



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



Champion of Change

James Creek resident Ephraim Scott spent the Wednesday before Father's Day in very dignified company, at a White House event celebrating the tremendous work happening in the fields of fatherhood and low-income men.

Last year Scott was selected as a DC area Champion of Change for fatherhood, and he participated in a roundtable discussion with Senior White House staff and other honorees to discuss what responsible fatherhood means.

Scott overcame many challenges in his life and said his difficulties have made him more determined to embrace fatherhood so wholeheartedly.

He and his seven-year-old son Lamont are inseparable, and those who observe his relationship with his son say it seems as if Lamont could be the very thing that makes every day worth living for Mr. Scott.

Scott said he doesn't have a close relationship with his other two children, and he feels blessed to have another chance to be a good father. He said the thing he appreciates most in life is the opportunity to be involved in his son's life on a daily basis.

In addition to being a great father, Scott has been an active participant in the James Creek community.

A proud Ephraim Scott and family are pictured at the White House-sponsored December 2011 event where he received his certificate for being a Champion of Change for DC.



THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

EXCEL *newsletter*

Summer 2012

Garfield Terrace Seniors Get Connected to the “Net”

There are a few certainties that come with the month of June. It will get hotter, June 22nd is the longest day of the year, and there will be many graduation ceremonies.

DC Mayor Vincent Gray joined DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman at Garfield Terrace for a graduation ceremony of some not-so-traditional students. On June 5th, 24 senior residents became the first graduating class from the Connected Living program that shows residents how to unlock the power of the Internet.



Graduate Patricia Miller took a break from celebrating her achievement to speak with FOX 5 news

Connected Living is a Massachusetts-based firm that works with seniors across the country to teach residents how to surf the Internet, send emails, share photos and videos, and get information on any topic. These basic computer tasks—common for most young people—can be very intimidating for senior citizens who have never used a mouse or even logged on to a computer.

According to Connected Living CEO Sarah Hoit, the program is best described like a Facebook for seniors. “The first thing I hear everywhere I go is, ‘Oh, seniors don’t like technology. They don’t want to do that.’ Well, yes, actually they do.”

Executive Director Todman said, “Garfield Terrace residents now have the ability to participate in areas that matter most to them including, education, healthcare, socialization, jobs and bridging of the generations.” The next group of Garfield Terrace residents has already signed up for classes and a new peer trainer from the first class, Denise Crenshaw will be one of their instructors.

TAKE *a* LOOK

INSIDE

Lead Paint Testing

Starting in August, DCHA will begin conducting lead-based paint inspections for public housing units built before 1978, based on new DC regulations from the DC Department of the Environment (DDOE).

“DCHA has always used lead-safe practices in turning over and renovating units and provided information to residents on lead paint hazards,” says Nathan Bovel, Interim Deputy Executive Director of Operations. The new DC regulations require a specific test and a reporting form on lead-based paint hazards for any tenant in the city, in both public and private rental units.

“Inspectors in the Office of Audit and Compliance have all received training on the testing procedures from DDOE, and DDOE trainers will assist us in our first months of conducting the tests,” said Ben Miller, Department Director. “We will start our work in family sites, since the most vulnerable household members are children under six and pregnant women,” he added.

Residents will be notified by letter when testing is scheduled for their buildings and units.

After three successful annual inspections, DCHA will be able to certify that a unit does not need any additional testing for lead paint hazards.

Board of Commissioners

PEDRO ALFONSO

Chairman

TERRI THOMPSON, ESQ.

Vice Chairman

KEN GROSSINGER

VICTOR HOSKINS

FRANK LANCASTER

CLARENCE MOBLEY

JENNIFER REED

M. BERNADETTE TOLSON

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

Keith Washington
Photographer

Kristen Bell
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

Summer is certainly here! The entire Housing Authority is humming with summertime activities, even with the 100-plus degree temperatures we have had. Our Do Your B.E.S.T. summer youth program is underway, and we are pleased to celebrate 15 years of providing employment opportunities for younger residents. As you will read in this newsletter, DYB participation is a great first step to further achievements.

I want to thank you all for exercising your vote and letting your voice be heard in our election for the three resident commissioners on the DCHA Board of Commissioners. We can announce that two of our current commissioners were re-elected: Aquarium Van Ghasri, representing family sites, and Frank Lancaster, representing elderly and mixed sites. We will bid a fond good-bye to At Large Commissioner Marie Whitfield, who chose not to run again. We also will be introducing you to the new commissioner in this position, Kenneth Council of Fort Dupont, in September's Excel issue, when he will be taking office.

In addition to my big announcement, there are a lot of other activities going on at our various properties. This June we started a new partnership with Zipcar, the car sharing service. The announcement was made at Stoddert Terrace, the first site to get a Zipcar spot. Zipcars will be at six properties before the end of summer. This is a great opportunity for us to provide a service not only to our residents, but also to the surrounding community as well.

This is also the time of year where many have been celebrating graduations. I would like to congratulate all of the high school and college graduates among our extended family, and an extra special shout out to the seniors who graduated from our first Connected Living class at Garfield Terrace.

Summer is just beginning so there will be a lot more news to come.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne Todman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Adrienne Todman

Public Housing Gets New Residents

Six public housing sites will have new residents before the end of summer, and these new occupants bring something for the whole community.

"Wheels, when you want them," is the tagline for Zipcar, the world's leading car sharing network, which is expanding car sharing availability to DCHA public housing sites across the District to provide alternative transportation options for local residents.

Zipcar will place nine vehicles at DCHA locations for use by local residents. DCHA is one of the first housing authorities in the nation to partner with Zipcar, bringing affordable car sharing to public housing residents.

"The lack of flexible transportation options can hinder our residents' efforts to become more self-sufficient, such as being able to reach a job interview for a company that is inaccessible by public transportation. Part of our role, as the District's largest landlord, includes making sure our tenants have access to convenient and cost-effective modes of transportation," said DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman.



Fort Dupont Resident Council President Kenneth Council receives a few pre-test drive instructions from Zipcar D.C. General Manager Ellice Perez.

An alternative to car ownership, Zipcars can be reserved for as short as an hour or for several days. Gas, reserved parking spots, insurance, roadside assistance, and up to 180 miles of driving per day are included in the hourly and daily Zipcar rates, which start as low as \$8 per hour and \$74 per day in Washington D.C. National studies have shown that, depending on total distance driven, a car-sharing program can save members up to 70 percent of their total transportation costs.

In addition to providing transportation options, the profits generated from the partnership will be put back into DCHA communities to continue to support resident-centered programming. The new Zipcars will live at Elvans Court, Greenleaf Gardens, Knox Hill Regency House, Potomac Gardens Senior and Stoddert Terrace; the cars will be available for anyone who is a Zipcar member.

Park Morton's Newest Ambassador

There is a good chance that when Park Morton resident A'Tira High starts seventh grade this fall, she will have the best "what I did for my summer vacation" essay of not only her class, but the whole student body at Mary McLeod Bethune Public Charter School.

High will be on cloud nine this summer as a youth ambassador with People to People.

She is more than worthy of the honor. At 12 years old, she is already proficient in Spanish and sign language and is studying Latin. She will be going to England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales for 19 days this summer, her itinerary includes touring historic sites and also meeting with public officials.

Her mother, Shonta High, said when the opportunity presented itself she knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime event, and too good to pass up. She raised money for her daughter by baking and selling cupcakes, and she said the support she got from fellow Park Morton residents was truly amazing.

She said while A'Tira is the family's first international academic scholar, she will not be the last. She reminds her daughter that, just like their last name, the sky is the limit.



If you have any good news you would like to share for a future issue of Excel contact Cymando Henley at 202-535-2805 or an email to chenley@dchousing.org



This spring you received a letter announcing the next phase of DCHA's "Sustaining Healthy Communities" campaign in your neighborhood.

By now you should be using the designated recycling containers located near the trash receptacles for your glass, paper and plastic.

This summer staff from the Office of Resident Services, in partnership with the Department of Sustainability at the University of the District of Columbia and your resident council leadership will be visiting meetings to discuss our new recycling and training program.

We will also be recruiting for new "Green Hat" patrol! I look forward to all of our sites being "green" and I look forward to your participation!

For more information Informational contact your resident council or your management office.

LET'S ALL DO OUR PART TO SAVE THE PLANET!



If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your rental office or call the DCHA Customer Call Center at 202-535-1000.

Doing Your B.E.S.T. (doesn't end with summer)

Jennifer Guy will spend her third summer working with the DYB program. The difference, this time, is she is helping run the program, giving current participants the same guidance and encouragement she received for two years as a participant.

Guy is a 2012 graduate from the University of North Carolina (UNC), where she majored in Anthropology with a minor in African American Studies. She attended UNC on a full scholarship, with a portion of her aid coming from DCHA's Commitment to Excellence Scholarship.

A native Washingtonian and 2008 graduate of McKinley Tech, Guy was eligible for the DYB program since her mom was a Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) participant—the program is only open to youth from public housing or HCVP participant homes. She credits the program for helping her get to where she is today. She is the first person in her immediate family to go straight into college after graduating high school.

"DYB was my first job experience so everything I learned about professionalism, I learned in DYB," she said. She highlighted the interviewing skills and the strong work ethic she learned in the program as being the most beneficial parts for her, and said it was easy for her to say yes when she was offered the job as DYB youth employment specialist.

"I know I can act as a mentor since I've now been on both sides of the program, and I can really relate to their experiences," she said. "Now that I'm working behind the scenes, I see how much time and energy it takes to match the more than 80 participants with 26 host sites throughout the District."

Yvonne Harvey, Social Services Manager in the Office of Resident Services and Guy's supervisor for the summer, spoke of her dedication to the program. "Jennifer really hit the ground running," she said. "She has been coming home since April to interview and make sure everything



Jennifer Guy pictured with her uncle Robert Walker; he was one of 17 family members to travel to UNC for her graduation.

she will be starting a mortuary science program at UDC and next year she plans to begin her master's in forensic science.

Opportunity of a Lifetime

When Hopkins Apartments resident Susie Tate heard about DCHA's new partnership with Great Schools, she knew it was worth looking into. Capitol Hill Day School (CHDS) has partnered with DCHA to reserve some spots for low-income residents.

The students still have to go through the application process and pass entrance exams just like all other applicants, but their tuition is waived upon their acceptance. Tate saw an opportunity for her daughter, six-year-old Shania.

The elder Tate said she was focused on Shania's success even before she was born. She said as soon as she found out she was pregnant, she began doing all the things necessary to make sure she would have a healthy baby. She even started playing classical music, because she heard it helps with the development of children's brains. So of course, when this new opportunity came up, she jumped on it.



Family Services Coordinator Iris McLaurin-Southall (left) is all smiles as she poses with Shania and Susie Tate.

"It was a lot of paperwork," said Tate when asked about the application for the scholarship. "A lot of parents dropped out." Tate was determined to go through with the process, saying that Shania was at the top of her class at Friendship with a 4.0 GPA, but wasn't being challenged enough.

Not only did Shania have to take an entrance exam, she also had to spend a day in a classroom and attend some meetings as well.

Tate said the most impressive thing was the eighth graders conducting the school tours. "They were extremely well spoken and really good at presenting; I knew they were ready for high school."

When they received the notification that Shania was accepted, Tate wasn't surprised, "I knew my daughter was going to pass the test," she said.

The scholarships are awarded based on academic performance and teacher recommendations. The teacher of the class Shania visited said she believes Shania will thrive at that school.

Shania is very excited about her new school, saying that she will miss her friends at Friendship, but that she has already started making friends at her new school. She will have another chance to get a head start on the friend making, as she will attend the CHDS Summer Camp from July 30th through August 10th. The cost of the camp is also covered in the scholarship. Susie Tate is the most excited, because Shania will be able to attend CHDS through eighth grade, and Tate believes this is the first step in Shania's life of success.