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Did You Know . . .

DCHA provides TTY service to our residents through DC Relay. The number to DC Relay is (202) 855-1234.

From the Interim Executive Director

Greetings!

You've been seeing and hearing many commercials for the US Census 2010. I cannot stress enough how important the 2010 Census is for us in the District of Columbia. The federal government uses the counts to determine how much money to provide to states and DC for schools, transportation, health care and other major programs.

DC can't get its fair share of federal tax funds if we don't all fill in our census forms and put them in the mail. The count also is used by city planners to determine areas of the city which need additional social services or facilities. The Census Bureau cannot share an individual's information with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement. So please fill in your form and mail it in.

If you haven't mailed it in by early April, you will get a visit from a Census staff member. This person can answer questions and help you fill in your form.

After the record snowfalls this winter, I'm sure everybody is ready for good dose of spring. And there was a positive outcome to those storms: we saw how close our DCHA family is. In my tours of our properties, I saw residents helping each other dig out and checking in with older or home-bound neighbors.

I also was extremely proud of the work of our operations staff members -- including mechanics, laborers, foremen and property management employees -- who showed up for work during the weekend and provided excellent service to our residents.

As spring blossoms, so do activities at DCHA. Our Do Your BEST Summer Youth Employment Program will be back for its 13th summer. Our nonprofit, Community Vision Inc., will have another round of scholarships for residents seeking higher education. I anticipate being able to break ground on our new Sheridan Station HOPE VI development as well as cut the ribbon on our newly renovated Williston Apartments. Of course, our hard work continues at each of our public housing sites as we install "green" products and beautify our common spaces.

I have been visiting various communities over the past several months and have attended Resident Council and managers' meetings. I encourage you to continue to get involved and stay involved at your property. Your opinion matters! We want to hear from you about your ideas and concerns.

My best to you and your families.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Todman
Interim Executive Director



Adrienne Todman
Interim Executive Director



May Appointed DCHA Board Chair

In December 2009, Mayor Adrian Fenty appointed LaRuby May as the Chairperson of the DCHA Board of Commissioners. Ms. May is the Executive Director for Vision of Victory Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization that serves children and families in Southeast DC. The organization currently is building an affordable 140-unit building for seniors in Ward 8. She is a Florida native who relocated to the District in 1997 to complete graduate studies at George Washington University.

After receiving her master's in education and human development, she started the Gift Family Resource

Center, a nonprofit organization that assisted underserved and under-resourced children and families in Southeast DC.

Ms. May earned a Juris Doctorate from the University of the District of Columbia Law School and served an internship as a Constituent Services Director in the office of Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry. She is a member of the Florida and District of Columbia Bar Associations. She was nominated to the Board by Mayor Adrian Fenty in May 2009. Ms. May replaced Bill Slover as the Chairperson: Mr. Slover remains on the board.



DCHA Board of Commissioners
Chairperson LaRuby May

Commissioner Vann-Ghasri Tapped for HUD Talks

When the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) wanted to know how to better serve public housing residents across our country, they turned to some of their most knowledgeable resources: public housing residents. DCHA Resident Commissioner Aquarius Vann-Ghasri was one of approximately thirty public housing residents selected from around the country to participate in a special meeting with Shaun Donovan, Secretary of HUD and other senior staff.

Some of the goals of the January 20th meeting included obtaining feedback from residents on the future of public housing and on ways to maintain public housing residents' voices as policy proposals move forward. HUD was also looking for ways to build a more engaged and informed group of public housing residents with an ongoing and mean-

ingful role in HUD policies and programs.

Commissioner Vann-Ghasri was selected to participate in these special talks based on her connections locally with public housing residents and resident organizations; her ability to network and obtain information about issues and conditions in public housing; and, her interest and understanding and on public housing policies.

"The meetings were very productive. It was great to meet so many dedicated public housing residents from around the country. We got some good work done and really gave



HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan (center) poses with residents at the special meeting held in January.

HUD some things to think about." Commissioner Vann-Ghasri said of the meetings. Debra Frazier, DCHA Housing Choice Voucher participant and former Arthur Capper resident, also participated in the meetings.



Resident Graduates “Get it Right”

Hard work certainly does pay off, and the graduates of DCHA's Section 3 Workforce Development Program know this firsthand. On February 26, 15 participants completed a training program on construction skills.

The program was conceived and developed by Alphonzo Malone. His construction company, “Get it Right” Home Improvement, has been in operation for three years. Mr. Malone is a DC native from Southeast and has been doing home improvement since he was nine years old. Malone saw a need to develop job skills for residents and approached DCHA about addressing it.

“I did this because I know what it's like not to have a job. I wanted to get people off of the street, build up their morale and self esteem and help get them the skills needed to get jobs in the construction industry. I have a heart for people, and this was God's calling for me to do,” explained Mr. Malone.



Alphonzo Malone with the graduates of DCHA's Section 3 Workforce Development Program.

Mr. Malone used his own money to fund the pilot program to develop a working model. It is his hope that the city will be able to provide funding to continue the program.

The training was intense; 26 residents started the program and 15 completed it. The graduates were trained with a hands-on approach in blueprint reading, framing, brick laying, drywall,

painting and plastering, plumbing and electric, windows, roofing, siding and duct work.

With their newly acquired skills, the resident graduates are now ready to work on construction job sites across the city. Mr. Malone has hired eight of the graduates at “Get it Right” Home Improvement and the rest are interviewing for jobs.

Commitment to Excellence Scholarship Program

Each year, the District of Columbia Housing Authority, in partnership with Community Vision, Inc., awards scholarships to public housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents who have a strong commitment to their communities. This year, up to \$25,000 in scholarships and other educational assistance will be awarded. The schol-

arships can be used for books, tuition, supplies, equipment or any other school-related expenses. There is no age restriction. Eligible residents must plan to enroll in a college, university, or trade/technical school during the 2010 - 2011 academic year or currently be enrolled in post-secondary educational and/or employment training

programs that are offered at colleges, universities, trade schools, or technical schools. The deadline to submit completed application packets is FRIDAY, MAY 28TH. For more information please contact the Office of Resident Services at (202) 535-1517 or visit our website at www.dchousing.org.



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of those addresses and records the answers to the questions on the form

♦ If no one answers at a particular residence, a census taker will visit that home up to three times, each time leaving a door hanger featuring a phone number; residents can call the number on the hanger to schedule the visit

The census taker will ONLY ask the questions that appear on the census form.

Do I have to talk to the census taker? Yes. Your participation in the 2010 Census is vital and required by law. Your privacy and confidentiality is the Census Bureau's priority. By law, the census taker and Census

Bureau can not share any individual's information including federal, state and local agencies.

DC Mayor Adrian Fenty estimates that we undercounted the population of DC by 31,000 people in 2000. For each person who went uncounted, the district lost about \$3,500 each year for the past 10 years. That is a very conservative estimate of over one billion dollars of lost revenue for DC!

With this information, it is easy to see why the task of a more accurate count is so important to us all. These funds will go toward many of our public programs including schools, roads, libraries, and many other public projects.

Here is the spring schedule:

March 2010 - Census forms are

mailed or delivered to households

April 2010 - National Census Day-use this day as a point of reference for sending your completed forms back in the mail

April - July 2010 - Census takers visit households that did not return a form by mail

If you have questions about the 2010 Census on your property call please contact the Office of Resident Services at 202-535-1517.

To apply for 2010 Census jobs please call (866) 861-2010 visit www.2010censusjobs.gov or www.census.dc.gov

Make DC Count! Participate in the 2010 Census!

New Equipment Powers DCHA

The DCHA Motor Pool got some serious muscle added to its team in February. It came in the form of 33 new vehicles designed to help DCHA deliver better and faster services to residents.

Robert Magruder, Transportation Officer, took some time to show EXCEL the new vehicles and explain what each

one will be used for. Here is the breakdown: 20 Ford F-350 Super Duty trucks (18 equipped with front end plows and two designed as welder units), nine one-ton utility work vans (to be used by plumbers,



Robert Magruder, Transportation Officer, poses with one of DCHA's new Ford F-350 Super Duty trucks.

carpenters and electricians), two Ford F-250 Crew Cab pick-up trucks (for use by supervisors) and 2 Ford Escape Hybrid SUVs (for general use).

"This delivery of top-of-the-line

equipment replaces some aging units that were in our fleet. These new trucks and vans will give us less down time and allow staff to work more efficiently," explained Magruder.

Some of the new vehicles were already put to the test. The F-350 Super Duty trucks with front end plows saw major service dur-

ing the double snow storms in early February. When asked how the new trucks performed, Mr. Magruder simply replied: "Superbly."



DCHA Battles Largest Snowfall in History

The Washington DC Metro Area got hit with a one-two punch of winter weather in February. The first storm blew into town February 5 and dumped about two feet of snow in 48 hours. Four days later on February 10, a second storm dropped 18 more inches of snow. While the city was basically at a stand still, DCHA crews were hard at work keeping our 50 developments open and operational.

“We ran extra shifts and our personnel worked around the clock to make certain that our clients in public housing had safe passage from their front doors to the street,” said DCHA Interim Executive Director Adrienne Todman. “We plowed each of the developments, and we had staff available to successfully address heating, water and other mechanical emergencies caused by

the storms.”

“DCHA’s operations staff members provided excellent service to our residents,” added LaRuby May, Chairperson of the DCHA Board of Commissioners. “I am proud of the commitment of our essential personnel to ensure the safety of our residents.”

The success in these back-to-back storms can be attributed to DCHA’s fleet personnel who kept snow blowers, Bobcats and trucks with plows or spreaders operating throughout the storms and traveled



Workers take a break from digging out a DCHA vehicle.

around the region as far as Baltimore to buy additional salt. DCHA also hired 25 public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher Program participants to work during the storms to enhance staff snow removal efforts.

DCHA Gives Big Gift of Love



DC Council Chairman Vincent Gray, Interim DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman and DCHA Board Chair LaRuby May pose with Santa, Mrs. Claus and Fort Dupont residents Latika and Connell Proctor. The Proctor children were sponsored by DCHA staffers Belinda Blount and Leslie Jackson.

Employees at DCHA opened their hearts and wallets this past holiday season to help out those less fortunate. DCHA’s “Gift of Love” campaign encourages DCHA employees and friends of DCHA to support a public housing or HCVP family by purchasing needed gift items for children whose families are under significant economic hardship.

Families are identified based on need and compliance. Each year the Office of Resident Services collaborates with the Special Programs Division of the Housing Choice Voucher Program to carry out this project. A total of 258 children were the recipients of gifts this year, 179 from public housing and 79 were

from HCVP. In all, 150 DCHA staff served as individual sponsors. This year 71 children were sponsored by non-DCHA employees.

On December 22, 2009, the selected families came to DCHA at designated times to receive their gifts and the children had the opportunity to meet their sponsors and take pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus (a.k.a. DCHA employees Richard Congo and Dorothea Roundtree).

The Gift of Love program is made possible year after year only from the generous support of employees and friends who sponsored a child, donated a book or toy, wrote a check, or donated time to help in some way.



Domestic Violence and Housing: Know Your Rights

Are you having problems with your housing because of domestic violence? This article outlines important ways in which DC and federal laws protect you if you are a victim of domestic violence and tells you where to get help.

Termination of your lease: If you need to terminate your lease to be safe, you can do so with 30 days notice to your landlord. You will still owe 30 days of rent but nothing after that. You will need to give your landlord a letter stating that you are leaving and ending your lease because of domestic violence, give it a copy of your protection order, fill out a vacate form at your landlord's management office and turn in your keys to management. If you do not have a protective order, you can use instead a letter from the police, a domestic violence advocate or counselor, a health professional or DCHA that states you are a victim of domestic violence. Your landlord can not keep your security deposit just because you terminated your lease early to escape domestic violence.

Evictions: It is illegal for a landlord to evict you because you are the victim of domestic violence. To raise domestic violence as a defense to an eviction, it will help if you have a protection order. It is likely that you will not be evicted, if you were not the perpetrator of the domestic violence. If a member of your household caused the violence, the court may evict that person from

your household but not the entire family. You may not be evicted because your abuser caused damage to the unit or for criminal activity related to the domestic violence, unless you were the perpetrator of the domestic violence.

safe from domestic violence, your landlord must change them within 5 days of your written request to him or you may immediately change the lock and provide a copy of the key to your landlord. You will need to pay your landlord back for the cost of the lock change within 45 days, if the landlord changes the lock.

Get free legal help now for any of these problems!!!

Call:

- ◆ Bread for the City
265-2400
- ◆ DC Law Students in Court
638-4798
- ◆ Legal Aid Society
628-1161
- ◆ Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
328-5500

Public Housing and Section 8: All these rights apply in public housing, in Section 8 housing, and in regular private housing, but you have some extra rights in Section 8 and public housing. For example, if you need to move out of public housing right away because of domestic violence, you can ask DCHA for a public safety emergency transfer. You may not be transferred immediately because you will be placed on the public safety emergency transfer waiting list with other residents based on the date and time that you made your written transfer request to DCHA.

If you live in Section 8 housing and are in danger, you can request a transfer voucher to rent another unit. If you are the only person who signed the lease and the person who abused you is on your public housing lease as a permitted occupant, you can ask DCHA to remove the person from the family composition and if necessary ask DCHA to evict that person. If only the person who abused you signed the lease, you can ask DCHA to evict that person and put the lease and voucher into your name instead.

Discrimination: You cannot be treated differently because you are a domestic violence victim. For example: A landlord cannot force you to leave your home, refuse to make repairs, refuse to rent to you, or tell you not to call the police. If you believe you have been discriminated against, call the DC Office of Human Rights at 727-4559.

Lock Change and Safety: If you need your locks changed to be



Summer Jobs

Applications are now available for the 2010 Do Your B.E.S.T. (DYB) Summer Employment Program. The DYB Program provides summer job opportunities to public housing youth, ages 14- 18. Additionally, youth are engaged in teambuilding, leadership development, academic enrichment, and community service activities. The 2010 program dates are June 21st - August 13th.

Applications are available at the following locations:

- ◆ DCHA Office of Resident Services (1133 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 325)
- ◆ DCHA Housing Choice Voucher Program (1133 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 100)
- ◆ DCHA website: www.dchousing.org (click on Resident Services; then go to Do Your B.E.S.T. Summer Youth Employment Program)
- ◆ Resident Council offices (public housing sites)
- ◆ Housing Management Offices (public housing sites)

The deadline to submit applications is Friday, April 23rd.
For more information, contact the Office of Resident Services at
(202) 535-1517.

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WASHINGTON DC

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





Commitment to Excellence

April 2010

DCHA Aims to Make Census Count in DC

The 2010 Census is upon us and DCHA plans to make everybody count. On Wednesday, March 24, 2010, DCHA staff members fanned out across the city to visit properties and raise awareness about the importance of participating in the census. Proudly wearing their “Count Me In” census t-shirts, 150 DCHA staff members met with residents, posted informational material and handed out fliers in an effort to drive home the importance of completing and mailing back the census form.

The 2010 Census aims to count all U.S. residents-citizens and non-citizens alike. To accomplish this, the Census Bureau delivers a short, 10-question form to every household in America and requires that you fill in the form to account for everyone living at your address as of April 1, 2010. Then mail it back in the prepaid envelope as soon as



DCHA Interim Executive Director Adrienne Todman visits Shirley Richardson at Langston Terrace to talk about the 2010 Census.

possible. **(NOTE: YOU CANNOT FILL OUT THE FORM ONLINE.)**

The 2010 Census form is shorter and easier to fill out. There are only 10 questions, such as: name, sex, age date of birth, Hispanic origin, race, household relationship and if you own or rent. **The census does not ask about the legal status of respondents or their Social Security numbers.**

For residences that do not fill out the form and mail it back by April 1, the Census Bureau will send a census taker to

those houses to get the information. A census taker is a person from your community who is hired by the Census Bureau to make sure that your neighborhood gets represented as accurately as possible.

- ♦ The Census Bureau provides the census taker with a binder containing all of the addresses that didn't send back a filled out census form

- ♦ The census taker then visits all

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DCHA staff members pose for a group photo before heading out to the properties.

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