



Building Better Communities -
Neighborhood by Neighborhood

The Advocate

NJ Department of Community Affairs ■ Division of Housing and Community Resources

OHA's Annual Grantee Meeting Held May 9

by Janis Ginsburg

The Office of Housing Advocacy's (OHA) annual grantee meeting was hosted this year by Summit Bank at its training facility in Jamesburg. Tracy Tener, Vice President of Summit Bank, welcomed our grantees and spoke about Summit's commitment to community development as well as new and existing products that benefit our grantees and other non-profit developers of affordable housing. Annual meetings offer grantees an opportunity to network, share their knowledge and, hopefully, form collaborations.

Collaboration is the Division's theme for the millennium, and Keith Jones, Director of the Division of Housing and Community Resources spoke about the Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) collaborations with other state agencies and private sector institutions. He encouraged OHA grantees to speak to program supervisors at DCA, public and private sector organizations, and each other about resourceful programs or services they would like to create.

Mr. Jones accurately described OHA as the Division's incubator because our unit has given birth and nurtured several meaningful programs. Not only are our programs innovative and thriving, they are also great examples of successful collaborations. For example, the Faith-Based Community Development Initiative was created in collaboration with The Chase Manhattan Bank, Public Service Gas & Electric, the Center for Non-Profits, and DCA in 1998. Approximately \$10 million in grants have been awarded to communities of faith to provide services to people in need in their communities. Our Predevelopment Loan Program is a collaboration of ten funders and DCA. Since its creation four years ago, we have made 56 interest-free loans totaling \$4.2 million and

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Family Self-Sufficiency Program Presents Annual Report

by Walter Planer

The New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program recently presented its annual report to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The winner of a HUD Best Practices Award in 1999, the FSS Program has grown to include a total of 1,561 families currently participating under FSS Contracts of Participation. This represents an increase of 190 program participants during the year 1999.

The FSS Program continues to be marketed at certification and recertification to all participants of the tenant-based Section 8 Housing Assistance Program. There have also been increased efforts to reach out to participants who are in the Work First New Jersey Program (the State's welfare-to-work initiative) and to clients of the Regional Opportunities Counseling Program. Telephone interviews and direct mailings are used to reach out to every family with an interest in the FSS program and to provide an opportunity for them to enjoy the benefits of being on Family Self-Sufficiency.

One of the benefits is the FSS Escrow/Savings Account. As a participating family's earned income increases, an interest-bearing FSS Escrow/Savings Account is established in the family's name and maintained by the Housing Assistance Program's fiscal unit. Upon successful completion of the family's FSS Contract of Participation, the FSS Escrow/Savings Account funds earned by the family are released to them.

Section 8 Field Representatives continue to perform the primary activities necessary to administer and maintain housing assistance payments to FSS participants. These activities include tenant counseling, dwelling unit inspections, and lease and contract preparation as required. Each county has designated at least one Field

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Job Fair Held for First Union/DCA Housing Scholars

by Janis Ginsburg

Twenty-six New Jersey college students were selected to participate in the 2000 First Union/Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Housing Scholars Program. Housing Scholars have been helping nonprofits to develop, implement, or complete projects or programs that ultimately benefit



New Jersey communities. Exceptional students majoring in architecture, civil engineering, urban planning, and public policy and administration were recruited for the program by faculty and academic advisors from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University (Camden,

Newark, and New Brunswick campuses), Essex County College, Mercer County College, and Gloucester County College. More than 30 non-profit organizations engaged in developing affordable housing or community and economic development submitted requests for proposals in December 1999, hoping to be awarded a Housing Scholar.

At the April 7 job fair, nonprofits carrying blueprints, brochures, maps, and story boards interviewed students and had the opportunity to "show and tell" them about the work of their agency. Following the interviews students were asked to select three possible agencies for whom they would

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More About First Union/DCA Housing Scholars



Cecil Broadnax, Executive Director of NJIT's Career Development Services presents award to Keith A. Jones, Janis Ginsburg, and Meyer Pincelli.

by Janis Ginsburg

Coordinating a job fair, a luncheon, and a five-day training program for 26 New Jersey college students could at first glance appear to be daunting. However, when you are fortunate enough to have the support of an institution like the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), wonderful things can happen - and they did. This year's First Union/Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Housing Scholars Kickoff Luncheon hosted by NJIT was superb.

The Housing Scholars, representatives from the nonprofit organizations with whom they will be working this summer, First Union officials, and DCA representatives attended. The keynote speaker was Thomas H. O'Brien, Regional President for New York and Connecticut at First Union Bank. Mr. O'Brien's message was clear: life is much richer when we contribute to the shaping of the communities in which we live. As future architects, civil engineers, and urban planners, First Union/DCA Housing Scholars are in a position to do just that.

Sharing the podium with Mr. O'Brien was Keith A. Jones, Director of DCA's Division of Housing and Community Resources. Mr. Jones was effusive in his praise of the level of

commitment and collaboration by First Union and NJIT. NJIT presented DCA with a plaque honoring its dedication to NJ college students and the nonprofit community.

Without a doubt, the most demanding and rewarding part of planning the 2000 Housing Scholars Program was designing a training course to prepare students for the work ahead. The Program was fortunate to engage the services of urban designer Anton (Tony) Nelessen of Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Professor Nelessen, assisted by Alle Ries, Director of the Newark Community Development Network; George Paschalis, Director of the Newark Center for Families and Communities; and Vivian Lanzot, Assistant Director of Community and Public Service at NJIT, worked with DCA to design a comprehensive five-day

training in Newark, NJ. Scholars were introduced to affordable housing issues and neighborhood redevelopment by focusing on the design of a livable and sustainable neighborhood plan for a 21-block area of Newark's West Side Park community.

Equipped with base maps, the Scholars walked the area and assessed the condition of every structure, lot, and street and spoke to the residents in the community. Working in teams of four or five, they used the data gathered to determine how best to redevelop the area. In addition to attending classes on urban design taught by Professor Nelessen, they attended a workshop on social entrepreneurship taught by Dr. Garry Keel of NJIT. Newark's city historian, Charles Cummings, conducted a slide presentation and led the Scholars on a guided tour of Newark's many diverse neighborhoods. Students even worked a half-day at the Habitat for Humanity-Newark, helping to build homes for families in the Central Ward.

Using the knowledge gained in lectures and in the field, students designed site maps, prepared a narrative of their plan and presented it to a panel of experts and members of the community. The panel critiqued the plans and several teams incorporated the suggestions into their final plan to be presented on the last day of training.

While the training focused on urban neighborhood design and planning, the Scholars also learned the value of teamwork and collaboration. Architects and civil engineering students were skilled in assessing the structural integrity of existing buildings. Public administration and urban planning students were proficient in urban design theories. Pooling their knowledge, and working as a cohesive unit, teams worked through the night revising maps and neighborhood plans.

On their last day of training the Housing Scholars presented their final maps and redevelopment strategies to seven experts representing nonprofit organizations, state officials, and funders. The judges were impressed by the quality and quantity of the Scholars' work and commended the students for their creativity and sensitivity in responding to community needs.

OHA staff looks forward to visiting the students at their job sites this summer and witnessing first hand how they have applied the lessons learned in training to the "real world" of nonprofit affordable housing development.

Janis Ginsburg is a program manager in the Department's Division of Housing and Community Resources' Office of Housing Advocacy.

The Advocate

Summer 2000

The Advocate is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Division of Housing and Community Resources for organizations interested in providing low- and moderate-income housing and community services in New Jersey. For further information, call Janis Ginsburg at (609) 292-9470.

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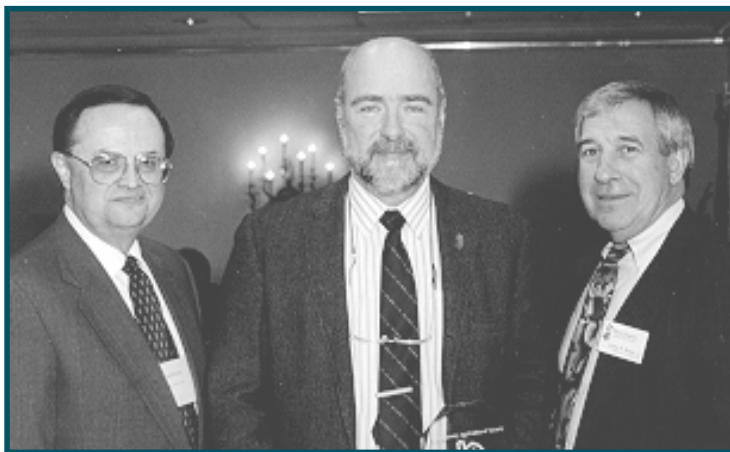
Above - Housing Scholars putting the finishing touches on a Habitat for Humanity house.

Right - Preparing to work at Habitat



DCA Accepts Award from NJ Agricultural Society

Jacques Lebel, Assistant Division Director the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Housing and Community Resources, recently accepted the New Jersey Agricultural Society's "President's Award" on behalf of Commissioner Kenny and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Utilizing several different



From left to right: New Jersey Agricultural Society President, Earl Ervey; Assistant Director of DCA's Division of Housing and Community Resources, Jacques Lebel; and NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Arthur Brown.

funding streams, DCA has assisted a number of food distribution and food security programs serving New Jersey's low-income communities. Of particular relevance to the NJ Agricultural Society has been DCA's role over the past several years as the largest single financial supporter of its Farmers Against Hunger pro-

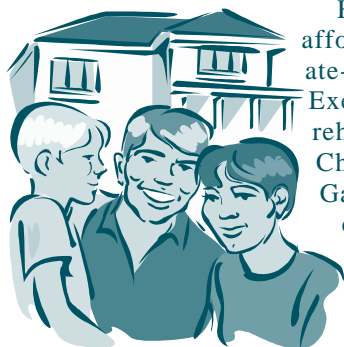
gram. The program has provided over a million pounds of fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables for distribution to those in need throughout New Jersey.

Non-Profit Corner

Families Move into HOMECorp's Miller Cottages

During this past year, new tenants have been settling into the HOMECorp Miller Cottages complex in the Southend neighborhood in Montclair. HOMECorp purchased and rehabilitated this six-unit duplex apartment with financing through the Division's Neighborhood Preservation Balanced Housing and Lead Abatement Programs and the Essex County HOME Program.

Carol Gumedé-Gayle, her husband Warren, and their two children recently moved into this apartment complex for low- and moderate-income households. They were willing to wait two years in a one-bedroom apartment in Montclair to secure a HOMECorp residence in Miller Cottages. "HOMECorp made a difference because we couldn't find any place with the bedrooms for the children in the entire period," she said. "The children are very happy because they have their own rooms. They like everything, to be honest. Everything was ready when we moved in." She and her husband agree that there is no better place for a family that values education. She commented, "Great schools are here in Montclair" and added, "I didn't see anywhere else we'd want to live, so we waited the two years."



HOMECorp was founded in 1988 to provide safe, affordable housing in Montclair for low- and moderate-income families. Beverly Riddick, HOMECorp's Executive Director since 1996, is proud of the 30 rehabilitated homes now occupied, as well as the Children's Garden on Miller Street. The Children's Garden, adjacent to HOMECorp's Community Garden, will be blooming after a two-year hiatus because volunteers have come forth to help work with the children. To learn more about HOMECorp, call (973)744-4141.

Prudential Foundation Helps Fund Launch Urban Child Care Initiative

Major funding from the Prudential Foundation combined with support from PSE&G will assist the New Jersey Community Loan Fund in implementing a new program, the Urban Child Care Initiative, in targeted areas of Essex County. The program was conceived in response to the 1997 New Jersey Supreme Court decision in *Abbott v. Burke*, which mandates that 30 New Jersey "urban aid" public school districts (serving New Jersey's lowest income families) must provide opportunities for early education, often referred to as Pre-K.

Through an application process, the Fund proposes to meet the State's challenge by offering assistance to a group of up to 30 nonprofit and for profit child care centers concentrated in Newark, Irvington, Orange and East Orange. The Child Care Collaboration—led by the Fund and including the Child Care Connection, Programs for Parents and the Association for Children of New Jersey—will offer the twelve-month Urban Child Care Initiative program to the selected centers.

Program objectives are to strengthen business operations, improve ability to offer high quality early care and education, and provide valuable management resources and technical assistance that will put the centers in position to successfully fulfill important roles in Pre-K education for four- and three-year olds.

Additionally, the Initiative will guide these centers toward special financing, and addressing welfare-to-work issues such as coordinating child care with work schedules and transportation availability. The Initiative will complement, but not duplicate, other efforts surrounding the child care/Pre-K issue. Selected centers will be announced in March 2000.

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Market-Rate Rentals Coming to Paterson, Bayonne

Whitman Program Designed to Attract Middle-Income Residents to Cities

Governor Whitman announced that a vacant textile mill in Paterson will be converted into apartments under a new state program that provides funding to help developers reintroduce middle-income households to urban neighborhoods.

A \$1.5 million, low-interest loan represents the first funding committed under a new Whitman administration program called Downtown Living. The conversion of the former textile mill into rental units also constitutes the largest start of new, market-rate housing for Paterson in more than two decades.

Attracting all income groups to cities is the surest urban revitalization strategy, Gov. Whitman said. The Downtown Living program will help cities attract and retain middle-income households, and help people rediscover the excitement and convenience of city life.

The developers intend to work in phases to convert the circa-1900, red brick building into a complex of apartments, stores and offices that will be called Paterson Commons. The project's first phase will create 39 apartments with rents ranging from \$650 for a one-bedroom unit to \$950 for a three-bedroom unit. There will also be 10,000 square feet of retail and office space. Subsequent phases call for an additional 150 rental units and 50,000 square feet of retail and office space. The Downtown Living Program will transform this remnant of Paterson's industrial past into a distinctive residence for its growing numbers of upwardly mobile families, said DCA Commissioner Jane M. Kenny, whose department administers the program. The City of Paterson contributed \$660,000 to the financing of Paterson Commons. Mayor Martin A. Barnes said the project demonstrates how far Paterson has come. This project is particularly welcome in the city, Mayor Barnes said. It illustrates our renewal and our faith in the future.

Alpert & Alpert of Fort Lee, the project developer, estimated total project costs of this first phase at \$3.66 million. Vice President Joseph Alpert said the funding from Gov. Whitman's Downtown Living Program was critical to his securing additional funds from the private sector. The funding from Downtown Living will make it possible to bring back this historic piece of old Paterson, said Joseph Alpert, Vice President of Alpert & Alpert. It was the state's involvement in the project that helped convince the private sector this was a sound investment.

The city of Bayonne was also awarded a \$1 million, low-interest loan to help build a new apartment complex on the site of a former building supply business in Bayonne. The project, called Peninsula Court, will be located on West 25th Street between Avenue C and Broadway. It will feature 51 units with rents ranging from \$835 to \$1,100 per month. The developer of the project is The Alessi Organization of Bayonne.

Capital Area Housing Resource Center, Inc. Opens Its Doors

by Barbara Anne Gardenhire-Mills, Executive Director

After almost three years of planning and preparation, the brand new Capital Area Housing Resource Center, Inc. (CAHRC) celebrated its ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening reception on Monday, March 27, at Renaissance Place Atrium, 225 East State Street in Trenton.

Event speakers included Anthony Cancro, Deputy Commissioner, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs; Douglas H. Palmer, Mayor, City of Trenton; Susanne Svizeny, Regional President of Southern New Jersey for First Union National Bank; Jerry Keelen, Director of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency Single Family Division; Carlos Peraza, Program Director, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) New Jersey Multi-City Program; Frances Blanco, Executive Director, Mercer County Hispanic Association (MECHA); Phillip Woolfolk, Community Development Manager for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, Sovereign Bank; and Thomas Hand, Community Development Officer for Summit Bank. Peter Kasabach, Director of Housing, Isles, Inc. and president of the CAHRC Board of Trustees was the master of ceremonies.

The CAHRC is a membership organization that coordinates with nonprofit, for-profit and government members to provide housing information, education, and referral services to existing and future residents of the City of Trenton and Mercer County. Though the CAHRC had been conducting a test opening since January, this event marked the official opening of CAHRC to the community for programs and services.

The Center has six basic functions: to be a clearinghouse of housing information; to screen, evaluate, and refer customers to appropriate member services; to showcase neighborhoods and the benefits of living in the City of Trenton and Mercer County; to collect market data about people assisted and types of requests received; to coordinate and monitor educational services and training programs; and to provide services that fill in gaps not being presently met through member organizations.

Some of the services offered directly by the CAHRC include group workshops and seminars on how to buy a home, operating and maintaining a home, and other related housing topics. CAHRC also has lists of member organizations and information about their services available as well as computer resources that can be used by clients for housing information searches on the Internet. Additionally, a wide variety of other housing and related services are available through member organizations on a referral basis.

The CAHRC has 25 member organizations that include nonprofit housing and social services providers, government agencies and for-profit businesses, and many more organizations and businesses have expressed an interest in membership. The information and referral services provided by the Center are often cited by new affiliates as the main reason they decided to get involved.

We are really excited about the services that CAHRC provides to help clients navigate the complex housing and social service system that exists in Mercer County, stated Leslie A. Dona, Executive Director of United Progress, Inc. We got involved because there is a need for coordination among the various agencies and for a centralized location where people can go to get information on what is available, added Paul Pintella, Jr., President of the Urban League of Metropolitan Trenton.

Incorporated in June 1999, the development of the CAHRC actually began in May 1997 and has evolved to where it is today through the support and participation of the NJ DCA as well as the City of Trenton and several area nonprofit organizations and lenders. As noted by Barbara Anne Gardenhire-Mills, Executive Director the CAHRC, Many people have contributed to making the CAHRC happen and I know that, as we continue to move forward, the Center will play an important role in helping residents of Mercer County area with their housing needs.

For more information about the CAHRC please call 609-396-8400, E-mail us at CAHRC@aol.com, or check out our website at <http://community.nj.com/cc/cahrc>.



Front Row: Assisting Mayor Douglas H. Palmer with the ribbon cutting is CAHRC's Executive Director, Barbara Anne Gardenhire-Mills, and DCA's Deputy Commissioner, Anthony Cancro.



Head Start children break ground for future affordable rental housing.

Union City's Renaissance

by Donna Scarano

The abandoned and decaying building at 26th Street and Central Avenue was a blight on Union City's Dardanelles neighborhood and a threat to the property values of the residents. That changed on October 28, 1999 when bulldozers readied to begin to demolish the old structure to make way for a new 37-unit, four-story building for affordable rental housing. That day, Michael Leggiere, Chairperson of North Hudson Community Action Affordable Housing Corporation (NHCAAHC) welcomed hundreds of local residents, dignitaries, and members of

the press to the ground breaking ceremony. Children in hard hats from the Head Start Program at North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) broke ground with their kid-size shovels.

Co-developer Ron Brown of EMET Realty explained that the project includes a mix of studio and one, two, and three-bedroom units equipped with security features, frost-free refrigerators, laundry room, on-site parking, and community meeting facilities. This project also incorporates provisions of PSE&G's Energy Efficient Home 5-Star Program. This \$6 million project is an innovative collaboration of public and

private funding sources. HMFA's Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) are being purchased through a social investment initiative between Chase Manhattan Bank and Hudson County's Affordable Housing Trust Funds. Additional funding will come from the Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program, and New Jersey's new Demolition Loan Program.

Officials from Hudson County and Union City echoed Leggiere's vision that Union City's "Renaissance" had finally arrived. The Renaissance building will be NHCAAHC's second major effort to develop quality housing for Hudson County's low- and moderate-

income residents. In 1994 they co-developed the \$9 million Park Pointe 8-story, 60-unit rental development in West New York with the Ingerman Group. Leggiere commented that: "There is a significant unmet demand for quality, affordable rental units, and to the extent that our agency touches the lives of so many working poor, our Board wholeheartedly supports our commitment to develop additional projects with community partners throughout Hudson County."

Donna Scarano is President of D. Scarano & Associates in Livingston, NJ.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program...continued

Representative to act as the FSS Coordinator and has been provided the necessary training for this function.

In addition to the housing component, the FSS Program Coordinators and the Section 8 Field Representatives are responsible for FSS Program outreach, assessment of each client, case planning, development of the Individual Training and Services Plan, linkage to available services, monitoring of the providers of these services and, finally, tracking the family's progress as they work towards their goal of self-sufficiency.

Some of the highlights of the past year in the FSS Program were:

- § Fifty-four families successfully completed the FSS Contract for Participation.
- § Two hundred and forty-four additional families established FSS Escrow/Savings accounts, bringing to 653 the grand total of families with accounts.
- § The total being held in the FSS Escrow/Savings accounts increased by \$1,185,729 to a total account balance of \$2,382,443.
- § Approved disbursements of the FSS Escrow/Savings Accounts increased by 193% over last year. Fifty-seven fami-

lies withdrew a total for \$376,657 in 1999.

- § Twenty-six families completed their FSS Contracts of Participation, withdrew from the Section 8 Housing Assistance Program, and became first-time home buyers in 1999 with the help of their FSS Escrow/Savings Accounts. This raised the total for first-time home buyers to a total of 38 families over the history of the program.

Walter Planer is Supervisor of the Landlord Liaison Office within the Division's Housing Assistance Element.

Job Fair . . . continued

like to work; agencies selected three students they would like to hire. Based on their selections, students and agencies were matched.

The real work begins for the First Union/DCA Housing Scholars on June 12 and will last for 10 weeks. Congratulations to all program participants and best wishes for a productive summer.

Janis Ginsburg is a program manager in the Department's Division of Housing and Community Resources' Office of Housing Advocacy.

OHA's Annual Grantee Meeting . . . continued

created 3,000 units of affordable housing. Since partnering with First Union Bank in 1996, DCA's Housing Scholars Program has grown from 10 to 26 students and continues to staff nonprofit organizations each summer with New Jersey's brightest college students.

Roy Ziegler, Assistant Director of the Division's Housing Assistance Element, and Jerome Keelen, Director of N.J. Housing Mortgage Finance Agency's (HMFA) Single Family Division joined Meyer Pincelli, OHA's administrator, and Keith Jones on the dais as presenters and panelists. Mr. Ziegler spoke of the new initiatives created by his element: the Section 8 Resident Advisory Board and the Family Self Sufficiency program that received HUD's Best Practice Award. Jerome Keelen gave an overview of many HMFA programs including UHGRP, Downtown Living, and HMFA's many low interest rate mortgages available to nonprofit organizations and individuals.

In closing, Mr. Pincelli encouraged OHA grantees to bring their ideas to the OHA staff, develop collaborations, and most of all, continue to build affordable housing.

Janis Ginsburg is a program manager in the Department's Division of Housing and Community Resources' Office of Housing Advocacy.

Recreation Commission for Individuals with Disabilities - and the

**Winners
are...**

The New Jersey Commission on Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities and the State Office of Recreation sponsored the Annual Governor's Conference on Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities in Princeton on May 1. Commissioner Jane M. Kenny and Keith A. Jones represented the Department of Community Affairs and presented awards to individuals and agencies for their outstanding performance in five categories.

Assemblywoman Rose Heck, 38th District, was awarded the Evelyn Arnow Dolan Citizens Award for her outstanding job in promoting the growth and development of recreation services for individuals with disabilities. She gave tirelessly of her time in aiding a group of parents seeking recreational opportunities for their children with autism, helping the group develop a plan and funding sources, and locating an agency, the ARC of Bergen and Passaic Counties, who assisted with the development of the program.

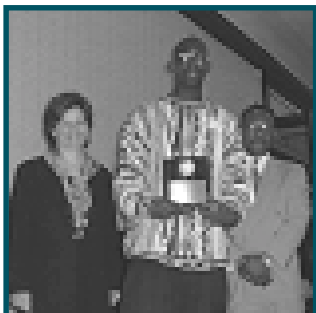
The Handicapped High Riders Club, Inc. of Allentown received the Distinguished Agency Award for its horseback riding program. Riders enjoy riding lessons, hands-on grooming, classroom instruction, and a mainstream summer camp in a supportive environment.

The Alvin Slotsky Exemplary Recreation Lifestyle Award went to Steven Howard, an 18 year old high school senior from Jersey City. Before the age of two, Steven's lower leg and foot were amputated and replaced with a prosthetic device. A fan of basketball, Steven played since he was 10. In high school he became part of his school's fledgling basketball team. Al never tried out before for a team. "I thought I was now good enough to play, so I figured I would try," says Steven.

The Hand In Hand Club, sponsored by the Northern Valley Regional High School in Demarest, received the Ted Kaplan Exemplary Recreation Group Award for their peer interaction with teenagers with disabilities who live in the district but are schooled outside the District. The program has been especially meaningful to the Special Education students by imparting the feeling that they belong and are part of the community.

The Mt. Hope Access Ramp Project received an award for Innovative Accessible Facility. The ramp provides access to the beach and lakefront and allows citizens with disabilities to participate in community events held at the facility. Because of the positive impact of the project, other private lake communities may soon be implementing similar facilities.

KUDOS to the winners! They are an inspiration to all of us.



*Steven Howard
accepts award
from Commis-
sioner Jane M.
Kenny and Keith
A. Jones.*

The 6th Annual Governor's Conference on Housing and Community Development

October 18-19, 2000 s Atlantic City Convention Center

The 2000 Housing and Community Development Conference is being sponsored by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the Council on Affordable Housing, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, the Office of State Planning, and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The theme for this year's conference is: "New Jersey, a great place to live, work, and raise a family."

The conference committee is currently in the process of developing workshops for the conference. As part of this process, individuals who attended last year's conference were asked to identify pressing issues affecting their organizations. This year the workshops will focus on the areas of neighborhood revitalization, organizational and financial management for nonprofits, community and social services, comprehensive community development, and financial and technical state housing resources. The goal of the conference is to attract over 600 industry professionals by offering more than 30 different break-out sessions.

To obtain additional information, please contact the following individuals:

Trade show booths: Maryann Mattonelli at (609) 278-7498; Registration: Mary Miller at (609) 278-7403; Hotel reservations: Sheraton Hotel (609) 344-3535.



LISC Joins National AmeriCorps Program

September 2000 marks the conclusion of the Local Initiative Support Corporation's (LISC) participation in the AmeriCorps Education Award Program (EAP). The EAP is a partnership program established between LISC and the Corporation for National Service (CNS). The program was founded to expand opportunities for individuals attending undergraduate or graduate school, who serve their communities as AmeriCorps Members and earn educational benefits. EAP has the flexibility to provide service opportunities in neighborhood revitalization to students and others who are not able to serve full-time or who may only be available during the summer or one semester.

During 1999-2000, six students were recruited by four community development corporations (CDC) to participate in the EAP. The students participated in a wide array of activities at their respective organizations. These activities included projects that provided housing opportunities for low-income people, improved the neighborhood environment, and mobilized residents. In addition to their individual projects, students are collectively involved in planning a neighborhood service project and have al-

ready recruited neighborhood residents and a local business to work along with them.

The Newark LISC program is excited about its transition into the National AmeriCorps program. Unlike the EAP, the AmeriCorps programs allows non-college bound individuals to take part in the program. Interested members must be at least 17 years old, with a high school degree or a GED. As AmeriCorps members, participants are committed to one-year, full-time employment with community-based organizations. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps participants will receive a living stipend, health and child care coverage, and training. It is anticipated that CDC's will be able to recruit individuals, from their own or adjacent communities, who are aware of the current conditions that plague the neighborhood. The program will be structured in a manner that is beneficial to both the AmeriCorps member and the CDC. LISC anticipates that if the AmeriCorps/CDC relationship proves fruitful and funding exists for new staff people, the CDC's may retain their AmeriCorps member as permanent employees.

For more information on the Newark LISC AmeriCorps program, please contact the office at (973) 624-6676.



Consultant's Corner

Collaboration...Why Now??...Why Not???

by Donna Scarano

In the dawning of the new millennium, we know there is not enough affordable housing and the ever widening gap between the rich and poor means more of it will be needed in the near future.

What else do we know about New Jersey's affordable housing industry?

- m Every year there's a mad dash to secure whatever limited development subsidies exist.
- m There now exists a group of for-profit developers who repeatedly receive awards.
- m In certain areas, deteriorated buildings that were once the fodder of community nonprofits, are now being purchased at a premium for luxury housing.
- m Development timelines for stand-alone nonprofits typically exceed those of for-profit developers.

This scenario appears to suggest that the affordable housing industry, like most other businesses, is subject to the economic laws of supply and demand. If we are committed to providing an adequate supply of affordable quality housing, then something has to shift in the way developers use existing resources.

To that end, the housing development process has changed in certain regards. We have evolved from projects put forth by single developing entities to those put forth by for-profit developers with a nonprofit social service component. In the latter case, the nonprofit typically had little development responsibility, nor did it materially

participate in the developer's fee. However, as joint ventures emerge, the roles and responsibilities of each partner are being more clearly defined.

Many of the advances made in co-developing projects have come about by virtue of necessity, i.e., government funding requisites. If development continues in this vein, affordable housing will truly become the province of very few instead of the right of local communities to determine the look and composition of their own neighborhoods.

What can interested parties do now to improve the process? The answer lies in collaboration. We must focus the vision for the millennium's new affordable housing paradigm on the value added by the members of the development team. The determining factors will be driven by the following:

- m Accelerating the rate at which affordable units are put into service.
- m Effectively utilizing the strengths of participating entities.
- m Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of development team members.
- m Efficiently gaining access to predevelopment and subsidy dollars.
- m Expanding the quality and availability of social services and new jobs created by the proposed project.
- m Equitably sharing in the wealth of the developer's fee by the nonprofit.

Collaboration initiatives must be incorporated at the beginning and continue throughout the development process, not just when the partners are measuring their wants against their capabilities.

What can collaboration in this millennium look like? North Hudson Community Action Corporation (NHCAC) President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Leggiro offers the following: "True collaboration is not easy to achieve. Our project went through several iterations. However, when a team of competent and capable development professionals collaborate, mutual benefit accrues to everyone involved in the process." That is exactly what happened with NHCAC's family rental project in Union City. Every step of NHCAC's effort was a collaborative effort and the community as well as the partners will reap the rewards.

- m The National Puerto Rican Coalition, a HUD technical assistance intermediary, was approached to provide essential core funding to retain the services of a consultant to develop a strategic housing plan.
- m NHCAC obtained input from the mayors of the seven municipalities in which NHCAC worked, regarding the types of housing they envisioned for their communities. Each municipality was made aware that NHCAC wanted to be included in any relevant housing initiative.
- m NHCAC contacted all the financial institutions they did business with or that financed affordable housing in NHCAC's franchise. As a result, NHCAC generated a small but essential amount of funding to develop its housing initiative without having to deplete its operating cash flow. Ultimately, one of those funders also became the project financier.
- m The for-profit partner will earn a developer's fee upon completion of the new building.
- m The new project will help stabilize the neighborhood and provide families with safe, affordable housing.

Without collaboration, these 37 units would not have been constructed. When this project is put into service in 2001, the parties will have the ability to move onto other projects because they chose to collaborate on this project.

Donna Scarano is President of D. Scarano & Associates, Inc., a statewide community development and management resource consultancy in Livingston, N.J. She can be reached at (973)597-0699.

Pro Bono Partnership Expands Services into Northern New Jersey

The Pro Bono Partnership, a resource center that coordinates the efforts of lawyers wishing to provide volunteer legal services to nonprofit community-based organizations, has completed plans to expand its service area into Northern New Jersey.

Founded in 1997 and based in White Plains, NY, the organization now serves more than 200 clients, counseling them on more than 400 separate legal issues. "As we expand into New Jersey, where there are 17,000 nonprofits, that number is really going to jump," says Jennifer Chandler Hauge, an attorney who works for the New Jersey section of Pro Bono, soon to be based in Newark.

The organization also offers workshops and training on a variety of topics affecting nonprofit organizations and volunteer attorneys. Topics include: Employment

Law, Corporate Law and Governance, Insurance, Liability and Volunteer Issues, and Nonprofit Law.

For additional information check out the Pro Bono Partnership web site at <http://www.probonopartnership.org/> or call Jennifer Chandler Hauge at (973) 984-1612.

Submitted by Rod Groff, Office of Research and Policy Development



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To strengthen and revitalize communities by assisting in the delivery of affordable housing, providing supportive services, and promoting community and economic development.