq, caused a major oil spill that polluted the water. Some other causes of pollution are sewage, floods and radioactive wastes. Beaches in the United Kingdom, for example, have a high amount of pollution. Sometimes when pollution occurs, sediments enter bodies of water and suffocate plants and fish. When this happens, productivity and water depth are diminished and

organisms are left without a home. Pathogens are another type of pollution. Pathogens include viruses that can eventually cause cancer and other diseases. They also include organisms such as bacteria and protozoa. The pollutants enter waterways and storm drains. Though microscopic, these pathogens have a tremendous ability to cause disease.

Other forms of water pollution come in the form of petroleum, radioactive substances and heat. Petroleum (oil) sometimes pollutes the water through oil spills. Large amounts of petroleum are being discarded and causing pollution along shore lines. Oil spills are caused by offshore drilling and supertankers carrying oil that have accidents. Radioactive substances are produced by nuclear power plants, and from industrial, medical and scientific use of radioactive materials. Heat is also considered a pollutant under certain conditions because it can cause the death of plants and animals.

Most workers use special nets to clean up a beach after an oil spill. Oil spills are an environmental problem because once oil is spilled it is almost impossible to clean up. The smallest amount of oil can spread very quickly. Water pollution can be classified as municipal, industrial and agricultural. Municipal water pollution consists of waste water from homes. But more stress is being put on the removal of solid residue from waste water.

About 95 percent of fresh water on earth is found in

to eat or sleep.

Many of us in this system have been through too much and the load is too heavy for us.

I have been in the system for five years. I was taken away from my mother when I was nine years old and still emotionally attached to her. It felt like I was being torn away from her womb.

Because of a drug habit, we ended up starving for days, without clothes on our back, suffering abuse and neglect. Then it all started with a pair of shoes. My sister got new shoes and was so excited. She was showing them to everyone but hid them from my mother. Eventually, though, my mother found them and sold them.

My sister was in tears, acting hysterical, and out of anger called her godmother and told her what was going on, because we had always been very secretive about what was going on behind family walls. Her godmother

"In

**my opinion, the system needs to be investigated because it's not doing its job.  
Living in a group home or foster home, you are surrounded by total strangers, afraid to eat or sleep."**

the

intercourse on

the

job?

Or that they consider it OK to draw a knife on a client? Is it right for group home staff to insult a client, threaten him or put their hands on him?

This is the most disgusting, sickening, unreal place I know of. This is a bad combination that's destroying our future.

How can people say what we do is wrong when we live in a place like this where anything crazy and unthinkable can happen at any time?

## Too Heavy A Load by Anonymous

To elevate your mind, you need to raise yourself over all the madness out there. Sure it's possible, but the world is full of unstable situations, and the only situation you have is what's given to you.

What if you lived in a place that was corrupt? Then the only option is jail. What am I talking about? I'm talking about living in a foster home or a group home, places that are supposed to assist youth and provide them homes, food, clothing and other services. The question is, do these homes live up to their job titles?

What I mean is, how can someone have a lawyer, caseworker, case manager and therapist and still be stuck at point A?

In my opinion the system needs to be investigated because it's not doing its job. Living in a group home or foster home, you are surrounded by total strangers, afraid



UYIJP reporter, Tiffany Young, interviews a Cabrini-Green resident for the "Candyman" movie DVD edition project. photographer -- Beauty Turner

## Urban Youth International Journalism Program

**Publisher**  
*Ethan Michaeli*

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

## Participants

*Ebony Adams, Velouria Brimmer, Tieara Brown, Rashawn Coleman, Alexis Castleberry, Yolanda Cathey, Roberto Del Toro, Mia Dunlap, Nemayah Evans, Antoinette Franklin, Corey Gathings, Jovan Gathings, Clarivel Gonzalez, Iesha Griffin, LaMonica Hicks, Anquella Jackson, Tyrone Jarvis, Dimitri Juste, Bryant Larkins Jr., Darius Lewis, Lois Lewis, LaKendra McKay, Nick Minor, Andre Murphy, Mary Pickens, Sheena Rhodes, Alexis Salgado, Laura Salgado, Frederick Scott, Antione Shaw, Anise Tatum, Iesha Watts, Kenneth Watts, James*

## My Life in Bolingbrook by Tiffany Young

*Editor's Note: As part of the redevelopment of public housing, many young people who formerly lived in public housing in Chicago have moved to the suburbs or other neighborhoods closer to the edges of the city. Tiffany Young talks about life in the suburbs and how it differs from her previous Chicago home, in Robert Taylor housing developments.*

I moved to Bolingbrook from 39th and Prairie in Chicago on Dec. 18, 2002. Bolingbrook is very different from where I moved. It's very quiet out there. Bolingbrook is a western suburb of DuPage County. I attend Bolingbrook High School. It's stricter out there because if you fight in school, you have to go to court. However, there are still fights. You don't hear about many crimes out

there like you do here in Chicago. You don't have a problem getting a job there at the age of 15. You can learn how to drive there at 16 years of age. Many students there have cars - there are student and teacher

"[L]iving in Bolingbrook is a big experience for me because I'm around races other than my own."

Bolingbrook. I met a lot of people out there - by chance I even found one of my cousins out there. When I moved to Bolingbrook I planned to attend a diverse school. I didn't want to go to a all black school again. I wanted to be around whites, Mexicans, Hispanics, etc.

A lot of people who live in Bolingbrook think it's lame. There's not that much to do out there, but I just got finished adapting to it.

In conclusion, living in Bolingbrook is a big experience for me because I'm around races other than my own. And it's not rowdy out there like it is in Chicago. A lot of people are more well-mannered than in Chicago. A lot of parents out there are more strict on kids about grades. The parents out there want their kids to all get As. Living in Bolingbrook is a big change for me, but I think Bolingbrook is all right.

## Love Versus Infatuation

### by Kenneth Watts

Since there have been a lot of disputes or arguments on the subject of love versus infatuation, I am undertaking the task of trying to figure out from an overall perspective what teens in this day and age are experiencing: love or infatuation.

Being 20 years old doesn't help you figure this out - you are sort of stuck in the middle of the whole situation. I'm trying to figure out if other teens feel the same way as me.

Is there a big difference between the two words that determines whether or not a relationship is worth staying in?

Maybe you should look for a pattern that shows mistakes without being too cyn-

ical. I asked a 20-year-old woman who declined to give her name her opinion on the subject and she said, "Love is something that's not easily recognizable. It has no common characteristics except you being happier than ever before.

Now, infatuation, on the other hand, you are just there."

She said, "I'm like this - either you're ready to accept me with all of my flaws, or you're not. Since love is unconditional there should be nothing you can't show to your significant other." Which leads to a lot of excuses if you're in a relationship.

James Wesley, another teen, had this to say: "People are looking, wanting and needing to be loved. Some just find other ways and things to put in the place of love lost, or love that was never found.

"The reason teens nowadays get love and infatuation mixed up," he added, "is

that they can't comprehend love when it's in their face. So their eyes are opened by infatuation but their hearts aren't expanded by love. And how do our youth embrace things they don't

"The only way you'll know it is by being in touch with yourself."

understand? By avoiding it."

"I can tell that society is pulling the youth of today away from family values and the things it takes to establish a loving and healthy relationship," said a teen named Malcolm.

Another anonymous person I interviewed said that, "Love is feeling cherished above all else. You'll never really know love until it's hit you like a ton of bricks." She also said that once you experience love, "it will have an everlasting effect on

how you view life."

Christina, a 20-year-old North Side woman, said that, "Love shouldn't be taken lightly - that person could make or break your world."

A man who asked his name not be used added that, "Love is a feeling that if not handled well could ruin your life."

I think there are several ways to change society's views on living in relationships based on changing the way households conduct the business of loving and caring for their children while instilling morals in their children so they can tell right from wrong.

People must understand the many phases of love and that love and infatuation are often intertwined. There is a thin line between being infatuated and truly loved. The only way you'll know it is by being in touch with yourself.

## Meet The Urban Youth International Journalism Program!



Satin Crable and Kari Lydersen say "Hello", assistant directors of UYIJP.



Youth reporter Corey Gathings interviews a Cabrini resident who says "Candyman" five times for the camera.  
In July, youth reporters interviewed various Cabrini Green residents for the DVD release of "Candyman" the movie.



Youth reporters Mia Dunlap (left) and Twanda White (right) at the New Expressions, youth journalism awards ceremony, held at the Tribune Tower in June.

## Relationships by Talonda White

Relationships may be good or bad. Some relationships may last forever and then some may last for only about a year depending on whether the pair relate with each other well. I've even known relationships to fall apart because someone in their family would butt into their business and cause the couple to break up. Every relationship is not going to be great because there is always someone or something there to ruin it, but if the two mates sit down and try to talk about their issues, maybe they can resolve them.

I asked Alexis Brown, 14, how long has her relationship lasted and how did it go. Alexis said, "My relationship lasted for about a week because we weren't on the

same page - we really weren't each others' type." I asked Khrystyna McClinton, 14, has she ever had a relationship with someone and how did it turn out? She responded, "Yes I did have a relationship with somebody and it was beautiful until I found out his ex-girlfriend was coming back into town. I didn't know until I heard his conversation on the phone. All I heard was 'Yeah, it will be great.'

"I was very upset, so I sat down with him and had a long talk, and I found out that her mother and father were throwing her a welcome back party and they wanted him to help and to invite a lot of his friends. After all, my relationship turned out to be great."

I think that if there is a lot of drama in your relationship then it really isn't meant for you to be together. Everett Joiner, 14, agreed. He said he and his girlfriend would always argue, even if he just glanced at another

girl. She even got mad when they were at a party and another girl juked [i.e. danced with] him.

"After that little accident I had to let her go, since she would always find something to get mad about," Joiner said.

Another guy I asked was Jeffry Johnson, 14. He said that his girlfriend would start fussing at him if he would even play ball at the park. He also said that he is getting sick and tired of always being around her, that he wants to hang out with his friends, too. I told Jeffry to just talk to her and make arrangements that some days he would go hang out with friends and sometimes he would be with her.

What I am trying to get across to couples these days is that if they take the time to talk it out, maybe their relationship could become greater and more passionate, but sometimes people just aren't made for each other.

## What is a Friend? by Lois Lewis

Define the word friend.

In the dictionary it has many meanings. Different people have different meanings for the word.

To me, a friend is supposed to be there when you have mishaps, when you're

down and blue, when you're happy or just need someone to talk to who gives the words "I care" meaning. Some people use the word friend loosely, like they would use the word "love."

Some people can't love themselves. So how can they be a friend to others? A young woman stated to me that she had a friend like a sister who knew her from left to right, who knew her deepest secrets. She put her trust, her

love,  
[A]  
**friend is suppose to be there  
when you have mishaps, when you're  
down and blue, when you're happy or just  
need someone to talk to, who gives the  
words "I care" meaning."**

her  
faith in her friend and one day she had a mishap where people were against her and thought her friend would be there for

her, but it turned out her friend was the main one turning against her. She closed her eyes in disbelief and then opened them again in slow motion to double check, but realized that who she called her sister and her best friend was on the other side.

The woman stated that you have to live day by day, and remember that as long as you believe in yourself that's all you need.

I ask you, who is your friend? Will they be there for you?

## Make New Friends.. UYIJP and Gumbo UNITE!

*My Gumbo* is a nationally distributed teen magazine written, produced, and edited entirely by teens from all over the United States. Based out of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, youth reporters traveled up to Chicago to meet the youth reporters of *Residents' Journal* for meetings, story development sessions, and a fun-filled day and tour of Navy Pier.

"It was an experience to remember. Interacting with them [gumbo journalists] gave me a new perspective about just how important and powerful it is to be a youth journalist. And it was nice to meet other doing the same things as me." -- Twanda White



**Meeting new people and having fun at Navy Pier!**



# Positive People In CHA

by Bobby Watkins

This edition of positive people is dedicated to some of the young residents, to thank them for staying in school and wanting to continue their education, especially those wanting to go out of the developments and then bring back something positive to the community in which they live. One of these individuals is a former participant in the *Residents' Journal's Urban Youth International Journalism Program.*

*Carly Hodges*

Young Achievers group, where she worked with the Mayor's Office's summer youth program at Lathrop Homes. Hodges attends the Church of the Good News where she is always involved in something. Hodges was also in the first graduating class of *Residents' Journal's Urban Youth International Journalism Program,*

*International Journalism*

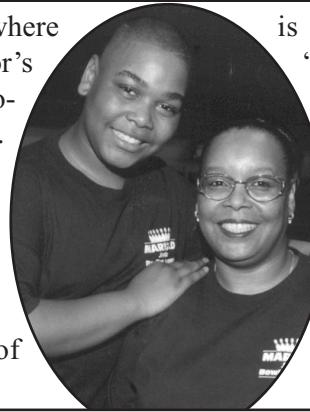
**CHA Northeast Scattered Sites resident Mary Giles and son.**

and we salute her and urge

is known to many as "Momma."

Giles works closely with the youth and has a youth bowling team that has won several competitions. Giles has also worked with the North East Scattered Sites lunch program, its annual fun day celebration and many other programs. Giles recently said she hopes to bring new

programming to North East Scattered



**David Haracaz**

Many North Side residents – especially those of the Chicago Housing Authority – would like to congratulate Haracaz, formerly an attorney at the Legal Assistance Foundation, on his recent appointment to the Circuit Court. Haracaz was a lawyer who worked closely with public housing residents and was considered by many public housing residents to be among the best and will be missed. Haracaz came to be respected by many residents as more than just a lawyer. We hope this appointment is just one of

**T**his edition of positive people is dedicated to some of the young residents, to thank them for staying in school and wanting to continue their education, especially those wanting to go out of the developments and then bring back something positive to the community in which they live.

I'm especially proud of this young lady because she is somewhat special to me. A resident of Lathrop Homes for the past 19 years, Hodges is always respectful of adults, went to Holy Family Grade School, attended Notre Dame High School and is presently attending Robert Morris College. Hodges has been a volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club and was a member of the 4H

her to be the best at whatever she decides to do in the future!

**Mary Giles**  
Giles is from North East Scattered Sites, and is a volunteer member of the Local Advisory Council there. Giles has always liked to work in the community she calls home and where she

Sites, as well as serve in an elected capacity with the Local Advisory Council, which she said will allow her to do even more to help the residents be all they can be. Keep up the good work!

many, for Haracaz helped many CHA residents keep their homes and will be thought of as a man who always put up a good fight! Keep up the good work.

**R e s i d e n t s '**

## **Journal**

### **New Contact Information**

**Beginning Monday August 11, 2003,  
*Residents' Journal* personnel can be  
reached at the numbers listed below:**

**Ethan Michaeli, Publisher**

**(312) 745-2681**

**Mary C. Johns, Editor-in-Chief**

**(312) 745-2682**

**Beauty Turner, Assistant Editor**

**(312) 745-2686**

**Gabriel Piemonte, Outreach Program Director**

**(312) 745-2687**

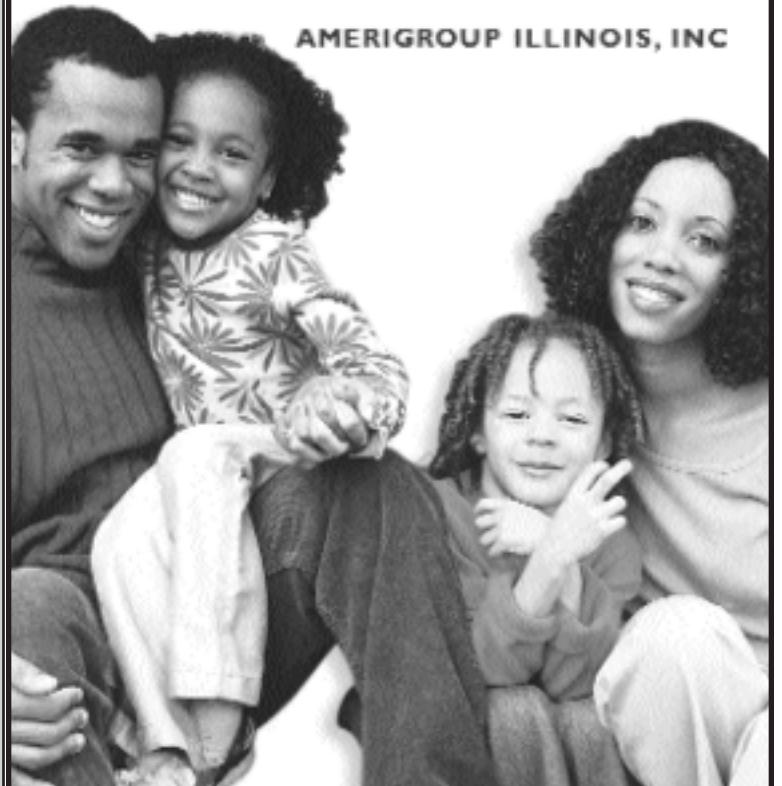
**Crystal Medina, Editorial Assistant**

**(312) 745-2684**

**312-384-6809**

[www.amerigroupcorp.com](http://www.amerigroupcorp.com)

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# Stop The Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

**A** May 6 press release reported that the people of Cabrini Green recently had to defend themselves against police officers they deemed "Marauding Pigs" that allegedly tried to harm some residents who were outside enjoying the company of relatives after one had just buried his grandmother.

On April 17, at about 10:30 p.m., police officers came into the public housing complex, speeding up onto the sidewalk, according to the account of eyewitnesses. The car came to a stop and police officers jumped out and started grabbing people, witnesses said. A young man nicknamed "Nightfall" was in a van with some of his friends on his way to the store when a police car pulled up alongside the van in order to block its exit path, witnesses said. Several officers then approached the vehicle, with one allegedly hitting Nightfall in the face. Additional police



Cenabeth Cross

**Residents' Journal** that was shot by the police for trespassing, (removing the last of her furniture). The police alleged she shot a police-woman in the leg as she fled the scene, but eventually accused somebody else instead.

Police brutality is getting worse, according to some residents.

#### Women in Prison

**T**he 9th of May I went to a rally at the Thompson Center to support local efforts to promote community-based sentencing for women and children.

The day began with vocalist Chris Inserra singing "Voices," then Gail Smith, executive director of CLAIM (Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers) welcomed all that were there.

A member of CLAIM then read a let-

**I**ncarceration in Dwight Prison in central Illinois costs taxpayers \$30,390 per year per person and \$25,000 each year to care for each child of an incarcerated woman in foster care.

cars came and the police, witnesses said, with their weapons drawn, surrounded the van. Cabrini Green residents began to surround the police, and as this happened some officers tried to push the crowd back as others broke the windows of and threw teargas into the van, according to the eyewitness account.

The assault sparked strong community response, possibly fueled by the memory of the death last October of 21-year-old Michael Walker at the hands of police, according to witnesses. Walker was shot in the face, according to reports of the incident, and the police had kept him in the hallway where he fell for two hours, and he bled to death.

The people came out of all the doors and began to shout at the police to leave the young men alone. The memory of the last murder was still fresh. The residents followed the police to the station.

By the time they arrived the police were all outside blocking the entrance. They had brought out the dogs, too. The witnesses said that the police had threatened to shoot one of the young men on the ground after they had handcuffed him. They also said that five officers beat up a 50-year-old woman and arrested nine other people.

One of the young men who was attacked said, "I was surprised and glad the community stuck together. It was a good thing, a beautiful thing. We were in that van thinking we were all gonna die." Police brutality goes on in many of the CHA housing complexes, as reported in **Residents' Journal**. The Chicago Police Department decided to not charge the lady I wrote about in a recent issue of

ter sent to governor Rod Blagojevich. This is an excerpt:

"In this time of tough budget choices and belt tightening, I urge you to consider a program that will save taxpayer cost, reduce repeat offenses and preserve families. Last year, Public Act 92-0806 was enacted. It outlines a pilot Residential and Transition Treatment Center for women convicted of nonviolent offenses, to be operated by the Cook County Sheriff.

"The acute need for this program cannot be denied."

It goes on to tell that of the 82% of women in jail are mothers and the same amount are in jail for nonviolent offenses, according to a study released by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. The study reveals it is cheaper to treat offenders outside of prison than within. Incarceration in Dwight Prison in central Illinois costs taxpayers \$30,390 per year per person and \$25,000 each year to care for each child of an incarcerated woman in foster care.

Working with non-profit organizations could provide programs that reduce repeat offenders.

The Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers did a similar study in 1997. Almost 2,600 women are locked up in Illinois prisons. More than 1,100 women await trial in the Cook County Jail.

Many are single parents who need drug treatments. To just put them in jail does not rehabilitate them, according to CLAIM. Community based treatment will be better for the ex-offenders. They can learn parenting skills and family

relationship counseling. They can get jobs after the proper training. Naturally, they will need help in obtaining any housing.

The plan offers hope for the women and relief for everyone concerned. There is a great strain on the relatives who have to pay to take children to the penitentiary to visit.

Michelle Muniz told how hard it was for her when her sister was in jail. She had to see after her kids. Her sister Diana T. Delgado is out now and she has become an advocacy coordinator for CLAIM.

Women from Visible Voices and Grace House recited the poem listed below at the "Mothers In Prison, Children in Crisis" National Campaign in early May.

Photo by Cenabeth Cross



**Women from Visible Voices and Grace House recited the poem listed below at the "Mothers In Prison, Children in Crisis" National Campaign in early May.**

grandmother and her grandson did a rap about incarceration.

(Continued on Page 19)

#### The Truth About Us

**T**he truth about us is that we've been in jail. Some of us many times, some of us only once. We might as well go ahead and say that first 'cause most of you think that's who we are before anything else.

The truth about us is most of us have been addicted to drugs or alcohol and did just about anything we could to make a buy.

Yeah, the truth about us is some of us sold our bodies, stole money, wrote bad checks, sold drugs and a few of us hurt other people in a blackout rage, but mainly we take it out on ourselves.

That's the truth about us.

Most people stop right here and decide they know all they need to know of the truth about us.

But there are a few of you out there who see a deeper truth and we hope you are listening.

The truth about us is that we're women and mothers and sisters, daughters and partners.

We miss our kids and families, we cry at night and we worry about what's happening at home.

That's the truth about us.

The truth about us is that we're scared and confused and angry and sad and lonely and desperate.

We don't know how to be in a relationship that's good – whatever that is – but we are really good at taking care of other people. We don't know a lot about boundaries. We'll trust anybody, but we don't really trust anybody.

The truth about us is we're hopeful and eager and creative – we can learn.

We're artists and writers and store managers.

We get depressed and have nightmares.

We know how to act real tough.

We cry a lot.

We sometimes get confused about whether it's today or a long time ago.

We can't remember a LOT about being kids.

We remember a LOT about being little, about being beaten and raped by people we trusted.

We keep a lot of secrets.

That's the truth about us.

The truth about us is we don't know how to ask for your help.

We don't know the names of your agencies, but we know the faces and the names of people that treat us with respect.

We can tell when you really don't want us around.

We can tell when you really care.

We are survivors.

That's the truth about us.

**Note: This poem was collaboratively written by the women from Visible Voices and Grace House**

# Some Secrets About A Better and A Longer Life

by Dr. Rodica Popescu

What I want to write here is an article which is supposed to open a longer line of information about life's secrets. This is intended for those people interested in learning how to live a longer, better life. Personally, I think everybody ought to be equally interested, even if well-informed. Like life itself, the sciences about life are in continuous development. News, too, is coming continuously – fresher and fresher and more and more interesting news confirming the newest studies and their findings. Nowadays, much more than at any other time, we can see that what is new today is not so tomorrow. The newest discoveries in great variety are coming rapidly, through the newest ways of the newest technology, and are fascinating. Today, the most modern possibilities of science and technology offer the promise of fulfillment of the ambitions of the world's scientists.

These scientists fight to master all kinds of secrets of life in order to extend the length and quality of life for the benefit of all people. They are taking this question as a real life challenge and a very useful lesson.

But this is not enough. The public at large, overwhelmed by day-to-day concerns, are constantly busy and do not keep in touch with scientific advancements

ily understand what this equilibrium or balance means, I will compare it to an airplane in flight. For the purposes of safety, a plane's designer and constructors make a body that is perfectly balanced. Its purpose is to fly safely. If, somehow, this perfect balance is broken, then the airplane will come down immediately, possibly leading to fatality. The same happens with living creatures if they lose the balance of their normal lives. Just like this airplane, they could also experience something abnormal or even fatal what is wrong is not righted in time. That's why before any flying, in order to prevent trouble stemming from any attacks or defects, the plane will be carefully scrutinized.

The same must be done periodically with living creatures in order to determine whether all vital functions are operating properly, and, if not, then every disorder – even the smallest – must be fixed. Every function must return to normal. I define normal as conforming to some pre-established set of norms, where forms and functions are in a state of health and everything works in balance.

## Why Does Disease Occur?

The causes can be mechanical, chemical and human error, including the error of ignorance. In the case of people, there are other aggressors which are living creatures to and which I call bio-aggressors. The aggression is an unprovoked attack which requires entry into the human body. In

against bio-aggressors, an incapacitation of the ability of the body to use force and fight invasion. In this case, the individual will be open to the smallest attack of any kind. The bio-aggressor will seek to attack the victim's entire body in order to destroy it. There is a direct proportion between the force of immunity and success in life, as well as an indirect proportion between one's bad habits and the force of immunity. Individuals who have bad habits are weaker and their success in life will be poorer, while those who do not have any kind of bad habits are more successful. There is not another way between these two alternatives, just as there is not another way between normal and abnor-

mal. The only difference is one of the degree of success or disease.

Bio-aggressors, because they live on another living being, are called parasites. They take their shelter, as well as their food, from the host's body. They are classified based on their size, form, mode of living and method of attack of respective hosts, among other aspects. The basic categories are parasites, bacteria and viruses. What seems interesting to me is that people are very afraid of animals that are bigger and look forceful but are not afraid

which is a great mistake. Of course, keep in mind that even better than combating something wrong is preventing the problem from happening in the first place – prevention is the mother of wisdom.

## Life's Secrets

There are many secrets to life, big and small.

First, remember that people's capacity to improve understanding is unlimited, though many prefer to not pay attention to information. Also, we have grown unused to being fully attentive, and this can lead to fatal results.

We all have a very large capacity of self-protection, but not all of us use it. In

**L**ive practically, not theoretically. Use whatever means you can to find out about your enemies, including their vulnerabilities and personalities.

fact, many people choose to destroy that capacity instead through bad habits. Learn from the misfortunes of others in order to avoid the same pitfalls yourself. We sometimes mistakenly believe problems belong just to others that turn out to be our problems as well.

It's important also to pay attention to the news in order to gain information that will help in the practice of a better lifestyle. Many people do not understand that life is something very fragile, ready to

# A Senior Commentary

enough to understand all the secrets of life. Some people consider these secrets a problem for scientists alone. This is wrong! Such people will never be prepared to combat an eventual attack on their health, let alone help others who fall ill. They will be vulnerable to becoming victims because they are already victims of their own ignorance.

At the same time, people who are well informed are ready any time for a good fight. They are vigilant and alert – and, as a result, safer. Many people are not conscious that life is nothing other than a continuous, sophisticated and difficult fight and full of secrets. For a successful life, everybody must be fully prepared intellectually, physically and psychologically. I mean everybody. That is why I am writing. This being the main reason for this article, I will start with the simplest definitions about the principal notions used by me here: health and disease.

Health is a state of perfect and continuous equilibrium or balance physically, physiologically and psychologically of the vital functions of a physical body, be it human, animal or vegetable. Disease is the breaking of this perfect, natural equilibrium. Even the word itself – dis-ease – shows a state out of ease; a dysfunction or disorder; the state of being out of control. Illness means the same thing – basically, something is wrong. In order to more eas-

order to enter, the bio-aggressor must find a gate. It is up to the potential victim whether a gate will be open or not.

The gate is bad habits: smoking, poor diet, obesity, lack of optimism, a sedentary way of life, stress, alcoholism, lack of physical activity or exercise, lack of information or ignorance about healthier lifestyle choices, promiscuity, lack of hygiene, etc. Unfortunately, there is not a direct proportion to cause and effect. Sometimes a small cause can provoke a disastrous effect – even a fatal one – if it is not properly fixed in a timely fashion.

## How Does Disease Occur?

As I mentioned before, disease depends on the cause as well as the conditions. Each bio-aggressor uses a certain method of entrance. These methods vary based on the nature of the gate, the location of the attack and the reaction of the potential victim (I define reaction as a force of self-protection or immunity), among other factors.

It is important to know about immunity. It is a natural power of the living body which is gained through nourishment – mother's milk, in the earliest years. Immunity can be lost if one lives an unhealthy lifestyle. The result will be a loss of natural power to protect the body

if the animal is smaller, even if it is just as dangerous or more dangerous than the large ones. In the case of bacteria or viruses, it seems people are less afraid just because they don't see them. So it is that people will lick their fingers during a meal despite the fact that they have not washed them.

These kinds of bad habits are doubly dangerous because people not only endanger themselves. They set an example others, including children, might follow. The mouth is the very first gate of entrance for all bio-aggressors, and the mistake only has to be made once for it to have an effect.

Many diseases depend only on people themselves. All of us are suffering more or less similar attacks, but not all of us become victims. Many of us, for example, are suffering under stressful conditions, but the results of those conditions vary because immunity differs among individuals.

When the state of one's health begins to deteriorate, there start to appear signs of an unhealthy state. These are called symptoms. I will write about symptoms in the future, because there are a large number of them, and it is very important to know about as many as possible in order to address them and combat sickness. Many people, even when they know they have symptoms, make no effort to fix them,

be lost at any moment, and therefore are not prepared, as they should be, for a fight at any moment against any kind of aggression. Additionally, when contemplating aggression, keep in mind that not only is an attack itself aggression but the very idea of an attack is a very real aggression and is the greatest danger. Ultimately, everything else is merely a weapon.

People do not know that a successful fight is the result of a good way of life. A good life is a healthy one, one that is not polluted with bad habits. Keep your life under your control, and remember that a victory over your enemy is a victory over yourself. Think of life as a continuous drill for a fight. Live practically, not theoretically. Use whatever means you can to find out about your enemies, including their vulnerabilities and personalities.

Finally, keep in mind that each fight for a better and longer life is new motivation for a better way of life.

These are not all the secrets to life; I will leave it to the reader to discover additional ones, which will serve as a challenge for a positive, more active involvement in maintaining good health.

*Author's note: I wrote all of this from my own knowledge and experience after 27 years of medical practice as a physician in my own country, Romania. I hope I am correctly understood.*

# 2003 Puerto Rican Day Parade

## Crystal Medina Editorial Assistant

Many Puerto Rican people recently started their weekend by cruising around the city waving flags, honking horns and cheering.

**T**his fest is the biggest week-long event in the mid-west.



This metallic Puerto Rico Flag loomed over the party goers during 39th Annual Puerto Rican festival in June.

Photo by Crystal Medina

ing as they headed to the 2003 Fiestas Puertoriquenas (Puerto Rican festivities). "This is a huge celebration and we are loud, and this is important in letting everyone know that we are here and that we are strong, politically and economically," said Mr. Xavier Nogueras, director of festivities for the Puerto Rican Parade Committee. The festivities took place in the heart of the Puerto Rican community, Humboldt Park,

from June 16 to 22. This fest is the biggest week-long event in the Midwest. 50,000 proud Boriquas (Puerto Rican people) a day, starting Friday, showed up for the 39th annual festival. People old and young came out to celebrate their heritage and have lots of fun in the decorated park. Red, white and blue were everywhere along with an estimated 100 booths that housed vendors, restaurants and organizations.

The vendors sold merchandise from T-shirts to refrigerator magnets. Jewelry is a top seller, and yes, this is where those CDs with the Puerto Rican flags on them hanging from rear view mirrors come from. Artwork that tells the story of Puerto Rico over the years through woodwork, sculptures, paintings and drawings were sold. CDs are also popular items. Salsa, Merengue, Hip Hop and House are favorites. People even bought

T-shirts spray painted in different colors stating nicknames and letting everyone know who they loved and who loved them. Hungry people waited in long lines for their arroz con gandules and lechon (yellow rice and pigeon peas with roasted pork), and frituras (different varieties of fried appetizers which are a dough typically your choice of pork, beef, chicken or fish.). And of course, I can't leave out the infamous Jibarito sandwich. This steak sandwich placed on two giant fried plantains topped with cheese, mayonnaise, lettuce, tomato and smothered with garlic is named after the Country Folks who reside in Puerto Rico. When it comes to Puerto Rican cuisine, your taste buds will never be disappointed!

Organizations and companies also came out for different reasons. Some came to advertise and hand out flyers, and some came to educate and give out literature. For entertainment, the Puerto Rican Fest is the largest carnival and has more rides than any other carnival in the city. There was a carousel for the children and bigger rides for the more courageous and everything in between. There were also carnival games like the classic basketball game and others.

Two stages were put up to house superstars. There talents such as Elvis Crespo, and Fulanito, a popular singer and group who perform Meringue, could be seen, as well as old school Salsa master Sonora Poncena and Huey Dunbar, who does a little of everything. The future stars of America



Latinos, young and old, around the city of Chicago gather to have a good time eating and communing together during the 2003 Puerto Rican festivities in Humboldt Park in June.

Photo by Crystal Medina

weren't left behind either. Youth dance groups stole the spotlight to show off their talents in shaking a little of this and twisting a little of that. The shows were spectacular! I got the chance to speak with Efrain Malave, President of the Puerto Rican Parade Committee.

**R. J.:** What did you think of the turn out of the festivities this year?

**Malave:** This year it was bigger than ever because the festival was free of alcohol and tobacco, and the entertainment was better because it started with a Christian act on Tuesday. It was more of a family event, and more people came out.

## Odyssey Project Graduation

### by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

Forty-six adults ranging in age from 20 to 72 attended a graduation ceremony Saturday, May 31, 2003 after completing a free, yearlong college level introduction into the humanities. The ceremony for the Odyssey Project, a humanities course offered to low-income adults, was held at 54 W. Chicago Ave. The graduates received not only their certificates, but also a book of 20th Century poetry as a gift. They will also receive a stamped transcript of six credit hours from Bard College.

**T**he subject matter of the courses included philosophy, American history, literature, art history and critical thinking,...

Most of the adults had been out of school for years, even decades, and were eager to take part in the program. Sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council, classes were held two nights a week for nine months at The Abraham Lincoln Centre located on Chicago's South Side, and on the North Side at The Howard Area Community Center. A "Bridge Course" for graduates who had taken the 2001-2002 introductory classes was held in a classroom at Columbia College on Wabash and Congress.

The subject matter of the courses included philosophy, American history, literature, art history and critical thinking,

and were taught by professors from The University of Chicago, Northwestern University, DePaul University, The School of the Art Institute and Shimer College. Among the graduates completing the first year course at the South Side location was Bernice Robinson, 51. Robinson said the classes started with about 26 people and ended up with about 12. She wasn't one of those who dropped out because "I'm hard-headed."

"Even the things I had difficulty with," explained Robinson, "I really wanted to learn. I went to the library to research some of the things I had trouble with." Robinson said her favorite courses were literature and art. "[I] acquired knowledge to talk on a

citizen since September of 2002, also attended classes on the North Side. A native of Nigeria, Akerele-Ale said the course titled "Critical Thinking and Reading" helped him a lot. "Before I started the course I would always tell myself to slow down. Now [I] speak with confidence." Akerele-Ale originally took the course to "know more

about the culture of white and black America," and to improve his knowledge of philosophy. Ferdinand Hounlekpo, 29, from Benin, also a country in Africa, attended the South Side classes. He said the course offered "people who've had a little bit of hard time to go to school." Hounlekpo, who drives a cab to pay tuition, said he took the course for the free credits. Hounlekpo said college tuition in America will cost him three times more than it would other students because he's from a Third World country. His favorite courses were "American History" and "Philosophy."

"Anybody who [hasn't] studied philosophy [has] missed a lot," Hounlekpo said. Gerald Mitchell, 53, was one of the graduates from the Bridge Course. "When [black people] get teased about education," Mitchell said, "we make ourselves feel bad



Chicago area residents ages 20 to 72 attended a graduation ceremony Saturday, May 31, 2003 after completing a free, yearlong college level introduction into the humanities, provided freely by the Odyssey Project.

Photo by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

– it's not for white folks only." Mitchell said he "appreciated the extra reading material. It has built my library." Mitchell said he now finds himself looking at philosophy books a lot in bookstores.

Although all students who graduated from the first year course are eligible to take the second year course with all the benefits, free bus fair, books and credits upon completion, Hounlekpo has been encouraged by the course to go to college sooner than planned. "Thanks to the Odyssey Project I've made up my mind... It triggered me to want to do it now," he said.

# Stop The Violence Continued

(Continued from page 17)

**S**ome of the supporting organizations include Amnesty International, Beyond Education, Black on Black Love/My Sisters Keeper, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Church Women United of Illinois, Girl Talk and Grace House. CLAIM was established in 1985 and became a corporation in 1987. They provide legal services to help mothers take steps to prevent their mistakes from causing irreversible damage to themselves and their families. In child custody classes they are given the *Handbook for Incarcerated Parents in Illinois* to study. This book is used as a model in 13 other states and Canada. Jail Project volunteers

teach the classes at the Cook County jail every Saturday. Volunteer lawyers and paralegals provide pro bono representation on family cases.

## Superintendent Selection

**O**ne of the people in attendance was police officer, community activist and member of the African American Police League Pat Hill, talking about the selection strategy used in appointing a new police superintendent. Superintendent Terry Hillard retired this year. She suggested that the people get involved in the selection of his replacement. She says that the public pays their salaries, therefore the public should be the ones to decide this issue.

It is now done in private by 11 people. The tone is set up from the top, meaning that the one who gets the job will be picked by the "in" crowd. This is why we should set up committees to write to 700

because of the state of affairs and violations within the department itself. The beatings, rapes and killings in the Cook County Jail Jesse Jackson to call a summit meeting that was held at the PUSH

**N**othing good came out of the summit. It ended with a female sheriff running out of the back door because the ex-cons told her she couldn't speak and took over.

E. Oakwood Blvd. The zip code is 60653. We could call the police board, Hill said, who could tell us when the African American Police League has its next meeting by calling this number. You would be able to speak at this meeting and help set the standards of what we expect the superintendent to do,

headquarters recently. It was a meeting where ex-offenders faced each other to talk. Nothing good came out of the summit, many activists said.

It ended with a female sheriff running out of the back door because the ex-cons told her she couldn't speak and took over.

# Project Safe Neighborhoods

by Cenabeth Cross

**A** new federally-backed initiative is helping the Chicago Police Department (CPD) in its efforts to reduce the number of illegal guns on the streets, building on the ongoing work of the past couple years. Named Project Safe Neighborhoods, the program seeks to address concerns about gun violence that have been discussed in community forums for years.

I've been interested in getting guns off the streets for a long time, even before my son was killed on Nov. 19, 1991 – he was shot in the back on his way home after visiting relatives at the Dearborn Homes public housing complex. The Million Mom March was the first rally I had attended for gun control. It was held May 14, 2000, in Washington. Also in attendance was U.S. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), a nurse and mother

College. This was given by U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL). His son Huey Rich had been killed on Oct. 22, 1999. He had been attacked by two men who claimed that they were policemen. Both of the men had guns but just one of the men shot Rush's son – twice. Rush was also at the Million Mom March, and he spoke about his loss.

Rush is a former member of the Black Panthers. He has seen violence and death before. His friend Fred Hampton was killed 30 years ago in an infamous police raid. Another ally, Huey Newton, was also shot and killed.

The latest attempt to curb gun violence is called Project Safe Neighborhoods. This is a joint effort by federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. My information on Project Safe Neighborhoods comes from a CPD news release involving this fairly new method of curbing gun violence, centered on a more aggressive application of federal

longer terms. This is good news for the millions of law-abiding citizens of the City of Chicago. Because they just want these criminals and their weapons removed from their neighborhoods, so their families can live in peace and safety."

While Project Safe Neighborhoods has been set up citywide and beyond, special emphasis is focused on the 11th and the 15th districts where gun violence is especially high. Another key part of the plan is to target 30,000 state parolees and another 30,000 probationers in Cook County. The largest concentrations of these parolees and probationers are in districts 11 and 15. The Illinois Department of Corrections and the Cook County Adult Probation Department will be assisting in sending out letters notifying the offenders of the severe penalties for gun possession. The program will also have the assistance of the Illinois Department of Corrections parole and field service units.

The first person to be convicted under this new program is a resident from the Rockwell Gardens public

housing complex. Santana Rocquemore, 28, was sentenced to 10 years. This is the maximum term under the new law, given to him by district court judge Rueben Castillo. Rocquemore will serve his time in a federal prison. He will serve at least 8 of the 10 years, and there is no chance for parole.

Rocqueford is an alleged gang member from District 11 in Chicago. He lives in Rockwell Gardens, at 2450 W. Monroe Ave. On May 16, at roughly 9 p.m., officers report they saw the suspect at 4400 W. Madison St. where they saw him put a .25 caliber semi-automatic pistol in his pocket. They identified themselves as policemen as Rocquemore ran into a home nearby, police said. When they caught him, he engaged in a fight with the officers, according to police, and was finally arrested and searched, at which

point they found the gun, which was fully loaded, and 5 bags of rock cocaine. Rocquemore has prior arrests for robbery and delivery and possession of a controlled substance.

CPD spokesman Dave Bayless said, as part of this new initiative, every gun case is being reviewed by the U.S. district attorney in Cook County.

"We are looking to find out where we can get the most bang for our buck, so we're looking for federal cases that apply," Bayless said. "When the cases stick, we send them to federal penitentiaries in Montana or somewhere. We're sending a message that gun violence will not be tolerated. We're working with law enforcement agencies and community organizations.

"People are inclined to return to their old ways and go back to doing what they did before," said Bayless. "Now we're meeting with [the convicted] shortly after their release to give them any social services available. We plan to get tough without the empty message that there is no other way,"

"We feel things are working, but only time will tell," Bayless added. "We can sustain this by making ourselves accountable with the community's help, including CAPS. Once indicted or charged, photos are put up in the neighborhood where they live. We send out letters to parolees. The letter informs the probationers that their names [have] been given to federal law enforcement agencies and that [should they be convicted of] any future offenses...they may be prosecuted as an Armed Career Criminal, and go to federal prison for a minimum of 15 years without chance of parole. It explains that the federal system has no parole and no day-for-a-day good time credit."

Since Project Safe Neighborhoods was put into place, there were 20 indictments in one recent week, including a Robbins firefighter and a Steger police officer with one or more counts of firearms violations. Indictments are only charges and are not evidence of guilt. The

**N**ow we're meeting with [the convicted] shortly after their release to give them any social services available. We plan to get tough without the empty message that there is no other way...

**-Chicago Police Department Spokesman, David Bayless**

from New York, whose husband was killed and her son wounded and left partially handicapped in 1993 by a gunman on a Long Island Railroad commuter train. McCarthy has become a leader in the struggle against gun violence since successfully running for her congressional seat following the assault on her husband and son. Sarah Brady, the wife of James S. Brady, was there also. A former White House press secretary, Brady was shot in the head and left partially paralyzed by a gunman attempting to assassinate then-President Ronald Reagan in 1981. The two women spoke out at the march. I won the 2001 award for excellence in commentary from the Chicago Association of Black Journalists for the story I wrote on the event for *Residents' Journal*.

There have been other meetings, such as the one held at the Chicago State

laws related to illegal possession of firearms.

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program launched by President George W. Bush and U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft. It has five core elements: partnerships between the state and federal officers and prosecutors, planning, training, community outreach and accountability. Last year in Chicago, the police recovered 10,000 guns, and there were 666 homicides, of which 75 percent were the result of shootings.

In a statement, Chicago Mayor Daley said, "Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, when career criminals are caught with firearms, they will be turned over to the federal government for prosecution, whenever possible. As a result, more dangerous criminals will be sent to prison for

# Vivir más y mejor

por la Dra.  
Rodica Popescu

Deseo escribir en estas páginas un artículo con el que pretendo abrir vías más amplias de información acerca de los secretos de la vida. Este artículo va dirigido a las personas interesadas en aprender a vivir más tiempo y mejor. Personalmente opino que todos deberíamos tener similar interés en este tema, incluso si ya disponemos de información al respecto.

Como la vida misma, las ciencias acerca de la vida están en continuo desarrollo. De igual manera, las noticias no dejan de sucederse unas a otras continuamente, cada vez más novedosas y cada vez más interesantes, confirmando los más recientes estudios y sus resultados. Los científicos luchan por dominar toda clase de secretos sobre la vida para ampliar la duración y la calidad de la vida para el beneficio de todos. Se toma esta cuestión como un desafío de la vida real y una lección muy útil, pero no es suficiente. El público en general, abrumado por sus preocupaciones cotidianas, está constantemente ocupado y no se mantiene al día respecto a los avances científicos en forma suficiente para comprender todos los secretos de la vida. Algunas personas consideran que estos secretos son un problema de los científicos solamente. ¡Es falso! Muchas personas no son conscientes de que la vida no es otra cosa que una lucha continua, compleja y difícil y está llena de secretos. Para lograr una vida satisfactoria todos debemos estar totalmente preparados desde el punto de vista intelectual, físico y psicológico. Ésta es la razón fundamental de este artículo y comenzaré con las definiciones más sencillas acerca de las nociones principales que desarrollaré en esta

exposición de ideas: la salud y la enfermedad. La salud es un estado de equilibrio perfecto y continuo, en el ámbito físico, fisiológico y psicológico de las funciones vitales de un cuerpo, bien sea un ser humano, un animal o un vegetal. La enfermedad es la ruptura de este equilibrio perfecto y natural. Incluso la propia palabra "enfermedad", es decir, "malestar" indica un estado ajeno al bienestar, un trastorno o afección, el estado de algo que se halla fuera de control. Cuando esto ocurre, es preciso que cada función retorne a la normalidad. Yo defino la normalidad como un estado conforme a un conjunto pre establecido de normas en el cual las formas y las funciones son saludables y todo transcurre en equilibrio.

## ¿Por qué ocurre la enfermedad?

Las causas pueden ser mecánicas, químicas e incluso errores humanos, incluyendo el error de la ignorancia. En el caso de las personas, hay otros agresores que son criaturas vivientes a las cuales yo denomino agresores biológicos. La agresión es un ataque unilateral que requiere la entrada en el organismo humano. Para entrar, el agresor biológico debe encontrar una puerta. Depende de la víctima potencial abrir o mantener cerrada esa puerta. La puerta son los malos hábitos: fumar, una dieta deficiente, obesidad, falta de optimismo, una forma sedentaria de vida, el estrés, el alcoholismo, la falta de actividad o ejercicio físico, la falta de información o la ignorancia acerca de las alternativas de estilos de vida más saludables, promiscuidad, carencia de higiene, etc.

Lamentablemente no hay una proporción directa entre causas y efectos. En ocasiones una pequeña causa puede provocar un efecto desastroso, incluso fatal, si no se soluciona en forma adecuada y oportuna.

## ¿Por qué ocurren las enfermedades?

Puesto que viven a expensas de otro ser vivo, los agresores biológicos se denominan parásitos. Se refugian en el organismo anfitrión y se alimentan de ese organismo. Se clasifican según su tamaño, forma, modo de vida, método de ataque a los respectivos anfitriones, entre otros aspectos. Las categorías básicas son parásitos, bacterias y virus. Resulta interesante observar que la gente teme a los animales que tienen gran tamaño y aspecto feroz, pero no se preocupan si el animal es más pequeño, aunque sea tanto o más peligroso que los animales grandes. En el caso de bacterias o virus, parece que la gente tiene menos miedo porque no los ve. Así observamos a personas que se chupan los dedos durante una comida a pesar de que no se han lavado las manos.

Estas clases de malos hábitos son doblemente peligrosos porque las personas no sólo se ponen en peligro ellas mismas, sino que también dan un ejemplo que los demás, los niños, por ejemplo, podrían seguir. La boca es la primera puerta de entrada para todos los agresores biológicos y basta cometer el error una sola vez para que cobren efectos tales ataques. La vida encierra muchos secretos, grandes y pequeños.

En primer lugar, recuerde que la capacidad de la gente para mejorar su comprensión es ilimitada, aunque muchos prefieren no prestar atención a la información disponible. Además, hemos perdido el hábito de concentrarnos totalmente en el análisis de problemas y peligros, y esto puede acarrear consecuencias fatales.

Todos tenemos una capacidad muy amplia de protección propia, pero no todos nosotros la utilizamos. En efecto, muchas personas prefieren destruir esa capacidad a través de sus

malos hábitos. Aprenda con las desgracias de los demás para evitar esos abismos usted mismo. En ocasiones creemos erróneamente que los problemas son cosas que sólo afectan a los demás, pero luego comprobamos que también nos afectan a nosotros.

También es importante prestar atención a las noticias para obtener información que nos ayude a practicar un mejor estilo de vida. Muchas personas no comprenden que la vida es algo muy frágil, que puede perderse en cualquier momento y, por tanto, no están preparadas como deberían estarlo, para luchar en cualquier momento contra cualquier clase de agresión. Además, al contemplar la agresión, tenga en cuenta que no sólo se trata de un ataque en sí mismo, lo importante no es sólo la agresión sino la misma idea de un ataque es una agresión muy real y representa el mayor peligro. En definitiva, todo ataque constituye una agresión armada contra nosotros.

La gente no sabe que una lucha satisfactoria contra los agresores es el resultado de una buena forma de vida y una buena vida es una vida saludable que no esté contaminada con malos hábitos.

Por último, tenga en cuenta que la lucha por una vida más larga y mejor es un motivo más para llevar una mejor forma de vida. Éstos no son todos los secretos de la vida; le dejaré al lector la responsabilidad de descubrir otros secretos que le sirvan como motivación o como forma de comprometerse de manera más positiva y activa con el mantenimiento de una buena salud.

Nota del autor: este artículo es el resultado de mis propios conocimientos y experiencias después de veintisiete años de ejercicio de la medicina en mi país, Rumanía. Espero que se me comprenda correctamente.

## CHINESE TRANSLATION

**KOREAN TRANSLATION**

**RUSSIAN TRANSLATION**

# Letters to the Editor

## Crystal Clear Views

### Dear Crystal:

I'm worried about the violence in my community. It seems like whenever I turn on the news, there's never anything good to report. So many bad things are happening in the city, and I can't help but be scared. Any tips on how to protect ourselves and our children?

-Worried

### Dear Worried:

It does seem like as the weather gets warmer so do the city streets, doesn't it? Every time I hear of an adult dying or of a child getting hurt, it saddens me because it's such a shame. I hate to say it, but I have to: Things are only going to get worse if people don't start coming together to stop all

community. According to the Webster's dictionary, community means a unified body of individuals as: people with common interest living in a particular area. So, do you know what I say to that? Why not unite and let our common interest be peace? We all agree that we want to be safe and we want our children to be safe and grow up in happy environments, so what's the problem, people? Let's get with it!

The other morning, I was driving to work and I saw a little corner store set up in someone's front yard complete with snow cones, potato chips and candy. This made me smile because this sweet shop symbolized the simpler elements in a community that mean so much more.

The first word that comes to mind when I think

of this madness. The key word that you used was com-

of candy is children. Next, I think of innocence and then, safety.

Until that day when we can leave our doors unlocked and let our children walk to the corner store (or front yard) without that heavy feeling in our guts, if you choose to live in the city,

you can't live your life in fear. You'll just go crazy. You just have to be careful. Always keep your ears and your eyes open. Don't ever let your guard down and be observant of your surroundings.



Crystal Medina

## Poetry Corner

### On Night Ground

Footsteps of many, with ages young.  
Headed near nor far, from thy Kingdom come.  
Moon beams shine, on their sleepy stroll.  
With eyes wide open, bad decisions.  
Uncertain visions unfold.

A bundle of x's and o's, of black chromo-  
somes, the shadow of a tree, from shady days  
sprung.  
Shows their image, of what's known and  
unknown.  
Of their own futures hung.

Four corner foray, near the edge they stand.  
Not an ambition spoken, nor future seen.

A fellowship broken, wind beneath their  
wings, the waves give away, to thy grayish  
sand.

Praying on all fours, nowhere to creep, no  
revolving doors.

Money flows, through their nose.  
Powdery white, as snowflakes blow.  
Two steps from the door, from where the Oasis  
flows.  
The spirits make home, inside the cold glass,  
where your demons roam.

Their faces seen, young they stood.  
Life intervened, but they're known in the

hood.  
Saturday not met, not started yet.  
For the things they've done.  
In years they will say.  
While in the darkness, lying, wait for the sun.

I've walked the walk, underlined with dande-  
lions.  
Curvature chalk, with an empty mind.  
Caught up in the catching up.  
Between a thin line, the wrong side I sup.  
With nothing but time to talk – now.  
Tell me why?  
The last sip, the last drink, is from an empty  
cup.

-by Deno Sandz

## Not For Me!

It's starting to look real different around here.  
The sun is shining a li'l brighter and even the sky  
is clear.  
All the new buildings being built on the block,  
Where the slingers once stood when it was gravel  
and rocks,  
Flowers being planted and green grass is being  
grown in the spots.  
In the lots, where police brutality was once shown,  
the building of my childhood no longer exists.  
Where the elevators wreaked of 40 oz piss.  
And the stairways that were lightless and cold.  
Where my black sisters' souls were being sold.  
And my childhood playground that was once

made of wood and metal,  
Are now bright and colorful – at least my children  
won't have to settle.  
For the shortcomings of the city and our society.  
Oh wait – you didn't rebuild the city for the color  
me, and I'm almost certain that you would dis-  
agree, and insist that this inner city remake was  
done for me.  
But I have this question and I just dying to know.  
While my people are being sent to the suburbs,  
"Where will your people go?"

-by Tiffany Millison

## CONDOLENCES

**RJ** sends regards to the family of former LAC president of Lawndale Gardens, Louis Brown who passed away in July due to an illness. Condolences to Bobby Bolden, director of the CHA Summer Food Program, on the passing of her father in July.

**Residents' Journal** welcomes submissions from all of our readers and especially from public housing residents. Please send all letters and poetry to: 4859 S. Wabash Ave. Chicago, IL 60615. You may also call our office at our new number:(312) 745-2682 to discuss your ideas for submission.

# Rosstloss Relocations Fight On

by Ethan Michaeli  
Publisher

It's been almost 18 years since they were first evacuated from their public housing high-rises, but the former residents of the Lakefront Properties are still alive and kicking. At a recent meeting, more than 150 former residents of the Lakefront Properties spent more than two hours strategizing, organizing and rallying for their right to return to the North Kenwood-Oakland community.

Drawn by a simple advertisement on one of the city's most popular African American radio stations, they gathered in the office of the Lakefront Community Organization, the home-grown group which has represented them for all of this time. They filled all of the chairs in the room and then filled all of the empty spaces. When there was no more room in the office, they filled up the hallway.

Some of the former Lakefront tenants had gained a lot of gray hair in the nearly two decades they have been waiting for replacement housing. Others have grown from children into full-fledged adults with their own families. None of them, however, have forgotten the network of family, friends and neighbors that made their community a special place. There are many people out there who don't believe the 'relocatees,' as they are known, are still around. But those who doubt the existence or the resilience of this community would be well-advised to read this report of the history and current status of the relocatees. With construction finally beginning on the lion's share of their replacement units, the relocatees know that their struggle is in its most important stage. Some relocatees are aiming to get jobs building the units for which they have been waiting for so long. Many others are simply determined to come back to the neighborhood which has so many good memories for them.

As the relocatees struggle for their rights, meanwhile, the story of the former residents of the Lakefront Properties has a lot to offer to those who are concerned with the current relocation and redevelopment effort of all of the Chicago Housing Authority's properties.

The six high-rise buildings which comprised the Lakefront Properties resembled the high-rises in Robert Taylor Homes, Cabrini-Green, Henry Horner Homes and many other developments. Like many of those buildings, they had fallen into disrepair by the early '80s. Street gangs had effectively taken over the lobbies and public spaces as crack cocaine sales fueled their growth and armament.

The Lakefront Properties, however, had one thing that distinguished them from the other developments; as the name suggests, they are located on the south lakefront, near the mansions of Kenwood and integrated enclave of Hyde Park. Their proximity to Lake Michigan was envied by many around the city, including real estate developers and other politically powerful entities.

In 1983, CHA Chairman Vince Lane announced a plan to empty the Lakefront Properties and remake them as a 'mixed-income community.'

With the administration of President Ronald Reagan making rhetorical and political attacks on "welfare queens" and making deep cuts to the budgets of public housing developments, Lane felt he needed a positive example that public housing could provide quality housing for people from a range of backgrounds.

Today, almost everyone agrees that 'mixed-income' is a great idea. Back in 1983, however, mixed-income was a new concept and Vince Lane was its chief advocate. Lane went to Washington, D.C., and convinced the U.S.



Ethan Michaeli

Congress and officials with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to give his approach a try.

The residents of the Lakefront Properties had no idea they were about to become an experiment in creating these new mixed-income communities. They first heard about the redevelopment plans for their community by reading the newspaper, recalled Izora Davis, a tenant of the development who has represented her former neighbors for close to two decades now.

Davis and many other tenants were not inclined to become Lane's guinea pigs. After years of experiencing CHA's mismanagement and broken promises, they decided to take steps to protect themselves. Davis and other Lakefront tenants founded the Lakefront Community Organization. Davis is now executive director of the Lakefront Community Organization.

Out of the 700 families who lived in the Lakefront Properties, 160 refused to go - at least until they had a written guarantee that they would be able to return. CHA had promised to rehab all six buildings, and Davis and the others wanted that promise in a legally enforceable document.

The tenants

who refused to go

all moved into one

remaining high-

rise,

4040 S.

Oakenwald Blvd.

They organized

work details and

security patrols

and prepared for a

long struggle.

The local

political climate was just as hostile to public housing tenants as the national mood. The largely African American middle-class homeowners who lived in the neighborhood around the Lakefront Properties were just as prejudiced against public housing tenants as the Reagan administration. The middle-class homeowners elected local officials who sought to make the residents of the Lakefront Properties disappear. "It was a lot of hatred toward the residents of CHA," Davis said.

Like many of her neighbors, Davis was a single mother doing her best to rear her children under difficult circumstances - rats, roaches and gang members on the outside, health problems and poverty on the inside.

Davis and other members of her group felt an obligation to fight on behalf of their neighbors. After all, they had helped each other through the tough times. They had watched each other's children and together made the most of their scarce resources. A group of die-hards stayed in the building after everyone else had left. For two months, Davis stayed in the building by herself.

"Our position was that the people would get housed and that the children would get a place to stay," Davis explained.

"It was winter time. With icicles on the stairs, the water and the electricity turned off, who would want to stay there?"

"But then again, I'm hard-headed. I refused to let them give the people a place to stay."

Davis and her organization won the legal document they sought. The CHA gave them a Memorandum of Accord, a piece of paper that the Lakefront relocatees have used as a weapon ever since.

As any resident or Native American knows, a written promise from the government does not guarantee it will be implemented. So Davis and the other members of the Lakefront Community Organization have been in and out

of court for the past two decades, wrestling with lawyers from all of the various sides which have a stake in CHA redevelopment. Occasionally, they have gone on the war path, marching on CHA offices and protesting public officials.

Keeping track of the residents has been a continuing challenge of keeping a community from becoming invisible. Over 18 years, some families have grown while others have disintegrated. Some residents got their own Section 8 vouchers and found units in the private market. Some went to other CHA developments. Davis and her team have kept track of people using methods both traditional and creative. Mainly, the relocatees themselves have kept in touch with the Lakefront Community Organization, updating their former neighbors and keeping the hope alive that they might be neighbors again. Along the way, Davis and her team helped relocatees find jobs, get services and get out of trouble. Often, they provided relocatees with the kind of advocacy and advice only possible from those who have known each other for most of their lives.

"We now have a third generation who qualify for housing," Davis explained.

The relocatees have had significant victories.

Two of their six high-rises were rehabbed into a mixed-income development renamed Lake Parc Place. Today, Lake Parc Place houses hundreds of families, both public housing tenants and those who fit into the "working poor" category.

Lake Parc

Place is unlike any other CHA development. Clean and secure, the buildings offer well-kept laundry rooms, functioning elevators and numerous community activities. The hallways of Lake Parc Place are quiet, well-lit and free of graffiti.

Some may ask: If Lake Parc Place is so great, why doesn't the CHA use it as a model? That's a good question, one that I have asked many times, and for which I have never gotten an adequate answer. Vince Lane currently is serving a prison term for a botched real estate deal into which he entered during his tenure at CHA. Perhaps Lake Parc Place is ignored because Lane's political enemies are loathe to give him any credit. Perhaps Lake Parc Place irritates all of those who believe that poor people and high rises don't mix. Perhaps Lake Parc Place annoys those who don't want to admit there is a success story of residents taking charge of their own destiny.

"There have been a whole lot of efforts to get a hold of these buildings, get rid of the Lakefront Community Organization, and take this land, which is right next to the lake," Davis said.

"There has been a whole process of trying to pretend that the Lakefront Community Organization doesn't exist."

CHA officials and others have tried many different tactics in their efforts to change the terms of the original agreement. The residents' records have disappeared from CHA's archives and then, ironically, the agency has complained that the Lakefront Community Organization refuses to turn over its records. CHA has cut the Lakefront Community Organization's budget, tried to evict the group from its office in Lake Parc Place, tried to recognize other residents as the relocatees' representatives and even has tried to establish other resident groups to supplant the Lakefront Community Organization. Davis herself has been the subject of frequent harassment.

But Davis and the other relocatees have fought on, meeting when necessary and making all necessary sacrifices to maintain their rights. And that's not to say the Lakefront Community Organization hasn't compromised when it's necessary. For 10 years, the four empty high-rise buildings loomed above the neighborhood. Then, in 1995, the relocatees negotiated a plan which allowed CHA to demolish the four remaining high-rises in exchange for the construction of replacement units in North Kenwood-Oakland and nearby neighborhoods.

In 1998, the CHA held a nationally-televised event on the lakefront to celebrate the implosion of the remaining high-rises. Well-heeled government officials, neighborhood homeowners and many others gathered in the park just across Lake Shore Drive from the buildings. A few relocatees in the crowd could be seen shedding tears when the explosives were set off. Most of the crowd cheered. The buildings, however, had their own way of expressing themselves.

A morning eastward breeze brought a cloud of yellow dust across Lake Shore Drive toward the excited crowd. A composite of concrete mixed with all the blood, sweat, tears and laughter which took place in the structures, the dust blotted out the morning sun and covered everything and everyone in a thick layer. Suddenly, all of those who had been cheering and all of those who had shed tears were scrambling for cover.

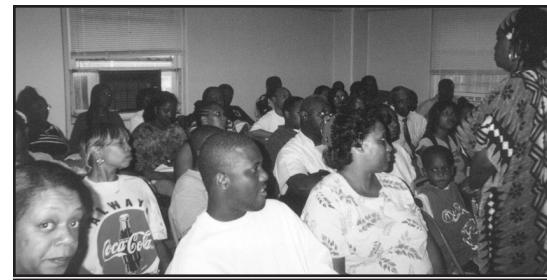
People covered their mouths and closed their eyes but were unable to keep the dust out. Those who sat in their cars fared no better as the dust covered their windshields in a thick paste which had to be scraped off.

Many of those who gathered on the lakefront that day wanted to celebrate the demolition of a community. All walked away from the lakefront with a part of that community - literally. Covered in dust, it was impossible to tell relocatee from middle-class homeowner, African American from white, rich from poor. In the scuttled celebration of the demolition is a lesson for all of those who wish to ignore the rights of residents. Nature has a way of reminding us that we are all part of the same human community. Time has a way of distributing justice equally to all.

What happens to the Lakefront Properties relocatees will set a precedent for all of the redevelopment projects currently underway. The communities in Robert Taylor Homes, Ida B. Wells, Stateway Gardens, Rockwell Gardens, Cabrini-Green and the other developments are no less resilient, no less determined than the community that once lived in the Lakefront Properties. If the relocatees are satisfied that their rights have been respected, and if they are able to reconstitute their community, then all of the other developments will look toward the south lakefront as an example that promises can be kept.

If, however, the Lakefront residents are denied, the last two decades teach us that this community will not disappear or grow less vocal. The Lakefront relocatees maintained their struggle without money, without lawyers and without much political support. They are, after all, public housing tenants and Chicago's public housing tenants are highly experienced in the tactics and patience required for political guerilla warfare. No one should expect anything less from the communities of Robert Taylor, Ida B. Wells, Cabrini-Green and the rest.

Even the Lakefront Properties buildings refused to be destroyed without reminding all of those gathered of the community which they once housed. So too will all of the communities housed in CHA developments be tougher to destroy than some people think. Those who ignore or disrespect those communities risk having their efforts thrown back in their faces.



Lakefront Community Organization founder Clara Dixon speaks to relocatees this spring.

Photo by Beauty Turner

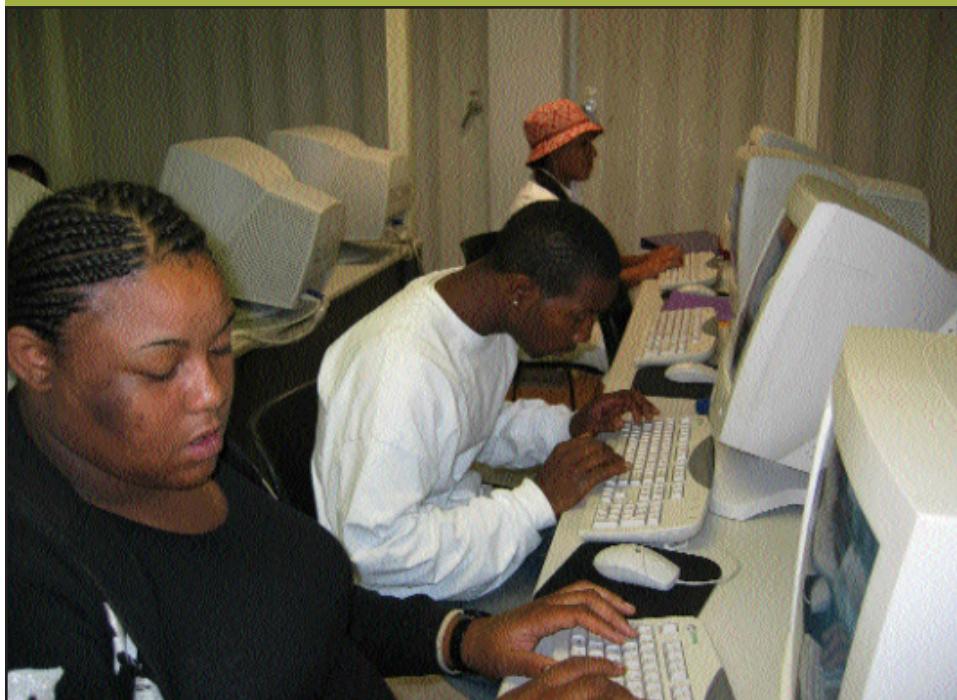
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These young people are hard at work during a recent WIA YouthTech class at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, where the youth take training in telecommunications as technicians for voice or data cabling, and as Microsoft Office Specialists.

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