

R E S I D E N T S '

Journal

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Winner!
2006 Studs Terkel
Award, Community
Media Workshop

Winner!
1st Place, 2005
New America
Award, National
Society of
Professional
Journalists

Winner!
2005 Peter Lisagor
Award, Chicago
Headline Club

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Residents' Journal is published by We The People Media, 4859 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60615. All Chicago Public Housing Residents are welcome to contribute to Residents' Journal©. Please call (312) 745-2682 or fax us at (773) 285-2853 with your ideas, comments and concerns.

Our Mission

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

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

We The People Media is committed to the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which protects the Freedom of the Press.

The views expressed in this publication do not reflect the views of We The People Media or its staff.

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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Publisher's Box

by Ethan Michaeli Publisher

We're back. Our regular readers will notice that *Residents' Journal* has not published in a few months. I apologize for this delay. As a not-for-profit organization, we are dependent on foundation support, and the grants did not come in the way we hoped for in 2005.

I will admit that there were times the *Residents' Journal* staff wondered if we would ever publish again. But we kept at it, broadcasting over our Web site, www.wethepeoplemedia.org, and on "Residents' Journal TV," our television program on the CAN-TV network. We also reached out for help and got great support both from our fellow journalists and from the broader community. In the spring, the Chicago Headline Club announced that Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns and Assistant Editor Beauty Turner - as well as our partners at the *Chicago Reporter*, Alden Loury and Brian Rogal - won first place in the Media Collaboration category for our report, "Deadly Moves." In the summer, the Society of Professional Journalists announced that "Deadly Moves" won the First Place Award in the first-ever New America category. I got to accompany Mary and Beauty when they went to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. to pick up their award. I even got to take the photo of Mary posing with legendary CBS anchorman Dan Rather. The "Deadly Moves" team was asked to train other journalists on the techniques of successful collaborations at the SPJ convention in Las Vegas later that year.

That was just the beginning. Also in the summer, Mary and Beauty won the Courageous Voices Award from the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, a 40-year-old social justice group here in Chicago. In August, the Chicago Defender Charities awarded us the Marjorie Stewart Joyner Community Service Award. The late fall saw the premiere of "Dislocation," a documentary film which covers the last six months of Beauty's former building in the Robert Taylor Homes development. Beauty is one of the main characters in "Dislocation" and the film was made by Sudhir Venkatesh, a Columbia University sociologist and **We The People Media** board member.

All of these honors meant a lot to our morale during what might otherwise have been a down time. The good news on the financial front started coming just as the weather turned cold. We got new support from the Albert Pick Fund, Illinois Bar Association, the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Chicago Community Trust and the Chicago Reader as well as continuing support from the Polk Bros. Foundation. As a reader, you will



Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

also note our new look, courtesy of the R.R. Donnelly Corporation, which is providing us with in-kind support by printing *Residents' Journal* for free. Like many of the above grants and honors, the new relationship with Donnelly Corp. is due to our board of directors. They have been gracious and understanding about our situation, and are stepping up their efforts to get us back on firm financial footing.

In recent days, we got two bits of news even bigger than those I listed above. First, the *Wall Street Journal* featured *Residents' Journal* on their front page. They even included their famous line drawings of Mary, Beauty and me. Then, the Community Media Workshop announced that we had been awarded the 2006 Studs Terkel Award. To me, the Studs Terkel Award is the most prestigious honor in Chicago journalism, given to those writers who - like Studs himself - use the power of the pen to bring the stories of ordinary people to the public square. A major factor in the *Wall Street Journal*

Instead of fame and fortune, we keep publishing the *Residents' Journal* because the content of our articles frequently improves the lives of our readers and sometimes saves their lives.

article and the Studs Terkel Award was our publication of "A Questionable Connection," the investigation we conducted with the Better Government Association of the donations from CHA contractors to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization, a political entity affiliated with CHA CEO Terry Peterson.

The mainstream media coverage, awards and the grants are a great boost, but the truth is that they are not what motivate us. This is hard work, stressful, dangerous and - as the name suggests - non-profit. Instead of fame and fortune, we keep publishing the *Residents' Journal* because the content of our articles frequently improves the lives of our readers and sometimes saves their lives. "Deadly Moves" is an investigation of the relationship between the relocation of public housing families and the surge in the murder rate in certain parts of the city. Publishing it prompted the city to deploy more police officers to 'hot spots' around the city. We wrote "A Questionable Connection" because residents are too often blamed for the lousy services the CHA provides. Publishing it got at least one private management company to clean up its act.

As you will see from reading the follow-up reports to "Deadly Moves" and "A Questionable Connection" on the following pages, both reports produced tangible benefits for our readers and for taxpayers in general.

You also will see that more work needs to be done to make sure that the relocation and redevelopment process launched seven years ago is completed properly. Much of the mainstream media and the general public has given up or forgotten about public housing. Reading the news reports about high-rises being demolished at Cabrini-Green or Robert Taylor Homes has led many to think that every building has already been demolished. The truth is that only 1/3rd of the city's public housing units are gone, and those residents who have been relocated have not gone far. Most have moved just a few miles away to other low-income, African American neighborhoods like Englewood, Roseland and South Shore.

So we will stay on the beat. And we are not alone. In addition to our partners and supporters, there are many others making sure that Chicago's most vulnerable families are not kicked to the curb. Among them is Jamie Kalven, a **We The People Media** board member and author who broadcasts at www.viewfromtheground.org. Over the years, Kalven has been involved with residents of Stateway Gardens, working closely with Local Advisory Council President Francine Washington, also a **We The People Media** board member.

These days, Kalven is helping a Stateway resident named Diane Bond sue a number of individual police officers for alleged acts of abuse. According to the lawsuit, Bond was repeatedly harassed and assaulted by officers who are members of something called the "skullcap crew."

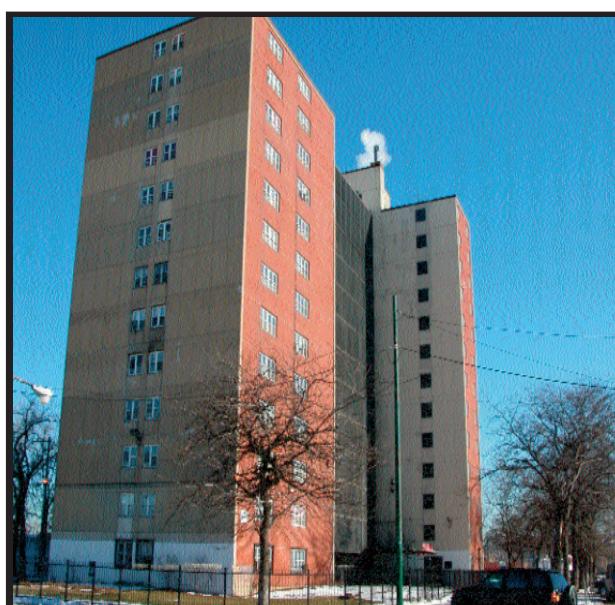
The city and the police department are contesting Bond's allegations and have issued a subpoena against Kalven. But residents of Stateway and nearby Robert Taylor Homes confirmed for me one part of Bond's story. There is a skullcap crew in the Chicago Police Department. Assistant Editor Beauty Turner, among others, said the skullcap crew has a distinct reputation in the developments.

"All the young men know the skullcap crew," she told me. "They know to run."

I do not mean to prejudge the officers here. The public housing beat is the toughest in the city. Just the idea that a 'skullcap crew' exists, however, detracts from the professionalism of the department. Even if it is just perception that this 'special' team of officers operates under different rules in public housing, it shatters trust between citizens and their police department. It goes without saying that the skullcap crew would not be tolerated in, say, Lincoln Park or any other middle-class neighborhood.

"The official narrative does not include the skullcap crew," Kalven explained.

Kalven is right. A lot of things are left out of the official narrative. So here's one more edition of *Residents' Journal* for the *unofficial* narrative.

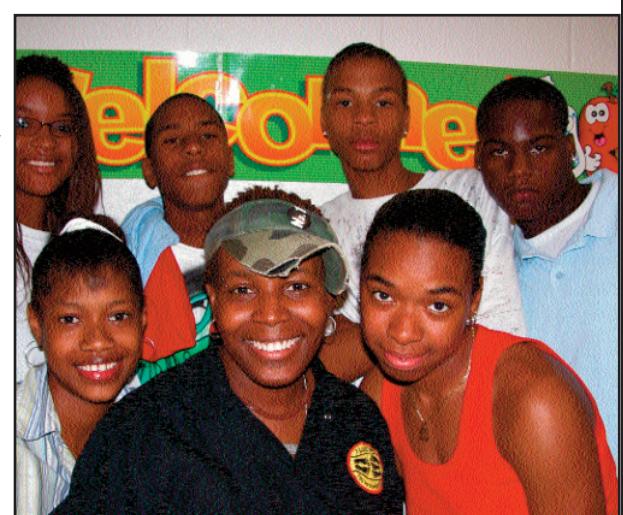


The Last Days of Rockwell Gardens

Left Photo: The last building to be occupied at Rockwell Gardens, 2450 West Monroe Avenue, in December just before it was completely shuttered. Several Rockwell buildings are slated for demolition this year.

Right Photo: Teens from the Jordon Boys and Girls Club, 2120 West Monroe Avenue, who interviewed Rockwell residents under the supervision of director Kendra Hogan (center), a former resident of Rockwell Gardens. The group turned their efforts into "The Rise and Fall and Rise Again of Rockwell Gardens," a digitally produced documentary.

Photos by Mary C. Johns



News Briefs

Report: Illinois Poverty Worst in Midwest

Despite being one of the wealthiest states in the Midwest, Illinois' poverty rate is higher than any other state – including Michigan, where chronic job loss in the automotive industry has crippled that state's economy, a recent report revealed. The report, presented on Feb. 1 at the 6th annual meeting of the Illinois Poverty Summit, analyzes the region's poverty state-by-state by examining 15 key poverty indicators and other data. Illinois ranked behind the other Midwest states in all 15 indicators, including child poverty, housing affordability and education spending.

The report reveals that, of former welfare recipients who work, 70 percent do not receive benefits with their jobs. Also, from 2001 to 2004, state human services funding was cut by \$387 million, while 285,000 more people landed in poverty. Meanwhile, half of Illinois seniors would be in poverty without Social Security benefits.

The report was presented by Sid Mohn, president of Heartland Alliance, and Amy Rynell, director of the Illinois Poverty Summit. The summit is a bipartisan group that analyzes poverty trends in Illinois.

Madigan Pushes for Charity from Hospitals

Hospitals benefiting from not-for-profit status must do more to retain their tax status, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced in January. Not-for-profit hospitals do not pay taxes, in part, because of the expectation that they will help the poor, Madigan said, and she wants to force them to spend at least 8 percent of their operating costs each year on "charity care" – free health care to the poor and uninsured.

1,767,00 people in Illinois did not have health insurance in 2002, according to Illinois for Health Care, an advocacy group. Roughly one quarter of those uninsured are children. Madigan's proposal would provide specific discounts to be provided to those without insurance at these hospitals. The Healthy Illinois Campaign, a statewide coalition, recently reported that 36 percent of people recently surveyed said that rising health care costs was their number one economic concern, and that nearly two-thirds of respondents said they knew someone who had been without health care in the past two years.

Health Care Workers Union, Employer Sign Deal

One of the largest home health care providers and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) announced a deal in January to allow national collective bargaining between the two groups. Representatives of Addus HealthCare, Inc., a company providing health care services to 40,000 people annually, and SEIU announced the deal at SEIU's offices in Chicago.

"America faces a crisis in long term care unless we take dramatic steps like this national Addus agreement," SEIU president Andrew L. Stern said in a statement.

Details of the agreement include paid leave for time spent lobbying for increased resources for home health care, development of a national bargaining units for employees and continued local bargaining rights for local issues such as wages and benefits.

Landlords Pledge to Revive Lawndale Complex

In the largest project-based Section 8 bailout in recent history, federal funds are being promised to a group of 23 developers who together will replace Lawndale Restoration LP in managing their complex, a group of more than 1,000 subsidized apartments in the Lawndale community.

Residents' Journal reported on the complex's dilapidated condition following a tour with then-U.S. Senate hopeful Alan Keyes and representatives of the ex-offender advocacy group Voices of The Ex-offenders. One of the buildings had been accidentally hit by a suburban woman in her car, and the building collapsed. The city then swarmed the complex and cited Lawndale Restoration LP for more than 1,800 code violations.

Residents' Journal Awards

Peter Lisagor and JCUA Courageous Voices 2005 Awards

Left photo: *RJ* Assistant Editor Beauty Turner and Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns hold the Peter Lisagor Awards they received from the Chicago chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists in April 2005. Mary and Beauty won in the "Media Collaboration" category for "Deadly Moves," an investigation of the connection between the relocation of public housing families and the murder rate in Chicago. **Right photo:** Mary and Beauty (seated in white), proudly display the Courageous Voices Awards they received from the Chicago based Jewish Council on Urban Affairs last summer. Other award recipients included, We The People Media Board member Barbara Moore (seated left).



National Society of Professional Journalists New America and Chicago Defender Charities 2005 Awards

Left photo below: *RJ* Editor-in-Chief Mary Johns poses with retired CBS anchorman Dan Rather on July 8, 2005, at the National Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi banquet at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Johns and Assistant Editor Beauty Turner were the First Place winners of the 1st Annual New America Award. **Right photo:** *RJ* staff pose for a photo commemorating the receipt of the "Dr. Marjorie Stewart Joyner Grassroots Organization of the Year" award. Chicago Defender Charities awarded We The People Media the prize on August 4, 2005 at the DuSable Musuem.



CONDOLENCES

RJ sends regards to reporter Jacqueline Thompson on the passing of her husband Leon in early February. Our regards also to Teresa Ricks, resident and former LAC president of the CHA Dearborn Homes, on the death of her son Dion Ricks who passed away in early February. Best wishes to Hallie Amy, longtime resident of Wentworth Gardens and a CHA Board Commissioner, and to the family members of Doris Smith, resident and secretary of the CHA Hyde Park Elderly Apartments, who is recuperating from a severe stroke she suffered last year.

Questionable Connection - An Update

Victory at Bridgeport Homes

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

For years, the resident leaders of the South Side CHA Bridgeport Homes public housing complex said that Legum and Norman, the private property management firm for the public housing site, were poor managers.

The resident representatives at the complex often reported to the CHA officials the concerns and problems they were experiencing with the management company. Residents' complaints range from long-standing work orders that were not addressed, to poor roofing work done in a row of units housing seniors during the winter, to allegations of mismanagement of public funds by former property managers of the company, to one manager's alleged violation of federal rules by granting a prison inmate permission to live with his sister at the CHA site currently under rehabilitation. Because of the residents' continued complaints about the private property management company, Legum and Norman, a Virginia based company, also came under scrutiny for their campaign donations. Legum and Norman's only business interests in Illinois seem to be in Chicago and the company made their only political donations in Illinois to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization, where there is no public housing or redevelopment activity. "A Questionable Connection," an investigation done by *Residents' Journal* in collaboration with the Better Government Association and published in the last issue, detailed an analysis of the Illinois State Campaign Contribution Disclosure Forms and CHA contract agreements which showed that Legum and Norman gave before and after receiving contracts from the

"A Questionable Connection" is an ongoing investigation conducted by Residents' Journal and the Better Government Association. Research, interviews with residents, officials and contractors, reporting and legal analysis by R.J. staff Ethan Michaeli, Mary C. Johns, Beauty Turner, Gabriel Piemonte and Micah Maidenberg and the BGA.

CHA. But they made no campaign donations to any other wards since working in Chicago. The 17th Ward is currently home to CHA CEO Terry Peterson, who was also the former alderman of the ward. Current 17th Ward Alderman Latasha Thomas confirmed in "A Questionable Connection" that Peterson remains actively involved in 17th Ward affairs.

In response to the resident representatives' complaints, Legum and Norman Vice President Price was quoted in "A Questionable Connection" as saying: "Bridgeport complains about everything. I can turn myself blue in the face and they'll still be complaining. That's the nature of the beast."

Price's comments outraged the area resident representatives. In a personal interview with *RJ* at the LAC office at the public housing site in April 2005, Sherry Guzman, area president of Bridgeport Homes, and area vice president Emily Cano said they were offended by the comments made by Price, and wanted to rebut Price comments in *RJ*'s follow up article. The two said they would also take their complaints against him to CHA officials.

RJ asked CHA what they intended to do about the Legum and Norman vice president's remarks about the residents. In an emailed response, CHA officials wrote on April

21, "It is always the CHA's hope that property management firms will treat residents with the same respect and dignity any of us would want and deserve. We take very seriously the belief that all of our efforts should be geared toward offering families an improved quality of life – and this includes issues related to property management. Any reports that residents have not been treated accordingly, we will look into."

The next month, Guzman called *RJ* and said she wanted to retract her rebuttal of Price's remarks. She said that the president of Legum and Norman came out to meet with her and other residents the previous week. The president addressed their concerns and apologized to them directly on behalf of Price.

"The reason why I'm calling is because the president of the company came out and he apologized for what Mr. Price said," Guzman said.

"[Dwaine] Bailey and the Asset Manager brought him to my house. Several times he apologized. He said he was appalled of what Mr. Price said," Guzman said cheerfully.

After a Tenant Services meeting in January this year, Sherry Guzman, area president of Bridgeport Homes, and a few other residents of the public housing development met with CHA and the property management officials to discuss some issues that needed resolving.

Guzman didn't provide *Residents' Journal* with specific details of the residents' concerns with the management company during a phone interview in mid-February. She said she talked to CHA about "different stuff that we had to resolve." Guzman added that the issues were being resolved and that she was satisfied about how things are going with Legum and Norman at the public housing site.

"It's going fine," she said.

Update: Questions Linger, Contributions Dwindle

by Ethan Michaeli
Publisher

Well over one-half of the contributions to a political fund closely linked to Chicago Housing Authority CEO Terry Peterson came from CHA contractors, affiliated companies or their employees and officers, according to an analysis by *Residents' Journal* and the Better Government Association.

Over 60 percent of the itemized individual contributions to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization in 2005 came from CHA contractors and related sources, according to a comparison of records filed with the Illinois Board of Election Commissioners with lists of CHA contractors. The overall total of contributions to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization dropped dramatically in 2005 as compared with previous years after three straight years of increasing totals. The 17th Ward Democratic Organization saw its donations drop to their lowest level since 2001.

The *Residents' Journal*/BGA investigation also found that a number of CHA contractors who made donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization failed to make required contributions to residents and comply with labor rules. An analysis of correspondence between CHA and its contractors found that CHA cited five different firms for failing to meet their legal obligations to provide jobs or financial contributions to groups serving residents.

In 2004, *Residents' Journal* and BGA launched an 8-month investigation of possible connections between CHA contractors and the 17th Ward Democratic Organization. Peterson was the alderman of the 17th Ward before he was appointed CEO of the CHA by Mayor Richard M. Daley in 2000. The investigation, published in April 2005 as "A Questionable Connection," found 63 companies who donated to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization and also received contracts from CHA. From 2001 to 2004, the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in a total of \$673,333.05, of which

\$225,318.32 – 33.46 percent – came from contractors at the CHA. Many companies gave to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization just before or just after they were awarded contracts from the CHA. One firm gave a \$2,500 donation to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization the same day the firm was awarded a construction contract worth \$3,292,095.

The percentage of funds donated to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization which came from CHA contractors increased dramatically in 2005. Records show that the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in a total of \$70,445 in individual itemized contributions in 2005, of which \$42,850 - or 60.83 percent - was contributed by CHA contractors.

The donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization from CHA contractors are particularly surprising given that the 17th Ward contains no CHA family public housing developments, senior buildings or redevelopment sites. In the first "Questionable Connection," the investigative team found two out-of-state CHA contractors which made their only political contributions inside Illinois to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization and related political candidates. Many of the companies are involved in CHA's 10-year, \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation, including managers of public housing sites, relocation counselors, moving companies, developers and construction companies.

It is not illegal for CHA contractors to give donations to political organizations. However, if Peterson or other CHA officials promised to provide contracts to companies in exchange for the donations to a political fund or threatened to pull existing contracts if political donations were not made, those actions could be considered bribery or extortion under state or federal law, according to a legal analysis by BGA.

Peterson or other CHA officials could further be at risk of being found in violation of the federal Hatch Act, which prevents federal officials or local government officials paid with federal dollars from engaging in certain types of political activity. Almost all of CHA's budget comes from the federal government, making CHA employees subject to the Hatch Act.

CHA policy states that "Contracts with a value equal to or greater than \$100,000 must be led by an open competitive sealed bidding process, or competitive negotiation after public advertisement." If Peterson or other CHA officials are found to have influenced or interfered with the competitive bidding process, however, they could be found in violation of state or federal law, according to BGA's legal analysis.

According to a review of campaign finance reports filed with the Illinois Board of Election Commissioners, 2005 was the worst year for the 17th Ward Democratic Organization since the fund was reestablished in 2001. Last year, the 17th Ward Organization took in just \$72,512.94, as compared with \$251,518.33 in 2004, \$202,355 in 2003 and \$172,668 in 2002. In 2001, the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in \$47,791, though those funds represent income only for the second one-half of the year, since the fund was re-launched in September 2001.

Contributions dropped significantly after publication of "A Questionable Connection" in April 2005. During the second one-half of 2005, the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in just \$35,550. In a similar period of 2004, the fund took in \$161,383.33. During the last six months of 2003, the fund took in \$140,830. In the same period of 2002, the 17th Ward Democratic Organization took in \$148,425.

CHA spokesperson Karen Pride sent the following e-mail in response to a request for comment on this story: "RESPONSE – The CHA has no comment." 17th Ward Ald. Latasha Thomas did not return a telephone call seeking comment on this story.

A review of correspondence between CHA and its contractors obtained under a Freedom of Information Act request, meanwhile, found that several CHA contractors who

(Continued on pg. 23)

Deadly Moves II

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

In "Deadly Moves," a series of articles produced by *Residents' Journal* and the *Chicago Reporter* magazine in the fall of 2004, a year long investigation found that the murder rate increased in public housing developments and areas where CHA residents had been relocated across the city under the Chicago Housing Authority's \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation. The articles appeared simultaneously in both publications and resulted in a new police pilot program.

RJ provided details of the new police initiative to help combat crime in "Deadly Moves Update" in the November/December 2004 issue. The program called for the deployment of 120 more officers to "hot spot areas" across the city which included CHA public housing developments. Forty police officers would be deployed in locations such as Englewood, South Shore and Roseland, where CHA residents have relocated with housing vouchers. Eighty police officers were to be added to the police public housing division at eight targeted public housing sites. Police would be sent to the last occupied building at Stateway Gardens, located in the vicinity of the CPD Headquarters on the South Side; at the Robert Taylor development, where one building remains; Raymond Hilliard Homes; Harold Ickes Homes; Cabrini-Green; Dearborn Homes; Altgeld Gardens and at LeClaire Courts, a CHA City-State site located on the West Side.

After an eight-month investigation of the "hot spot" areas across the city where former CHA residents relocated, and at other CHA relocation sites, *RJ* found the murder rate had decreased. There were other criminal concerns, however, including an increase in crime in specific South Side neighborhoods and complaints from



Mary C. Johns

This article is a continuation of Deadly Moves, a series of articles investigating the connection between the city's homicide rate and the relocation of public housing families. Deadly Moves II is supported by a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism.

determined that the Chicago Housing Authority is not in possession of the above referenced documents. As a result of this determination, we have to deny your request," the letter, dated October 4, 2005, stated.

The Chicago Police Department provided *RJ* with the documents in mid-February which showed a slight decrease in the murder rate at CHA developments, as well as a decrease in overall crime at the public housing sites.

The CPD "Incidents and Arrests" reports at CHA locations showed that there were a total of 20 homicides in 2004 and 17 homicides in 2005, and a total of 16,247 incidents in 2004 and 14,979 in 2005.

Several Local Advisory Councils presidents and other residents at various public housing complexes in the hot spot areas agreed with the police reports on the reduction of murders and shootings at CHA sites. But a large number of residents continue to have concerns about the increase in drug activity. For example, police officials recently reported a number of suspicious overdose deaths that occurred at one of the CHA hot spots, which is also a relocation site.

In a recent community alert, the Narcotics and Gang Investigation Section of the Chicago Police Department



Ald. Leslie Hairston

ter to CHA from the management company for the Near West Side mixed-income development, Westhaven Park. In it, manager Veronica Roundtree complained about the crime in the area driving away potential market rate customers. In a second letter of complaint to the CHA, in April 05, Roundtree stated that "there was some type of conflict between two gangs...that resulted in shootings near the property."

Roundtree also expressed concerns about the Police officers detailed to the mixed-income and public housing sites.

"Whenever we bring things to their attention, it is addressed, but it is short term. CPD is not effective in that they have limitations in regards to staff and all of the officers are not effective when they are on site," she wrote.

Roundtree told *RJ* last month there was a huge turnaround with the loitering of non-leaseholders, and in the gang violence - and vacancies - at Westhaven.

"I can see a difference. It's not near as bad as it was last year. It's better. I don't have any vacancies in the new units. I don't have any vacancies in the affordable... Right at this moment, we are not experiencing any problems," she said during a February interview.

Lacking Resources for Relocates

In "Deadly Moves," *RJ* reported on the influx of crime in the Englewood and South Shore areas, where public housing residents migrated upon relocation under the Plan for Transformation.

Following the article, the Chicago Police Department reported a decrease in the city's homicide rate, and attributed it to several drug raids at CHA sites and in other areas in which they confiscated hundreds of illegal weapons.

Recently, *RJ* spoke to aldermen of two of the wards mentioned in the Deadly Moves series of articles, to see what affect the past and recent drug raids had on the crime in their areas. They reported continuing narcotic activity and reported a need for more police resources and social services for the former CHA residents who relocated in their areas.

Fifth Ward Concerns

Ald. Leslie Hairston (5th), whose ward includes parts of the 21st and 3rd police districts, recently reported persistent crime moving from CHA to her neighborhoods and not enough police resources. She reported last year "that many of the communities that have received the highest concentrations of relocated CHA residents have also seen significant increases in crime."

"Specifically in the 3rd and 21st districts, with gang activities, narcotics, prostitution," she said, during a phone interview last November.

The 3rd District, which includes South Shore, has seen some of the highest concentrations of relocated former CHA residents, according to Hairston.

Hairston also said that those areas still need more police officers.

"I think they need more police...They need to be staffed at a hundred percent," she said.

In a November 2005 report that Hairston provided to *RJ* in February, she stated that "As of August [2005], the 3rd District was one of only four districts in the city that saw index crime increase over the summer. The total increase of crime in the 3rd District was greater than the increases in her other three districts combined, and there was a "dramatic increase in the shootings, murders and violence along Cottage Grove, Maryland and Drexel Avenues."

"By September, the 21st District had seen a 6.7 increase in violent crime over last year," she wrote.



Ald. Freddrena Lyle

that injured three people, including two children.

A Satisfactory Report

Deadly Moves" reported that complaints about an increase in violent crime related to the Plan for Transformation included a let-

across the city of a spike in drug activity. And a recent report by the Chicago Police Department revealed a spike in homicides in January compared to homicides for January 2005, as well as a slight increase in the trend of other crime.

RJ talked to residents living at the eight CHA hot spot sites, and interviewed two aldermen in areas where residents relocated with housing vouchers, who had complaints about security issues and about the overall Plan for Transformation.

To get an accurate account of the murder rate, *RJ* also requested, under the Freedom of Information Act, CPD progress reports from the CHA, as required in their contract agreement. CHA is paying CPD \$16 million annually to provide "above baseline" services to residents during the Plan for Transformation.

CHA CEO Terry Peterson has stated that the housing agency meets with the police quarterly to assess progress and that the police periodically send reports on what they're doing. But, after months of requesting the CPD progress reports from the CHA, the housing authority denied *RJ* the documents. In a letter hand delivered to *RJ*'s offices by CHA Director of Communications Derek Hill on November 10, 2005, the request was denied because the housing authority didn't have them to give.

"After a thorough search of our records, it has been

Deadly Moves II

Troubling Development by Beauty Turner Assistant Editor

Dearborn Homes; New Crack City?

Dearborn Homes are becoming like New Jack City," said Joyce Van Allen, a long time resident of the development, in an interview in January, 2006.

"More like New Crack City," Louisa Samuel, a relocated resident from Robert Taylor, said as she was visiting Van Allen's apartment from next door. The residents reported a decrease in violent crime and an increased police presence but complained about a sharp rise in the drug dealing taking place on the property.

"Last year, we had no protection down here," Van Allen told **RJ**, "but this year the police presence has increased."

Van Allen is a grandmother that lives with her four grandchildren, her daughter (who works for UPS), along with her disabled son. All seven of them are in a three bedroom apartment that has numerous crates as well as cardboard boxes crowded into the living room and stacks of old newspaper with little walking room. Van Allen has been a resident at Dearborn Homes for more than 30 years.

"In these 30 years, I have seen this place go from bad to worse," Van Allen continued.

Recently, however, shootings have been on the decline, she said.

"This year, shooting so far has decreased, maybe



Beauty Turner



Some undercover Chicago police officers search a man in the CHA Dearborn Homes in early February, following a number of suspected tainted heroin drug overdose deaths at the public housing site.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

because it is winter," Van Allen said in a phone interview. "When it gets hot outside, that's when the killing starts."

Meanwhile, police shut down a drug market at Dearborn Homes in January, and 20 people were charged in that raid, the result of a four-month investigation.

Van Allen also pointed to recent reports of tainted heroin leading to deaths at and around the development as a possible reason for the increased police presence.

"Drug addicts have been dropping like flies that have been sprayed with a can of Raid, so that is mainly why the police presence has increased," Van Allen added.

The drug-related deaths have included Latinos and whites as well as African Americans. Many of the residents said that the number of drug-related deaths behind this toxic heroin scare is much more than what the police reports are saying.

Even with the police presence, gang and drug activity continued to flourish, Van Allen said.

"I still fear for my grandchildren lives concerning gangs," Van Allen said.

"The gangs were chasing and trying to recruit my 15-year-old grandson, and it is leaving me stressed out and sick behind it."

According to many of the residents, there are numer-

ous mid-rises that are drug havens

Some of the addresses mentioned include 2910 and 2930 South Dearborn Street, 2931 South Federal Street and 2940 South State Street.

Michelle Lawson, 20, described living in the development as a place that is making her and her son sick – literally – along with the presence of gangs and drugs.

"My son has asthma, and there are not only gangs and drugs down here but so are mold and mildew in my apartment," Lawson added.

"My son had to keep running to the hospital for 9 months because of the condition down here," Lawson continued sounding rather stressed out in a recent interview.

RJ talked to Chicago Police Department spokesperson Pat Camden about the Dearborn Homes situation.

In 2003 there were five homicides and zero in 2004. In 2005, there were three killings in the Dearborn Homes, Camden said.

Gray fog clouds hang over LeClaire Courts

No more dark clouds over LeClaire Courts there are instead only police cameras. All last year, bullets were flying instead of birds in the LeClaire Courts housing development on the far West Side. This year seems to be the opposite.

Now residents are telling **RJ** that the violence has slowed down to a drip. Unlike other developments, though, they do not report an increased police presence. In fact, Local Advisory Council President Natalie Saffold reports a decrease in police.

"The only problem that we are having here in LeClaire Courts is that we haven't been seeing our normal beat car passing through the development," Saffold said.

"Otherwise LeClaire Courts has been a little quiet," Saffold continued. "Well, when it comes to police we haven't been seeing our beat car riding through here, so we are trying to get a meeting with the commander concerning that!"

Saffold noted that there was an additional police presence in the form of a security camera.

"There's a camera in our community now and we are expecting one more," Saffold went on to say.

Ruth Todd, a long time resident and a former LAC president, agreed with Saffold.

"Like Natalie said, it has been kind of quiet in the development, all except for a few break-ins," Todd said. Like other developments, however, there's no lack of drug dealing there, she added.

"At least there have been no more killings so far, just a lot of drug selling. That's all," Todd said.

Ida B. Wells Melting Pot

Ida B. Wells is one of the first Chicago Housing Authority public housing developments ever built in Chicago. It was constructed in the early 1940s and included row houses as well as high rises.

Once considered among the best housing available on the South Side, Wells has long shared the negative reputation of many other public housing developments.

RJ interviewed Wells resident Tyrone Rone in February to see how conditions were in the last year. Rone complained about what he sees as an increase in the drug trade but said, in other respects, conditions had improved in Wells.

"I lived in Ida B. Wells all my life and now it is worse than ever before. It is drug infested," Rone, 32, said. "One thing I can say about it now is that there have been less killings than previous years. I see more of a police presence in the development but that still hasn't stopped the drug selling.

"It's too bad; when the development was full, you didn't see that many police officers. Now there are less people and more cops," Rone added.

Even after a recent, high-profile city police sting operation called "Sin City," where numerous alleged

I t's a melting pot down there. Every drug dealer in Chicago came down to Ickes. There are 11 buildings and every building has a dope house and addicts from all over come down in Ickes. Just drive by. They're standing out in the open where you can see them."

-Gloria Williams, LAC President, CHA Harold Ickes Homes

drug dealers as well as alleged gang members were nabbed, there still is a lot of traffic, residents said. Wells is another development where a police camera has been added to the site but residents reported that drug dealing continued, even under its watchful eye.

Harold Ickes Homes Troubles

When LAC President Gloria Williams attended the November 2005 tenant services meeting, she laid out in detail what seemed to be a common theme in the developments: the scourge of gang and drug activity is unabated and growing.

"It's a melting pot down there. Every drug dealer in Chicago came down in Ickes. There are 11 buildings and every building has a dope house and addicts from all over come down in Ickes. Just drive by. They're standing out in the open where you can see them," Williams, told CHA CEO Terry Peterson and others during a resident meeting in November 2005.

Williams seemed to think the violence that occurred



LeClaire Courts LAC President Natalie Saffold discusses crime and other issues at the CHA hot spot site, as Ald. Michael Zalewski, (second from right), and other CHA and City officials listen at the Townhall meeting in June 2005.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

at her development in 2005 was due to other residents relocating into her public housing complex from other CHA locations without the provision of social aid.

"I want to tell everybody something that doesn't reach the newspapers. A kid got shot in my development last night. My development was locked down. But this is only a pimple on a mole head at what's going on at Ickes."

(Continued on Page 18)

Primary Election Coverage

Cook County Presidential Race

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

As the two Democratic frontrunners for the Cook County Board President were prepping for primary race elections in March, *Residents' Journal* spoke to incumbent Cook County Board President John Stroger and to his contender, Cook County Commissioner Forrest Claypool, about their plans for the poor. In in-depth interviews at their offices in January, both were asked about housing, health care and ex-offender services as well as recent juvenile detention center scandals. *RJ* also questioned both about the ethics of campaign contributions from employees and contractors.

The Contender

Claypool, Mayor Richard M. Daley's former chief of staff, said he was "running on a comprehensive health care campaign platform to create...a safety net without holes that would make health care accessible, convenient, more comprehensive, and...create more health care provisions by redirecting money from a wasteful and bloated bureaucracy."

Claypool, an attorney, said he was running as a reformer, which he defined as changing the way things are done in politics.

"The choice this election is between... the old ways of doing business...where ward committeeman and politicians view the county as a place to place their precinct captains and their relatives and friends [and] a modern government that understands that our first priority is service to people," he said.

Claypool, first elected in 2002, said the poor should vote for him because he would break down barriers to medical care. Despite the opening of the John Stroger Hospital, people report long delays seeing the physician and getting pharmacy medication. He said he would slash the budget and use the savings for direct medical services, to hire nurses and lab technicians, to provide increased clinical care and subsidies for doctor's services for uninsured patients in their neighborhoods.

Claypool said he would partner with private hospitals and clinics in low-income neighborhoods "where patients can see specialists close to where they live," he said.

Claypool, a committee member of Provident Hospital, said Stroger was mismanaging that hospital.

"Provident Hospital is a good example. Earlier this year the State of Illinois threatened to cut off funding at Provident Hospital because of what the *Tribune* called a catalog of horrors...and President Stroger's response to that was to bring in a new CEO... [John] Fairman, [who] had been fired as the head of public hospitals in Denver, Houston, and Washington D.C. - each time under allegations of fraud and mismanagement," Claypool declared.

Recently, the media also reported chronic problems with Cook County's Juvenile Detention Center. There had been

reports of sexual abuse and physical assaults by staff member towards detainees.

If elected Claypool said he would, "fire the entire top management of the juvenile center and replace them with professionals who are trained in youth development" and "also institutionalize clear monitoring systems to prevent abuse of the children."

Recent news sources also reported that Stroger had been accused of unethical practices in his methods of receiving campaign contributions from county contractors and employees by civic watchdog group the Better Government Association.

Claypool said those contributions aren't wrong by law but can be unethical, and accused Stroger of breaking the ethics ordinance, which limits and restricts the amount of money that contractors can give to an elected official in the form of campaign contributions.

"No, not by law...but it is wrong if, then, you turn around and award no-bid contracts to those same people in a pay to play system which is what President Stroger has perfected. That's something the Better Government [Association] revealed ... with their reports."

Claypool added that the ethics ordinance needs to be enforced.

"But it's not enforced, and we saw that in the BGA story...So I think we've got to put teeth in that ordinance and strengthen it as a first step."

As to whether he had accepted any campaign donations from employees or contractors, Claypool said, "I've not accepted contributions from employees, but I have from a handful of contractors...it probably amounts to no more than a few thousand dollars."

Claypool said he would "have to think hard" about accepting contributions from employees.

"Every individual has a first amendment right to participate in the political process and that includes making contributions, but there can be reasonable limits on those contributions and they need to be enforced," he said.

The Incumbent

Stroger said he was in favor of public and other federally subsidized housing. But he didn't comment on what was going on at the Cook County Housing Authority in detail because "I have no authority over the Cook County Department of Housing," he said during a interview with *RJ*.

"I am in favor of low-income and moderate housing, and I'm also in favor of Section 8 type vouchers to help people who need financial support in obtaining decent housing," he said.

Thousands of ex-offenders were expected to be released from Illinois prisons this year. Many will not find housing or jobs. They will end up back in prison because of that housing shortage and joblessness and little moral support from family and friends, Stroger said.

"I'm opposed to the fact that they're prohibited from getting public housing. I think public housing should be available for any poor, financially disabled people," he declared.

"Truthfully, I am very glad people are getting out of jail. But I'm sorry that so many people are getting out of jail without any proper training," he said.

Stroger said the jail system was Cook County Sheriff Michael Sheehan's responsibility. He said millions are spent on substance abuse programs for inmates in Cook County Correction facilities but there should also be social service programs in jail to help the inmates become productive citizens upon release.

"I think that every state penitentiary should have training programs to make certain that [they] reenter our communities with some marketable skills," he said.

Stroger has direct control over 30 clinics and all of the health facilities of Cook County, which include John Stroger Hospital, Provident Hospital, Oak Forest Hospital and Cermak Hospital. He said that people wait long periods of time to get medical treatment and their prescriptions filled because of staffing shortfalls and because people come to the hospital needing multiple prescriptions filled.

"The county didn't have enough money to hire a lot of



John Stroger, President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

extra pharmacists," he said.

Claypool told *RJ* that he would "redirect" the Cook County dollars and hire more nurses and more lab technicians. But according to Stroger, Claypool, along with other board members, cut the hospitals' budget in the face of this need.

"Mr. Claypool, Mr. [Mike] Quigley, Mr. [Larry] Suffredin and [Carl R.] Hanson and those sorts of men, who knew that we were having problems...decided...to cut back on the money...to those hospitals," Stroger said. "They have been insensitive to the change and the demand on that hospital."

Stroger said he agreed with Attorney General Lisa Madigan's recent proposal to make nonprofit hospitals contribute at least six percent of their earnings to the poor for charity care.

Stroger said the poor and needy should vote for him because "I have tried to commit my life to helping...the medically indigent people of the county," he said.

In response to the recent news reports of inappropriate conduct of the staff and alleged sexual abuse at the youth detention center, Stroger said it was politically contrived by an unnamed person.

"[T]hat was political propaganda...some people...may have hit a kid...but, our people have always went in there, checked it out, prosecuted those officers who had allegedly committed those offenses, and our office does not tolerate abuse of our program," he declared.

In answer to Claypool's allegations of political patronage, Stroger hinted that Claypool may be a bigot.

"Well I can tell you if he's talking about that, I hire a lot of people who may be African Americans. I've hired a lot of people who are African Americans but they all must have qualifications...I think he may feel like that any Black that is hired is my close friend," he said.

Stroger said that he makes recommendations for every top person in certain Cook County administrations. But he said they must all go through the proper procedures of hiring.

Stroger, a 76 year old former lawyer and school teacher, said there are people, including contractors, that may make campaign contributions to him that he may know.

"But, ain't no way in the world... Don't you know that they will put me in jail if I did things like that? I don't know most of these people." He said they would have to follow the proper bidding procedures.

Stroger defended campaign donations from employees.

"I'd hope that if you were working for me, and I had a social affair that you would probably make a contribution... But, most of the people who come to work for me, work under what is called the Shakman Decree," Stroger said.

Stroger's recent accomplishments include the opening of the Domestic Violence Court House, the New Stroger Hospital that opened in 2002, and the Ruth Rothstein Core Center for the treatment of individuals with HIV/AIDS.



Cook County Commissioner and Candidate for Board Presidency Forrest Claypool.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Primary Election Coverage

Rush vs. Jackson

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

On March 21, the voters of the First Congressional District in Illinois will have a choice between their longtime incumbent Congressman, Bobby Rush, and former Chicago Housing Authority CEO and director of the Black Star Project Phillip Jackson. **RJ** decided to interview the two candidates.

RJ interviewed Rush by telephone:

RJ: Mayor Richard M. Daley is using school closure as part of his school improvement strategy. Do you agree to this approach?

Bobby Rush: In order to get anything done most of all we need community involvement. We have an acute problem of parental absenteeism when it comes to important issues.

RJ: Many of the Chicago Housing Authority public housing high rises have been demolished, and many of the public housing residents have been displaced. Do you have any plans to address this issue?

RJ: Again, that is another serious indication of absenteeism...these issues are not isolated, but are entwined and interconnected," Rush said.

RJ: How are you addressing the needs of ex-offenders who are leaving prison and returning to their communities?

RJ: I have a bill that I'm trying to pass...concerning family members receiving calls from their loved one in prison to make it more affordable to keep family connected.

RJ: There were some questionable connections revealed recently by **RJ** concerning private contractors working with

CHA allegedly being steered toward contributing to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization. Any comment?

BR: Just a blimp on the radar screen. I have worked very closely with Terry Peterson when it comes to Washington D.C issues such as public housing and him asking for federal help.

RJ next interviewed Phillip Jackson.

While Jackson pulled off a coat over his head still



Former CHA CEO Phillip Jackson, right, is challenging U.S. Congressman Bobby Rush (D-1) for his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

attempting to look at me over his small rimmed glasses, he revealed a yellow jogging suit top that read Educate or Die..

"What you see is what you get." Jackson said. "I don't feel that I need to wear a suit in order to get my point across."

RJ: Why are you running?

PJ: I'm running because the people in the first congressional district are in trouble, many of them are. The district is actually a tale of two districts: there is a southern part...who

are mostly white, are doing very, very well. For the most part, you can find million dollars houses out there; people got great jobs, a pretty low unemployment rate. Then there's the northern part of the district...the people in that part of the district are struggling [and] maybe 90% of them are black. The schools are not being successful in that part of the district educating our children. The young men themselves don't see education as a vehicle to take them to the places that they want to go...The thing that is going to work is getting the parents involved and the community involved.

RJ: When you were the CEO of Chicago Housing Authority, a lot of people were displaced and a lot of people lost their jobs

PJ: It was national policy signed by Clinton, voted for by Congress.

RJ: Did you have any power?

PJ: Yes I had power to demand social services for the people in public housing, which I did. You know that this happened all over the country.

RJ: Why should people from public housing vote for you - they know you from when you ran Chicago's public housing authority and many of them think that you are the cause of the buildings being demolished?

PJ: I'm not the cause of their problems - they had problems before I got there, when Vince [Lane] was there and when Joe [Shuldiner] was there, they still had problems.

In his concluding remarks, Jackson said African Americans have to create our own plans for our own communities.

"We have got to become the change - not you, not just me, but we!" Jackson said.

Jones vs. Tatum

by Beauty Turner
Assistant Editor

Running for State Representative for the 26th District is incumbent Lovanna Jones, in office since 1987, and Ranoule Tatum, a long time entrepreneur and community service worker.

RJ recently interviewed State Representative Lovanna Jones.

RJ: Many of your constituents are worried about the public schools that are closing in your boundaries. What do you plan to do to address that?

LJ: I'm very upset with [CPS CEO]Arne Duncan. I don't understand why some schools get better treatment than others; after all, they all use our tax dollars. They need to restructure the money and divide it evenly to all of the schools.

RJ: Many CHA public housing high rises has fell prey to the wrecking ball and a lot of public housing residents has been displaced. Do you have any plans to address this issue?

LJ: The thing about this is that the people didn't receive the correct information - some didn't receive no information," Jones said. "Many people that live in the suburbs didn't want public housing residents living there they didn't have resources to help them."

Many ex-offenders are due to re-enter our communities. How do you plan to address their issues such as housing and jobs?

"The Governor has a re-entry program which is not worth a dime; if the federal, state and city don't hire the ex-offender, how can they expect the little guy at the bottom to do what they won't even do," Jones said. "There are ex-offenders that have [committed] non-violent crimes...emergency housing services are needed to help

them as well as the other ex-felons."

Any concluding thoughts?

"I think that our readers need to be educated on what each officials does - such as an alderman, senator, and congressman. Then they can hold each one of them responsible," Jones said.

RJ also interviewed Ranoule Tatum.

Why should the people in the district vote for you?

"Because I have a strong background in education as a classroom teacher and working in specialized programs to address the specific needs of our children," Tatum said. "We need to look at education versus criminalization"

Lately in Chicago Mayor Daley is closing schools. If you became a state representative what would you do about that?



Ranoule Tatum, left, is challenging State Rep. Lovanna Jones for her 26th District seat.

"One thing that I'm beginning to notice about CPS is that all the schools that are being affected are south of Madison street in the African American community; only one is north of Madison Street," Tatum said. "With the regentrification we know that a lot of these schools are

going to fall in the hands of other people and not African Americans."

"When I get into office I plan on getting together with other legislators...that represent areas that are being affected by school closing [so] that we can get together to create a block...so that our children can benefit," Tatum added.

In this district a lot of public housing residents have been displaced as a result of the CHA's Plan for Transformation. What would you do in order to address this issue?

"That's only a clever word that they use, a plan for transformation, but what they are doing is resembling a plan for transplantation - you taking the plant out of one pot and so called putting it into a better pot [but] the people are the same plant," Tatum said. "The plants are not changing; the people are the same plant. The people are not changing; only the locations are supposed to be changing."

"That's a Federal [issue]. It's going to require not only myself as a state legislator to address this issue but other legislators that have CHA residents in their district," Tatum said.

CHA said that their plan is working. Do you agree?

"I do have some first-hand experience that it is working for some of the residents but not all because some of the people are getting lost in the shuffle," Tatum said.

Many ex-offenders are supposed to re-enter our communities very soon. What do you plan to do to help them?

"I have been involved for well over 12 years...in a federal program for people transitioning back," Tatum said. "If they didn't get any treatment in the penitentiary then they definitely need supportive services."

Health Watch Alert: Bird Flu Pandemic Expected

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Congressional leaders are currently rushing to prepare for the “looming danger” of a bird flu pandemic, according to U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), and others who spoke at the federal Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee hearings on Influenza Preparedness, on January 31, 2006, in Washington, D.C.

A Rush to Prepare

“The public needs to be informed about what is coming and educated about what actions are expected of it” declared Dr. Joanne Godley, a bioethicist and acting health commissioner, Philadelphia Department of Social Services.

“Scientists, doctors and public health people tell us that it’s not a matter of if but when [the bird flu] will move into a pandemic stage,” declared Harkin during the televised hearings on C-Span 2.

“We’ve had a couple of major disasters in the U.S. in the last few years, and what we’ve found out is that we’re just totally unprepared. We’ve been warned about the Avian Flu influenza, and we know what the dimensions of it could be. And this time, we’ve got to be prepared. And time is running out,” Harkin proclaimed.

Harkin also said that Congress only approved half of the requested \$8 billion for the expected pandemic, and less than the \$7 billion, \$1 million President George W. Bush requested.

According to Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), President Bush alerted the country of the “very serious

health problem,” and asked Congress for the emergency allocations in November 2005 at the National Institute of Health.

The money is to be used for state and local capacity, stockpiling vaccines and anti-virals, increasing global surveillance activities, and to expand the domestic production of flu vaccine. \$350 million dollars of the funds are appropriated for state and local response capacity to a pandemic Harkin said. Based on his historical perspective, Robert Barry, the author of “The Great Influenza of 1918,” when a pandemic was estimated to have killed some 50 million people across the country, said that millions of people could also be afflicted in the soon-coming health epidemic.

that would help protect people in case of a pandemic.”

Another concern of Godley was about Philadelphia not having a federal quarantine office within the city, which she stated would be a major problem in a flu pandemic.

“It is at JFK airport, so that the cross jurisdictional issues would be a factor in Philadelphia,” she said.

Godley said that other countries were more prepared and better equipped to help America in a disastrous event than the U.S.

She said “Within hours after Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, and the tragic flooding ensued, the tiny island of Cuba mobilized more than a thousand medical care practitioners” to assist the deadly storm’s victims.

“There were nurses and doctors who were trained in medical relief operations and who were literally placed on call to travel to the U.S., even with supplies. The country who’s GNP (Gross National Product) is a mere fraction of ours can respond to an emergency in that fashion. Why can’t we?” she declared.

Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) said he didn’t think the federal government can finance the cost alone and suggested that states take on some of the costs.

But Harkin questioned that notion.

“What happens to the states like Louisiana, Mississippi that were hit by Katrina? They don’t have the money. I think there needs to be a national stockpile of the flu shots. What do we do when states like Louisiana just don’t have the money? I really don’t know,” he proclaimed

I think there needs to be a national stockpile of the flu shots. What do we do when states like Louisiana just don’t have the money?

-U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA)

At the hearing, chief officers from pharmaceutical companies testified about how they would help during the potential influenza pandemic.

The bird flu is currently circulating in countries in Asia in Turkey and recently one case in Iraq, Specter said.

Harkin said he recently introduced Senate Bill 2112, “which would provide a free flu shot to everyone in the United States” and would create demand for flu vaccines, stimulate the production facilities, dramatically lower the costs of flu shots, and stimulate public health agencies to build sustainable delivery systems. The bill could also result in “major protection from the more virulent strains or might build up some immunity

by Latoya Wolfe

Years down the road, after I have severed all of my ties to public housing, I will remember most how confined to the space I felt when I lived there. Much of my adult years have been spent on green college campuses populated by squirrels and young people eager to learn and party. My environment was pleasant, the buildings covered in ivy, not graffiti. The air smelled of cafeteria food, not urine. And it’s amazing how quickly you can push bad memories into the back of your mind. After living in Robert Taylor for 18 years, I somehow, after only a semester on campus at North Park University, adapted to my surroundings. Coming home for the holidays was a rough transition.

During eggnog days, I’d leave school with a suitcase or two and hop on the Red Line headed for 47th Street. Take the #51 to State Street, and drag myself toward 4950. As I approached the building where I grew up, where my mother grew up, where my grandmother grew into a woman, I’d tilt my head and examine the building. We are not always given the opportunity to examine things with new eyes but that first Christmas home in 1998, I realized that Robert Taylor was not a place where people should have to live.

As I approached the building with my suitcases, I encountered the entrepreneurs who had set up shop; they stood deep, four, sometimes five or six at a time, and they didn’t seem to be in a hurry to slide to the side so that I could enter the brick tower. Some of them were old classmates, who would later call me “College Girl.” As soon as I entered the mouth of the building, its breath, which could’ve smelled like anything from old mop water to urine to marijuana to a dead, rat

would wrap around you, choke you. Inside, you’d be presented with the opportunity to walk your suitcase up the stairs (twelve flights) or take the elevator. If the elevators were out, I had no choice.

Housing projects, whether they are high rises or not, are built in a way that make you feel like you are locked up. I’ve toured concentration camps in Prague, and visited cousins in jail, and these places remind me of my childhood home. You feel like someone is trying to detain you. Someone wants you to see the bars when you open your front door and remember that you are indeed a prisoner, and that you should not get out of line. There is cement everywhere, and brick, and these stones help to keep everyone depressed and angry.

After going back to school in January of 1999, I was so happy to return to grass and trees coated with snow and air that was crisp, and an environment that was not enclosed and barred off. And I would go back and forth from tree-lined streets and sidewalks attacked by chalk advertisements of campus events to a block of drug trafficking, cold, messy stairwells and police sweeps. After two years, I left North Park and transferred to a HBCU (Historically Black College and University) in Norfolk, Virginia, but in between the start of my new school year, I had to come home.

While my family welcomed my returns with open arms, Thanksgiving-style meals and my own room, I would always remember my life on campus, and I couldn’t explain to my family, who had only lived in Robert Taylor, how this was such a hostile environment. After running out of financial aid for an out-of-state school, I was forced to come back home into Robert Taylor, and at this time they were in a true state of transition; there were several buildings missing from the lineup on State Street. The picture that I was so

used to seeing on the Dan Ryan of row after row of buildings was different.

I enrolled in Columbia College, the place where I finally received my bachelor’s degree, and while living at home continuously, for the first time since high school, I watched them knock down building after building. For the two years that I attended Columbia College, I lived in Robert Taylor and things were worse than ever before because I knew that most people did not have to endure walking up sixteen flights of stair, creeping through a dark hallway in a building that was under-populated due to its impending demolition. For the first time in my adult life, I decided to move out on my own. With the opportunity to attend college, I had resources that most of my neighbors in Robert Taylor did not have access to, so I worked and I rented an apartment.

Though I never made any vows to never return to Robert Taylor, I secretly aspired to stay away from public housing, and to work hard to help my mother to get out. Interestingly enough, life has a way of playing cruel jokes on you, and so my aspirations to be a writer forced me to minimize my spending, and work less so that I could finish my first book. So what was I forced to do? You guessed it. I moved back in with my mother.

Now I’ve graduated from Columbia College and I am putting the finishing touches on my novel, and though the housing development that I live in does not have drug dealers, smells decent, and there are no rodent problems, I still can’t get used to feeling caged in.

I feel like I’m home for the holidays even though there are no red and green M&Ms on the cocktail table, no Christmas tree. It’s summertime and unlike every other trip back home, I have a college degree. So perhaps I am finally on my way out of this prison for good, and I can work on coming back for my mother.

State Passes Support for Renters

by Michael Ibrahim

In Chicago, even everyday citizens have definite ideas about affordable housing or the lack of it. Throughout Illinois, activists and legislators alike are pleased with the results of the State House vote on May 4 for S.B.75, better known as the Rental Housing Support Program. "We are very excited about the passing of this bill...it is estimated that this bill could help 5,500 homeless applicants per year," exclaimed Mimi Alschuler from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless.

The Rental Housing Support Program plans to assist families earning 30 percent or below an area's median income. In most places in Illinois, supporters say that's about \$19,000 for a family of four. More than 150 organizations statewide supported this bill. The program would be funded with a \$10 state surcharge on real estate documents recorded with county recorders. All total, counties statewide could build a fund amounting to between \$25 million to \$30 million, though estimates vary. Those funds are expected to be sufficient annually to assist over 5,500 applicants. Each county would be allowed to keep \$1 of the \$10 surcharge paid for the documents recorded in the county recorder's office, with the remainder going for the Rental Housing Support Program.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority is the clearinghouse for the program. Rules for signing up for the program have not been established yet.

The Rental Housing Support Program has some history behind it from the stand point that Illinois is not the first state to use this type of rental support plan: three other states, Missouri, Delaware and Ohio, already use recording fees to fund affordable housing.

In an email, Susannah Levine, a policy analyst for Business and Professional People in the Public Interest, wrote that "The Rental Housing Support Program is modeled after the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund.



Retired school teacher Deborah Hughes said she worries about those who cannot afford a home and who do not have a support network of friends and family.
Photo by Michael Ibrahim

The Chicago program has been around for 12 years and subsidizes 2,000 apartments annually. They have a waiting list of landlords that want to participate in the program because the program works very well for landlords."

Illinois is a large state, and while 30 percent of the funds generated by the Program will have a definite impact on the state's most densely populated area – Chicago – 70 percent, or the lion's share, will go to fund affordable housing in other areas of the state. Localized need, as is customary, will be determined by Census data.

Clearly, affordable housing is a big issue in Chicago and across the state. A year ago, the civic organization Metropolis 2020 released a report entitled "Housing as Opportunity." The report alleged that not only did Chicago lose more than 5,200 rental apartments between 1990-2000, but during the remarkable building boom between 1970-2000, rental housing overall increased a mere 8 percent, less than half the growth rate for New York, and a fraction of the growth occurring in Dallas for the same period.

In Chicago, Mayor Daley wants to build affordable housing by giving private developers incentives. On May 26 of last year, Mayor Daley held a press conference announcing new changes in zoning regulations along with his design for building affordable housing in the city. At that time, I went to Peter Scales of the



Michael Ibrahim

Department of Planning for a detailed explanation of what the Mayor proposed to do about affordable housing locally. When I asked Scales how the Mayor's plan would allow those in need to access housing, Scales said, "We will allow [developers] to build an additional three square feet of market rate residential space for every square foot of affordable housing they decide to include in their plans.

"We will let them build a taller building or a building with more dwelling units if they agree to set a number of affordable housing units aside," he continued. Scales further explained there also was a plan to allow com-

mercial builders to contribute to an affordable housing fund, saying that, had this fund been in place during the years 1997-2002, at the height of the real estate boom, "by this time we would have generated upwards of 650 units of affordable housing together with about \$25 million into an affordable housing fund."

However, critics say that 650 units would scarcely scratch the surface needs of affordable housing in metropolitan Chicago. The Rental Housing Support Program, a state-level initiative, is expected to have a high impact on stemming the growing rate of homelessness in Chicago, where the public sees it every day, and statewide as well.

Making some inquiries around town, I was able to dialogue with different people about their opinions regarding both homelessness and this bill. I found I needed to explain that the primary focus for the majority of activists at this time is not on the so-called American Dream of home ownership. Individual home ownership with repair costs, property taxes, mortgages, labor for its upkeep and other costs is quite expensive these days and beyond the reach of many of our neighbors, friends and relations. In a word, rental is more affordable as we see how homelessness is rising.

John G. Markowski, the Chicago Commissioner of Housing, whom I have had the opportunity of meeting a number of times, had straight forward ideas about he wanted to say on the matter.

"Housing is the key to the success of any individual and family. Our goal in the Plan to End Homelessness is to quickly move people into permanent housing because we know there's no place like a home; that kids do better in school when they are sleeping in their own bed and not on a couch. It's easier to hold a job and take care of your health when you have a place

to call home. It provides a sense of security and belonging to a community," said Markowski

In a way, Markowski's comments reminded me of the passionate words of Cardinal Francis George at the Valuing Affordability Conference. "It is not just about affordable housing; it is more about structural justice. So, when we advocate for affordable we are advocating for people, families, community and opportunity. Likewise, when we develop affordable housing, we are really developing people and families, community and opportunity," Cardinal George said.

"In short, if we truly respect human dignity, protect basic rights, support families, foster community and promote opportunity, we should value affordability."

Jennie Rosa, who I bumped into downtown, worked as a homemaker for years, but now is on board at the Department on Aging. She said she thinks that poverty can bring out the worst in people but it doesn't necessarily have to. She also thinks affordable housing is a critical issue.

"The bottom line is that we can as a society begin with making sure affordable housing is available to everyone who is at least trying to make something of themselves," Rosa said.

We are very excited about the passing of this bill...it is estimated that this bill could help 5,500 homeless applicants per year.

-Mimi Alschuler, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

A retired Chicago Public Schools teacher also expressed concern with the plight of those people without secure housing.

"I feel that not having access to affordable housing places one in a very precarious position," Deborah Hughes said. "[Housing] is something which I guess that most of us take for granted. But, just think, if you did not have that one convenience and lump that together with not having close family or friends to rely on, that's a terrible situation."

After everything that has been said and done, this bill proves that community activism is capable of producing positive results. And that it is useless to be victimized by pessimism.

A Friend Remembered

Mr. Roosevelt Norris, Centenarian plus five, peerless in age grouping, God fearing, Man of God, God loving teacher, good neighbor, good cook, friend, icon, human example of Dr. Martin Luther King's quote, "Longevity has its place," and indeed, Mr. Roosevelt, as he was so lovingly called, found that place and will still live in the hearts and minds of all who knew him.

Mayor Daley recognized him to be Chicago's oldest citizen not long before he died. His legacy of a long and positive life will surely give strength to his family and neighbors. Harold L. Ikes was blessed with his presence.

-photo and text by Jacqueline Thompson





Young and Restless



Child Molestation: Being The Victim by Anonymous

I can remember the smell of liquor on his breath, and I can remember him saying that this was “daddy’s little game.” I am a victim of child molestation. I was molested by my stepfather numerous times between the ages of five and eleven. I can’t tell you each account, but I can give you details on how I felt then and how I feel now.

My mother was always at work, providing for the family, and my father was what I guess you’d call a “house husband.” There would be times when he would just touch or rub on my private parts or make me touch his. There were times when he would sit me on his lap, and I could feel it as he would grind on me. I never knew this was wrong, but the same sense, I never really knew what was taking place. My stepfather would always say that this was “daddy’s little game” and that if I did not cooperate he would tell mommy and that she would send me away, and I didn’t want to be sent away. There were

times when my stepfather would kiss me forcing his rough tongue in my mouth. It tasted of alcohol and cigarettes.

As I got older, I began to realize this was wrong. But I was still scared because my stepfather warned me that I shouldn’t tell anyone. In the back of my mind, I always wondered what possessed this man to hurt me this way. I began to think that maybe I did something wrong, and that maybe I deserved this pain, and maybe this was my punishment.

Some of the most horrific moments were when my stepfather took it to the next level. He would be on top of me performing these acts, and it would seem as if he was in another world. The look on his face was just indescribable. At the same time, I would mentally transport myself to another world. A world where nothing bad ever happened, where every day was filled with sunshine and rainbows, but eventually I would have to step back to the harsh reality that I was a victim of child molestation.

After a few long years of this abuse, I would finally be freed when my mother noticed that I acted kind of different around him. My mother took me to a doctor and the doctor checked all parts of my body as well as my anus, and told my mother that I was being touched. The look on my mother’s face was one that I will always

remember – she had the look of hurt and tears began to flow from her eyes. I even then felt that things were still my fault if I had just acted normal then my mother would have never taken me to the doctor then she would have never known what happened and then she would have no reason to cry.

My mother and I never went back to that house. We went to my grandmother’s house. Being so young, I don’t really know what happened after all that. I do know that I had to meet with a lot of people, and tell them everything I could remember. I was so messed up. Everything really took a hold on me and by the age of 13, I tried to commit suicide by taking a lot of pain pills. I thank God to this day that I did not succeed. I also had a few good friends who stood by me and helped me through everything. God truly blessed me.

Now he’s out of my life and he has been out of my life and it’s been seven years since the last time he touched me. I’m still scared. I still have nightmares about him. I even still believe at some times that it was my entire fault. This is something that I wouldn’t wish on my worst enemy. To anyone going through this, there is help. You can call this number 1-800-25ABUSE. Yes, I am a victim of child molestation but I will shine through the rain.

Cabrini Residents Protest Corruption by Carl Allen-Goosby and Angela M. Lathan

Hey, hey, what’s up today; It’s time to investigate CHA.” These were the chants that filled the air outside U.S. Attorney General Patrick Fitzgerald’s office on Friday, August 12, as about a hundred people, mostly youth, marched downtown. These people were residents and other representatives of the Cabrini Green housing complex, there to protest its planned demolition by CHA (the Chicago Housing Authority). As bemused shoppers of the farmer’s market across the street looked on, the youth drum team accompanying the protesters played for the nearly 30 minutes the group stayed. A small number of police officers soon gathered inside the building. But despite the constantly thundering drums, the atmosphere remained calm. As the group waited outside of the building, Maurice Edwards Jr., vice president of the Cabrini Green Local Advisory Council, went in to deliver a letter the residents wrote protesting the demolition of Cabrini.

The City of Chicago supports CHA’s plans of demolishing Cabrini Green and relocating its residents on the basis of the housing project’s history of gang violence, high crime and drug sales and use. The protestors are aware that it’s situated on some of the city’s most desirable real estate, right off Chicago’s Gold Coast. This, they believe is the real motive behind CHA’s move to demolish the project. In other words, they suspect CHA of being involved in a money-making, land-grabbing scheme. They feel building contractors, land developers, and even the ward’s alderman, Walter Burnett, are all key players who stand to benefit financially from the housing project being demolished.

Even with the housing project’s problems, Edwards is of the firm belief that measures less drastic than demolition should be considered first. For instance, he proposed that CHA could implement a screening process if they wanted to keep people with criminal records out, set up better lighting outside the building, and do an overall refurbishing of the housing units. These types of alternatives

have been put in place in the Lowden Homes, a housing complex with similar problems on the South Side of Chicago. “CHA is trying to sabotage Cabrini Green,” Edwards said, “and a lot of people are too scared to speak up about it.”

In addition to the issues surrounding the graft associated with the demolition project, Edwards also spoke about the human issues that have to be considered when forcibly evicting approximately 4,700 people from their homes. “There are families that live in different units here,” he said. “If I have to move, I won’t even be close to my half-sisters anymore. I’d be really scared that something could happen to them, and I couldn’t get to them. A lot of other families are in the same situation.”

He went on to say that all throughout the housing project, people have extended family members – living in separate units – who provide valuable support to each other. Some serve as babysitters. Others share meals together. There are old people that need their grandchildren nearby so they can do things like picking up groceries or medicine, or even help clean their homes. In essence, they’re family, so for many reasons they just want to be near each other.

Edwards’ position about extended family members desiring to not be separated was the subject of a research paper by Anne Leete, an English major at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA. It’s titled “Family Networks: Does Structure Effect Support.” In it, Leete asks an African American girl to whom she would go to first if she had a problem, and what she worries about. “My grandma” was the answer to both questions.” The girl explained that because her mother had to work to get the family the things they needed (the father wasn’t there), she had really been raised by her grandmother. The article doesn’t say where this girl lived but what is clear is that she’s saying the same thing that Edwards is saying: being near extended family members means a lot. This is especially true in low-income African American families because overall they have fewer ways to pay for services and things they need. Their extended family members often cover some of their most important needs at no cost. But convenience isn’t all that is concerned here. There’s also a lot of love family members feel for one another. What really makes this point is the large number of people in New Orleans who refused to evacuate and leave behind extended family members even though the threat of Hurricane Katrina was bearing down

on them. Of course, many news reporters expressed their own ideas about why people did this, often saying that many black people rode out the storm because they didn’t have the money and sometimes not even cars needed to help them leave to a safe and nice place. But no matter what the reason, the common denominator is that through love and support, our families help complete our lives and people having their extended families close is important to them in many different ways, especially for families that have little money or other resources.

So when decisions are made to relocate people, destroy their housing, and split up their families, those decisions should not be based on how much money real estate developers and building contractors can make. They also shouldn’t be made without factoring in the hardships and bad things that can happen to people who are separated from those they’re close to. And whatever valid reasons there are for taking people out of their homes, they should always be weighed against doing something less upsetting to those people’s lives.

Urban Youth International Journalism Program

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Leaving CHA by Tracy Brandon

These days, I live in Englewood, but I haven't always lived there. Have you ever heard of Stateway Gardens? Well, this is where I used to live in CHA public housing. It's not what it seems what most people say. I know because I lived there for 14 years.

People outside of CHA housing say the residents are ghetto or wild. It's not even like that, but I can see that they don't know any better when they say such things. They're listening to "he said she said" outsiders. I'm not saying that some of what they say isn't true. All I'm saying is get real. But let me tell from the point of view of a person who lived there and saw it.

Within every community, there's good and bad. There are a lot of positive things happening within Stateway Gardens. For example, there are a lot of activities for kids, teens and adults. All year around, no matter what, the people are always trying to keep everyone out of trouble and occupied.

Every neighborhood isn't perfect. There are almost

always trials and tribulations to overcome. You never heard about all the tournaments the people entered and won at Stateway, such as dance shows, flag football, softball, baseball, track and field and gymnastics. Did you know that about a week or two before Thanksgiving and Christmas that the Stateway Gardens Center gives a big dinner? Everyone can come but it's mostly for the ones who can't afford all that they might want. This didn't just start. It's been going on since as long as I can remember.

Could you believe that every day after school there was a homework session in one room? The staff helped students with any questions that they had. If you need help, you were welcome. There is also an exercise room with a boxing ring in it. Whether you want to be on the boxing team or just box for fun, you can. Some people do it just to get the stress off their shoulders.

A very good friend of the family named Tamika Griffin lived in the Robert Taylor Homes. But years later she moved to Stateway Gardens. I asked her what the difference was between the two. She said "Stateway Gardens' recreational center is closer than Robert Taylor because there you have to cross the street and most parents do not allow their children to cross the street without them."

\$2,000 to pay the coyote. That's the person who crosses the border with you.

It was around Mother's Day when my mother and I took the road of San José de Otates for Leon Guanajuato de Leon and for Nogales (on the border). We had to rent a hotel. I remember the name. It was called "The Princess." We waited there for the coyote. We thought we would be the only ones crossing, but no, there were other people at the hotel also waiting for him. We had to wait until it was very dark for the coyote to come and wake us up, I was very nervous when he came. We had to walk over mountains. The road was very rocky. My mother told me she didn't know if she could make it, and she was having problems breathing. I told the coyote. He said if she didn't think she was going to make it to stay behind. My mother decided to return but it was hard because we'd already walked a lot and lost the road. Luckily, we ran into the police. They asked what we were doing so far out in the mountains. We told them we were trying to cross the border but my mother couldn't make it and now

Many times when someone looking in from the outside looks at graffiti, they automatically think that the roots for this come from gangs, dope-fiends, thieves or violent characters. This may be true among some graffiti artists, though it's not the case with many of them.

It has been said that graffiti is not art. So wait; to sketch something, put your time into choosing the colors for it, and applying it to a wall is not art, but grabbing random paint and splashing it on to a canvas is art? The way I see it, art has no limits and it has no rules. It's all art. Poetry, music, break dancing, journalism, acting, graffiti, authors, illustrators. They're all just different in their own unique way but they all take time, talent, ideas and organizing.

"Nerd" is a graffiti writer from Uptown here in Chicago. He has committed himself to being involved in the community in whichever way he can. He is also in charge of the graffiti team for Kumba Lynx. They are a group of young kids who perform plays and skits. These plays hold a very positive message for the urban communities. I decided to interview Nerd so that those of you who read this may have an idea of why he does what he does.

Residents' Journal: What do you consider yourself to be in the world of art?

NERD: I've always called myself a writer.

RJ: When did you become involved in art?

NERD: Well, I started bombing (spray painting a name on a wall) and getting up in 1985. I didn't start writing "Nerd" until 1988.

RJ: Was there something in specific that made you want to do this?

NERD: I grew up in Uptown and everybody in the hood was bombing. We had famous writers in our neighborhood like Cre8, Warp and Tsel who were a big influence on me. My older brother was also a writer. He hung around

She also said "The situation in public housing is not what they say. It's how you go about it." Then I asked her what are some of the good and bad things that she saw at CHA properties. She answered, "The selling of drugs stinks, but it's good in a way because it teaches kids to do better than what they see, that they could do something with themselves. When they see their brother or friend's brother go to jail, they might make a good choice. The bad thing is that they see fast money coming in that they want."

Has anyone told you that rats or anything else were in the hallways in every public housing building? I heard that too but it isn't true. The janitors cleaned up all seventeen floors of the building I lived in, including front and back hallways. It's up to the people if they want to keep it clean. The janitors do their job but some residents don't do theirs. If you didn't know, the rooms in most of the people's apartments I saw looked better than inside the houses of some homeowners. What I'm trying to say is that if you walk in one of the apartments, you would have thought that person was rich.

Never judge a book by its cover because you never might know what's inside that book. Most people do and a lot of people are wrongly judged as a result.

we were lost. The police gave us a ride to the hotel. We thanked them and stayed in the hotel, disillusioned at not crossing this time. But the next day, we crossed again, differently this time. We had to walk but not as far and the road wasn't as difficult. The coyote took us to a house in Phoenix, Arizona. The coyotes said we had to pay so my mother called my sister and she sent the \$2,000 for the coyotes. Then the coyotes had to buy clothing for us. They took us to the airport. They said not to be nervous there. There were a lot of immigration officials at the airport, and we all could have been arrested. But everything went well.

Now I'm in Chicago and my mother has work here and we are much happier living here because there is work for women, not like in Mexico. That's why a lot of people leave Mexico and come to the U.S. I graduated in 2005 from Howard Area Alternative High School. It's good I went to school instead of just working because that means a better future for me and my mother here in the United States.

a lot of writers and I always liked to tag along when they went to the train yards.

RJ: What is it about street art that makes you want to keep doing it?

NERD: I paint to relieve stress and to express myself. Most of my pieces are straight off the top of my dome (head). It's more fun that way. It's like a surprise because I never know what it's going to look like until it's done. I just get to the surface, whether it be a wall or train, and try to combine styles that are old and new. I always try to produce something I've never seen before.

RJ: Why do you think there are so many people out there who do what you do?

NERD: Graffiti is a form of rebellion and it gives the youth a sense of power through words written on walls. People like Mayor Daley don't want to hear your voice or your opinion, and I compare that to when slave masters wouldn't let slaves read. They did this because they knew knowledge is power.

RJ: How do you feel about the City of Chicago's thoughts on graffiti?

NERD: I think that changing graffiti laws into a felony created more ruthless criminals. They would rather rob, steal and gangbang because it's less of a charge to do this than it is to paint on a garbage can. That's why there's more gang bangers than there are writers nowadays.

RJ: As my last question, when and where do you think graffiti originated?

NERD: People have been doing graffiti since the caveman era and they're going to keep on bombing as long as there is injustice in the world. Some writers got something to say and other writers just want to be remembered.

Why People Leave Mexico by Jose Soto

I remember when I was 15 years old, I left school. Life wasn't easy for us because I had five brothers and a sister, and my father was killed when I was only five.

It was very hard for my mother because there wasn't work for women, and she had to sell enchiladas at night. She didn't make much money, just enough for food and school. She only had one nice dress. But things were going to change; my sister got married and went to Chicago.

She was pregnant, and she was going to need help when the baby arrived, so my mother decided to go to Chicago. It wasn't going to be easy because she needed

The Writing on the Wall

by Adam Rios

Ché Guevara: a man who gave and received respect; a man who took a bold stand for many things that he thought needed someone to stand up for them, such as those in poverty, women, equal rights, etc. He was educated in what he had a passion for and for what he believed in. He possessed knowledge that not many had and used it to create changes. This is why he was robbed of his life. This is why he was assassinated. He took a firm stand for something that very few were willing to stand up for and he did it in a bold manner.

In a way, this is similar to those nowadays who take a stand for something and are repressed. This world has had many different types of writers; those who had different ideas, wanted to express a certain something, had information to share, or those who simply wanted fame. These different motives apply to novel writers, poets, MCs, journalists and "taggers," as society has labeled them. However, they don't like to be called taggers for the simple fact that what they do goes beyond just writing a name on a wall.

Each individual has his own beliefs and thoughts. Growing up in a repressive society makes it difficult to get these thoughts and ideas out there without doing something radical or extreme. Don't get me wrong, though. I'm not saying every writer had it rough. The reason for choosing to do what they do differs in each writer and didn't just come out of nowhere. As stated before, they either want to share ideas, express themselves, fight for something specific, or just get a little fame.

The Summer Ambassadors Program

Chicago Historical Society by Chantell Suggs

The Chicago Historical Society's literature states that it strives to promote knowledge and understanding of Chicago and the nation's past by providing access to the primary materials of history.

"The collections of the Chicago Historical Society provide a rich source of materials for the study of Chicago's history and many other aspects of American history. The collections number an estimated 20 million items, including photographs and drawings, diaries and letters, costumes and textiles, sound recordings and films, books and newspapers, furniture and manufactured objects, architectural fragments and renderings, and many other artifacts," according to the Chicago Historical Society web site.

Currently, the historical society is closed for renovations in preparation for their 150th anniversary. When it reopens – in fall of this year – people will be able to enjoy the kinds of exhibits the Summer Ambassadors experienced during their trip there.

The exhibitions that were open when the Summer Ambassadors visited included *Without Sanctuary*. This is an exhibit everyone needs to go view. The exhibit is a collection of pictures from James Allen & John Littlefield with the support of the Lannan Foundation. The pictures tell the story of African

American history and slavery. This exhibit is a very interesting and educational experience. Every picture tells its own story and it is very important to look at every detail. The details are very intense and may be hard to endure.

Once you walk into the room, it's a very quiet environment. It's amazing how it's not just African Americans, but every race comes to view this exhibit. It feels like you're walking back into a history book. You can read the story of lynchings but the exhibit is like being there and actually seeing it with your own eyes. It is a totally different experience.

Most lynching stories were black males being accused of sexually assaulting a white lady. It seems to me like every incident was the same - the white woman said she'd been raped or a young white girl accused the man of molesting her. There was no trial, just her word against his. To the extent that the black males were automatically considered guilty in these cases, there didn't seem to be any justice or equity.

First he'd be taken to jail. Then the mob ignored orders from authorities to disperse and dragged the accused man from the jail. He'd then get brutally beaten. Next, they would lynch and in some cases even burn the accused man to death. What a harsh and painful way to die.

The entire process was amazing. To me it wasn't just the murder itself but how the crowd was so entertained seeing another human being getting killed, in some cases getting killed just because of the

color of their skin. As you view the detail in these amazing images, you can see the people in the background cheering, trying to be a part of this event. You can even see kids and also other blacks in these pictures.

In the exhibit there is a section for Ida B. Wells-

million dollars. On July 16th 2004, Millennium Park was born.

The Cloud Gate, also known as "The Bean," is one the popular marks of the parks. It is a bean-shaped object which is very big and tall. It has a metal, mirror-like substance which is very good for taking nice pictures of the city's downtown. When we were at the Bean, we took pictures and they came out cool because along with the reflections, the city's skyscrapers were seen along with our pictures. The Cloud

Gate is inspired by liquid mercury. It is one of the largest sculptures in the world. It measures 66 feet long by 33 feet high and weighs 110 tons.

The Crown Fountain features two 50-foot-high block towers with shallow pools on each side. The towers each are equipped with video images and falling water

owner of Zam Zam's name is Mumtaz Rizvi. He has been in America for 18 years. He also told me that before 1947, India and Pakistan were the same nation. I asked Rizvi why he came to America? His response was: "Just to establish myself." I realized that the owner was also in the kitchen cooking the food, and he was also serving the food. I ordered a chicken sandwich. It was very hot and spicy, and also had round onions. The sandwich was cut into half with a green sauce. I also had a lamb sausage – the sausage was really good! It tasted like gyro meat.

Later I visited the jewelry store. It had lots of real nice jewelry. Some of the jewelry was pure gold. Everything was real. It was Pakistani Jewelry. They also had real nice, beautiful, wedding jewelry. They had jewelry for all occasions. After visiting those two stores, I then went to a clothing store. This particular

Barnett. She was a journalist known for a piece she wrote called "Southern Horrors: A Red Record Mob Rule in New Orleans" about lynching.

The Emmett Louis Till exhibit is very different because it shows images from the actual court room. He was a 14-year-old boy murdered while visiting his family in Mississippi. Till's crime was the alleged insult of a white woman he whistled at, Carolyn Bryant.

The display for Till has the picture from the funeral and the drawings from the court room. It felt like walking back into history.

The Historical Society is truly a place to go to learn knowledge about American history. People say you never know how something feels until you go through it yourself but in this case, you don't have to actually be the victim. Through learning, you can be the solution to their pain.



The graduating UYIJP - and Summer Ambassadors - class of '05 and staff: From left, Jovan Gathings, Development Associate Micah Maidenberg (rear), Keyonna James (front), instructor Kari Lyderson, instructor Satin Crable with son Sean, Twanda White, Chantell Suggs and Roberto Del Toro

cascades from the top of each tower. On the towers, there are images of Chicago citizens spitting water out of their mouths, much like sculptures of gargoyles spitting water out of their mouths. Basically, Piensa used an old time model and recreated the model with his own idea.

The Jay Pritzker Pavilion stands about 120 feet high. The stage is built with steel from top to bottom with a bulky, silver, curved, panel-like sculptures that radiate from the center stage. The stage has an amazing state-of-the-art sound system and seats 4,000 people, and "The Great Lawn," which is located under a huge metal framework, seats an additional 7,000 people. I think it is very interesting how the Pavilion was created. I know it took a lot of hard work to complete.

The B.P. Bridge, also created by Frank Gehry, is what connects Millennium Park to the Daley Bicentennial Plaza. It is 925 feet long with beautiful views of the Chicago Skyline, Lake Michigan and Grant Park. It is equipped with a slope that helps physically disabled people use the bridge.

To conclude, my trip to Millennium Park was a good one. I highly recommend people to visit the park. It is a great attraction to our city and I expect more and more things to come to this great project.

store sold shalwars and kameezes. This store was kind of big and wide. It also sold dressy kinds of shoes. All of their clothing items were reasonably priced. As you walk down the street, you can smell all of the different kinds of tasty foods. I think it would be a great idea for others to go out and visit Devon Street. It's a nice place with variety of stores to shop in. I mean it's different and new.

Devon Street is a good example of Pakistani and Indian culture. It is a great place to experience a new culture and different religions. Take a break and go out and visit and have a wonderful time.

Devon Street is 6400 North in the Rogers Park neighborhood. To get there, take the Red Line to the Loyola stop or the Western bus to Western Avenue and Devon Street.

Devon Street Sights & Taste by Twanda White

On July 27, 2005, the Summer Ambassadors Project went on a trip to the North Side. It was on a popular street named Devon. It appeared that Muslims mostly live and work in the area. Most Muslims that I saw in that area wore a type of clothing named a shalwar, which is a long skirt, and a kameez, which is a shirt.

We walked along Devon Street, taking in the sights, sounds and smells. After exploring the neighborhood, we went to a restaurant called Zam Zam. The

The Summer Ambassadors Program

Chiappetti: The Last Slaughter House by Roberto Del Toro

Slaughterhouses! Why are they gone? How could a city that was the primary location of stockyards in this country have just one left?

Franco Chiappetti is the marketing president of the company Chiappetti, which has been in his family for more than four generations since his great-grandfather Fiore Chiappetti started the business. The elder Chiappetti killed lambs for friends and relatives. The word spread and he got the business started. Franco Chiappetti says that the most important job in the company today is to buy the livestock because without the supply, you have nothing to break apart. He also said that after the animal is dead, they have to chill it in a cooler for 12 hours before processing it.

"Chicago is a great city," Chiappetti said. "Where else could you find the Wild West by the Sears Tower?"

The stockyards were big business in Chicago, and a lot of hard work. The Chicago stockyards are an American trademark. At its height, 45,000 employees went to work each day in the yards. Since Chicago is



The Summer Ambassadors with Chiappetti slaughterhouse marketing president Franco Chiappetti (far left), great-grandson of founder Fiore Chiappetti.

Photo by Micah Maidenberg

directly in the center of the United States, the company relied on railroads to get their stock sent out. After a couple of years, the refrigerated rail car was invented making the meat able to be transported without getting spoiled.

Immigrants made up most of the employees. Sometimes children even worked in them so they could get money for their families. When it came to slaughtering an animal, the company "used everything, but the squeal," according to a PBS documentary about

the Chicago stockyards. The stockyards became known as a "weird amusement park" because people were allowed to come for visits.

But 1955 was the beginning of the end. After this was when most of the slaughterhouses started closing. July 31, 1971, was when most of them were finally shut down. States like Colorado and Nebraska replaced Chicago as the places where meat was slaughtered.

Chiappetti was the only company that was able to survive. One of the main reasons that they survived was because of kosher and halal (Muslim) markets. Chiappetti is located in Bridgeport, a neighborhood on the city's Southwest Side. The animals come from Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Indiana. One thousand lambs come in every day and on Mondays, 300 veal calves are slaughtered. (Veal calves are baby cows.)

When the lamb is going to get killed, the workers shackle the lamb by its hind legs; it is hanging with its head down. Then the lamb is stunned with a gun. After that the throat is cut, killing the lamb and also draining the blood, which is caught by a container.

A visit to Chiappetti takes you back to the days when Chicago was king of the slaughterhouses. For more information, you can visit the website at www.lambandveal.com.

Fire and Steel: The Acme Steel Coke Plant

by Roberto Del Toro

The Acme Steel Coke Plant is located at 112th Street and Torrence Avenue on the Southeast Side of Chicago. Frank Greco, Mr. T. and some of their friends who worked in the plant before it was closed down on Thanksgiving 2001 showed the Summer Ambassadors around the plant and also showed us the process that they used to get the coke out of the coal. In the first building that we saw, clothing, newspapers and other things were dropped all over the floor. There still were schedules up on the walls with the days the workers had to go to work and the time that they started to the time that they ended their shift. There was an oily smell inside of the building because the machines were just turned off when the plant closed down. Before every worker started at the company they were given safety shoes which protected their feet with a big flap that covered the shoe laces. Mr. T. wore his shoes to show us.

When the coal was heated up and everything was taken out, all that was left was coke and that was what this company made. Some coal came from here in Illinois

but most of it came from different states. When they got the coal, it was put into piles. Coal that came from different places was never put into the same pile because it would affect what they had to use to get the coke. Outside where the coal was kept there are still small piles of coal that were never used. Greco said making coke is a very simple process but a long one.

"The Dumper" was the freight car that carried the coal into the building that started off the process. The Dumper would flip over and dump all of the coal into the hopper, which separated the coal. Then the coal would be smashed to smithereens the size of gunpowder. After that, the coal would be taken to the Mixer, which stored the coal in eight separate bins. Everything was next transported to the ovens.

There were 100 ovens at the Acme plant. In the ovens, the coal was heated up to 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit. When the coal reached the top of the mill, it would fall into the Larry Car. The Larry Car had holes on the bottom of it so when it would go down the tracks the coal would fall out of it and into holes leading to the ovens. The holes in the ground would be covered up after

the coal fell through because the fire would continue to shoot out if left uncovered. Our tour guides said that the oven area was like a living version of hell on Earth because of all the fire shooting out.

After the coal was cooked, all that was left was coke. The gases would go through the pipes and as the gas cooled down, it turned solid and the workers would then pick them out. The coke then is burned to make iron. The Larry Car would be taken to the back and water would just be dropped on it so it could cool down. Coke was going for \$100 a ton when shut down but it is going for \$450 a ton now.

People should go see the steel mill because it was a huge part of Chicago's history. Without the steel mills, there would be no buildings here in Chicago because there would be no steel. Steel is also used in cars, railroad tracks and countless other appliances. To preserve this history, former steelworkers are trying to turn the Acme plant into a museum. The steel mill is not really open to the public but you could make arrangements for a tour by calling the Chicago Steel Heritage Project at (773) 646-0436.

A Walking Tour of Pilsen's Murals



Left photo: The Summer Ambassadors with Pilsen mural tour guide Jose Guerrero (second from left) during a tour of Pilsen's historic murals. Chantell Suggs, third from right, wrote of the trip "Pilsen was a very interesting place we visited this summer. It's known for its amazing murals all around the town."

Chantell also noted Guerrero told the Summer Ambassadors that "Art is always about people and how they should know their culture. It's important for everybody to know your culture."

Right photo: A section of one of the murals wrapped around the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, 1852 W. 19th St.
Photos by Micah Maidenberg



The Summer Ambassadors Program

Respect Me, Don't Media Me!

by Keyonna James

On August 17, 2005, I was given the opportunity to visit the Gene Siskel Film Center located at 164 North State Street in downtown Chicago. When I first walked up to the film center, I noticed a big green and white sign posted vertically on the side of the building. The sign read "Gene Siskel Film Center" in big, bold green letters.

As I entered the building, I pictured the inside looking like the inside of a movie theater. You know, where you get your ticket and then purchase your drinks and popcorn. To my surprise, it wasn't. When Micah* and I first entered, we went right up the stairs. There was a long flight of stairs when you first walked in the door. The stairs were green and white with a marble-like texture. I thought they were very pretty. When Micah and I reached the top of the stairs, we approached a room where two girls were sitting right at the entrance. By looking at the girls' facial expressions, you could tell that they were there to meet and greet the people that entered the room. The two girls offered Micah and I pizza, salad and soda.

The first thing I noticed when we entered the room was voices. I heard voices coming from every direction. Why did I hear voices? I heard voices because the room was filled with people of different ages and races who were sitting at round tables eating pizza and talking. Micah grabbed a salad and I didn't grab anything. I wasn't hungry.

As Micah and I waited to be guided into the theater, we looked out of the window to view the action that was going on in downtown Chicago. There was no action, though. I mean, the only action you had was two police officers sitting in the middle of the street on their blue and white motorcycles and then you had the Chicago Theater across the street. I started to daydream while looking through the window but I was rudely

interrupted by the sound of chairs hitting the floors and voice tones getting louder.

I turned around and saw that everyone was being led into the theater where we would watch the movie. Micah and I followed the small crowd. Inside the theater were these big, comfortable seats that were a maroon color. I sat in the seat and guess what? The seat could rock back and forth. I thought that was so different from an original movie theater. I would consider an original movie theater being like the theater in Ford City or the theater on 87th Street.

In the theater we viewed a 30 minute movie called "Respect Me, Don't Media Me." The movie was put together by a group of girls ages 14-18 who happened to be part of an organization called Sisters Empowering Sisters. Sisters Empowering Sisters is an organization made up of teenage girls who are basically trying to make a difference in the lives of other teenagers by building

There were young girls interviewed in the movies who told how they felt about being portrayed in music videos.

their self-esteem. The movie "Respect Me, Don't Media Me" was a very interesting movie and it had a lot of meaning to it. The movie examined the portrayal of young women in music videos and other media such as movies and television shows. There were young girls interviewed in the movie who told how they felt about being portrayed in music videos. One girl mentioned how she wore glasses and because of the fact she wore glasses, many guys didn't want to date her. She told how they would

use lines towards her such as "We don't make passes to girls who wear glasses." I never heard that line before but I thought it was cruel yet interesting.

Another girl in the movie had to write a paper on a person she would like to be like. They showed how in the process of her writing the paper she had two options. The options were to be like Nikki Hilton or her mother. Why would she want to be like Nikki Hilton? Because Nikki Hilton is famous, rich, pretty and most people like her. Why would she want to be like her mother? Because her mother is happy, cool and responsible. When it all came down to choosing between the two, the girl realized that she only wanted to be like herself. She wanted to be like herself because she was cool, empowering and happy just the way she was.

I really liked the movie "Respect Me, Don't Media Me." The reason I liked the movie is because it made me look at things from a different point of view. The movie left me asking myself questions such as, How does media affect the lives of young teens? Does it affect me? Does it affect my everyday life decisions?

The questions I asked myself are questions that I'm sure most teens would ask themselves after watching the movie or even during the movie. "Respect Me, Don't Media Me" is a movie I feel should be viewed by all teens in Chicagoland. It's a movie that gives motivation and helps to gain self-esteem.

For more information about Sisters Empowering Sisters you could contact Girl's Best Friend Foundation at.....

c/o Sisters Empowering Sisters
900 N. Franklin, Suite 210
Chicago, IL 60610 or you could fax them at (312) 266-2972.

*note: Micah is Micah Maidenberg, former Development Associate and Youth Instructor for We The People Media.

Labor History Past and Present

by Keyonna James

On July 18, 2005 members of the Summer Ambassadors Project went to the Illinois Labor History Society located in downtown Chicago on Jackson Boulevard. This trip was a good experience. When we first entered the building, I felt as if I was in a hotel that was in the process of being remodeled. On the first floor of the building, I remember seeing two guards posted at the front desk. There was no carpet on the floor and there were no chairs. I guess that tells you that the area wasn't for waiting. We got on an elevator and took it to the 10th floor.

On the 10th floor, we entered room 1012, where we met Les Orear, the president of the Illinois Labor History Society. Orear, who was wearing an olive green shirt with khaki slacks, was our tour guide and a past worker of a meat packing plant in the old stock yards. He started working at the meat packing plant in 1932 after leaving the University of Wisconsin when he received a telegram saying that he had to return to Chicago to help support his family, which included two younger brothers and his sickly father.

Orear gave us a tour of the Illinois Labor History Society Museum. The museum was a mini-museum. I called it a mini-museum is because it isn't big like the Field Museum or the Museum of Science and Industry. The first thing he pointed out to us during the tour was a baseball suit. The suit was blue, red and white and it read "Spolek Plzenskych Rezniku Zaloz 24, 1886." "Chicago, Illinois" was printed underneath

that. I remember the baseball suit having a silky texture and in the top left corner of the shirt was a symbol of a horse with the years 1986-1989.

Orear showed us photos of Chicago sweat shops and a poster board that had information about Lucy Parsons, an African American woman married to a white man. Parsons and her husband were anarchists, which means that they felt as if the whole capitalist system was wrong. Parsons had a reputation as being a writer, a speaker, a wife, a mother, a labor activist and a dress maker.

After viewing the Parsons' board, Orear showed us photos of the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, when police officers and steelworkers in South Chicago got into a deadly fight. Ten steelworkers were killed.

Orear showed us many interesting things. He told us a few short stories too. The stories may have been short but they have a long history behind them. As we left the Illinois Labor History Society, we walked the streets of downtown and noticed that labor history was still being created right in the blink of an eye.

Former workers of The Congress Plaza Hotel were striking right in front of the hotel's 520 S. Michigan Ave. location downtown. The workers of the Congress went on strike because in May 2003, the owners of the hotel made a 7 percent wage cut and eliminated health insurance and pension benefits. Luckily, I was given the opportunity to interview some of the strikers. Jose Albarado was a former worker at The Congress Plaza Hotel. During the inter-

view, I asked Albarado how long he had been on strike. He said, "I've been on strike for two years."

I then asked what made him go on strike. He replied, "the reason I went on strike is because the owner of the hotel cut many people's pay and benefits." Albarado wasn't the only person who was angry about the cut of pay and benefits. Many of his co-workers were angry too. 95 percent of them decided to go and work for other hotels. When Albarado first started his strike, he marched in front of The Congress Plaza Hotel seven days a week and 12 months a year. He now marches in front of the hotel five days a week for five hours. Jose felt as if the owners of the hotel didn't want to pay. He was then forced to ask the company, "if they wanted to fight or agree with the pay and benefits?"

The company said fight, so Albarado and some of his co-workers started the strike. During the time of the strike, Albarado was jobless. He was not working at all so therefore he wasn't receiving any income. The strikers seemed to be very determined to me. I feel that their determination will eventually get them a raise in their pay and benefits.

The Illinois Labor History Society is located 28 E. Jackson in Room 1012. For more information you can call (312) 663-4107.

The Congress Plaza Hotel is located 520 S. Michigan in downtown Chicago. For more information you can visit the striker's website at www.congresshotelstrike.info.

Why Teens Like Rap

by Alfredo Martinez

Originally rap was known as emceeing. It was started in the early 1970s by Jamaican DJs including one named Kool Herc who moved into the West Bronx and tried to improvise rhymes over the dub version of reggae records. This didn't go over very well, though. After that, in the early days young party goers recited popular phrases and slang to the music. They would try to get a response from the crowd. It went over big and became very popular. It was rhyming that was personalized to where they were or how a person felt.

Rap caught on and gave young kids a chance to express themselves freely. Anyone could do it and you didn't need a lot of money. There were no set rules. All you had to do was just be original and rhyme to the beat of the music. You could practice and do it whenever you liked. To be def – good – was the main goal, and to have your peers acknowledge you.

Hip hop or rap music is very popular with today's

teens. I'll give you an insight into what a teen in today's world thinks of rap music.

I interviewed Rick Martinez, a 15 year old freshman in high school.

I asked why he likes rap.

"Because it represents what's happening right now. It's more of a culture than just music."

Do you think there's a difference between rap and hip hop?

"No, it's the same to me."

Does rap music mean anything to you?

"It means lots of things. I don't know how to put it into words. It depends on the song I'm listening to."

His favorite artist is Tupac. His favorite song is "Dear Mama" by Shakur.

"He talked about politics and things that were happening recently. I like a lot of other rappers too but there are too many to name."

He said rap influences his life a lot.

"In the way I act, the way I dress, even how I get my hair braided."

I asked what the most important thing he has learned from rap music is.

"Oh, I'm not sure. I mean rap has influenced and

inspired my life in so many ways."

I also asked Nalleli Salgado, a student at Rudy Lozano Leadership Academy, how she feels about rap and hip hop.

"It helps you express your feelings," she said. "Everyone should have the experience of listening to rap music."

Her favorite group is Bone Thugs-N-Harmony.

"I think they make good music and I would like for them to remain a group," she said. "I would be devastated if they weren't making music."

She said hip hop would be a good career "because I would have a lot of money."

"To me hip hop is an interesting subject and people should learn more about it," she said.

She likes Tupac better than the Notorious B.I.G..

"Tupac focused more on life's everyday struggles," she said. "My friend would love it if Tupac was still alive. She would like to marry him."

There you have it, some thoughts and opinions of teens on rap music. Rap has a big following and I think it will last forever. This music lets us express our innermost thoughts and feelings. If we can't do it ourselves, at least we can do it through rap groups.

Hip Hop Music + Clothes = Fashion

by Chantell Suggs

Everyone has their own way of dressing but music is one of the biggest influences on the way people dress. Hip hop music is popular nationwide and is one of the main influences on fashion for the younger age group that wants to dress fresh or dress to impress. It's not only blacks dressing in hip hop fashion but all cultures and races. According to Soundscan, the company that charts record sales, three quarters of all hardcore rap albums were sold to white consumers in 1994.

Hip hop fashion isn't cheap, and youth today are spending more money on fashion than ever. When someone walks in the room, the first thing you look at is what they're wearing head to toe. It's to the point where sometimes you don't even realize that's what you're doing because you're so used to it. I find myself judging someone from their clothes, even though that could be totally different than how they are on the inside or how they live their life.

Everybody wants to dress or look like a superstar, from Beyoncé's sexy style to the free form look of 106&Park. Like it says in a Jay-Z song, lots of young people want fixed hats, button ups, jerseys, white suit jackets, baggy pants, Timberlands, Nikes and fresh white Air Force Ones. Many rappers are coming out with their own clothing lines, including Jay-Z's Rocawear, Kisson Simmon's Phat Farm, J-Lo (Jennifer Lopez), Puffy and more. Other popular brands are Ecko, Girbaud, Baby Phat, Apple Bottom and Lady Enyce. Some young women are into heels and boots, some are into gym shoes like the guys. Jeans and suit jackets are also taking off these days.

"Hip hop is stealing the branding of sports footwear from the athletic superstars," says the web site shopping-blog.com. "Hip hop stars like Jay-Z (Keds), Snoop Dogg (Pony) and Missy Elliott (Adidas) have recently been part of shoe launches from major shoe brands."

Stars have the money to spend thousands or even millions of dollars on a piece of jewelry, wearing diamonds that cost as much as a house costs, from chains on the neck to diamonds in the teeth, with expensive clothes from Gucci to Chanel to Prada.

"Of course there is also the platinum and gold bling bling jewelry, gold caps for teeth and shoe spinners (little chrome disks that hang from shoes)," says shopping-blog.com.

In our world, it might not be as expensive, but we still want to wear a lot of jewelry, "bling bling" as we call it.

And with hip hop fashion, you also have to deal with

your ride – what kind of car do you have and whether it has a nice sound system. Do you have a cell phone and what kind, prepaid or contact? Is it a picture phone to the Internet?

But fashion doesn't have to be all about what you spend. It can also be how you wear what you've got. How you put your gear together. The way you walk. Fashion doesn't make the person. The person makes the fashion. My advice is stay dressing fresh but be wise with how you spend your money.

I interviewed three youths about their opinions on hip hop and fashion. They are Jose Idarrondo, 19, a student at El Cuarto Ano High School in Chicago, Vivian Roman, 16, a student at El Cuarto Ano, and Jennifer Forest, 19, a student at Harold Washington College in Chicago.

Residents' Journal: Do you listen to hip hop?

Jose: Yes, I don't know why. It takes me away from my problems.

Vivian: Yes. I listen to all kinds of music.

Jennifer: Yes, I listen to it because that's what I happen to like. I like R&B too.

RJ: Do you believe hip hop music influences the way people dress?

Jose: Yeah, you see it in a video and you have to go out and get it.

Vivian: Yeah, everywhere you look you see rappers wearing bangin' clothes. It's a style.

Jennifer: Yes. Hip hop is the biggest influence on the world today. You see what someone else is wearing

Englewood Closure

by Kimberly Guillory

Englewood High School is now closing. Officials say that Englewood is closing because the students of the school are not learning the knowledge there is to be taught. Some say it needs to close because lots of bad things are happening at this school. But where will they put these students from Englewood? The Englewood principal and the principals at other schools nearby came up with a solution to their problem. Some of the students that are going to enroll in Englewood next year will be sent to nearby schools like Paul Robeson High School.

As a student at Paul Robeson High School knowing that Englewood High School was closing and that most of their enrolled students are going to return to my school, it's crazy. To me, it's going to cause difficulty. Just the thought of being overcrowded with other students, it's ridiculous. Our school is already crowded. If our school

and you just got to get it.

RJ: How much money do you spend on clothes?

Jose: \$150 a month – a lot.

Vivian: \$200 a month.

Jennifer: I spend a lot, like close to \$200 or \$300 and my hair in micro braids which costs like \$200 every two months. I spend all my money on fashion.

RJ: Is school becoming more like a fashion show?

Jose: Yeah. If you look dirty or not cool, you don't fit in.

Vivian: Yeah. If other girls think they look better than me, then I want to look better.

Jennifer: Yes. Because people like to dress to impress. Well I know I do.

RJ: Do you judge people because of how they dress?

Jose:

No!

Vivian: Yeah, maybe also because of the way they act and if they think they're all that. I'm not going to like that. Sometimes I'll just be hating.

Jennifer: Yes, because some people are just dirty or think they are all that but are just looking a mess.

RJ: Do you think fashion is important?

Jose: Yeah. Because everyone thinks of me as being cool and clean like I like to dress.

Vivian: Maybe. Because some things are just ugly.

Jennifer: Fashion is important and to me the way a person dresses is important.

My interviews showed that hip hop fashion is an important part of people's lives.

was a lot bigger than it is, I think it will be all right if the other students come to Robeson. Robeson is not that big, though.

When our school found out that Englewood was closing, everyone started thinking, "Where are these students going to be placed." But the nearest school is Robeson. Now that we have found out that Englewood is closing, our principal is thinking about making another starting time for classes. So that means we are going to have three starting times which will be very difficult.

Kewona Washington, a student at Englewood High School, said, "I myself have difficult decisions to make. It will be hard to get to know Robeson's hallways and students. I know I will be one of the students that will have to transfer to Robeson High School."

As the year of 2006 has arrived, no one knows what's going to happen. But be prepared. Most of the students at Paul Robeson think it's unfair but we've got to deal with the situation. Next year I will be a senior. So most likely, I will have a great school year and won't have to worry about the incoming students from Englewood.

CHA Contracting Woes

by Mary C. Johns
Editor-in-Chief

Residents of public housing are constantly being told by the Chicago Housing Authority and its private housing contractors to properly manage their personal affairs in order to be lease compliant under their \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation. But is the CHA properly managing its own state of affairs?

Mismanaged CHA Contractor under Federal Indictment

On June 15, 2005, a federal grand jury indicted three employees of CHA property manager William Moorehead and Associates, including William Moorehead himself, for "allegedly fraudulently" taking nearly \$1 million housing funds appropriated for "more than a dozen U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development subsidized properties, including housing units operated by the CHA between 1994 and 2002," according to U.S. Department of Justice documents.

The cases against Moorehead's and one co-defendant, 47-year-old Patricia Taylor, are pending, but Brian Townsend, a 40-year-old co-defendant in the case, was sentenced to four months in prison. He also had to pay a \$4,000 fine and was ordered to perform 500 community service hours for falsifying the financial records of the private management company.

Townsend was sentenced in early January this year, after pleading guilty in September 2005 for his part in the rip-off the city and federal government funding meant for Chicago public housing residents.

Under count one of the criminal charges of wire fraud against the 62-year-old owner William Moorehead and the two former financial controllers of his company, the threesome "fraudulently converted, misappropriated, embezzled, transferred, and took at least \$995,000 from HUD and CHA housing projects they were managing, and from the Marion Stamps Memorial Charity Fund," according to the U.S. States Attorney.

Under the civil indictment, Moorehead allegedly used housing funds to pay personal and business expenses, to purchase a car for his own use, and to purchase a certificate of deposit, which he then pledged as collateral for a personal loan that he obtained to purchase two Mail Boxes Etc. franchises, according to the complaint.

The civil suit seeks monetary damages of \$3,128,550 in addition to costs and attorney and auditing fees. If convicted in the criminal case, Moorehead and Taylor could face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and

\$250,000 fine. But Moorehead alone faces a second count that carries a maximum of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine in addition to mandatory restitution, according the U.S. Department of Justice document.

In early 2000, Moorehead & Associates' contract was terminated by the St. Louis Housing Authority from managing 418 family and senior apartments. Moorehead still had contracts to manage approximately 7,000 CHA public housing units at Evergreen Tower Apartments, Evergreen Terrace Apartments, Kenneth Campbell Apartments, Lake Michigan Apartments, Lawndale Gardens Apartments, Midway Gardens Apartments, Robert Taylor Homes, Southwest Scattered Sites and West Scattered Sites, and 65th Street Apartments. The demolition company was accused of "not submitting financial reports," according to St. Louis Housing Authority Executive Director Cheryl Lovell.

"He didn't follow his contract. And our contract says if you don't follow the contract requirements, we can terminate you at any time for default. They worked for us about 5 or 6 months, and we terminated the contract because they failed to submit timely financial reports. The reason you were required to turn financial reports in is so that you cannot play with the money," Lovell said during a phone conversation in mid-August.

"So, I would say that we took positive and swift action before there was any ability for them to defraud us of any money. Once we took it back and got all the accounts in order, I don't believe we found anything substantial that was inconsistent with the records. If we did, we would have called the inspector general."

Also, in an article written by *Residents' Journal* Assistant Editor Beauty Turner in 2002, "Resident janitors who lived in the now-demolished Robert Taylor Homes and worked for Moorehead had complained that their paychecks had been bouncing for the last four months of 2001. The private management company was engaged in unfair labor practices, while Moorehead was managing the property as well as being the Service Connector for the former CHA site, according to the article titled "Manager Ousted From Robert Taylor," that appeared in the June/July 2002 issue.

In the January/February 2002 *RJ*, a former resident council president at the time said of Moorehead, "If this company can't even balance their books, how could they teach us to balance ours?"

Despite those accusations of non-payment and non-compliance with the Section 3 program made

against Moorehead and his company, the CHA continued to contract with the private management firm, and hired them to manage some of their senior portfolios.

The CHA declined to discuss any issues relating to Moorehead and Associates because of the court case against the management company, according to spokesperson Derek Hill.

Hill would only say in a July 05 email that the public housing agency was cooperating with the U.S. States Attorney's office.

"The CHA has cooperated with the federal government throughout its investigation and will continue to do so as needed. We take very seriously any allegations of misconduct that may negatively impact our public housing families."

In another emailed statement to *Residents' Journal*, CHA said they currently have a good screening process in place to check the backgrounds of contractors bidding to manage and demolish their properties, among other services.

"The CHA does a number of background checks on the companies bidding for CHA contracts. Currently, the CHA checks a list of debarred companies and performs a Dun & Bradstreet check for the company's financial information. (This ensures that contractor is running a financially sound business and would thus be in a better position to fulfill their contract obligations with the CHA.) CHA also asks bidders for references within their proposals, which CHA then checks. Additionally, CHA asks for contractor affidavits and inquires as to whether the company is involved in any lawsuits," stated the July 16 email.

CHA claimed to have had no idea that Moorehead and Associates had been fired from managing the family and elderly units at the St. Louis Housing Authority while they were managing some CHA properties in 2000.

"No. We were not aware of the firing," Hill's email read.

Moorehead couldn't be reached at the time of this report. The message for the number at his office located at 833 N. Orleans St. said the line was being checked for trouble.

Deadly Moves II

Troubling Development

(Continued from Page 7)

"I have said it over and over again. Mr. Peterson, y'all [CHA] put all of those people down in Ickes and didn't give us any social help. And we still haven't gotten any. When are you going to give us some help? When you put all of those people down there, Mr. Peterson, you endangered everybody else's life. We had our problems to begin with. But when you start sending people who couldn't live anywhere else but in public housing, you endangered every kid's life in there. It is so bad that in the morning, when the kids

go to school, they stop selling for 15 minutes. In the evening when they get out at 2:30 p.m., they shut down for a half an hour. They even recognized their problem in the community. I'm getting tired of hearing myself say it. But if I stop talking, ain't nobody gonna ever do anything with the situation down there," Williams said.

Dwaine Bailey, CHA chief of operations, told Williams that he and others met with CPD officials and that police officers would start coming to the Tenants' Services Meetings to meet and discuss residents' concerns.

"I think we all have to work with them and unfortunately, sometimes it takes some time for them to do what they have to do to get the bad guys," Bailey said.

Later that day, police raided Ickes.



Dedication for the Youth

State Rep. Marlow Colvin (D-33) and the staff of We The People Media pose at the dedication of a peace garden at Paul Robeson High School. From December 2004 to June of this year, We The People Media's Urban Youth International Journalism Program participated in the "Where I Stand" program, a new violence prevention effort designed by policymakers at Illinois Lieutenant Governor Patrick Quinn's office. The program incorporated community-based organizations and elected officials including Colvin, also African American Caucus Chairman.

Pilsen Guards Against Gentrifiers

by Lorenzia Shelby

On April 26, 2005 the Pilsen Alliance and the residents of the Pilsen community held a press conference in front of the now defunct Lerner Box Company, an industrial building on 16th Street and Carpenter. They were marching, picketing and protesting the Lipe Property Company. If you were anywhere near 16th and Carpenter that Tuesday night, you would have heard the shouting and chanting voices of men, women and a lot of young people, belowing these words of protest: "Familias Si, Condos No" (Families Yes, Condos No).

There were six resident representatives and speakers at the rally. The first speaker was Alejandra L. Ibanez, Executive Director of the Pilsen Alliance and a neighborhood resident. Her entire speech was done in Spanish. The participants responded to her comments favorably.

Pilsen is a largely Mexican-American and Mexican immigrant community on the near Southwest Side of Chicago. Many residents are worried about gentrification of the community as new, wealthier people move in.

The debate about development in Pilsen is intense. At a meeting about the Lerner Box condo development held in Las Americas meeting room on February 16,



Lorenzia Shelby

the rents low. Lipe condos are really bad for our neighborhood because people will not be able to pay if we have to raise their rents," she said. "Real estate taxes are getting too high, and people will not be able to live here. We must get together and get rid of this man. We love this neighborhood. We are going to fight to keep it."

Amy Decelles, one of Pilsen's newer residents, expressed her opinions and concerns. "I just moved to Pilsen from Uptown where my daughter and I lived for years. Like Pilsen, Uptown had its good qualities and its bad qualities. Like Pilsen, you would have to live in the community to understand it. Like Pilsen, the developers set their sights on Uptown because of its location. That's all they care about is location. Everything in our old neighborhood is crazy. There seem to be more condos than rental housing.

"Most of the rental houses [in Uptown] are too expensive for most working people."

Another Pilsen resident who spoke was Rebecca Rubio.

"We are passing these little blue cards and all it simply states is call the Alderman and tell him 'I

am against the Lipe proposal. Do not rezone this building. We do not want it.' Tie up his line. If everyone here calls and has their family to call, it will tie his line up."

There's one man along with his family who resides in Pilsen who doesn't share the same views as the condo rejecters. He thinks condos coming to Pilsen is a great idea. Manuel Jasso, a storeowner in the community, said "I think it's a good thing they are coming. Because it will bring and invite a better class of people into the community, instead of having all those gangbangers and what is called wino people around. A lot of them hide out in old abandoned buildings or they rent for cheap prices. They just drink and do all kinds of stuff. In those

2005, the 25th Ward Alderman, Daniel Solis, challenged one of his critics, Victoria Romero, to run against him in 2007. At the Lerner building protest in April, Romero continued to criticize how the neighborhood is changing.

This is what Romero had to say in April. "I'm Victoria Romero. I am a life-long Pilsen resident. My family has been here in Pilsen for 50 years."

"[Y]ou see behind us...a building that used to house the Lerner Box Company. That's now in the process of being developed into a luxury condominium. Luxury condos that Mr. Lipe said are 21 percent affordable. But, my question to you and the entire city is, 'Affordable to whom?' Who is going to be able to afford these buildings - not me and definitely not you."

Romero gave a brief history of the "Pilsen Is Not For Sale Campaign." She said they organized a ballot referendum in March 2004 to make the development and zoning process in Pilsen transparent. She said 96 percent of voters approved the referendum.

"We want to be part of the development in our own neighborhood. We should have some say on what happens to a building like the one behind us," Romero said. "The cost of the renters, cost of the homeowners because our property taxes are going up will force hard working families, Latinos as well as non-Latinos, out of Pilsen."

According to a "Pilsen Is Not For Sale" campaign flier, most of Pilsen is still "predominately working class immigrant families," despite the tax increment financing (TIF) districts, the development of University Village adjacent to the neighborhood, and escalating property tax increases in East Pilsen. The main concern now is the high end condos. Developer Steven Lipe calls the Lerner Box project "Chantico Lofts," with units costing at least \$250,000 to \$350,000.

The next speaker at the April rally was Rocio Krevesky. She and her husband have been residents of Pilsen for more than 35 years. They own two buildings there.

"With our two buildings, we try very hard to keep

The Lerner Box Company, that's now in the process of being developed into a luxury condominium...[owner] Mr. Lipe said are twenty one percent affordable. But, my question to you and the entire city, is 'Affordable to whom?'

-Pilsen resident Victoria Romera

condos they can't do that, because they cannot pay the rent."

Jasso was asked if you bring in those expensive condos, won't that force people to move out of Pilsen? "That's not forcing them out. There's a lot of options. Why don't homeowners fix up their properties and raise the rents."

Jasso was asked if you bring in those condos won't that make the property taxes go sky high and that will make homeowners raise their rents? "That would give help to the homeowners to repair their building. In Pilsen, you have some cheap apartments with holes on the outside and all kinds of leaks. You can't charge high rents, plug this, plug that and windows are like air conditioners year round. The heat is in disarray. If you don't fix it, you're not going to have anything. The condos would uplift the neighborhood."

Michael Florez, the host of the press conference, asked the participants to send a strong message to Alderman Solis.

"Do you work for Daniel Solis? Or does Daniel Solis work for us? He works for us," Florez told the

crowd.

On that note, the group started marching and chanting "Familias Si, Lipe No" (Families yes, Lipe no) again.

After the press conference, I interviewed Michael Florez. He had a few comments he wanted to express.

Residents' Journal: If you stop the condos from coming in, what are you going to do with this building?

Michael Florez: Well, if the residents of Pilsen get their way, we'd like to see maybe a community center or affordable housing. The Pilsen Alliance is not against projects in our community. What we would like to do is be a part of it.

RJ: Have you talked to Alderman Solis?

MF: I personally have not talked to the Alderman, but I can see his stance when he doesn't answer. For a month and half, we have been contacting his office to ask where are the building permits? Why is there construction going on? Whereas the average Joe like yourself and myself trying to fix up our houses and somebody drops a dime on us and says 'Hey! There's illegal construction going on at your house. You don't have a permit.' The inspectors will shut you down. They will put a big bright orange tag on it. But it didn't happen in this case.



Michael Florez of the Pilsen Alliance

RJ: Tell us about the R-4 and R-5 zoning.

MF: Right now [the Lerner Box building] is zoned R-4. All that was done way before my time. I believe it was done back in the '30s. At that time, our city wasn't

that big. It was thriving but it wasn't as big as it is now.

RJ: Under R-5 zoning, will that give you permission to build condominiums?

MF: Under R-4 zoning [the Lipe Company] still can make condominiums, but he won't be able to make as many. If he stays in the R-4 rating, he will be able to build about 20 condos. If it goes to R-5, he can build 40 or 50. It will give him more room to expand at the expense of the community.

RJ: With the condos coming, won't that elevate and improve the quality of the community?

MF: We are for quality but not at the expense of hard working class citizens, whether they are documented or undocumented. You know the Alderman has said the undocumented people do not pay taxes. That's the farthest thing from the truth. When they buy gasoline, bread, milk and when they pay rent. That rent money doesn't necessarily go into the landlord's pocket. With that money, he is able to pay his property taxes. They pay their taxes on phone, utilities, lights.

CHA Development News

by Jacqueline Thompson

Harold Ickes News

Harold Ickes is an eternally active mosaic of changing conditions. For the past nine months, we longtime residents have shared stairwells, hallways, by-ways and parking (already scarce) with strangers who look at you with surprise as they continue to claim their place in what you thought was your space.

Where the rent paying residents have no say so as to who frequents the common areas, neither do they have the authority to stop the heavy human traffic in the stairwells where our small children and seniors have to go up and down. The elevators in some buildings stop on a floor, the doors open a peak, slams shut and the elevator continues on its way, leaving one to get off above or below their floor with or without heavy bags or other packages. Where is management?

Another standard question is, "What are they going to do with Ickes," besides relocate people who bring to the area different moves and attitudes. Not bad attitudes, just different, so it takes time to develop the neighborliness one has been accustomed to.

The police continued to cross the area, sometimes stopping long time residents and questioning them extensively. It's not rare, though, to see a stranger being stopped and questioned, especially if he is of another ethnic background. All different nationalities of people come into Ickes regularly, meeting at the same time each day. During the school year, even some of the children can recognize those who leave via the "el" until the next day.

The children know about the excessive human traffic but they're learning from the powers that be that it's alright. But it's not. Where is the outcry from the people? Where is the power of the people?

New Construction

While life goes on as usual within the Ickes boundaries, progress has been made to upgrade and revitalize a huge vacant space across South State Street.

One organization in particular has already held a stunning ground breaking ceremony, complete with a delicious continental buffet and souvenir hard hat. The company is "Link Unlimited," and they will build a headquarters for it on the site. Link Unlimited is a 39-year-old scholarship and mentoring organization serving economically disadvantaged African American high school youth of Chicago.

After looking in their 2004 Annual Report and seeing the pictures of some of the students who have been served by their organization, I realized that they all attended Catholic or private high schools. So I called Jeryl Levin, who, when she returned my call, answered all my questions with such a positive attitude, I feel certain they will truly be an asset to the community.

Residents' Journal - How will you explain to the youth who live across from your new facility who mainly attend pub-

lic high school, yet are economically and (culturally) or ethnically qualified, that your organization cannot service them.

Jeryl Levin - Not true. We serve any child who would be interested in going to a private high school and through college but you have to not be able to afford to go. Any 8th grade student with B or better grades can apply for our services.

R.J. - Just how will your presence in the community help to revitalize it and how will the residents living closest to the headquarters be able to participate in what you do?

J.L. - I think there are some plans to put up some tutoring programs. However, they are not fully established yet.

R.J. - Will there be an opportunity for employment for any of the residents of Harold Ickes?

J.L. - Well, we are really small-staffed – about seven people – and we are all specialists at what we do. Of course, we're always looking for volunteers.

R.J. - Being a small non profit group, How long have you had permission to use public property for private endeavors?

J.L. - It took about 3 to 4 years to make application through the city council and we had to be an asset to the community.

R.J. - Tell me something about your parent involvement.

J.L. - Throughout the whole process, the parents have to be closely involved or the students will get fined.

I sincerely hope that the parents here in Ickes will get involved in their children's grade school education so that they can qualify for the extraordinary opportunity the Link Unlimited organization brings to this community.

Ickes Hot Summer Activity

Another one of the most exciting times for children in the Ickes in summer is the Annual Low End Productions Basketball League which has four divisions. The newest one, being the best all-around division, is named the Popcorn League.

This group is newly formed and was spawned from the deletion of another league of older individuals who behaved in an unacceptable fashion by ending games in some sort of dispute that soured the sportsmanship and friendships at each game and divided the spectators into uneasy sides.

The age range of the Popcorn league is 8 and under. It is coed and a more enjoyable and exciting game has never been played. Girls playing just as fast as boys, just as athletic, twisting, turning and just as skilled at "getting the basket." Makes you feel proud.

The league also features, father and child, meaning sons or daughters can play together. Recently, on the Popcorn League day for play, a girl made the winning basket for her team. Hooray!

The Low End Productions managers, Aaron Lefty Boyd and Monty Thomas, have produced these good times for the past 10 years. The games ran for six full weeks. The culmination games and ceremonies were on August 27.

Part of this hot ticket item is the participation of the male parent in more than one way. Two fathers are coaches, while others are players. They are the best kind of role model for the community of children.

Another Hot Ticket Item

The annual Sunday Night Steppers Set in the spring and summer are a cultural bonus for the adults who would partake of the music and dancing in our still well kept basketball pre-school play area. A long time resident known as Old School D.J. Roy still spins oldies and the latest in R & B to the delight of comers. Many former residents of Ickes and residents of some other developments come to enjoy. No you don't have to be a resident and yes, it's open to the peaceful public.

With the success of the steppers sets, special events are held on some nights where the steppers wear certain clothing and adhere to a common theme. One evening's All White Night was incredibly peaceful. It was in the air. The word had gotten out to former residents who came back in groups to experience this new steppers groove. It became an actual reunion of families and friends. Between 175 and 200 steppers filled the outdoor basketball arena with white outfits to match Hollywood's red carpet on Oscar Night.

Things got even better when the August special set was dressing for the '70s. It was a true blast! Platforms, wigs, minis, huge naturals and funky phrases were the life of the evening.

On another evening, the focus was on our troops still fighting in Iraq. Everyone wore service camouflage gear. We all signed and sent letters to the service men to show our patriotism and care for their circumstances. It was a joint effort with the Local Advisory Council and President Gloria Williams. It is a good cause. And was it ever. At least 1,000 people filled the basketball arena and playground dressed to the nines in armed services fatigue outfits. Every style, every color, all sizes and all ages came ready to celebrate the U.S. armed forces men and women.

A huge American flag spanned an available wall to make a background for pictures to be sent to the service personal or take home. Preprinted greetings were signed to send to the war zone.

God bless our service men and women.

Altgeld Gardens News

Generational residents are caught in the middle of tradition, crack down on tradition, rumors of theft of traditional family washer and dryer machines, CHA plans for transformation, LAC apathy, CHA Board of Commissioners' decisions and the final call for "no more washer-dryer

machines in individual homes." All for an extended few inches of kitchen side board that takes up the space where washers and dryers used to fit comfortably.

Plans for the "transformation" of Chicago Housing Authority's Altgeld Gardens sent some families into a desperate scramble to keep their indoor washer and dryer systems hooked up and continue the routine of regular washing and drying without extra cost delays and traveling a distance which for some may be an additional expense.

Cheryl Johnson, Executive Director of People for Community Recovery, puts it plainly: "I grew up with a washer and dryer in my kitchen. I don't even know how to go to a laundrymat."

If you multiply this serious doubt of ability to do a simple chore in the future by 800 to 900 residents who may still have their washer-dryer hook ups, you have an army of unhappy residents. The resistance to this particular change seems respectable, according to Johnson, when I asked her:

R.J. - About how many years have washer-dryer hookups been a part of all households?

Cheryl Johnson - About 30 to 40 years.

R.J. - By having this convenience for those many years, have there been problems with flooding and structural damage from water?

C.J. - No, not in Altgeld Gardens; however, over in another section of housing called Murray [Homes], which was built 10 years after Altgeld, some residents had to put their hoses out of windows, whereas in Altgeld, all these years, you could get a work order to have holes put in the walls for dryer exhaust.

R.J. - What is the date of your first knowledge of plans to eliminate unit washer-dryer hook-ups?

C.J. - In December of 2004. There were no questions asked about if we wanted to keep the [hook-ups].

I wanted to clear up the rumor about East Lake Management, the management company for Altgeld-Murray, taking washer-dryer machines that were left by families, storing them, only to sell off later. So I called East Lake management and spoke to Gertie Smith.

R.J. - Can you tell me if it is true that East Lake Management is taking the washer and dryers from apartments vacated for rehabilitation, declaring them abandoned and selling them?

Gertie Smith - No. It is not true. We here at East Lake only manage the development and have not removed to sell any appliances. I refute this statement. We have nothing to do with that part of the redevelopment process; only CHA does. You should talk to Jacky Malone who is in charge of the whole operator.

This reporter has tried five times to get to talk to Malone. I have left messages. To no avail. So the real news may have to come out in the 'wash' at a later date.

(Continued on pg.23)

Stop the Violence

by Cenabeth Cross

R J discovered an organization that is providing employment services for people who need it badly. The Michael Barlow Center on Chicago's West Side is helping ex-offenders find jobs and places to live. The Barlow Center, which was dedicated on April 22, 2005, is a part of St. Leonard's Ministries, located at 2120 West Warren Blvd.

St. Leonard's Ministries helps inmates, women and men, with a place to stay, training and support as they re-enter society. They help ex-offenders to rebuild their lives and get a chance to make a buck. With the Barlow Center, they are expanding their services by opening new programs, including two new buildings where the residents will live and learn. One is a five-story high building where the residents will sleep. I learned this by taking a tour of the facilities after my interviews.

Ex-offenders always have had a hard time finding a way to re-enter society and be able to feed themselves and their families. Sometimes they are not able to come back to their homes, especially if they live in CHA apartments or Section 8 houses. The One Strike law was put in place to first rid public housing of the people who have records. In CHA buildings, when someone is caught selling drugs on the premises, for example, and they get arrested, the whole family can be moved out under One Strike.

St. Leonard's has a long history of working with ex-offenders. In 1954, Father James (Jimmie) Jones, the Episcopal Chaplin at the Cook County Jail, and the women of the Episcopal Church opened the doors of St. Leonard's House at Hoyne and Warren. There were 5 to 10 men from Bridewell Jail along with others from state prisons.

During the 1970s, the programs continued to expand, including receiving new money from the Illinois Department of Corrections. This brought the house count to 12 to 18 men each day. In the 1980s, as the number of felons began to increase because of the War on Drugs, St. Leonard's building at 2110 W. Warren was rehabbed and they took on 40 men. With the help of the Department of Human Services here in Chicago, Grace House opened in 1994 because the amount of women prisoners was on the rise. In 2004, St. Leonard's Ministries began working with the Illinois Facilities Fund and Pepper Construction Co. to build the Michael Barlow Center to help formerly incarcerated men and women find employment.

Michael Barlow was chosen as the patron of this new employment center because of the real way he turned his life around after the time he spent in prison. He had picked up a drug habit while serving in Vietnam and came to the St. Leonard's center in 1988. He became their first aftercare counselor before he died in 1996. Michael helped many other



Cenabeth Cross

ex-offenders before his death.

I went to the Michael Barlow Center and talked to a few of the people. The first interview was with Jim Zangs. Zangs is the Director of the Barlow Center. I had been steered to interview

B o b Dougherty,

Executive Director over all of St. Leonard's Ministries, but Dougherty told me that Jim was the one I wanted.

Residents' Journal: How did you become involved with St. Leonard's Ministries?

Jim Zangs: I was working for the Federal Bureau of Prisons and the SAFER Foundation, servicing the incarcerated. I was managing adult transition work at a 200 bed facility in Lawndale. I've known the executive director and he asked me if I was interested and I was. I like it because it's a small operation and getting to be included was a privilege.

R.J.: When was the Barlow Center formed?

J.Z.: Really in March, but the dedication was in April. St. Leonard's has two new buildings. St. Leonard's House just celebrated its 50th year and its 40 bed new building for the men. We also operate Grace House for women. Grace House has 16 beds with similar services. Six years ago, St. Andrews was opened. St. Leonard's would house [ex-offenders] for six months right from prison, then they move out. St. Andrews Court offers housing to the individuals who have completed the St. Leonard's House program.

R.J.: What is the organization about?

J.Z.: Let's back up. When [ex-offenders] first come to us, they usually have a drug issue and Leonard House sets up a program to have drug treatment services. After the first 30 days of treatment services, they go to TEP – The Employment Program. There they teach behavior, help them with their resumes and readiness skills. Some of the programs are still being set up.

R.J.: How do you recruit volunteers?

J.Z.: Sister Cathy McKillop started the volunteer program. She gets volunteers for all.

R.J.: How will ex-offenders gain jobs through the center?

J.Z.: Primarily, we'll set up in December for culinary training. The first class will be 15 people. They will learn how to cook basic things. The reason for this is we know there's a need and we have contacts with the corporations.

R.J.: How are you funded?

J.Z.: A variety of sources. The United Way, an umbrella of Episcopal charities, some state funds, half million from the city with the support of the mayor. We have a computer lab from the

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunities. It's open every day from 1 to 5 PM so residents can use it every day. Every Tuesday and Thursday we have volunteers to teach how to use Word and the Internet.

R.J.: How will ex-offenders be informed about the center?

J.Z.: Number one, if we don't fill up slots we get referrals. Number two, because of things like you're doing. Harry Porterfield did a story and so did the *Defender*. It was told on Channel 21 by a journalist from Northwestern. In Illinois, there are 33,000 leaving prison and need services and word travels fast.

My next interview was with an ex-offender, one of the former residents who now works part-time for St. Leonard's, Harry Sago.

R.J.: How did you become involved with St. Leonard's Ministries and the Michael Barlow Center?

Harry Sago: I was recently incarcerated and I filled out an application to come here. I also had a friend whose mother used to work here. I used to come here when I was young.

R.J.: How does St. Leonard's Ministries and the Barlow Center benefit you?

H.S.: So far, I haven't been able to get into the programs because I work and some of the programs aren't set up yet. I'm in the computer program and waiting for the other programs. I feel that other gentleman and ladies need a place like this. We're sort of outcasts and people think we shouldn't be let back into society because they think we're the worst of the worst.

R.J.: How do you feel?

H.S.: I feel I'm not the worst of the worst because this is my first offence and I thank God and St. Leonard's Ministries for giving us help. Some of us die from our addictions, some of us go back. I feel individuals who have been incarcerated need a second chance at life. A lot of us wouldn't go back out and do something illegal [if we had places like St. Leonard's]. We would be able to hold our heads up. They would feel like someone cares. They'd all be grateful for a place like this.

After the interview with Harry I asked to see the place. Harry was selected for this job. He explained to me that the Grace House teachers come to St. Leonard's House to help with GED classes. Mary Hornschemeier, high school coordinator, has moved their programs to the Barlow Center. There are rooms for computer classes that are headed by Eddie Weaver, Harry told me. He introduced me to others including Michael Wilson, who graduated from the Dominican University in River Forest, IL. He is the Barlow Center's Job Developer.

As we, Harry and I, crossed the yard to go to the lunchroom where I was to have an early lunch after the tour, we ran into Pat.

Patricia A. Taylor is the Assistant

Program Director at St. Leonard's House. She says that she had a drinking problem when first joined the organization. She has been sober for 8 years now.

There was no question and answer session, she had something to say and I let her say it. She told me that people right off the streets need not apply. This is where you would go straight out of the jail. She showed me a stack of 400 applications, of which she could only take in 40.

To get in, the inmate sends a letter and asks for an application or he can get one at any of the institutions here in Illinois. Pat then sends the package with the application inside. The package also contains the rules and consequences of breaking the rules. This way, ex-offenders come straight from the pen.

"Sometimes I get calls from family members to help find placement for their loved ones, a lot of them live in public housing," Taylor said. "People move to Chicago and children live here, where do the sex offenders live?"

This is one of Pat's bigger problems along with finding a way to keep up the men's enthusiasm as the ex-offender goes out to find work.

St. Leonard's doesn't charge anything. The inmates are given \$5 when they leave the institution, but to get an ID will cost much more not to mention car-fare.

Pat helps her crew learn to fill out their resumes. She tells them that "employers are aware when you have help writing your resumes."

Pat showed me a picture of a young man who she said fell through the cracks. He had been a resident of St. Leonard's. But he went back to jail, a violation of the program. He was reapplying to get back in. Pat said she was considering letting him have his second chance when she was informed that he was dead.

Programs working with ex-offenders always need more resources. St. Leonard's, according to their newsletter, could use a 30 to 50 cup coffee maker, folding tables and chairs, men's after shave and body lotion, sugar, coffee and creamer. The one thing they need most is bus cards. The men can't keep the jobs if they don't have a way to get to them.

A Personal Connection to St. Leonard's

Friday, July 8, I was at a relative's house when the probation officer came to the door. He had come for Nathaniel. Nathaniel had just been released from prison. He was going to stay with Pearl, the relative I was with, but she has small children. Nate was arrested for a sex crime so this would have the DCFS people all in her business so she had to refuse. He couldn't find anyone else to stay. Before he left, I asked the parole officer if he had heard of the St. Leonard's Ministry. He said yes and that he thought it was a good idea for Nate. He told us to get on it right away because he was taking Nate back to Statesville where they would hold him for a few months.

by Mary C. Johns Editor-in-Chief

In "Deadly Moves," a series of articles produced by *Residents' Journal* and the *Chicago Reporter* magazine in the fall of 2004, a year long investigation found that the murder rate increased in public housing developments and areas where CHA residents had been relocated across the city under the Chicago Housing Authority's \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation. The articles appeared simultaneously in both publications and resulted in a new police pilot program.

RJ provided details of the new police initiative to help combat crime in "Deadly Moves Update" in the November/December 2004 issue. The program called for the deployment of 120 more officers to "hot spot areas" across the city which included CHA public housing developments. Forty police officers would be deployed in locations such as Englewood, South Shore and Roseland, where CHA residents have relocated with housing vouchers. Eighty police officers



RJ analysis of hot spot areas where 13 murders and other crimes occurred in the 6th ward after CHA relocations last summer. Map photo courtesy of the City of Chicago

were to be added to the police public housing division at eight targeted public housing sites. Police would be sent to the last occupied building at Stateway Gardens, located in the vicinity of the CPD Headquarters on the South Side; at the Robert Taylor development, where one building remains; Raymond Hilliard Homes; Harold Ickes Homes; Cabrini-Green; Dearborn Homes; Altgeld Gardens and at LeClaire Courts, a CHA City-State sitelocated on the West Side.

After an eight-month investigation of the "hot spot" areas across the city where former CHA residents relocated, and at other CHA relocations sites, *RJ* found the murder rate had decreased. There were other criminal concerns, however, including an increase in crime in specific South Side neighborhoods and complaints from across the city of a spike in drug activity. And a recent report by the Chicago Police Department revealed a spike in homicides in January compared to homicides for January 2005, as well as a slight increase in the trend of other crime.

RJ talked to residents living at the eight CHA hot spot sites, and interviewed two aldermen in areas where residents relocated with housing vouchers, who had complaints about

To All CHA relocated residents with Housing Vouchers or Those Residing in Temporary CHA Replacement Units!!!

If you and your family have or do not have any relocation issues of concern (utility, unit or safety), *Residents' Journal* would like to know.

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Black History Through Performance

by Clemolyn "Pennie" Brinson

For Black History Month historical figure Frederick Douglass was portrayed by Kevin McIlvaine, former Harlan High School student, actor, singer, and educator, during a special event February 11-13 at the Field Museum. Frederick Douglass was a runaway slave who eventually became an abolitionist and founder of **The North Star**, an anti-slavery newspaper in the 1800s.

WVON's Cliff Kelley hosted the event. The Apostolic Church Choir of Chicago accompanied McIlvaine, singing several gospel renditions such as "Let My People Go," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and "We Shall Overcome."

McIlvaine performing as Douglass started with a story of Bill Demby, a slave who was shot to death by the plantation's overseer. He then went into accounts of becoming a freed slave after running away, then becoming an advocate speaking out against slavery, and against the mistreatment of blacks after slavery, and finally speaking up for women's rights before he died.

The actor fit modified speeches of Douglass' into nearly two hours of performance in front of approximately 100 people of various ages and races. Lorise Jones came all the way from Indiana with six of her children to see the Feb. 11 performance. Jones attended one of McIlvaine's performances a year prior, when he portrayed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the Field Museum. She said she likes the way McIlvaine teaches black history because he doesn't teach bitterness.

McIlvaine portrayed Dr. King again this past January



Pennie Brinson

at the Field Museum during the Dr. King four-day weekend. The focus was on the 40th anniversary of Dr. King's Chicago Freedom Movement speech that he recited July 10, 1966 at Soldier Field, protesting poor housing conditions in Chicago in front of over 50,000 people.

Ariel Capital Management, a Chicago based investment firm, sponsored the 2006 Douglass and Dr. King events. Students from Ariel Community Academy, 1119 E. 46th St., got first viewing of McIlvaine's Dr. King performance on Jan. 12.

"We thought it was a tremendous event and a great way to expose our kids to an historic and really important [figure] in their lives," said Matthew Yale, vice president of public affairs. "The students had a fantastic time and learned a lot. We're thrilled to be a part of it."

After the Dr. King presentation, McIlvaine mingled

with a crowd of children answering questions and joking around with them. He later told **RJ** that when he looks out into the audience and sees a lot of kids, he edits his speeches even more as to keep the youths' attention and "edu-tain" them.

McIlvaine said he portrays personalities such as Dr. King and Douglass because their messages are still relevant today and young people need to hear them. "[W]hen you look around, we still have a long way to go but we wouldn't have gotten this far if it weren't for men and women like Martin Luther King, Jr."

He said his goal is to inspire youth today to hear the messages and "take a stand for what they believe is right. He said, "Integrity and dignity is what separates the boys from the men."

In Washington, D.C., where he currently resides, McIlvaine has a program called PRIDE — Positive Reinforcement through Identity Development and Education. The program "edu-tains" by reminding people of all ages that there were men and women who made sacrifices in order to make life better for us all.

McIlvaine does not only portray historical figures. He also portrays other positive personalities like Teddy Pendergrass and Al Green. Dr. King is his most requested figure.

17th Ward Democratic Organization - \$1,000 on June 6, 2005 and \$500 on Oct. 24.

On Nov. 22, 2004, the Heneghan Wrecking Company was cited for failing to pay proper wages to an employee. Also in 2004, Heneghan made three separate donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization totaling \$2,350.

Rita Joan Heneghan, a spokesperson for Heneghan Wrecking, said the company worked in the 17th ward and made donations to the ward organization because of that work. Heneghan said she was not approached by CHA officials on behalf of the 17th Ward Democratic Organization, and did not get special treatment from CHA because of the contributions.

"Contributions to the 17th ward have nothing to do with CHA," she said.

On March 23, 2005, CHA wrote the Kutak Rock law firm to inform them their contracted funds would be placed on hold until the firm submitted documentation of compliance with rules for participation by firms owned by minorities, women and persons with disabilities. Kutak Rock submitted the requested documentation on April 4, 2005. In 2003 and 2004, Kutak Rock made two separate donations totaling \$4,000 to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization.

CHA informed the Legum and Norman management company (see story, same page) on May 13, 2004, that it was withholding a portion of its management fee because the company failed to meet its obligations under the rules for Section 3 and participation by firms owned by minorities, women and persons with disabilities. On May 11, 2005, CHA informed Legum and Norman that it had to provide the agency with documentation for some of its subcontractors to meet the same obligations. Legum and Norman gave the 17th Ward Democratic Organization \$4,275 in six separate donations from 2002 to 2004.

Ickes News (Continued from pg. 20)

To make sure I had enough information from the right sources, I phoned the CHA communications department and spoke to Derek Hill. Hill, like Williams, expressed disinterest in the subject. He said, "It is an 'old' issue."

R.J. - Well, what do you mean by that? The residents are still seriously concerned about the situation.

Derek Hill - first of all..., the washer-dryers were used in the apartments illegally. No one really knows how it got started or why it was allowed to continue. CHA has a budget to work with for all of the developments that are to be rehabilitated or rebuilt. It would cost \$7 million to \$9 million more than the budget to provide hookups for washer-dryers in Altgeld Gardens.

R.J. - What is the planned solution for the individual families.

D.H. - The plan is to build state-of-the-art facilities with new equipment replaced every 4-5 years, in multiple locations in close proximity to all housing blocks. This way the budget will remain stable and the need will be filled.

Only time will tell the final chapter on the quality of life for the family wash cycle in the Altgeld-Murray development. Hopefully, the new laundry facilities will "wash" away the stress of change and clear the way for more harmonic relationships between residents and the institutional powers that be.



Altgeld resident Dorothy Connerly during a CHA board meeting

Photo by Mary C. Johns

Questionable Connection (Continued from pg. 5)

were also donors to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization were cited by the CHA for failing to fulfill rules on wages, requirements for firms owned by minorities, women and persons with disabilities, and for failing to make contributions to residents as well as other issues.

Construction company G.F. Structures received 13 contracts from CHA worth more than \$70 million, according to information on CHA's web site. Several of these contracts were awarded at approximately the same time that G.F. Structures made donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization. Campaign finance records show that from 1998 to 2004, G.F. Structures made 11 separate donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization and Citizens to Elect Terry Peterson totaling \$14,000. On October 27, 2003 - the same day they made a \$2,500 donation to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization - the company received a construction contract worth \$3,292,095 from the CHA. In 2000, G.F. Structures lost a contract to provide wrought iron fences to the City of Chicago after a media investigation revealed that it overcharged for its services. The media reports mentioned that G.F. Structures' owner, Richard Crandall, was a reliable contributor to the political campaigns of Mayor Richard M. Daley and an insurance client of Cook County Commissioner John Daley, the mayor's brother.

Correspondence obtained by **Residents' Journal** and BGA indicates that G.F. Structures and its subcontractors were cited six separate times for failing to meet their requirements for Davis-Bacon labor rules, HUD Section 3 rules - which require firms which do business with housing authorities to provide jobs and make contributions to residents - as well as rules for participation of minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

Michael Lusk, a spokesperson for G.F. Structures, said he was unable to answer questions about this story.

Several other CHA contractors who donated to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization were cited for similar failures, according to the correspondence. Old Veterans Construction was assessed \$26,081.98 from its \$3 million contract on Oct. 25, 2004, for failing to meet Section 3 requirements. On Nov. 16, 2004, Old Veterans was cited for failing to pay one of its subcontractors according to prevailing wages set by the Davis-Bacon Act. Campaign finance records show Old Veterans gave the 17th Ward Democratic Organization \$1,500 on Oct. 20, 2004.

The Oakley Construction Company was cited by CHA on July 29, 2005, for non-compliance issues including a failure to pay back wages to subcontractors. In 2003 and 2004, Oakley Construction made seven separate donations to the 17th Ward Democratic Organization totaling \$6,100. In 2005, Oakley Construction made two donations to the



Residents of the Lilydale community protest corruption in the CHA administration

Photo by Beauty Turner



RJ Editor-in-Chief Mary C. Johns talks to in- and out-of-town Journalists and other media personalities about Chicago public housing and other low-income issues during the Nitty Gritty Bus Tour in September 2005 at the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center. The tour is part of the Les Brownlee Journalism Series of the Chicago Headline Club in conjunction with the Community Meida Workshp.

Photo by Micah Maidenberg



We The People Media Board member Professor Sudhir Venkatesh talks to housing advocates, journalists, RJ staff and others, including WTPM Board member Sunil Garg (seated at right), about "Dislocation," a film he produced with the help of RJ Assistant Editor Beauty Turner, and on the relocation of Robert Taylor residents at the Chicago Architeture Foundation in November 2005.

Photo by Mary C. Johns

RJ at Northwestern University

RJ Assistant Editor Beauty Turner talks to these Northwestern Students about *RJ* newspaper and the public housing and other social justice issues the award winning publication reports on, at their campus in Evanston, IL, in November.

Photo by Micah Maidenberg



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