

# PHA's Plan for Blumberg Moves Forward



HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced a \$500,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant awarded to PHA to create a Transformation Plan for the Sharswood neighborhood which includes PHA's Blumberg development. Congressman Chaka Fattah, Mayor Michael Nutter, City Council President Darrell Clarke, and PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah joined together in support of the grant award at the HUD press conference on November 22.

Three years of hard work paid off in late November when the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Shaun Donovan visited Philadelphia to announce that PHA had been awarded a \$500,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant for the Sharswood neighborhood.

The third time was indeed the charm as the agency had applied twice before for this grant.

The Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is the successor to the HOPE VI program that PHA used to rebuild several of its housing developments in the '90s and early 2000s.

The grant will fund the costs of developing a Transformation Plan for the crime and poverty-stricken Sharswood neighborhood in North Philadelphia that includes Blumberg Apartments. The redevelopment of PHA's most distressed high-rise property is essential to the overall revitalization of this community and will serve as a major planning component.

At the press conference announcing the award, PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah told the crowd at Blumberg that

when there's true, cooperative partnership, great things happen.

"PHA is thrilled to receive the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant," said Jeremiah. "The Blumberg Apartments and the neighboring North Philadelphia community has been a neglected part of the city. PHA has made a commitment to revitalize this community, but we cannot do it alone. With the support of HUD and the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant, Mayor Michael A. Nutter, City Council President Darrell Clarke and development partners, PHA will be able to make significant strides to restore this part of the city and help eliminate blight and crime and provide new career and educational opportunities for residents."

Secretary Donovan noted that, too often, children's life spans and chances for success are determined by the zip code where they live. He also said that the old federal approach to renewing neighborhoods ignored residents and the assets in their communities.

"This community should be defined by its potential, not its problems," Donovan said. "Bottom line: we are proud to

be working with local partners to lay the foundation for healthy, long-term community development."

PHA will implement this initiative by partnering with key stakeholders including public housing and neighborhood residents, the Mayor's Office, Police Department, School District, other City agencies, Girard College, neighborhood schools, nonprofit organizations, and local business owners. The process will build on recent planning efforts sponsored by the City Planning Commission.

"While this neighborhood has and we acknowledge some safety issues, I believe this grant is a major step in the right direction," said Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter. "We can begin to address blight and crime at the same time, right here in this neighborhood. You deserve to be as safe as anyone else, anywhere else, in the City of Philadelphia."

The Mayor added that by bringing together stakeholders, the city can rebuild neighborhoods that provide affordable housing and increased safety while spurring economic development.

"I do want to thank you for this community," said Congressman Chaka Fattah. "There's a commitment and there's knowledge that not only has there been a grand history here...but there's a grand future right here."

"I feel good about this. This is awesome," said City Council President Darrell Clarke, whose district includes the Blumberg neighborhood.

The councilman remarked that he had just seen President Obama earlier in the week and the President winked at him and he couldn't figure out why.

"And now you know," said Donovan. Clarke thanked him for the wonderful news.

The Norman Blumberg Apartments are located on a dense eight acre site and consist of 510 units in three high-rise towers housing both families and seniors, with 15 adjacent barracks style low-rise buildings.

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## PHA: *Moving Forward to 2014 with Momentum*



As 2013 comes to the end, I would like to reflect on PHA's accomplishments. We are no longer just transitioning; we are recovering and moving forward into the New Year with strong momentum. PHA is continuing to make a real difference throughout the City and is positively impacting the lives of the nearly 80,000 residents whom we serve. Yes, it is true; we are accomplishing our goal of becoming a good partner, neighbor and employer.

For the first time in years, PHA is operating with a balanced budget, while meeting the needs of residents, maintaining our properties, increasing housing opportunities, and doing so in an uncertain fiscal environment. I am pleased to report that our agency is fiscally strong and is well positioned to preserve affordable housing in Philadelphia for generations to come. Our Finance Department has done a great job of ensuring that PHA manages its funds well. I am proud that we are good stewards of the public trust and money and that PHA has closed the door on the culture of splurge.

I am particularly excited about the opportunities created by PHA's Community Operations and Resident Development Department (CORD) in helping residents become self-sufficient, initiatives for which we do not receive federal funding. Earlier this year, PhillySeeds was created and, with its help, PHA awarded \$160,000 in scholarships to PHA residents, many of whom hold GPAs in excess of 3.3/4.0. We revamped the Pre-Apprenticeship Program to ensure that all graduates would receive union cards and union jobs. We are seeing results: all 14 resident participants in the first class of our new program graduated and were hired by PHA. We also launched a new Section 3 Job Bank online to connect residents to jobs being offered by our vendors. PHA executed MOUs with Cheyney University, Drexel University, Audenried High School, Philly Works and Community College of Philadelphia, all aimed at providing educational and job training opportunities to PHA residents and staff. CORD also held 41 resident council elections, thus increasing the number of PHA resident councils and ensuring that all residents have input on PHA operations.

Not only have self-sufficiency opportunities for residents grown, but PHA has also committed to creating or preserving 6,000 new affordable housing units in five years under its "6 in 5" Plan. This plan is well underway with the purchase of Queen's Row Apartments in the Germantown neighborhood. Also, PHA applied for and has received the Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant for the Sharswood/Blumberg neighborhood, and, in collaboration with the City, was awarded \$1.5 million from the Office of Housing & Community Development (OHCD) for Blumberg Phase 1. PHA is working closely with Mayor Michael Nutter, the City Council and our sister agencies to coordinate housing policy and development across the City.

As we continue to look to expand, our frontline staff also works to maintain our existing housing stock. PHA's property managers have been caring for PHA's properties and residents, with less staff, by implementing creative and effective measures and, where appropriate, streamlining operations by right-sizing. And what an incredible year it has been for the best Maintenance Department in the business: a department that is on track to close nearly 135,566 service orders this year, which is nearly an eight percent increase in completed service orders in two years. I have personally seen their passion and dedication through fires, power outages and snowstorms. The efforts of the property managers and maintenance staff, along with our specialty crews, are truly the very best in the business.

This year, many others have recognized our hard work. In 2013, PHA was awarded HUD's Green Organizational Accreditation and has received several other industry awards for the great work we do. PHA was also invited to the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Challenge roundtable at the White House. By participating in this federal initiative, PHA has made a commitment to invest in energy efficiency systems and reduce its energy usage by 20 percent by the year 2020.

Additionally, PHA made history in 2013 by hiring 50 police officers, reorganizing PHA's Police Department and implementing a community policing model, with an emphasis on reducing crime at sites with high criminal activities. As a result of PHA's new policing strategy, criminal activities at or around PHA developments are on the decline. Further, in order to better respond to our residents' safety and security needs, PHA implemented a new Customer Response Center that is now available 24 hours a day, and we are investing more than \$9.5 million in CCTV and security access controls at various sites.

We cannot forget the great work that was done by our Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV) employees, who are working in partnership with the City and federal agencies to end veteran homelessness in Philadelphia by 2015. In our continuing efforts to better serve our clients, PHA reorganized and consolidated HCV administrative offices to one location to enable the agency to right-size the department, resulting in significant savings and greater efficiency.

For the first time in many years, PHA now has a fully staffed and functioning Office of General Counsel (OGC), thus reducing its use and reliance on outside lawyers and saving the agency millions. In 2013, OGC played a pivotal role in settling the longstanding McDowell class action lawsuit, which was filed more than 10 years ago, and reached an agreement with the City to settle more than \$10 million in City liens and fees for under \$6.3 million.

All of PHA's departments have had a great 2013. The work of the Human Resources Department included consolidating all six of PHA's collective bargaining agreements and accurately updating all job descriptions and organizational charts. Information Systems Management made our requisition process paperless. Supply Chain Management kept decreasing our fleet and improving our negotiating positions for contracts. The Communications Department and the Office of Policy, Research and Enterprise Planning are helping to keep us current and informed. The Office of Audit and Compliance (OAC) has done great work in safeguarding PHA resources against fraud, waste and mismanagement. Believe me, I did not forget about the role of Operations and other departments in the 2013 auctions, the waitlist purge and the multi-department chargeback projects.

Finally, as you know, I make informed, data-driven decisions. This data shows that 2013 was a great year for the Philadelphia Housing Authority. As I have said on many occasions, PHA cannot address the crisis of affordable housing alone. I am tremendously grateful to have the unwavering commitment of the Board of Commissioners, Mayor Michael Nutter, Council President Darrell Clarke and the City Council, our City, State and Federal housing partners, and especially Residents and PHA employees.

PHA today is not the same agency it was two years ago. This new PHA is moving forward with strong momentum, resolute in its commitment to being a better partner, a better neighbor, and an employer of choice. As we enter the New Year, let us aim to make 2014 even better than 2013.

I wish each of you Happy Holidays and best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

KELVIN A. JEREMIAH  
President & CEO

## PHA President and CEO Honored by Building One Pennsylvania

The Philadelphia Housing Authority's President and CEO, Kelvin Jeremiah, was honored at Building One Pennsylvania's 4th annual Leaders: Building Our Future Together Award Ceremony. He was named their Strategic Partner of the Year.

Building One Pennsylvania is a statewide network of local elected and civic leaders working to

identify bi-partisan solutions to the often overlooked fiscal and social challenges of our diverse middle class communities.

"The board of Building One Pennsylvania chose Mr. Jeremiah for special recognition because of his work in advancing the southeastern Pennsylvania housing mobility program, which will open up new

opportunity for where Housing Choice Voucher holders can live, work, and educate their children," said John McKelligott and Rev. Marlon Millner, the organization's co-chairs.

The regional housing mobility program seeks to promote inclusive, stable, and economically prosperous neighborhoods and reform practices that reinforce the concentration of

poverty. Participants in the program will receive counseling and support services before and after they move to high opportunity areas so individuals and families can be successful in their new communities. PHA is partnering with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Chester County Housing Authority, Delaware County Housing Authority,

and Montgomery County Housing Authority for this initiative.

"It is an honor to receive this award and to work with like-minded partners like Building One Pennsylvania to expand housing choices for families," said Jeremiah. "PHA is committed to fostering strong, prosperous communities throughout Philadelphia and the state."

## “6 in 5” Plan Starts to Pay Off

PHA's initiative to expand housing opportunities by 6,000 units over five years is headed in the right direction. The agency has provided conditional commitments of subsidy as well as capital funding for nearly 700 units.

PHA launched the “6 in 5” Initiative in May by issuing a request for proposals from affordable housing providers interested in rent subsidy in return for housing PHA residents. The subsidies can be used for existing, newly constructed, or renovated housing units, and could provide long-term financial assistance to property owners. Federal funding to build new sites has shrunk and the agency has decided that partnering with other development groups that build or preserve affordable housing would be much more effective.

“We are pleased with the response that we’ve received so far,” said Kelvin Jeremiah, PHA President and CEO. “We expect to attract more bids from other affordable housing providers as time goes on.”

So far, the PHA Board has approved contracts with NewCourtland Elder Services and Impact Services Corporation, covering 86 units. The agency is reviewing a number of other proposals from private, nonprofit providers that would help it reach its first year goal under the initiative.

The agreement with NewCourtland will subsidize 60 units for seniors at the Apartments at Allegheny, 1900 W. Allegheny Avenue in the City’s Tioga neighborhood. The new, seven-story apartment building is going up on a site once occupied by a suit factory.

NewCourtland is also building a LIFE Center at the site that will provide medical care to low income seniors in the neighborhood.

“The need for affordable senior housing in Philadelphia is enormous,” said Gail Kass, President and CEO of NewCourtland. “Without large-scale collaborations like this one between NewCourtland and PHA, projects of this size could not be completed.”

The other agreement with Impact Services Corporation will subsidize 26 units for low-income veterans and their family members. The development, the Impact Veterans Family Center at 1952 E. Allegheny Avenue, will be located in a factory building once used by an electronic components provider. It has easy access to the Market-Frankford El and four bus lines.

John MacDonald, the President and CEO of Impact Services Corporation, said, “Philadelphia lacks affordable housing for veterans with children.”

“The partnership with the Philadelphia Housing Authority has brought rent subsidies to the Vets Family Project, making the project affordable to the population it seeks to serve,” he said. “Without PHA, the project would not be able to serve very low-income vets families.”

MacDonald also believes that partnerships between PHA and nonprofit developers are the wave of the future. He hopes to continue this partnership with PHA.



PHA's agreement with NewCourtland Elder Services will subsidize 60 units of affordable housing at 1900 W. Allegheny Avenue. The development will also have a LIFE Center, shown here under construction at the site.



The Impact Veterans Family Center at 1952 E. Allegheny Avenue will be located in a factory building once used by an electronic components provider. The PHA Board has approved a contract to subsidize 26 units with Impact Services Corporation as part of the “6 in 5” Initiative to expand housing opportunities over the next five years.

## PHA Developments Recognized With Industry Awards

PHA's demonstrated leadership in the development of quality, affordable housing has won the recognition from five industry groups.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) cited Paschall Village in southwest Philadelphia with an “Outstanding Achievement” award.

This green development features technology that lowers energy costs by one-third and contributes to the City's plan to reduce its carbon footprint and sewer runoff.

Paschall Village also addresses residents' health, especially indoor air

quality health issues, with the materials used to build the site. The redeveloped site created more open space, a sense of community, and improved safety.

Mantua Square, Plymouth Hall and Paschall Village were recognized early this fall with “Best In Apartment Living Awards” from the Apartment Association of Greater Philadelphia (AAGP).

Mantua Square, Paschall Village, and Plymouth Hall were honored in the Community Presentation category. They were graded by judges from outside the city for curb appeal, landscaping, cleanliness, lighting,

model apartment, signage, and the leasing office. Mantua received honorable mention in this category, Plymouth finished in second place, and Paschall finished third.

Plymouth Hall also received a second place trophy for Maintenance Excellence. Categories considered by the judges were the overall level of care for the community, including maintenance staff and maintenance shop, level of cleaning care, and the effectiveness of maintenance contractors.

“It's a great feeling to know that people in your business believe that

you are producing a first-class, state-of-the-art product,” said Kelvin Jeremiah, PHA President and CEO. “This agency has shown time and again that it will go the extra mile to produce quality affordable housing and do it in a cost effective manner.”

The Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) recognized PHA's LEED Gold development, Norris Apartments, with a “Certificate of Achievement.”

The new Norris, which replaced an aging high-rise, meets requirements covering eight key areas of environment and human health, while

cutting energy costs dramatically, and reducing storm water runoff that is a source of pollution. The site is transit-oriented with an on-site park for residents and all building materials were local, recycled, or lumber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, to reduce the carbon footprint and waste.

Norris Apartments also received a “Sustainable Construction” award from the Construction Management Association of America, Mid-Atlantic Chapter, and a “Best Green Building Project” of 2013 award from the General Building Contractors Association regional chapter.

# Construction Manager Picked for Strawberry Mansion Development

The PHA Board has awarded a contract to Dale Corporation for the construction of the Strawberry Mansion/Oakdale development. Construction is expected to begin next spring in the historic Strawberry Mansion neighborhood at 33rd and Berks Streets, next to Fairmount Park. Most of the development will be situated between 32nd and 33rd Streets, covering Berks, Monument and Arlington Streets.

Dale Corporation was one of several bidders on the development that also includes the construction of nine homes on the neighborhoods northern border on the 2800 block of Oakdale Street.

The company has a successful history working within the public sector to build affordable housing. Marshall Shepard Village, Cambridge Plaza, Lucien E. Blackwell Homes, Nellie Reynolds Gardens, Plymouth Hall, and Courtyard at Riverview (formerly Southwark) were all built by Dale. The company also built the John F. Street Community Center and the PHA office building at Greater Grays Ferry Estates.

PHA anticipates that over \$10 million

of the funding will come from Low Income Housing Tax Credits, with the rest of the funding coming from public housing funds. The total development cost is estimated at \$25.5 million.

Strawberry Mansion/Oakdale will be LEED-certified construction. All homes at the sites will be Energy Star Rated Construction, designed with sustainability in mind and low energy use as the primary goal. The development will have solar panels to provide five percent of the total electrical demand at the site. A total of 76 new homes will be built in two and three-story townhouses and duplexes.

The new development adjacent to Fairmount Park will strike a balance between affordable housing and market-rate housing in the neighborhood, which is becoming attractive to private investors. Strawberry Mansion is adjacent to Brewerytown, located to the south, which has attracted reinvestment and young homeowners already. City Council President Darrell Clarke, whose district includes the development site, is backing the revitalization effort because of its intent to bring a balance to the neighborhood.



PHA expects to begin construction of the Strawberry Mansion/Oakdale development next spring. Most of the new units will be located north and east of 33rd and Berks Streets, next to Fairmount Park.

## PHA, City & Partners Pursue Choice Grant for Norris Homes Area

PHA and the City of Philadelphia have submitted another application for a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant, covering the area in North Central Philadelphia that includes the old, low-rise Norris Apartments. The area is bounded by York Street, Germantown Avenue, Cecil B. Moore Avenue, and North Carlisle Street.

The application requesting \$30 million was submitted in mid-September to the Department of Housing and Urban Development and would be part of a \$200 million redevelopment package. The rest of the funds would come from several other public and private sources. A grant request submitted by the agency and the city in 2012 was shortlisted, but ultimately not awarded.

Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM), the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Temple University, the Philadelphia School District, United Way, Philadelphia Youth Network, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and Temple Health Systems are key partners in the

proposed transformation plan.

“This neighborhood is transit-oriented and close to Center City as well as Temple University, so it is very attractive to developers,” said Michael Johns, PHA Acting Chief Operating Officer. “We want to make sure that our residents are able to stay here and thrive. By partnering with the City and other interests, we can improve the quality of life for them and everyone else.”

Deborah McColloch, Director of the City’s Office of Housing and Community Development, believes that the plan is critical to a balanced approach in the renewal of the neighborhood, which is located east of Temple University and just north of Center City, in a way that serves both long-time and new residents.

“The plan will develop and implement strategies that will improve the quality of life for all residents of the neighborhood by preserving and expanding the inventory of affordable housing, improve access to jobs and services, and increasing educational

opportunities,” she said. “Tremendous challenges remain, but this plan and this grant will help us address issues of affordability, vacancy, public safety, schools, employment and services.”

McColloch also stated that targeted investments by the private, nonprofit, and public sectors have already placed North Central Philadelphia at the cusp of revitalization, and the grant would surely boost efforts to transform the community.

The North Central Transformation Plan includes the development of 297 housing units, with a mix of affordable and market rate, rental and homeownership units. As a part of this plan, all 147 Norris Apartments low-rise units will be rebuilt into energy-efficient, affordable housing to ensure that low income families are able to remain in the neighborhood. The redevelopment would take place on both sides of SEPTA’s Temple University Station and would complement the recently completed Paseo Verde housing development already in place on 9th Street.

Over 50 years of disinvestment and population loss have left the neighborhood scattered with blighted properties or vacant lots that promote crime and decrease value. The schools are low-performing and the Germantown Avenue retail corridor is threatened by vacancies and underutilized properties.

Related improvements under the plan include new lighting, sidewalks, bus shelters, coordinated community policing, and community-building projects with the Mural Arts Program and Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to promote safety, improve walkability, and beautify the neighborhood.

Temple University has made a commitment of over \$1 million dollars to this neighborhood plan. It will partner with the school district and EducationWorks, a not-for-profit organization that provides comprehensive support for economically disadvantaged communities. The university will provide one-on-one tutoring in school and after school to ensure that children are performing on grade level.

APM’s case managers will work with Temple University to create individual education plans, so neighborhood youth are college and career ready. They will also help residents with housing counseling, GED testing, digital literacy, and connecting job ready adults to employers.

LISC, with its new \$500,000 loan fund, will aid existing local businesses on the nearby Germantown Avenue corridor through facade improvements and technical assistance. LISC will also participate in streetscape improvements, and develop programming in plazas and temporary spaces, along with a new mixed-use site.

### North-Central Redevelopment Proposal

- 147 rental replacement units (Norris)
- 90 affordable rental units
- 30 rental market rate units
- 267 rental subtotal
- 30 homeownership units (market and affordable)

**297 total units**

# New Agreement to Create Opportunities for Residents and Employees



*Cheyney University President Michelle Howard-Vital and PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah sign a new partnership agreement to create more educational programs for PHA residents and employees.*

A three-year agreement that features 12 special initiatives to enhance educational opportunities for public housing residents and agency employees has been inked by PHA and Cheyney University.

“In a time of shrinking resources, it is imperative to partner and leverage resources in order to serve effectively. This partnership is truly a win-win that will help residents and employees build better futures,” said PHA

President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. “We are excited to join with Cheyney to increase the educational possibilities for our residents and employees.”

The wide ranging agreement consists of summer internships for

Cheyney students at PHA, tutoring for residents, an urban farming program for residents, a continuing education program for agency employees and the adoption of a concurrent enrollment program for students of Audenried Charter High School. The high school is located in the agency’s Greater Grays Ferry Development.

“Cheyney University is very interested in helping students to bridge the gap between secondary school and college,” Cheyney University President Michelle Howard-Vital said. “By adopting a secondary school, Cheyney will be able to expose students to a

range of majors and career options. Additionally, the university will be able to help students as they prepare for college preparatory courses and study for the SAT.”

PHA and Cheyney will also partner on grant applications with the aim of obtaining funds to improve services to the communities they serve. By having an academic partner in grant applications, PHA believes it can increase and improve its research into the needs of residents whose programs depend, in part, on grant funding.

## PHA and Drexel Partner to Serve Mantua Neighborhood



collaboratively to provide high-speed internet access at the Mantua Square community center.

“I am thrilled that we could reach this agreement with Drexel University,” said Kelvin Jeremiah, PHA President and CEO. “PHA is a key partner in the Mantua Transformation Plan and so is the university. We truly want to see Mantua become a viable, attractive community for current and future residents of the neighborhood, and are pleased to be partnering with Drexel in this effort.”

The Mantua neighborhood was one of the first communities in the nation to receive a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative planning grant from HUD to begin the long-term process of improving the neighborhood, which experienced 60 years of population loss since 1950. The neighborhood has high levels of poverty and public assistance, median incomes below the city average, a high vacancy rate, low homeownership numbers, and almost one-third of its residents are without a high school diploma.

PHA has had a presence in the Mantua neighborhood since 1960 when the agency built an 18-story high-rise, Mantua Hall, which was demolished in early 2008. The skyscraper was replaced with Mantua Square, an award-winning low-rise development that covers a city block.

## PHA and Universal Audenried Charter High Sign Agreement

The Philadelphia Housing Authority will now work collaboratively with Universal Audenried Charter High School to enhance education and training opportunities for PHA residents who attend or live near the school in the Grays Ferry neighborhood.

The two-year agreement calls for an after school math and literacy tutoring program in partnership with Cheyney University that will allow students majoring in education to receive practical teaching experience. The new program will begin in January 2014. PHA, Audenried and Cheyney University will also provide college nights at the high school and develop a temporary financial aid and admissions office at the Greater Grays Ferry Estates housing development.

The newly signed agreement also includes an automobile fleet services program and a trades training program. Students from the high school’s Transportation Technology

Program will provide PHA with basic auto maintenance, with the agency providing the parts free of charge, while students donate their work.

Additionally, under the agreement, Audenried senior students who are also PHA residents will have the opportunity to participate in PHA’s new and improved Pre-Apprenticeship Program. Students interested in the program will have to be in good standing at school and meet the admission requirements.

“I believe that the way out of poverty to a better life starts with an education and training that will help develop an individual’s skill set for an ever changing job market,” said Kelvin Jeremiah, PHA President and CEO. “I strongly believe that education is the key to the economic social mobility that our residents desire. PHA will continue its efforts to give residents the tools and resources they need to permanently break the cycle of poverty.”

Universal Audenried Charter High School and PHA will also collaborate on the development of research projects that improve educational offerings to public housing residents and those living in the Grays Ferry neighborhood. Both parties will also partner to work on grant applications, especially those related to the development of the surrounding community and programs for PHA residents and students at the high school.

Universal Audenried Charter High School, which is composed of five academies, promotes itself as a dynamic learning environment where students can explore all of their options. The school has a longer school day and year, smaller class sizes, post-graduation planning, and a family and student resource center that can be used by the community.

# PHA Names New Senior Vice President of Policy, Research and Enterprise Planning



PHA Senior Vice President of Policy, Research and Enterprise Planning Martin LaMar.

In early August, the Philadelphia Housing Authority welcomed Martin LaMar as the new Senior Vice President of Policy, Research, and Enterprise Planning. In his new capacity, LaMar will oversee grant funding, policy and program performance analysis, as well as societal impacts on PHA.

A native of Atlanta, LaMar previously served as the Director of Policy Development and Regulatory Affairs at the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA). In his position, he cultivated and maintained relationships with local and federal government entities on behalf of AHA.

These relationships included coordinating agency-wide activities and overseeing external partnerships for Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed's Regional Taskforce on Homelessness. The homelessness initiative was aimed at reducing individual homelessness, through an "Innovation Delivery" grant gifted to the city from New York City Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, to tackle urban challenges.

LaMar's past collaborative efforts and organizational affiliations is something he hopes to foster with

many supporting organizations here in Philadelphia.

"Housing authorities are not just about providing housing anymore," he said when asked about his future plans for PHA. "In order to expand what we do, we have to create partnerships with agencies that, in the past, we might not have thought were important."

His plans also include creating policies and utilizing research to make informed decisions on how PHA does business.

With numerous acclamations, LaMar is no stranger to seeking educational programming opportunities for the betterment of the community. In 2012, he served on the Atlanta Public Schools Homelessness Education Advisory Board, as well as actively represented AHA as a Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center Community Coalition Board Member.

"Everything we do is to increase opportunities and improve the lives of our residents," said LaMar. "Our actions must be in the best interest of our residents."

# PHA Launches Online Job Bank for Residents



In October, PHA launched an online job bank designed to connect residents with Section 3 job and training opportunities.

Section 3 requires recipients of certain HUD financial assistance to provide job training, employment, contract opportunities, and other economic opportunities for low- or very-low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods to the greatest extent possible. Section 3 requirements apply to public housing authorities and all contractors and vendors who receive contract awards from housing authorities.

PHA's new Section 3 job bank promotes positions with contractors and vendors in a variety of different industries. At launch time, PHA was actively recruiting for over 20 open positions, ranging from laborers to clerical positions, and information systems analysts.

"PHA is not just about housing. We're also seeking to further education, training and job placement for residents, which is why I am thrilled to announce the launch of our online Section 3 Job Bank," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. "Section 3 is a powerful tool for ensuring that residents are participating and benefiting from PHA activities in their communities."

PHA has aggressively enhanced its Section 3 Program in 2013. Improvements include updating policy and procedures, educating vendors about the requirements, and streamlining the hiring process for vendors and residents alike.

Residents can browse job descriptions and upload or create their resumes by visiting the Section 3 Job Bank at [www.pha.phila.gov/section3jobs](http://www.pha.phila.gov/section3jobs). New positions will be posted as they become available. All residents are encouraged to submit their resumes so PHA staff can match them with future opportunities as well.

PHA's Office of Community Operations and Resident Development (CORD) will work to connect job seekers with resume-writing assistance. Residents are also welcome to visit PHA's computer labs to look at the job bank and work on their resumes. For resume assistance, please call CORD at 215-684-5300.

**Looking for a Job?**



**Browse for jobs & upload or create resumes at PHA's new Section 3 online Job Bank.**

**All residents are encouraged to submit their resumes for current and future opportunities at [www.pha.phila.gov/section3jobs](http://www.pha.phila.gov/section3jobs).**

**For more information, please call 215-684-5300.**

**Section 3 positions with PHA contractors & vendors will be posted as they become available.**



# Army Vet Becomes PHA's First Homeowner Through HUD-VASH



Robert A. Jackson had been renting a place on a HUD-VASH (Veteran Affairs Supported Housing) voucher. Now, he owns a three-bedroom row home in University City, of which he's very proud.

A retired 64-year-old Army veteran who lived out of his car for a short period now has the home of his dreams on the edge of the vibrant University City neighborhood in West Philadelphia.

Robert A. Jackson had been renting a place on a HUD-VASH (Veteran Affairs Supported Housing) voucher before discovering he could use that voucher money toward the purchase of his own home. For Jackson, it was like the sun coming over the horizon following some rocky moments in

recent years that included living out of his automobile.

Jackson served four years in the Army working as a finance specialist, hospital administration specialist, and supply specialist. He was discharged in November 1977, and went on to a varied career as a power tester for General Electric, and an electronics technician at the Philadelphia Navy Shipyard. He also received a business management degree from Penn while working there and worked in South Georgia.

Eventually, he came back to Philadelphia and worked as a phone installer and tractor-trailer driver, retiring in 2009. After retiring, Jackson's money didn't go as far as he'd hoped. He ended up living out of his car and taking showers at the place where he took his yoga class. One day in 2010, he happened to attend an informational session at one of the state's Career Link offices in Center City, which is where he learned about the HUD-VASH program that helps veterans rent a place to live. He became a PHA client through the program and began to rent private housing again.

After spending some time in the program, he attended a homeownership seminar. The officials conducting the seminar believed that the Jackson would be a good candidate for homeownership under HUD-VASH and he seized the opportunity.

"Here I am today with a beautiful home," he said. "I'm coming home. I'm from Southwest Philly. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."

The apple of Jackson's eye is now a remodeled three-bedroom row home with a cellar and a small back yard with durable floors that resemble hardwood. The VA Medical Center, Clark Park, and a number of other neighborhood attractions are all within walking distance. Jackson urges other veterans in HUD-VASH to look into the program.

"They may as well live in a house for the same amount of money that they spend on rent, building equity," he said.

## New Director of Resident Development Seeks to Provide More Resident Opportunities



PHA Director of Resident Development William Myles.

PHA welcomes William Myles to the newly reorganized Office of Community Operations and Resident Development (CORD). Myles will serve as the Director of Resident Development overseeing PHA's Homeownership, Self-Sufficiency, Section 3 and Pre-Apprenticeship Programs, as well as Community Partners.

Myles' ability to build an interactive relationship with residents, by drawing on years of personal and professional experiences, is one of the essential characteristics he brings to PHA.

A former public housing resident,

Myles grew up in the Meridian Housing Authority (MHA) in Mississippi. He credits his local Boys and Girls Club as a driving force of motivation for getting him to where he is today. There, at the Boys and Girls Club, he began his career toward the betterment of his community, leaving a path of accomplishments and award recognitions along the way.

Myles not only started the first choir at his district Boys and Girls Club, but also coordinated a Stop the Violence Rally in partnership with Meridian Mayor Cherri Barry.

In 2009, he received the HUD

Certificate of Excellence for performance in special resident programs, as well as for outstanding performance in resident opportunities and Self-Sufficiency Program Management.

"I'm just happy to work with people that I can relate to, because I used to be there," he said when asked about his numerous involvements in community activities. "Someone helped me when I couldn't help myself. I hope I am able to inspire people to do the same thing."

While his ties are still deeply rooted in the Boys and Girls Club, Myles made the transition to the MHA, working

in all facets of the agency, from FSS Coordinator to Hearing Officer. His extensive knowledge of public housing eventually led him to become MHA's Director of Community Supportive Services, the position he held prior to joining the PHA family.

In his new position, Myles hopes to launch innovative initiatives that socially engage residents, much like his work with the Boys and Girls Club.

"At the end of the day, I am an advocate for the residents and I want to provide them with the opportunities to achieve anything," he said.

## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

for

PHA Residents

General Education Development (GED)

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Digital Literacy Class

Placement and Skills Refresher Courses

### TESTING & ENROLLMENT

From now through January 6, 2014

### TESTING LOCATION

John F. Street Community Center  
1100 Poplar Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

To sign up or for more information, please call PHA Community Operations & Resident Development Department at 215-684-5300.



Philadelphia Housing Authority

# PHA and Calvary Chapel Hosts Annual Senior Holiday Luncheon



*Hundreds of PHA seniors ring in the holidays at the annual senior luncheon.*

# PHA and PhillySeeds Give Away Thanksgiving Turkeys



PHA gave away 2,000 turkeys to residents at multiple developments for Thanksgiving.

# Residents Get Head Start On College



15-year-old Christian Rosado and 16-year-old Sekya Gardner took their first visit to a college campus during a field trip to Cheyney University organized by PHA's Office of Community Operations and Resident Development.

Everybody knows that you have to start planning to go to college well before you graduate high school. Or maybe they don't.

PHA's Office of Community Operations and Resident Development (CORD) took 34 high school residents to Cheyney University in early August to get the lowdown on making the move to higher education. For many of these young men and women, they will be the first in their families to attend college.

16-year-old Sekya Gardner, who attends George Washington Carver Engineering and Science High School, had never been to a college campus before, but she would never think of not attending college.

"Money-wise, you can get paid more, a better job," she said.

Gardner is thinking about a career in the medical field, probably in nursing.

15-year-old Christian Rosado attends Parkway Center City High School, and wants a career in engineering.

"If I had to major in one [area], it would be technical engineering... building new equipment like cameras,

phones, computers...re-innovating, moving forward."

Students quickly found out that there's no time to waste.

"You need to get on the mission right now of trying to make up your mind of what it is you want to do and where it is that you're going to go," said Sharon Thorn, Director of Student Activities at the university.

Thorn also pointed out that activities, not just grades, are important, too, because they influence a student's personal development.

"Even before you leave [high] school, get involved," she said.

Thorn told the group that experience has taught her that students who lack involvement in organizations become discipline problems at the school. They miss out on scholarship opportunities that some organizations offer. And then, there's the satisfaction of becoming a role model while opening career doors.

"We want to make sure that when you leave, you have leadership qualities. You know, Robert's Rules of Order. You can do chapter management because you can run an office," she said.

Hip hop artist Taliyah "Lee Mazin" Smith took time out from her promotion schedule to remind the group to choose their friends carefully.

Lee Mazin, who attended Delaware State University for a year before embarking on her recording career, believes it's important to choose friends who have similar goals and values, and will be a positive influence. She said going to college should help a person develop the discipline and independence necessary to carry on their careers successfully.

Although she is currently not attending college, the award-winning artist told the group that she has plans to return and get a degree in business. She had a 3.8 grade point average in high school and still it was hard for her to get grants and loans. She urged the audience of high school students to start planning now.

Cheyney University is a diverse school, although 87 percent of its students are African-American. Dr. Eric Hilton, Executive Director of Enrollment Management, told his visitors that the university has white, Latino or Hispanic, and multi-ethnic students. He said the school's leaders believe that this enhances the educational experience.

Dr. Hilton reminded the teens that Cheyney will look at their activities as well as their grades when considering them for admission. He urged them to take the most challenging courses that their high schools offer because statistics show that those students have a better chance of graduating from college.

He advised them to take their college entrance exams (ACT or SAT) early so they don't miss out on scholarships, and also warned them to be very thoughtful when taking loans to attend college and to avoid borrowing heavily to buy discretionary items such as sneakers or technical equipment.



Dr. Eric Hilton, Executive Director of Enrollment Management, reminded the teens that Cheyney will look at their activities as well as their grades when considering them for admission.



Sharon Thorn, Director of Student Activities at Cheyney University, takes a question from one of the PHA residents who visited the campus in August. Thorn said that activities, not just grades, are important because they influence a student's personal development.

# Hall of Famer Dawn Staley Stays Humble, Remembers Her Roots



Former Raymond Rosen resident and South Carolina women's basketball Coach Dawn Staley emphasizes discipline, humility and community service as the keys to becoming a success in life. Photo credit: University of South Carolina Athletics Media Relations.

University of South Carolina women's basketball coach Dawn Staley knows how to keep things in perspective. The former Raymond Rosen resident, who went on to success, first as a player and now as a coach, received the ultimate honor in September as she was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. The legendary point guard has said that the honor is more than someone can ever expect, and she never forgets her roots at Rosen.

"It's my foundation and where I learned to hone my skills as a basketball player," she said. "It was also a place that always embraced me. It's a place where I learned how to survive. I learned survival techniques to ward off anything that came my way. I was able to equip myself with things that only the strong would be able to survive. I don't think I would've learned those things if I didn't grow up in Raymond Rosen."

It would certainly be understandable if Coach Staley, now in her sixth year at South Carolina, got wrapped up in the wake of her achievements. Her team is ranked in the Top 10 by the AP and the USA Today Coaches Poll at press time.

The Gamecocks are coming off of consecutive 25-win seasons, a first for

the team since the 1978-79 and 1979-80 seasons, and two NCAA tournament appearances. The team has steadily increased its overall Southeastern Conference win totals each season since Staley took over in 2008, culminating in last season's school-record 11 SEC victories. Average attendance in the last two seasons has increased dramatically from 43rd to 26th in the nation, bringing in nearly 4,000 fans per game last year.

Yet, Staley maintains a very measured perspective that's apparent whenever she speaks. If anything, entering the Hall of Fame has had a very positive effect, causing her to think of all the people who helped her over the years.

"I think it changed me in that it allowed me to reflect on my career," she said. "Since I went straight from playing to coaching, I haven't gotten a chance to exhale. Over the past few months, since the announcement, I've been able to take it all in and look back on some people and experiences that I've had, that have led me to being inducted in the Hall of Fame."

Community service remains a constant in Staley's life, beginning with the establishment of the critically acclaimed Dawn Staley Foundation

after she won the gold medal at the 1996 Olympics. The foundation gives middle school aged children a positive influence in their lives by sponsoring an after school program at the Hank Gathers Recreation Center, located next to Raymond Rosen. The Center focuses on academics and athletics and sponsors basketball leagues and other fundraising activities.

Because of her selfless community outreach, the WNBA has adopted a Dawn Staley Community Leadership Award.

As stated by the WNBA, "the award recognizes the player who best exemplifies the characteristics of a leader in the community and reflects Staley's leadership, spirit, charitable efforts, and love for the game."

More recently, over the summer Staley established the Innersole Foundation, which provides new sneakers to homeless children and children who are in need. In August, she traveled with former President Bill Clinton and his daughter, Chelsea, to Africa to view the foundation work established by the former First Family. She was overwhelmed by the grace of African nationals who continually gave of themselves to strangers despite their own need.

While Staley has made her name and reputation through sports, she encourages young people to get involved in group activities, whether they're athletic or not.

"I think it would benefit a young person to be a part of a group that you have to devote time to," she said. "You have to make sacrifices in order to be successful because it balances you out, as far as just not just being a student. When you have something else to tap into, it opens up opportunities for you to grow as a person. If it's a sport, you learn valuable life lessons through playing a sport."

Above all, when Coach Staley teaches, she emphasizes humility as a virtue.

"I absolutely do, because I'm really appreciative of all the people and things that have happened to me, good and bad. I think that when you are a person that has lived and experienced things, you want to lend your experiences to other people and because of that, I'm able to stay grounded."

Put another way, no one becomes a success all alone in a team sport or in life, and Dawn Staley has never forgotten that basic truth.

## Resident Utility Allowance Payments Will Now Be Paid Directly to Utility Supplier

Checks received by residents as utility allowance payments (UAP) will now go directly to the utility companies. The new policy that took effect December 1 was made because many residents used their utility allowance to pay for things other than utility bills, resulting in liens being filed against PHA properties.

To get those liens removed and protect against new ones, PHA signed a Board-approved contract that requires PHA to make direct payments.

Residents will still receive the full financial benefit of the UAP and won't lose any money. The direct payment to the utility companies goes dollar-for-dollar against the tenant's utility bills.

However, the payment that PHA sends will cover only part of the tenant's total bill, so tenants must pay the "Balance Due" or risk having the utility service shut off, which may result in eviction.

Residents who receive a UAP should check the bills from PECO and PGW each month and see if the amount of PHA's payment matches the figures on the letter PHA mailed in November. Residents should also check the "Payment Received" section to be sure it reflects their payment.

Questions regarding this new policy can be emailed to PHA at [pha.utilities@pha.phila.gov](mailto:pha.utilities@pha.phila.gov). Messages can be sent 24 hours a day and will be checked and responded to often.

## Revamped Pre-Apprenticeship Program Will Lead to Jobs



PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah spoke to residents in the new Pre-Apprenticeship Program in late October, saying he was proud of them for making the first step toward a better life.

For well over a decade, PHA ran a highly touted Pre-Apprenticeship Program with the building trade unions, but appearances can be deceptive.

A review of the program's results showed that fewer than 100 graduates out of over 800 were actually employed. That bothered PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah who ordered a revamp of the program. The new program relaunched in July in collaboration with several local unions and city partners.

In late October, 19 students admitted to the new Pre-Apprenticeship Program came to PHA's Workforce Development Center in Grays Ferry to begin their journey toward a union card, an actual job, and self-sufficiency. All of them are PHA residents and each attended eight weeks of training at the Finishing Trades Institute where they received refresher courses in math and reading, as well as instruction on green advantage and sustainability and leadership skills.

The students were slotted for training as maintenance mechanics, painters, or laborers depending upon the positions that PHA needs to fill. With this method, the agency can guarantee them a union job with benefits upon successful completion of the program.

Jeremiah visited the center on orientation day and told students that the old program had no emphasis on jobs, just a goal to make people feel good about themselves.

"What would make you guys feel good, really feel good?" he said. "Going through this training and being unemployed in the end or going through the training and get a job in the end?"

"Get a job," they said in unison.

Jeremiah then told them a story about his first job at the age of seven, pumping gas in his native Grenada. He received \$2, but never spent it. Nothing made him feel better about himself than the ability to work and get paid for it.

"I really do believe that the goal of any training program, the goal of any educational program should be ultimately to have you in a place where you can find social and economic mobility, where you can find gainful jobs," he said.

Aisha Taylor, who lives in Germantown, is excited to be in the new program. She plans on becoming a maintenance mechanic because of the varied skills set.

Students enrolled in that track are trained in carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work. Before entering the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, Taylor worked as a supervisor at Philly Future Track, a program run by the City to clean and beautify streets.

"I'll find my career in this. I'll find something that I love to do," she said.

Yvette Askew of Haddington Homes was working as a Certified Nursing

Assistant until she was laid off. She, too, is intent on becoming a maintenance mechanic and has a special interest in the electrical training.

"I want to do it because it makes me more self-sufficient. It's an opportunity to do something different. You don't have to stay stuck where you are," she said.

Students in the maintenance mechanics track will receive 16 weeks of training. A 12 week training will be required for the painters track, while those in the laborers track will train for five to six weeks.

Marlon Williams, one of the current instructors at the Workforce Development Center, said apprenticeships that follow training will run two to three years. Currently, a total of 33 residents are participating in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. Twenty-one are maintenance mechanics, 11 painters, and two are laborers.

Jeremiah noted that only 22 percent of PHA residents are employed and he believes that many of those who are unemployed want to work at a job that pays.

"I think if you provide the right resources and give people the right training with the end result that they can look forward to, I think people will jump at that," he told the students. "This is not about PHA giving anybody a handout 'cause it's your sweat and tears. This is about PHA giving you a hand up."

## PHA Resident Finds Fulfillment with Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Quahmir Martin is one of PHA's shining stars. A graduate of the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, the 20-year-old from Spring Garden Apartments saw the program as an opportunity for advancement.

"I wasn't really doing that well in high school," Martin admitted, "I needed a different way after I got my diploma."

Martin entered the Pre-Apprenticeship Program after graduating from Central High School. Martin's mother, Jeannine Martin, also attended the program and encouraged him to join. After attaining the highest score possible on the program's placement test, Martin quickly excelled in his courses, jump-starting his career as an electrician.

He became a leader amongst his classmates. Maintaining an average grade of 95 and above, Martin often tutored others to help them succeed. His knowledge and leadership abilities shined through and he was held over to the newly revamped Pre-Apprenticeship Program, to continue tutoring students.

"You're able to use your mind," said Martin, when asked about his favorite part of the program. "It's not too strenuous on your body. You can work smarter, not harder in a way."

### Resident Council Spotlight

The Abbottsford Resident Council celebrated the holidays with a senior dinner. Seniors enjoyed food served by youth residents, entertainment, and a visit from PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah and Executive Vice President of CORD Erik Soliván. Congratulations to



Quahmir Martin, a Pre-Apprenticeship Graduate, currently works as a successful electrician and still finds time to tutor incoming students.

Martin's achievements continued well after graduating from PHA's program. Upon completing the program, he applied and was accepted into the IBEW Local 98 (electricians union) as an apprentice.

Today, Martin continues to exceed expectations. Currently, he is working with J.P. Rainey Company Inc., an electrical construction firm, to install fire alarms and work on the Ambulatory Care Center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

"I see myself on top of the world," said Martin. We agree.



# Pre-Apprenticeship Instructor Returns to His Roots



*Pre-Apprenticeship graduate Marlon Williams returns to PHA as an instructor for the newly revamped Pre-Apprenticeship Program.*

## Ludlow Resident Enjoys New Career Opportunity

23-year-old Devon Finney graduated from Kensington High School and then spent a couple of years taking liberal arts and sciences at Cheyney University and Community College of Philadelphia. There was just one problem.

“The books, I really wasn’t into it, it wasn’t my thing,” he said. “I was more of a hands-on guy.”

Finney had played sports and enjoys being outdoors. He was working at Waste Management until he was laid off last year, one of a number of part-time jobs that he held. Then, he entered the Pre-Apprenticeship Program in September 2012, which went on hold until July as the program was revamped to meet the employment needs of PHA, and give residents a decent shot at landing one of those jobs.

Finney, who lives in the Ludlow neighborhood of North Philadelphia, believed that the Pre-Apprenticeship Program would give him the opportunity of a lifetime, a career and not just a job.

“I gained leadership skills,” he said. “Math, I reconnected with math because I never liked math. I really got to understand it once they sat down and went over everything through all the classes.”

Finney feels that the program, which is demanding, helped him develop better work habits, and made him more consistent. He began his new job as an apprentice union laborer in early November. Besides a steady pay check with benefits, he also gets a chance to

observe and learn new skills working alongside carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and painters.

Eventually, Finney may start his own business, but he urges other residents to not miss this opportunity.



*2013 Pre-Apprenticeship Graduate Devon Finney.*

Marlon Williams, who successfully completed the Pre-Apprenticeship Program almost ten years ago, literally left money on the table to come back to the program as an instructor.

Williams, a journeyman in good standing with IBEW Local 98 (electrician’s union), turned down an offer for two years of work. He has come full circle from the day he left a secure, modest paying social service job to the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, and then becoming a successful electrician.

Williams has had the opportunity to work on multiple large jobs, including Citizens Bank Park, the new Main Post Office on Lindbergh Boulevard, Avenue North next to Temple University, the Super Wal-Mart in Willow Grove, and the Fox 29 and CBS 3 television studios.

“I realized that part of my purpose of even being alive is to teach people,”

he said. “It just makes sense to be able to return that which I was taught coming through the program.”

Williams believes that one of the advantages of the new and improved Pre-Apprenticeship Program is that he and other instructors can spend more time on skill training.

“You can actually go through and complete a solid curriculum,” he said. “The probability for retaining information... increases when you’re dealing with it five days of week versus two.”

This is Williams’ second tenure as an instructor. He filled a tutorial position after graduating from the program in June 2003, while waiting for his first apprenticeship assignment at Citizens Bank Park. Since then, Williams has done quite well for himself and is eager to help others do the same.

## Newly Minted Apprentice Succeeds with Hard Work

Malik West is a young man who knows all about struggling. Yet, he’s not afraid of the struggle or the hard work necessary to win.

The 20-year-old Morton Homes resident graduated from Simon Gratz Mastery Charter High School with the intention of going to college. He was working as a cashier and packer at a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise, saving money for higher education when he heard about the revamped Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

He signed up in July, in hopes of becoming a welder, but PHA had no job openings for welders. West was offered a position in the laborer’s track.

“I felt that it was not easy, but it seemed interesting, so I joined it,” he said.

Marlon Williams, the maintenance mechanic instructor, convinced West that this track would be a good choice because it covers several skill areas.

In West, Williams sees a very focused person.

“He’s very determined,” Williams said. “I think he’s going to make it because he takes the initiative. He’s not riddled with excuses. Once he gets it, he’s got it.”

West enjoys working outdoors, something laborers do quite often.



*2013 Pre-Apprenticeship Graduate Malik West.*

“I liked the hard work. You get a workout out of it,” he said.

After completing 13 weeks of training, West was hired by PHA as an apprentice laborer in early November.

He also said the training he received through the Pre-Apprenticeship Program has sharpened his work habits. He meets interesting people on the job, not to mention learning how to use different tools.

“It’s a good program. It’s a great track to go into,” he said. A job with better pay and benefits is not something currently offered by the fast food industry.

# PHAPD Opens New Police Mini Station



Officers Jordan and Peters talk to Resident Council President Christine Boyd and other residents at the new police mini station in the community center building at 10th and Thompson at Harrison Plaza.

Beginning in December, a new form of security is coming to PHA. Harrison Plaza will be the first development in almost 20 years to have a police mini station.

A mini station is a small police station at a development that is staffed by two or more officers, and is part of PHA's new Community Policing Strategy. The goal is to deter crime by being on site and working closely with residents.

"We are making resident safety a top priority. These mini stations, in concert with the larger police force and the new Command Center, helps to keep our residents safe. We cannot have good, decent housing if unsafe elements are present. Simply put, our residents' quality of life is directly related to the safety of our developments," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah.

This year PHA hired 50 additional officers and, once PHA residents are selected and trained, ten more officers will be added to the force. In addition, the new Command Center keeps track of hundreds of surveillance cameras at 16 selected developments, 24 hours a day. The cameras not only help prevent crime but the recorded activity from these cameras is used to prosecute offenders.

Harrison Plaza Resident Council President Christine Boyd says her fellow residents think this mini station idea is great. "We need the PHA police officers on site because we have trouble with some of the young folks doing

what they want to do. With the mini station, this place will be safer for our children and families."

Harrison Plaza was chosen because of the high crime rate in the area and because it is close to other PHA developments including Spring Garden

Apartments, Norris Apartments, Richard Allen, Cambridge and the Fairhill Apartments. Decades ago, almost every development had a mini station but as the funding to support this project dried up, so did the number of mini stations.

The Harrison Plaza mini station will be located in the rear of the community center at 10th and Thompson Streets.

PHA Police Chief James Mitchell says to help cultivate relations with the resident community, the staff will remain the same. "These community relations officers, Officer Nanette Jordan and Officer Joseph Peters, will have the primary responsibility to develop a tight relationship with the residents."

The station will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. initially, but will expand to 24 hours a day.

Joyce Hester has been a resident

of Harrison Plaza for 14 years. Safety is her biggest concern. "I love it. I'm really happy. It's great to know someone is patrolling the area so you won't be scared to go somewhere and know your children are safe on their way to school," she said.

The PHA police are trying to establish two more mini stations at Norman Blumberg and Raymond Rosen as soon as possible. The number of available officers and funding will determine how many stations will eventually open.



Community Relations Officers Jordan and Peters are getting to know the neighbors at Harrison Plaza.



The new Command Center monitors hundreds of cameras that are operating on site at PHA developments.

# New Customer Response Center System Now Active

A new Customer Response Center (CRC) phone system is here and will enhance the relationship between residents and PHA. The system operates 24 hours a day and acts as an automated attendant. The system manages general questions regarding public housing, homeownership and some financial concerns without a Customer Response Technician.

If, for example, a resident wants to check on the status of their utility allowance or the status of an application, all that's needed is a six digit client ID number or a 10 digit vendor ID number. If you need additional assistance, a customer response technician is also available 24 hours a day.

CRC Supervisor, Lt. Angela R. Bradley, says this is a great system, "If a

client wants to know basic information about recertification or information in their file, they can do it here. No longer are they restricted to business hours to get many of their questions answered."

The new center also coordinates the response to emergencies on and around PHA properties. If the emergency is regarding a maintenance issue, an emergency service order will be generated and the appropriate PHA staff person will be notified immediately. All emergencies will be addressed within 24 hours.

CRC technicians will continue to initiate work orders for non-emergency maintenance requests. Customers can reach the Customer Response Center 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 215-684-8920.

If you have a police, fire or medical emergency call 215-684-1911 or 911.



**INTERESTED  
IN  
HOMEOWNERSHIP?**

The Scattered Sites Homeownership Program (Section 5H) is coming to a close.

The program will conclude on March 1, 2014.

**For more information, please contact  
the PHA Homeownership Division  
215-684-4112**



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## Sustainability Corner



Philadelphia Housing Authority

Last year, PHA's Board adopted a sustainability policy and committed to becoming more environmentally conscious. This summer, HUD awarded PHA with a Green Organizational Accreditation. To earn this honor, PHA submitted a Green Action Plan in which all departments made a commitment to adopt more environmentally friendly operational procedures.

PHA is also taking part in the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Challenge. The agency pledged to reduce its energy intensity by 20 percent over 10 years. As part of the Challenge launch, PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah participated in a roundtable at the White House in December.

Over the next 12 months, residents will begin to enjoy the benefits of

PHA's sustainability efforts.

### Green Action Plan Initiatives

- PHA will improve indoor air quality by using fewer chemical cleaning agents and pesticides. The agency also plans to reduce energy usage by installing Energy Star appliances and energy efficient heating, cooling and lighting whenever possible. PHA will provide resident training on how to use new energy-saving thermostats and on pest prevention and green housekeeping. Residents will also learn how to cut energy bills and get rewards for energy conservation.

- PHA will also begin its new Green Operations & Maintenance Plan which will reduce PHA's greenhouse gas emissions, storm water runoff and water usage. PHA will provide resident

training on household recycling and on the City's Recycling Rewards program and start recycling programs in its offices and administrative properties. PHA will reduce its energy and water usage in all of its operations.

- News and helpful hints about sustainability will be available for residents through a new PHA Sustainability webpage, this Sustainability Corner of the PHA Experience and a new Water Conservation Handbook. PHA will begin tracking energy and water consumption in order to see where savings are possible.

PHA residents will be also asked to begin reducing energy and water usage, keep current on utility bills, and participate in recycling and greening programs.

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