



Hope VI Residents



‘Dare To Repair’

Julie Sussman and Stephanie Glakas-Tenet teach DCHA residents the foundations of do-it-yourself home repair.

In February, the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), Home Depot and noted authors, Julie Sussman and Stephanie Glakas-Tenet, authors of “Dare to Repair” a Do-It-Yourself guide, hosted a HOPE VI Homebuyer workshop for women in public housing, to encourage first-time homeowners to use a you-can-do-it approach to fix-it jobs so that they can make home repairs on their own.

The workshop, held at the Washington Convention Center, taught HOPE VI-inspired homeowners how to make repairs without the assistance of plumbers or other paid experts, with the goal of erasing the stigma and intimidation that women particularly feel about the do-it-yourself approach towards repair.

“This workshop is a prime example of how DCHA is committed to providing the tools that our residents need to succeed in life,” said Michael Kelly, executive director of the Housing Authority.

“It is self-sufficiency programs like these that empower our residents with the necessary life skills that help them grow both personally and professionally.”

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DC Housing Authority Applies for HOPE VI Funds

The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) plans to to its HOPE VI program with a redevelopment designed to show the positive effects quality affordable housing can have on an entire community.

The DCHA recently applied for a \$20 million HOPE VI grant to rebuild Eastgate Gardens, a former public housing community in Northeast Washington, DC, into a model mixed-income neighborhood.

If the DCHA receives the requested funding, it will be combined with contributions from various public and private investors, totaling more than \$74 million.

The intended revitalization plans for Eastgate have affected the entire Marshall Heights neighborhood in which it lies.

As a result of the anticipated Eastgate renovations, redevelopment has begun or is scheduled to begin at 14 other sites including Amber Overlook, a multi-block, 11-building, 141-unit property, adjacent to the Eastgate site.

AmeriDream Charities purchased the vacant and boarded up property for approximately \$17 million. Eight of the buildings will be razed and the other three will be rehabilitated to convert the property into a 100-unit mixed-income community.

“One of the primary goals of my Administration is to provide District residents with access to quality, affordable housing,” said Mayor Anthony A. Williams.

“The award of this HOPE VI grant for the rebuilding of the Eastgate community is critical to the revitalization of the Marshall Heights neighborhood and will provide many new opportunities for residents of the area.”

That revitalization includes funding totaling \$28 million to the redevelopment initiative plus \$20 million for a new school in the neighborhood committed by Mayor Williams.

The most impressive part of the redevelopment effort is the partnership DCHA has developed with former Def Jam/Def Soul President Kevin Liles. Working with Liles, the Housing Authority received a commitment from the

RUSH Conglomerate founded by Russell Simmons (which included Def Jam/Def Soul Records as well as the Phat Farm and Baby Phat clothing lines) to provide operating support for the Community Arts Center the Authority is building there.

The center will be used by Eastgate residents and other community members for empowerment and self-sufficiency programs. It will offer an innovative opportunity to link between at-risk youth and the cultural arts as a deterrent to delinquent behavior by helping young people find career paths that interest them.

Funds will be provided for yearly operating costs, consulting and technical assistance to help with the design and set-up of the music recording studio, fashion design studio and performing arts theater.

The new Eastgate will be a 269-unit mixed-income community with 108 homeownership units, 61 public housing rental units and a 100-unit senior building. The homeownership units will be a mix of single-family homes, town homes, grand homes and duplexes, and prices will range from moderate to market-rate.



Kevin Liles

# Dear Community Partner,

It's hard to believe that we are already in the month of March. The year began on a busy note and the pace has yet to slow down. When you last received this publication, I shared my thoughts on the successes at Henson Ridge, the newest DCHA HOPE VI community. We continue to be excited about our progress there and we are hoping that HUD will be supportive of our latest HOPE VI proposal for the Eastgate site located on Benning Road in Northeast Washington.

Our Eastgate proposal, which we submitted in January, includes the construction of 169 homeownership and rental units on the site and another 100 off-site elderly units. We have also formed partnerships with multiple public and private entities to provide a comprehensive self-sufficiency program for residents. This includes a special partnership with Def Jam-Def Soul Records to establish a state of the art recording and training facility for community youth. You can read more about this exciting proposal in a separate story in this newsletter.

Additionally, the Benning Terrace community, which is not too far from the proposed Eastgate site, was acknowledged by the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise as a model for reducing violence and repairing public housing communities. Congratulations to everyone that has played a role in keeping the peace in this neighborhood.

It was also in January that Madison Jenkins resigned as chief of the Authority's Police Department to experience that wonderful, but sometimes elusive, state of existence called retirement. We wish him well and thank him for his exceptional leadership. He left the office in good hands, though, as Interim Chief William Pittman has done an excellent job thus far in his new post.

I am also pleased to share with you some of our accomplishments in helping low and moderate income families become homeowners. Recently, we successfully closed on our first home purchase under the new Housing Choice Voucher/Home Ownership Assistance Program (HCV/HOAP). Under HCV/HOAP, Housing Choice Voucher Program participants use their voucher subsidy as a portion of a mortgage payment, instead of rent. We expect this program will help hundreds of families become homeowners, and we are working closely with residents to get them prepared for this investment. Our first homeowner is a senior, and I know she will inspire many more residents.

We have also completed our conversion of the Frontiers development into a homeownership community. Frontiers was built in 1974 as a public housing development on four riot-damaged sites in the Shaw community in Northwest DC, not too far from the campus of Howard University. Through the collaboration of DCHA and Manna, Inc., all 54 units have been sold, some to original Frontiers residents, at a price range of \$89,000 to \$142,000. DCHA is very proud to have played a role in helping these families purchase a home in the District given the location of these units and the tight market in the city.

Along the same theme, DCHA recently held a "Dare to Repair" workshop. In the workshop, public housing residents planning to become first-time homeowners learned how to make home repairs on their own. DCHA partnered with Home Depot and Julie Sussman and Stephanie Glakas-Tenet, the authors of "Dare to Repair," a Do-It-Yourself guide to fixing (almost) anything in the home, for this important workshop. These authors have received national recognition for this great book, and we plan to hold additional workshops as an additional means of empowering our future homeowners.

Even in the height of winter, DCHA has already had a fruitful year. Much thanks to our business partners and resident leaders on helping us make it all happen.

Sincerely,

*DCHA Executive Director Michael Kelly and senior staff members recently met with HUD Inspector General Kenneth Donohue (c) to discuss collaborative efforts to prevent incidents of crime and fraud in the public housing and HCV programs. Pictured (back left) are Rudolph Haban, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations; Kenneth M. Donohue, Michael Kelly, Ken Taylor, Assistant Special Agent and DCHA senior staff members.*



Michael Kelly

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## Commissioner Profile



Commissioner Jacqueline West

Commissioner Jacqueline West has dedicated her life to public service. The native Washingtonian and Dunbar Sr. High School graduate was born on the 4th of July.

Elected to the District of Columbia Housing Authority's (DCHA) Board of Commissioners in June of 2003, Commissioner West began her career in government more than 30 years ago, working as a crossing guard for the D.C. Public School system, an ANC leader (ANC 6B), a reservist in the corps of the Metropolitan Police Department and an employee of the United States Postal Service.

Prior to being elected to the Board of Commissioners, she served as Vice Chair of the DCHA City-Wide Advisory Board and President of the Resident Council of the Potomac Gardens housing development for 15 years.

Commissioner West currently resides at Potomac Gardens and has been a resident there for more than 37 years.

A staunch advocate of youth issues, Commissioner West is a former PTA president for Hine Jr. High School. From 1985 to 1993, she managed the Potomac Gardens Recreation Center. She also worked to ensure summer employment for underprivileged youths of Ward 6 during her tenure as an ANC leader.

She sees being a newly-elected member of the Board as challenging and vows to make a difference. "This is a challenge to me. Because I am a good communicator and a people person, I think I can make some positive changes," she said.

"I want DCHA to be aware of all public housing communities, making sure that everyone has a 501 (c) (3) plan. I would also like to see an increase in security and public safety on the public housing sites as well as an increase in recreation, including more family involvement, such as workshops on parenting skills."

## Dare to Repair ... continued

Sussman, the wife of a CIA employee and Glakas-Tenet, the wife of the CIA director, both began doing their own home repairs when they tired of living with leaky faucets, sticky locks, and blown fuses.

Since their busy husbands were never home to fix things, they learned their way around the toolbox and taught themselves how to make repairs.

Now they share with others, what they've learned, through "Dare to Repair," called the only home repair manual any woman will ever need.

During the workshop, residents were given a list of repairs to be made that ranged from plumbing, electricity, appliances, windows, walls and doors and home safety among others.

They were also provided with books and tools that gave helpful hints in making the repairs. Home Depot provided the equipment for the workshop.



Stephanie Glakas-Tenet works with Dorthea Ferrell, one of three Resident Commissioners on the Housing Authority's Board.

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## DCHA at a Glance

### Mission

To provide and effectively manage housing which is affordable, diverse, well maintained, and aesthetically pleasing

### Leadership

#### Board Commissioners

Chairman: Russell Simmons  
Vice Chair: Lynn Cunningham,  
Marcie Cohen  
Dorothea Ferrell  
Ken Grossinger  
Frank Lancaster  
Fernando Lemos  
Eric Price

Jacqueline West

#### Executive Director

Michael Kelly

### Number of Employees

900

### Budget

Consolidated budget: \$250 million

### Number of Developments

58

### Total Number of Units

9230

### Number of Residents

25,000 (Public Housing)  
25,000 (Housing Choice Voucher Program)

### Waiting List

17,000 (Public Housing)  
26,000 (Rental Assistance)

### The Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program

11,766 (Total number)  
8,966 (Tenant-based)  
2,800 (Project-based)



*In a combined effort, the MPD and DCHAPD make a showing at the Kenilworth/Parkside community.*

## DCHA Police Force Presence In Communities

With a staff of 162 which includes 43 police officers, the District of Columbia Housing Authority's Police Department (DCHAPD) is a force to reckon with.

While the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) has primary public safety responsibility for the District residents that live in public housing, the DCHA officers compliment these efforts and maintain law and order on DCHA public housing sites and are fundamental to the overall

property management operation of the Housing Authority.

The DCHAPD is currently under the command of Deputy Chief William L. Pittman, who replaced Chief Madison Jenkins, Jr. who retired from the department in January.

Pittman will serve as interim chief until a new chief is appointed.

Last year, crime decreased 13 percent in public housing communities and Pittman says it's largely due to the well-trained staff

of officers. "We are a committed police department," he said. "We consider ourselves to be a vital part of the community."

Over the years, the DCHAPD has implemented several crime prevention strategies that improved the quality of life for the residents and brought national acclaim to the DCHA.

Operation Shoe Drop was implemented to remove shoes of slain persons from power lines.

Operation Bark and Bite decreased the number of vicious dogs from DCHA properties.

Operation Zip Lock was created to target illegal drug sells on DCHA properties and Operation Hook and Tow was responsible for the removal of many abandoned or stolen vehicles from DCHA properties.

Pittman, who joined DCHAPD in 1996 as a Lieutenant, graduated from George Mason University with a degree in Law Enforcement. He retired from the MPD after 25 years of service and is a Reservist Sgt. Major of the U.S. Army.

Since then, he has trained officers, developed training mechanisms, and assisted with designing uniforms for the department.

DCHAPD was created in 1995 to insure security for residents of public housing through community policing

## DCHA Honored For Role In National Initiative

The National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise recently acknowledged the District of Columbia Housing Authority for its work in the Benning Terrace development.

The Violence-Free Zone initiative has its origins in 1997, when violent crime in the Benning Terrace public housing development escalated to an all-time high.

NCNE worked with a grassroots group called the Alliance of Concerned Men to effect a truce, and then partnered with the DC Housing Authority to provide job training, employment opportunities, and life skills counseling.

The young men in the community not only stopped the violence,

they were instrumental in cleaning up their community with activities such as cleaning graffiti off the buildings.

"This turn-around is an example of what a community can do when they come together," said Charles Penny, youth coordinator at Benning Terrace.

The improvements at Benning Terrace show that developments can also be fixed without being replaced.

There have been no incidents between participants since the program's inception.

Violence-Free Zones can now be found in Dallas, Atlanta, Bir-



*Vernon Wise, DCHA Maintenance Worker at Lincoln Heights and former Benning Terrace resident, talks to the press about the struggle that youth in Benning Terrace faced and how the complex was turned around through collaborative efforts.*

mingham, Indianapolis, Milwaukee and Youngstown, OH.