



## Did you know DCHA provides FREE testing for HIV/AIDS?

HIV/AIDS continues to be a serious problem in African-American communities in Washington DC. Here are some statistics you should know:

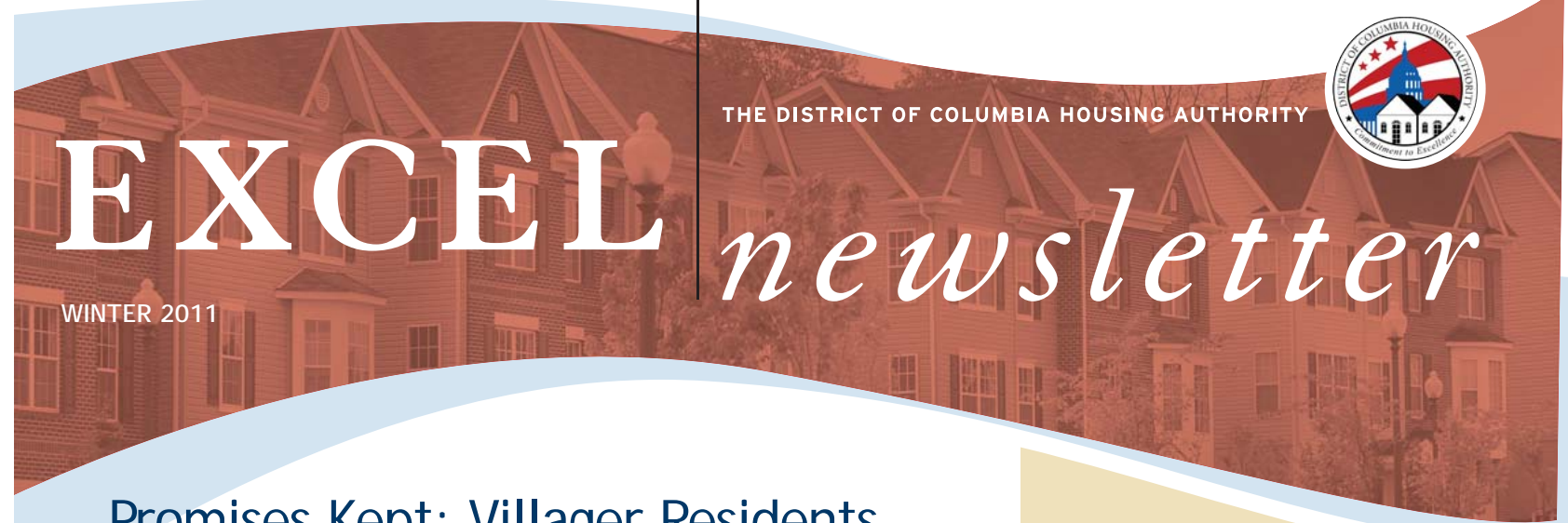
- ▶ Among DC residents in 2008, one in every 21 black residents was living with HIV/AIDS.
- ▶ African-Americans account for three quarters (75.6%) of District residents living with HIV/AIDS.
- ▶ DC black women are 17 times more likely to be living with HIV/AIDS than DC white women.

Free HIV/AIDS testing is provided to public housing residents each month by one of our DCHA HIV/AIDS Roundtable partners. For testing information updates at public housing developments, you may call Julian Wilson in the Office of Resident Services, 202.535.2682 or go to the DCHA website under Resident Services where updates will be posted.

**Get Tested! Know Your Status!**



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1133 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Washington DC 20002-7599



WINTER 2011

## Promises Kept: Villager Residents Return to Renovated Homes

In late fall, 15 families returned to a totally remodeled and renovated Villager Apartment building, and the consensus is that they are delighted to return home. DCHA has invested more than \$140 million in the last 10 years to renovate its public housing stock.

For some properties, DCHA has been able to renovate units while residents remained on the property. In some properties with large scale or fast-track renovations, such as the Villager, residents had to move off-site for construction to take place.

Alicia Ginyard and Shirley Boyd were two of the residents who made the temporary move and returned. Ms. Ginyard has lived at the Villager for 31 years, and says: "When I first came to the Villager it was a lovely, beautiful property." She added that a community should be a group working collectively, and that's been her attitude towards the building in which she lives.

"I am the type of person who likes to keep my unit up, and the area around me as well. I tidy up the hall area; I even get outside and pick up trash," she explained.

Shirley Boyd hasn't been there as long as Ms. Ginyard, but they have been friends since she moved there in 2003. Ms. Boyd is also a proud resident, and said she was eager to have her unit renovated, even with the prospect of having to move to another public housing unit temporarily.

Ms. Boyd explained that the Villager relocation process began in October 2009 with a meeting of residents and DCHA management to discuss renovations and time schedules. Several more meetings were held to introduce the moving firm, give residents choices on renovations such as keeping carpets or getting new hardwood floors, and answer questions.

DCHA staff provided lists of available temporary housing and provided transportation so that families could visit several units and choose among them, she added. The goal was to make the relocation as smooth and convenient as possible in order to relocate the families and have them settled in their new location before the holidays.

A total of 18 families were relocated. Because their families had outgrown the largest units at the Villager, three families chose new units for a permanent move.

Ms. Ginyard, who relocated to Kentucky Courts, returned 10 months later. "I think they've done a lovely job with the new Villager," she said, "the kitchen, the paint, everything looks great!" Of course she is still helping beyond her doorway, saying, "Ms. Moone asked us to work together to keep the property up."

Ms. Boyd said the renovations took a little longer than projected. "They told us

TAKE A LOOK

**INSIDE**

Promises Kept > Page 1

Development 2010 > Page 3

Fathers Empowered > Page 3

Fruit and Veggies at Langston's Community Garden > insert

DCHA Spotlight > insert

Free HIV/AIDS Testing > Page 4

Literacy and Life Skills > Page 4

six to eight months. It took a little longer but that wasn't really a problem," she said. "I now have hardwood floors, new kitchen countertops, and the relocation guys were excellent."

Ms. Boyd was so impressed with the renovations and relocation process that she spoke to the residents at Highland Dwellings at one of their early meetings on that property's renovation and construction process.

She said that having a positive attitude about upcoming changes is the most important thing: "I told them, thank God you'll still have a roof over your head; you could be living worse off." She added that the housing authority made the process easier by keeping residents informed throughout the moves and construction period: "They said we would come back to an almost new building, and they kept their promise."

## Board of Commissioners

**FERNANDO LEMOS**  
*Vice Chairman*

**KEN GROSSINGER**

**FRANK LANCASTER**

**ANGIE RODGERS**

**BILL SLOVER**

**AQUARIUS VANN-GHASRI**

**MARIE WHITFIELD**

Published by the  
Office of Public Affairs  
& Communication  
202.535.1315  
www.dchousing.org

**Dena Michaelson**  
*Director*

**Steve Hadley**  
*Webmaster*

**Cymando Henley**  
*Communications Coordinator*

**Gregory Meeropol**  
*Public Information Specialist*

**Keith Washington**  
*Photographer*

**Rayshawn Douglas**  
*Staff Assistant*

District of Columbia  
Housing Authority  
1133 North Capitol Street, NE  
Washington DC 20002-7599  
www.dchousing.org

## A Message from the Executive Director



**Adrienne Todman**  
DCHA Executive Director

Happy New Year!

I hope you and your family enjoyed your holidays, and I wish you a productive and prosperous New Year. The start of a year is a special time for us all. It is a time to take stock of the activities of the previous year and to plan for a successful 2011.

All types of construction dominated our 2010, and you can read about our development activities to provide new public housing in our articles this issue. We are particularly proud of our partnerships with community groups such as Matthews Memorial and the First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church.

Just as important, we renovated or are in the process of renovating many of our existing public housing developments using DCHA's energy loan, federal stimulus dollars and new funding sources. We've just welcomed back residents in the renovated Villager Apartments and are in early stages of construction for Highland Dwellings.

For 2011, I have challenged all the DCHA staff to look at the requirements of all our programs and to ask themselves: "Do we really need to do it the same way? Is there some way to streamline this program and make it easier for clients?" DCHA is very fortunate to be one of only 30 HUD housing authorities that are part of the "Moving to Work" program. Under this program, we can rewrite HUD rules to make them better meet our local needs. You'll be hearing about some of the steps we plan to take in the next couple of months, including the kick-off of the public housing homeownership program.

As we look forward to 2011, we at the DC Housing Authority will continue working hard to ensure that our interactions with you are professional and timely. You have my best wishes for a safe and peaceful new year

Sincerely,

**Adrienne Todman**  
*Executive Director*

## Development Drove DCHA in 2010

2010 was a busy year for DCHA. Continuing with its commitment to build new housing and modernize existing housing, the agency held several groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies during the year.

In October, DCHA celebrated the ground breaking of the new Matthews Memorial Terrace in Ward 8. The 99-unit development will consist of one, two and three-bedroom apartments and will house three different populations: seniors (ages 62 and above), public housing residents and those with incomes up to 60% of the area median income. A partnership with Mathew's Memorial Church, some of the building's amenities will include a community room, a meeting room with kitchen facilities, a green roof and parking.

In July, DCHA welcomed US Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan for the groundbreaking ceremony at Gibson Plaza. This redevelopment project, located in the Shaw neighborhood, is a partnership with the owner, First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church Housing Corporation. The work will completely renovate the original building, which was constructed in 1973, by the fall of 2011. Gibson Plaza will contain 217 affordable residential units, including 53 public housing apartments and 20 project-based voucher units supported by DCHA. It will feature green technology including rooftop solar panels, energy efficient windows and appliances, and high-efficiency heating and ventilation.

In June, DCHA welcomed Ward I Councilmember Jim Graham and DC Department of Housing and Community Development Executive Director, Leila Edmonds to cut the ribbon at the Williston Apartments. The two buildings on the property were



DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman was joined by Mayor Fenty, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Representative Elenor Holmes-Norton, Councilmember Jack Evans (Ward 2) and developers and residents at the Gibson Plaza Groundbreaking.

completely gutted and rebuilt with new roofs and landscaping. Residents and city officials celebrated the official re-opening of the property which features 28 mixed-income affordable housing units located in northwest near Howard University.

In May, DCHA welcomed Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, DC Mayor Adrian Fenty and other city officials and community activists as they broke ground on Phase I of the Sheridan Station HOPE VI redevelopment project. Phase I consists of a five-story, loft-style apartment building with 104 units, two adjacent 4-unit manor buildings and two town homes. The 114 units will all be affordable and 45 of the units will be public housing replacement units, with housing priority going to former Sheridan Terrace residents. On completion, Sheridan Station will be a 344-unit, mixed-income community with 183 rental units and 161 units for homeownership. This redevelopment replaces Sheridan Terrace, a 183-unit public housing community demolished in 1997.

## Fathers Empowered

DCHA Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri continued work to empower public housing families by organizing a trip to the 5th Annual Fatherhood Festival. DCHA provided transportation and covered registration fees for five single fathers from Potomac Gardens to the festival in Philadelphia last year. The goal of the festival was to make fatherhood a passion and work to have positive father figures involved in the lives of children. While there, the fathers attended workshops that focused on numerous topics including Life Skills, Fathering & Parenting, Finance and Legal Issues.

right: DCHA Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri and Laurie Pletcher (DCHA staff) with the resident fathers



## More than Fruit and Veggies at Langston's Community Garden

Gardening means different things to different people. Some folks view gardening as a hobby, a relaxing way to escape from the pressures of an urban environment. Some view it simply as means to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables. And some use it as a teaching tool to explain how nature works. All these meanings come together at Langston Dwellings.

Last year, Langston resident Kenneth Butler secured a \$500 grant from the Home Depot to start a community garden. He took his 30 years of gardening experience and began to share his vision of a functioning community garden with the residents at Langston. What has happened since then has been nothing short of spectacular.

The garden that Butler and his partner Edward Murdock created has multiple components. There are plots given out to residents who can grow whatever they want. There is a section strictly for flowers. Butler also holds a gardening class for youth at Langston to teach them the fundamentals of gardening.

"One of the most important lessons you can teach a child is how to tend and grow their own garden." explains Butler. In mid-summer, Butler and his gardening companions began to see the fruits of their labor, and Butler shares the harvest around Langston Dwellings. Residents are treated daily to fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, squash, okra, cabbage, kale, collard greens and sugar baby watermelons. Grateful residents and neighbors are happy to accept the produce. Any extras are given to the food bank and distributed to residents as they pick up their monthly allotments.

**"One of the most important lessons you can teach a child is how to tend and grow their own garden."**

Butler and his gardening team work in collaboration with the Anacostia Community Outreach Center (ACOC). He produces a monthly newsletter that includes updates on the community garden, class information and recipes for the fresh vegetables. In a day when children are being constantly bombarded with advertising for fast food and unhealthy treats, Butler gives residents the ability to create their own healthy alternatives.



Kenneth Butler displays some of the daily harvest from the Langston Garden



Job Developer Stephen Baker works with residents at the SW Family Enhancement Career Center

## Literacy and Life Skills Training Available for DC Residents

The DCHA SW Family Enhancement Career Center opened its doors to serve the DCHA community on March 17, 2008. The Center's mission is to improve the lives of families by providing basic literacy and life skills training and assist participants develop clear career pathways. The Center works aggressively to secure employment opportunities and to provide wrap around supportive services to public housing residents and HCVP program participants. Monthly orientations are open to all residents. The next orientation will be held on:

**Monday, March 7th at 9:00 a.m.**

The Center is located at Greenleaf Gardens, 203 N. Street SW, Washington, DC 20024 which is metro accessible via the 70 Bus or the Green Line Train to Waterfront Metro Station. For additional information, please call 202.645.5023.

**SUMMER JOBS APPLICATION DUE: 4/22/11**

DCHA is currently accepting applications for the 2011 Do Your B.E.S.T. (DYB) Summer Employment Program. The DYB Program provides summer job opportunities to public housing and HCVP youth, ages 14-18. The 2011 program dates are June 20th - August 12th. Go to [www.dchousing.org/best](http://www.dchousing.org/best) to complete your application. The application deadline is Friday, April 22nd. For more information, please contact the Office of Resident Services at (202) 535-1517.

## DCHA SPOTLIGHT

### Public Housing Movers & Shakers

This month EXCEL shines the spotlight on Shanita Smith, 16, from Stoddert Terrace.

This Friendship Edison Collegiate Academy junior was selected to introduce United States Housing and Urban Development Deputy Secretary Ron Sims at a national conference. The gathering, entitled "Collaborating for Results: Innovative Local, State, and Federal Models - A Peer-to-Peer Dialogue," was held July 1.

Federal, state and local agencies that support programs and services that focus on youth were invited to explore and discuss how groups collaborate to promote positive results for at-risk youth.

Shanita has been an outstanding participant in DCHA's Do Your B.E.S.T. (DYB) Summer Youth Employment Program since 2007 and was selected because of the commitment that she has demonstrated to the DYB program and her community.

Shanita is also a member of G.L.O.W. (Girls Leading Our Way) under the leadership of the Black Women's Health Imperative, the Executive Youth Leadership Program with D.E.R.F (Davis-Johnson Education Resource Foundation), a youth leader with Microsoft and a participant in the Crump Law Camp (National Bar Association).



Shanita Smith introducing HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims