

Greetings from Governor McGreevey and Commissioner Levin

Welcome to the summer edition of *The Advocate*, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' (DCA) Division of Housing and Community Resources' quarterly newsletter. This publication will inform you about how the Division encourages and promotes economic and community development throughout the state.

Through DCA, the Division works with nonprofit organizations, municipalities, private developers and the Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) to strengthen and revitalize communities with affordable housing efforts, supportive services and by rebuilding neighborhoods.

In this issue, you will read about the partnerships we are forging and the housing complexes we have opened. You also will learn about the steps we are taking to encourage youth participation in nonprofit organizations that give back to the community through our Housing Scholars Program. This program is two fold. It assists nonprofit organizations with much needed help, and as you will read, provides valuable experience and enriches the lives of the students involved.

Lastly, we want to remind you about Governor McGreevey's Conference on Housing and Community Development. The conference, which will be held on Sept. 23 & 24 at the Atlantic City Convention Center, is the single largest gathering of housing development and property management professionals in the State of New Jersey. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to discuss important issues with industry leaders and learn about useful products and services.

We hope you find this newsletter a valuable resource that will keep you informed on what we're up to in your community and throughout the state. We hope *The Advocate* helps you learn about and become more involved in our state's community development programs.

With all good wishes,



James E. McGreevey
James E. McGreevey
Governor



Susan Bass Levin
Susan Bass Levin
Commissioner



Providing homes for New Jersey's families is a priority to Governor McGreevey and this administration. That is why the Governor will host the 2003 Conference on Housing and Community Development in Atlantic City. See 'Save the Date' on the back cover of The Advocate.

Fair Housing Is Everyone's Right

A recent study released by United States' Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) found many people aren't aware of fair housing laws. In an effort to educate individuals about their rights, DCA started a new statewide outreach campaign entitled "Fair Housing Builds Better Communities."

The campaign's primary goal is to educate and inform potential victims of discrimination about their housing rights and responsibilities under the federal Fair Housing Act. Under this Act, discrimination is prohibited in rental, sales, lending and homeowner's insurance decisions because of a person's race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status and / or disability. Based on discrimination, the federal Fair Housing Act prohibits:

- Refusing to rent or sell housing
- Publishing advertisements indicating preferences or limitations
- Showing apartments or homes only in certain neighborhoods
- Refusing to provide information regarding mortgage loans, denying mortgage loans or imposing different terms or conditions on mortgage loans
- Denying property insurance
- Refusing to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities
- Failing to design and construct housing in an accessible manner

If you have been trying to buy or rent a home or apartment and you think your rights have been violated, HUD is ready to help. If you would like to receive more information about your rights and responsibilities or to file a complaint, please call our toll-free Fair Housing hotline at (800) 390-4845.

The 2004 Fair Housing Calendar will soon be available. For more information or to request a copy, call 1-800-390-4845.



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DCA & DHS Commissioners Announce \$3 Million Supportive Housing Funds for Persons with Disabilities

DCA Commissioner Susan Bass Levin announced \$3 million to assist in the development of community-based, affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities. Commissioner Levin made the announcement while speaking to members of the Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey (SHA) and was joined by Department of Human Services' (DHS) Commissioner Gwendolyn Harris and HMFA Executive Director Sean Closkey.

"One goal of DCA is to expand upon housing opportunities already in place for people with disabilities," Levin said. "By creating more innovative and flexible options for supportive housing developers, we are able to offer people with disabilities an enhanced, more independent quality of life."

The allocation allows HMFA, in collaboration with DHS's Division of Mental Health Services, to offer low-cost financing for supportive housing developers. This, in turn, will encourage affordable housing for people with developmental disabilities.

"This project will continue our long history of successful partnerships with HMFA and DCA," Harris said. "These partnerships mix DCA and HMFA housing expertise with DHS' expertise in serving people with special needs."

HMFA will provide access to low-cost financing through two specific programs: The Section 811 Bridge Loan and the Shared Living Residence Rental Housing Program. HMFA and DHS' Division of Mental Health Services must provide housing opportunities for people with special needs and this allocation will help make it possible.

The Advocate

Summer/Fall 2003

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 Caroline Woodrow at (609) 633-7121.

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Department of Community Affairs

Susan Bass Levin, *Commissioner*

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NJDCA & LISC Announce \$500,000 in Grants to Boost New Businesses and Job Creation

Awards Go to Eight Nonprofit Groups Statewide

Following through with Governor McGreevey's commitment to improve the quality of life for all New Jersey residents, Commissioner Levin announced a \$500,000 economic development grant to the New Jersey Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). With the funds, LISC will provide support and assistance to eight nonprofit organizations across the state so they can hire staff members that will develop and administer commercial revitalization plans.

"Governor McGreevey and I are committed to revitalizing communities throughout the state," Commissioner Levin said. "A neighborhood-based plan is the foundation for any successful revitalization effort, and organizations such as LISC help to build that foundation."

The joint Community Economic Initiative, involving DCA and LISC's Newark and New Jersey Multi-City offices, enables community-based groups throughout the state to recruit and maintain quality staff members. These staff members will help develop commercial revitalization projects in their areas.

A variety of organizations also partner with LISC to provide technical assistance and project financing. These institutions include the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, The New Jersey Community Loan Fund, the Reinvestment Fund, The New Jersey Economic Development Authority, Fleet Bank, PNC Bank, JP Morgan Chase, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, and Pro Bono Partnership.

DCA & LISC distributed nearly \$500,000 to:

- The Latin American Economic Development Association (LAEDA) in Camden (\$65,000)
- La Casa de Don Pedro in Newark (\$70,000)
- The Tri-County Community Action Agency in Bridgeton (\$50,000)
- The Cumberland Empowerment Zone Corporation in Bridgeton (\$50,000)
- The Housing and Neighborhood Development Services (HANDS) in Orange (\$70,000)
- The Renaissance Economic Development Corporation in Somerset (\$50,000)
- The Urban League of Hudson County's Affordable Housing & Community Development Corporation in Jersey City (\$70,000)
- The New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC) in Paterson (\$65,000)



DCA Cuts Ribbons on Camden Housing

Since the last edition of *The Advocate*, Camden celebrated the opening of the Carpenter Hill apartment development. With funding from DCA and HMFA, the St. Joseph's Carpenter Society, a 16-year-old, nonprofit housing organization in East Camden, celebrated the opening of this 49-unit rental project with a ribbon cutting. Attending the groundbreaking, from left to right, were William F. Whelan, executive director of St. Joseph's Carpenter Society, DCA Commissioner Susan Bass Levin, and Charles Lewis, vice president of Pennrose Properties, Inc.

Rutgers University Publishes Community Development Guide

The Community Development Institute (CDI) at Rutgers University published an Inventory of Community Development Training Programs. The inventory is designed as a resource about education and training opportunities for community development practitioners, elected officials and those interested in entering the community development field.

CDI is part of the Center for Urban Policy Research in the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. CDI gratefully acknowledges DCA and HMFA funding and support, which has made this inventory possible. The inventory can be downloaded on line at www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/cdi.

Created in 1989 by DCA, the Housing Scholars Program provides nonprofit organizations that are actively involved with the development of affordable housing with a full-time, summer intern from either an undergraduate or graduate program at one of five New Jersey Colleges and universities.

Nonprofits Hire Housing Graduates

by Janis Ginsburg

DCA's Office of Housing Advocacy and First Union Bank, its partner in the Housing Scholars Graduate Program, recently announced that two nonprofit organizations have each been awarded \$30,000 in matching grants, allowing each organization to hire former First Union/DCA Housing Scholars.

Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development Inc. (MEND) hired Patricia Seidman, MEND Housing Scholar in 2002, as their corporate development administrator. Seidman is a graduate of Rutgers University's Urban Studies program in Camden, and as an intern, she prepared a susceptibility study of Riverside, N.J. for the development of affordable housing along the impending light rail line. Now a full-time employee, Seidman will continue to focus on developing affordable housing in Riverside, as well as in other communities along the light train rail line.

The New Jersey Community Loan Fund (NJCLF) also hired two extraordinary students – Pascale Duvert and Akua Sarkodee.

Duvert received her master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Rutgers, New Brunswick. She will use her planning skills to create new programs and expand the Community Loan Fund's childcare initiatives.

Akua Sarkodee received her master's in Public Administration from Rutgers, Newark. Sarkodee will bring her experience from the banking and lending industry to NJCLF's Lending Division.

Congratulations to all!

Reflections from a Housing Scholar

by Nelisabel Mejia-Martinez

The Housing Scholars Program completely exceeded my expectations for an internship program! As a dual degree major in the bachelor's / master's program at New Jersey Institute of Technology's (NJIT) School of Architecture, I started the program at the end of my third year of study. – and what an experience it was!

Along with a group of over 20 students from prominent universities, including NJIT, Rutgers and Princeton, we prepared for our internships through a one-week intensive workshop on the inner workings of nonprofits and community planning. I was paired up with New Community Corporation's Newark office in the Development Department. At New Community, I was involved in the fast-track renovation of St. Columba, a four-story, turn of the century school in Newark's East Ward.

I was given the opportunity to work as the on-site supervisor of the renovation's first phase, which included everything from demolition to bid solicitation. As the weeks progressed, I also was encouraged to take part in more of the decision-making processes, which involved scheduling, managing 30 contractors and subcontractors, design proposals and overall on-site construction management.

Two months and \$2 million later, the renamed Lady Liberty Academy re-opened its doors to 300 smiling children who would enjoy a healthy and safe learning environment with state-of-the-art technology.

The Housing Scholars Program not only gave me the opportunity to work with the nation's largest nonprofit organization, but also provided me with a reservoir of knowledge and professional experiences to use in my career.

I am so grateful for the unforgettable impression and feeling of fulfillment that only community service can create, and I am lucky to have met all of the wonderful professionals at DCA, NJIT and First Union Bank. This was truly an amazing experience and I have DCA's Housing Scholars Program to thank.

With DCA's Support, New Jersey Organizations Benefit from AmeriCorps Placements

by Stacey Rapp, LISC-Newark

AmeriCorps is an organization that exposes people to community development by offering experience and specialized training. At the same time, it provides Community Development Corporations (CDC) with talented individuals looking for careers in community development. For the past four years, the Greater Newark and Jersey City Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) ushered in new classes of AmeriCorps members to get things done in local New Jersey neighborhoods.

For the 2002 - 2003 service year, with DCA's support, five LISC AmeriCorps members were placed at four CDCs. Fode Cisse worked at the Episcopal Community Development in Newark; Ramon Rodriguez and Licette Rodriguez worked at La Casa de Don Pedro in Newark; Lateefah Gilliam worked at Unified Vailsburg Services Organization of Newark; and Kila Lewis Jersey City Episcopal Community Development Corporation. Each of the AmeriCorps staff worked on housing issues facing these specific communities and helped make a difference.

Part of LISC's role is to provide skills training that will help them be successful in their new positions. Some of the training includes meeting facilitation, community organizing, project planning, understanding diversity, identifying community leadership, public speaking, working with the media, team building and an introduction to nonprofit organizations.

"I have a great deal of love for my community," said AmeriCorps participant Ramon Rodriguez. "The training that took place in October was an experience that will help me work with my community."

Throughout the year, LISC will continue to provide members with the technical skills they need for their responsibilities where they serve. For more information on the LISC AmeriCorps program supported by DCA, call the Newark LISC office at (973) 624-6676.



The 2002-2003 Greater Newark & Jersey City LISC AmeriCorps team. Standing (from left to right) Kila Lewis, Ramon Rodriguez, Lateefah Gilliam, and Fode Cisse. In front is Licette Rodriguez.

Save the Date

Governor James E. McGreevey's Conference on Housing and Community Development

September 23 & 24, 2003
Atlantic City Convention Center

Join more than 1,500 professionals committed to housing and economic development. Enjoy events designed to better prepare you to meet your organization's goals and help New Jersey thrive. You'll get an opportunity to discuss important issues with industry leaders and learn about useful products and services. For more information and updates visit HMFA's Web site at www.nj-hmfa.com. If interested in attending, contact Mary Miller (609) 278-7403.

New Housing Publications Available Online

Visit the Announcements section of DCA's Web site at www.nj.gov/dca to download new publications, including brochures about weatherization, the Neighborhood Preservation Program and Individual Development Accounts.

Office of Housing Advocacy MISSION STATEMENT:

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

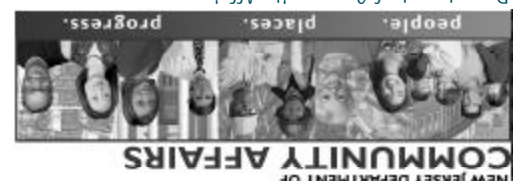
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