

Summit Attracts Residents From Across America

Public housing residents and Section 8 voucher holders from across the country gathered at the Hyatt Harborside Hotel in Boston for the Third National Public Housing Residents' Summit held from Thursday September 4 until Sunday September 7.

The Summit started with a welcome session Thursday evening with Shelia Crowley, Executive Director of the National Low-Income Housing Program, and Aaron Gornstein, Executive Director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Agency of Boston, giving speeches.

On Friday, a host of distinguished speakers took to the podium to address the large crowd convened in the main conference room. After the morning prayer, and a stirring rendition of "Wing Beneath my Wings," Boston Housing Authority CEO Sandra Henriquez welcomed the large delegation to Boston.

Henriquez boasted about Boston's progress in public housing under Mayor Thomas Menino. "This Mayor gets it," she said. "He realizes public housing is important enough of an issue to be discussed on the national scene."

Henriquez went on to describe the BHA as a highly participatory organization, working hard to provide housing in desired areas. "There are private organizations that would pay lots of money for the property our developments are on," noted Henriquez "Our housing is located on the waterfront and has great skyline views." But Henriquez emphatically warned, "no, they're not for sale!"

The BHA Administer/CEO concluded by encouraging participants to vote and use their voice to enact change.

"Use your power to preserve your housing and the housing for future generations," she stated. "You have the power, you are the power."

The morning ceremony ended with a riveting and inspirational speech by keynote speaker Barbara Robinson. Robinson, an accomplished author currently working on her fourth book, challenged the crowd of over 500 to, "dream big dreams and make them come true."

Robinson, in her poetic candor, explained, "the dictionary is the only place where success comes before work" and encouraged eager listeners to "stand up for yourself, even if it means standing alone."

A former resident of a Baltimore Housing Authority development,

Robinson was presented an award before a roaring ovation, as a thank you for her contributions to public housing issues and her participation in the conference.



(Continued on Page 4)

WHAT'S INSIDE?

SENIOR Community Links Program	2
Unity Day Volunteers Work to Bring Community Together	3
Playing Through	5
Job Well Done	6
New Bostonians Day	7
Archdale playgrounds made safer	8
Hispanic Heritage Celebration	8

SENIORS Community Links Program Educates Elderly on Sexual Abuse and Domestic Violence

The SENIORS (Safety Educational Network Involving Outreach and Resources for Seniors) Community Links Program is working to train and lend assistance to volunteers in order to better educate senior citizens on sexual abuse and domestic violence prevention. Participants in the program are trained and given technical assistance so that they can use these tools to work with elderly residents.

Formed in October 1999, the Seniors Community Links Program also reaches out to the elderly community in order to better educate them about the damaging effects that domestic violence and sexual assaults have upon their health and well-being. The goal is to empower senior citizens by giving them information needed to combat and, ultimately prevent, these crimes.

Between the months of June and August seven volunteers from the Foster Grandparents Program of ABCD spent two days a week manning an informational booth at public housing developments. The volunteers were equipped with pamphlets and other informational material, which they distributed to residents seeking assistance.

"The volunteers are given nine hours of training and ongoing technical assistance," noted Barbara Bullette, Director of Communications for the Roxbury Multi-Service Center. "We make sure they have all the information they need, where to go and who to contact."

The program does not end with the summer session. Members of the Roxbury Multi-Service Center will continue to visit developments and help educate residents on domestic violence and sexual abuse. "Our staff will continue the program and be there to answer people's questions," added Bullette.

The SENIORS Community Links Programs is currently available on site to men and women ages 55 and over living in Hassan, Holgate, Frederick Douglass, Hampton House and Amory Street.

The project is made possible through funding from the Violence Against Woman Act (Department of Public Safety), the Violence Family Act (through ABCD) and the Grove Hill Sage Neighborhood Initiative and is a collaboration between the Boston Housing Authority, Action for Boston Community Development and the Roxbury Multi-Service Center.

For more information on the SENIORS Community Links program, contact Barbara Bullette at (617) 427-4470 ext. 415

Practice Work Prepares Youth For Summer Jobs

In early June 67 young people between the ages of 14-21 enrolled in a month long job training program at Mission Main Resident Services called "Practice Work." J.D. Garcia, a Career Specialist at Mission Main, instructed the students on the professional behavior necessary to succeed in today's workplace.

The students worked in small groups and strived to develop strong teamwork skills as well as effective interpersonal and communication skills and conflict resolution strategies.

Practice Work set real work standards for the students by demanding perfect attendance and impeccable professional behavior. If an "employee" of the program missed a class without proper written documentation or arrived late without calling, they were eliminated from graduating from the program.

Thirty-one of the 67 students graduated and received a certificate from Practice Work. Almost all 67 were then hired for ABCD summer employment to apply the valuable skills they learned.

Unity Day Volunteers Work to Bring Community Together

As the sunlight begins to wane and the music fades to an inaudible whisper, a few hardy souls linger long into the evening to do their part to pitch in and clean the reminiscence of the block party reluctantly vacated by residents. Another successful Unity Day has come to a close for the revelers who depart slowly into the warm evening, but for volunteers the clean-up process has just begun.

In the midst of rap music blaring from large speakers and the screams of children running from carnival ride to carnival ride with wide-eyed expectations of what fun lies ahead, few take the time to ponder the amount of work and dedication necessary to ensure a safe and successful event for all.

The idea for a Unity Day arose in the 1980's in response to growing neighborhood tensions. The first celebration was held at Washington Beech in Roslindale and the event was such a success that other developments followed suit. Now residents at every BHA family housing development hold their own Unity Day once a summer.

But in order to put on a successful event, members of the tenant task force and volunteers must find innovative ways to raise money.

In order to secure enough cash for the biggest Gallivan Unity Day to date, Tenant Association President Toni Cromwell and her crew of volunteers held fundraising dinners. "We made so many chicken dinners, but it was worth it because I didn't want the same old hot dogs and ice cream for Unity Day" said Cromwell.

All the cooking paid off; Gallivan raised about \$2,300 from the dinners alone. In addition, they were given donations from local corporations and politicians.

Shaws donated \$500 and Target added \$250, while Massachusetts Speaker of the House Thomas Finneran dished out \$500 for the event. Mattapan Community Partnership added \$2,000 and t-shirts.

But raising money is just the beginning. Before families and friends gather to

take part in the games, the food and the neighborly atmosphere synonymous with Unity Day, there is an abundance of planning and preparation for coordinators and volunteers. Cromwell and her team of volunteers, that exceeded 40 members, met on a consistent basis from February until the event in August in order to ensure a safe and joyous day for all.

"You can't do it without volunteers," said Cromwell. "We had people in yellow shirts and made sure that there were at least two of them at every station helping people out."

The hard working and dedicated group of teenagers and adults from Gallivan worked from eight in the morning until eight at night, essentially sunrise to sunset, to put together a day the whole community could be proud of. The event included a mini carnival, food, music, pony rides, vendors, a col-

lege fair and much more.

Residents of the 251-unit complex responded by embracing the event. Cromwell estimates that



(Continued on page 7)

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(Continued From Page 1)

After the uplifting speeches, delegates from as far west as Hawaii and as far south as Puerto Rico took part in workshops. These workshops highlighted the Summit's theme of "Empowering Residents to Meet the New Challenges in Public Housing: Maximizing Residents' Knowledge, Services and Potential in Spite of Scarce Resources" and strived to educate participants on a number of issues via panel discussions and crowd involvement.

Workshop topics included Section 8 grant blocking, the newly implemented community service requirements and many other issues of importance to residents and administrators of public housing developments.

Participants not only learned from the knowledgeable panel, but also from their peers, as the geographically and ethnically diverse audience contributed to creating an ideal atmosphere for the exchange of ideas and brainstorming for solutions to obstacles currently facing the public housing sector.



Washington Beech residents (left to right) Mirriam Ortega and Nancy Velazquez, Maisha Douyon from the BU School of Public Health and BHA staff member Maria Chavez

Friday afternoon also provided members of the conference a chance to view some of Boston's housing developments. The bus tour took the group to Orchard Gardens, Alice Taylor and Mary Ellen McCormack where they met with members of the developments' task forces and surveyed the grounds of each.



A Baltimore Resident in the main conference room on Friday morning. Prominent speakers stressed voter registration and personal responsibility to over 500 spectators.

On Saturday evening, after several more informative workshops, many participants took part in a moonlight cruise around Boston Harbor. The cruise allowed public housing residents and administrators to network and further discuss current issues.

The Summit concluded on Sunday with early morning closing remarks. Delegates of the conference then went their separate ways to impart what they have learned to their peers with the words of Barbara Robinson fresh in their memory: "Knowledge is not power, applied knowledge is power."

Peace Drum Participants...

Teens from Dorchester, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale and Roxbury worked with ten seniors from the Amory Street Development in Jamaica Plain in order to develop a "peace drum" derived from oral history interviews of the elderly. August's edition of *BHA Today* inadvertently omitted some of the names of the participants in the project. **Cynthia Jimenez**, the Resident Service Coordinator, helped put the program together on the BHA end. The elders who contributed to the project are...

Marie Aponte
Joyce Crowder
Mirtola DeCampos
Emma Jones
Mirtola DeCampos

Emma Jones
Juaquina Pagan
Antonia Torres Pinones
Marie A. Watson
Betsy Williams

Playing Through

Seniors Work on Their Golf Game While Improving Their Health



Participants in the Senior Golf Program work on their swings

Every Monday and Wednesday a group of elderly men and women from Amory, Holgate, MLK and Pond Street rise early and wait eagerly for the community van to arrive. The van's arrival signifies the beginning of a full day of education, exercise and nutrition at the Franklin Park Golf Course in Boston.

Before they hit the links, the seniors are given expert instructional advice from a golf pro. They are shown individual attention and taught everything from putting to swinging techniques specifically tailored to enhance their game. The men and women are also granted access to special equipment that further aids them in overcoming challenges that may prohibit them from playing with standard clubs.

In addition to improving their golf game, the program also strives to improve the health and well-being of its participants. Nutritionists and health specialists work with the group, giving them tips that will allow them to live fuller and more enjoyable lives. Some lessons taught include the importance of cardio vascular activity and ways to ward off Alzheimer's.

"It's a great program, they are not only learning about golf, but they are also learning the keys to a longer life," said BHA Director of Elder Community Services, Al Davis. "The participating sponsors do a great job."

After the early morning health session, the group loosens up before teeing off and showcasing their new skills. The men and women have free reign to use the wide range of facilities, from the practice greens, to the driving range. While some participants are content with learning the nuances of the game, others are simply honing their already superior play. In fact, several members participated in, and won medals at, the Senior Games in May.

When the last person has left the green and the last putt has been drained, the group gathers for a lunch, with the menu chosen by nutritional experts. Lunch gives the group an opportunity to discuss their golf game, while eating healthy.

The fun does not stop when winter arrives and

snow protrudes over the greens and fairways. Members are given access to training equipment, which includes indoor putting greens and an indoor driving range. Their off-season workout helps keep them sharp so when the snow



melts, they are ready to spring back to action.

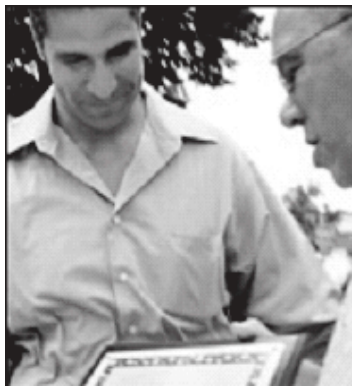
The golf program, part of the Wellness Center for seniors, is improving people's health and golf game for its second year thanks, in large part, to participating sponsors; the Harvard Cooperative Program on Aging, Boston University's School of Education and the Boston Public Health Commission's Reach Boston Elders Program.

Job Well Done

Congratulations to Leased Housing for achieving an overall SEMAP score of **96%**. HUD commended: "As a result of your overall SEMAP score of **96%**, BHA is hereby designated as a **High Performer**. Congratulations on your excellent performance."

Dick L'Europa thanks the Occupancy Dept. and Nancy Otero for their filled **Pennies for Eye-sight Canister**. Over \$600 in the name of the Authority has so far gone to this international program conducted by Lions Clubs all over the world. There are canisters located on the **3rd, 7th, 8th, and 10th** floors of the building.

The Risk Management Yellow Diamond Award was given to **Denise Murphy, Billy Wuschke**, and **Program 1 Managers, Supervisors** and **Staff** for consistently emphasizing safety and having the lowest number of workers' compensation claims and lowest amount of incurred losses during the policy year ended 8/1/03. The award and a coffee party also goes to **Jennifer Haynes, Paul Neves** and the **entire staff at Lenox Street** for implementing the new on the job injury procedures and OSHA forms and for consistently striving to create a safe working environment.



At the National Night Out Celebration on Tuesday, August 6, 2003 at Adams Park, Roslindale Village, the Community Service Award was presented to our own **Angel Lopez**. Through his work with the community, Angel and his staff have proven themselves an invaluable asset to the improvement of the quality of life of the Archdale residents and neighbors. Angel was a co-sponsor of the vigil and has also been active in crime prevention in and around the development including co-sponsoring crime-watch meetings with Healthy Roslindale Coalition, neighborhood clean-ups, and the annual Archdale Unity Day.

Alfred G. Davis, Program Director of Resident Services and **Gloria Johnson**, Resident Service Coordinator, completed a 10 month **Certification Program on Aging and Health Promotion** of the Harvard Upper New England Geriatric Education Center. Harvard Medical School and Brigham

and Women's Hospital sponsored the program.

Congrats goes to **Suzanne Forgione and Ruth Olsen** from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Thanks to their efforts, the Boston Housing Authority was announced as the 2003 recipient of the **National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) Merit Award** for its involvement in the Fleet Self-Sufficiency Loan Program. Olsen and Forgione worked on the loan committee with representatives from the Methuen, Shrewsbury, and North Andover housing authorities.

The award recognizes innovative and outstanding achievement in housing and community development programs throughout the nation. The BHA, in association with Fleet Bank and the Consumer Credit Counseling Service, collaborated to develop a specialized loan program aimed at meeting the needs of our FSS participants.

The Fleet FSS Loan Program, which began in 2002, has produced more than 76 loans. These loans are used for credit rehabilitation, debt consolidation and emergency expenses.

Dick L'Europa would like to thank **Gail Donahue** for her donation of pennies to the **Massachusetts Lions Pennies for Eye Sight** campaign.

BHA employees' donations of pennies to this campaign continue to grow with the total nearing \$1,000.

Joanne Moore would like to express her appreciation and thanks to **Pearl Ellis** for giving up her time on August 25th and 26th to meet with residents and issue new mailbox keys to over 300 families.

Steve Barry and **Denise Murphy** would like to commend not only the ERS Dept., but also, the management team at the Lenox development for their work during a transformer fire at 17 Trotter Court. Congratulations on a job well done goes out to operator **Zahir Akram** of the ERS staff, electrician **Jerry Aughe**, and laborer, **James Fopiano**, electrician **Russell Radcliffe**, manager, **Jennifer Haynes**, and superintendent, **Paul Neves** and **Bill Wuschke**.

Congratulations to long-time BHA resident **Aramis Camps** for his recent appointment as a Notary Public. Hooray Aramis!!

Unity Day Volunteers Work to Bring Community Together

(Continued from page 3)



Gallivan children enjoy the amusement rides at the biggest Unity Day in the development's history

almost all of the 400 tenants showed up to take part in the day's festivities at one point or another.

"I knew the event was a success when a lady who has lived [in Gallivan] for ten years said she'd never seen anything like that," said Cromwell knowingly.

As the setting sun casts shadows over the landscape, and the amusement rides are packed up and driven away, volunteers young and old remain until the last wrapper is picked up and the last plate is disposed of. People of different generations, working side by side, bound together by a sense of community and accomplishment.

"Unity Day is all about bringing together new and old residents to meet and laugh and share experiences," said Cromwell reflecting on the day. "But we have to work even harder to make next year's event even bigger and better."

Diversity Celebrated at New Bostonians Day

The 4th annual New Bostonians Day was held on Wednesday, September 17 at Boston City Hall. Festivities included multilingual tours of City Hall, resource tables, multi-cultural performances, ethnic food and music, career information and much more.

The day began with a performance from a Puerto Rican-American dance team that got the crowd's attention with some impressive dance moves. Next, a dance duo named "Free Motion" took to the stage to teach the audience some basic salsa steps.

The tandem encouraged spectators to participate. They implored the crowd to "kick, back, forward and side." Many obliged by getting out of their seats to join in the fun. In fact, several folks joined the group on stage to shake their hips to the music.

Boston Mayor Thomas Menino then addressed the crowd convened in City Hall Plaza. Menino announced that there will be immigration

clinics twice a month at City Hall. In addition, there will be classes to teach English as a second language.

The Mayor declared, "this is your day" to the hundreds in attendance. He noted that Boston is the only city that has a program like New Bostonians Day to welcome new immigrants.

Raul Solano of the Community Service Department coordinated the BHA's participation in the day's events. Assisting him were **Wanda Caban, Sandra Redish, Gloria Johnson, Juan Gonzalez, Carmen Figueroa, Lynne Jones, Lydia Agro, Mary Murphy, Gloria Meneses, Regina Dennis, Alfred Davis, Marilyn O'Sullivan, Rachel Goodman, Aida Burgos, Maria Chavez, Armando Zapata** and all of the **managers at the BHA developments**, who helped promote the event.

PMD Helps Make Playgrounds Safer For Archdale Youth

On Saturday, September 20 People Making A Difference through Community Service (PMD) teamed up with the Boston Housing Authority to improve playgrounds located within the Archdale Development.

A team of more than 20 volunteers worked from 9:30 am until 3:30 pm, putting down mulch at all six of the Development's playgrounds, making them safer for the children who play there every day.

Pictured are volunteers who generously donated their time: **Kaitlin Ambrogio, Mary Aquino, Carolyn Breit, Linda Fahy, Stephen Ferrari, Jane Ferry, Amanda Goodman, Elaine Gould, Clara Herrero, Joshua Ledwell, Amanda Lord, Holly Masek, Phil Milmoe, Eileen O'Neill, Natalie Rhodes, Matthew Richardson, Aimée Snyder, Lori Tsuruda, Kari Weinberg, Jenny Windhauser, and Andrea Zarkauskas.**



BHA Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



BHA staff and residents gathered on September 26 to experience and celebrate all aspects of the Hispanic culture during the Third Annual Hispanic Heritage Month event held at the Amory Street development.



BHA Today is a Boston Housing Authority publication and a BHA 2001 initiative.

Editor: *Lydia Agro* • **Stories & Layout:** *Jim Bentubo* • **Printing:** *Bostonian Press*

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