The Providence Housing Authority (PHA) was proud to be honored by our friends from the Boys and Girls Club (BGC) of Providence as a “Partner in Philanthropy” at the Association of Fundraising Professional’s “National Philanthropy Day” luncheon on November 23, 2010.

The BGC nominated the PHA for our agency’s dedication to improving the lives of children in public housing and the City of Providence. In these challenging economic times, PHA has helped increase services to some of the City’s most needy children by collaborating to open three new Boys & Girls Club sites in public housing. Together with the BGC, PHA makes it possible to bring critical programs and services to children who need it most.

PHA Receives $250,000 Grant for Security Cameras

The PHA has been awarded $250,000 from a HUD Emergency Safety and Security Funding grant. This money is being utilized to upgrade the security system infrastructure and to add security cameras in the family developments and the high-rises.

The new cameras obtained through this grant are being strategically placed to enhance the current camera coverage in Manton Heights, Hartford Park and Codding Court.

All of the high-rises have had cameras installed to cover the lobby areas, specifically to monitor people entering the building through the main lobby doors. Additionally exterior cameras located at the high-rises have been upgraded to more modern cameras that enhance clarity of the images being recorded.

To monitor the cameras, two additional monitoring screens were added in the Security Office. Through the use of the four screens several developments or problem areas can be viewed at the same time.

Since initial installation of the camera system and with the expansion of the system the Providence Police Public Housing Unit along with the PHA Security Department have utilized these cameras to detect and investigate criminal activity. The PHA has determined that these cameras have been instrumental in effectively reducing crime and criminal activity in the PHA developments.

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On Tuesday, December 7th, youth enrolled in the after school program, run in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of Providence at the PHA’s Thomas J. Anton Community Center in Hartford Park, got a treat when New England Patriots running backs BenJarvus Green-Ellis and Fred Taylor paid a surprise visit to their center. Taylor and Green-Ellis helped staff serve dinner and talked to a group of about 50 children about the importance of eating healthy, taking care of their bodies, studying hard and never giving up no matter the situation.

“The kids brought a big smile to my face,” said Green-Ellis. “It’s a pleasure just to be in their presence to see them going through things and just to light up when we came in here. I wish I had a Boys & Girls Club when I was growing up, so for me to come out and experience what the Boys & Girls Club was all about was just great. This was more of an experience for me than it was for them.”

“We’re just trying to enlighten the kids and more so to inspire,” said Taylor, who has five kids of his own, ranging in age from one to 16. “I just tell them that this is how I came up. It’s no secret and I think anytime you have the opportunity to get out there and share it, partake in that with them, and allow them to touch you, feel you and see you, you just inspire hope. It’s always good having these opportunities.”

Their message was well received, said Robert Brooks, president of the board of governors of the Boys & Girls Club of Providence, who was also on hand to help in the kitchen.

“To the kids it was an opportunity to meet a real life hero,” said Brooks. “A lot of these kids follow sports and follow the Patriots, so for the Patriots to come here is like a dream come true for them. They also get to see that they’re real people like them. They had to go through the same trials and tribulations — studying in school, eating the right things, never giving up, so I think it’s great that they could come here and give that message to the kids.”

In 2008, the Providence Boys & Girls Club and the Providence Housing Authority established a partnership to better serve children and youth in the Hartford Park development and surrounding neighborhood. Last year, the partnership expanded to Chad Brown and Manton Heights; currently, close to 500 youth have access to academic assistance, enrichment programming and organized sports and recreation during critical out of school time.

“We try to expose the kids to different types of success in the community... Every kid is different so we try to expose them to broad range of experiences and opportunities.”
- Robert Brooks, president of the board of governors of the Boys & Girls Club of Providence

“We try to expose the kids to different types of success in the community,” said Brooks. “Sometimes it’s people who have done well in sports. We also, for our teens, try to expose them to different types of work opportunities like meeting professionals who have done well. We also work with some of the trade unions for those kids that might have an aptitude for carpentry or electric work or plumbing work or something like that. Every kid is different so we try to expose them to broad range of experiences and opportunities.”
PHA is proud to present the winners of the **Fire Safety Poster Contest**, October 2010. These young boys and girls demonstrated their artistic and conceptual talent by creating posters showing the importance of fire alarms for the theme “Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with.”

During **Fire Prevention Week**, Housing Authority Insurance Group (HAI Group) teamed with the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) and local fire departments to sponsor this annual contest. Professional artist, **Stuart Wilson**, worked with the children to develop their ideas and help translate them into posters. Besides being a fun project, this contest serves as an educational tool for all the participants to discuss and demonstrate their knowledge of fire safety, which in turns helps reduce the chances of fire in our developments. Winners were awarded prizes in all three age categories. Congratulations to all the winners!!

**Welcome Back Angel and Joshua**

PHA and Boys & Girls Club (BGC) welcome back **Angel Santiago** and **Joshua Torres** after the unfortunate incident at Manton Heights in November in which these young boys were victims of a shooting. We are happy to report that Joshua made a speedy recovery and that Angel, while still in the process of his recovery, is in good spirits and doing well.

Upon Angel’s return from the hospital, the boys and girls of the **Manton Heights BGC** celebrated their brave recoveries with a welcome home party honoring both boys. Happy to be back with their friends again, Angel and Joshua enjoyed cake, snacks and refreshments after their dinner at the club. We wish a full recovery for both of them!!

**Fire Safety Poster Contest Winners**

- **Manton Heights Winners:**
  - Dae-Quan Perry, 16
  - Adamarelis Quiñones, 10
  - Daniel Luciano, 8

- **Hartford Park Winners:**
  - Gidelisse Sanchez, 10
  - Jordan Robertson, 13
  - Jennifer Ramirez, 7

- **Chad Brown Winner:**
  - Francely Ortiz, 9
Providence Housing Authority celebrates

with the first graduating class of the Providence Green Pathways Jobs Initiative Program!

The Providence Green Pathways program (PGP) is an initiative of the City of Providence in collaboration with Apeiron Institute, Cleanscape/Ecotope, OIC of RI, Amos House, CCRI, Genesis Center, the Providence Housing Authority, and the Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Board.

PGP provides 16 weeks of contextualized literacy training and hands on skills-development that prepares low literacy Providence residents for jobs in the emerging green industry sector.

As we celebrate the success of Cycle I and the 44 graduates, we are beginning Cycle II this month.

Enrollment for Cycle III, which will start on April 11, 2011, will begin in February. For more information about PGP, please contact Ashley Rice, PHA Education and Training Case Manager, at 401 709-6406.

PHA GED Book Discussion Group

The PHA GED class at 50 Laurel Hill Ave has decided that book discussion groups are a fun way to learn about books and share an interest in reading with their classmates. The group offers students the opportunity to talk about what they read and exchange ideas and interpretations of what the author has written.

Students meet every other week to discuss the assigned portion of the book. The first book they read was ‘A Child Called It’ by Dave Pelzer, followed by ‘Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus’ by John Gray. Both books were student suggestions. ‘A Child Called It’ generated an intense discussion on parenting and the rights of parents versus the rights of children. ‘Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus’ inspired students to share their feelings on what makes a relationship work and how men and women communicate. Discussions included students sharing their thoughts on what they found surprising about the facts presented in the books, if reading the books changed their opinion about the topic, and if the author presented the information in an interesting and insightful way.

In January the book group will participate in Reading Across Rhode Island (a project of the Rhode Island Center for the Book at the Providence Public Library) in the state’s community read of “The Unforgiving Minute,” by Craig Mullaney, a native Rhode Islander.

Employee Awards 2010

At its Board of Commissioners Annual Meeting in December, the PHA honored employees who have made a difference in 2010 by providing outstanding service to our residents. Four staff were selected as Employees of the Quarter: Ana Fernandez, Program Representative; Leslie Price, Resident Service Coordinator; Samuel Robinson, Lead Laborer; Larry Giorgi, Carpenter.

A special Service Award went to Thomas Green, Security Guard, for his dedication to maintaining security at Dexter Manor.

This year’s Employee of the Year Runner Up was Sean Pope, Landscape Architect/Property Design Manager. The PHA’s highest employee honor went to Ramona Rodriguez-Mejia, Resident Service Coordinator, as Employee of the Year 2010. Congratulations to all the winners!
Client Success: Osvaldo “Wally” Lora, United States Veteran living the American Dream!

Osvaldo “Wally” Lora has successfully purchased a single family home through PHA’s MY OWN HOME IDA matched savings program. He was able to save and secure $1800 through the IDA program and $2500 from the City of Providence, plus additional assistance through RI Housing, in order to cover down payment and closing costs.

Mr. Lora began credit counseling and the pre-qualification process with PHA’s Homeownership Coordinator, Tara Quinn, in September of 2009. At that time, he did not have sufficient credit but chose to apply for a secured line of credit to establish good credit history and a credit score. Within less than one year, Mr. Lora graduated from the 12 hour homebuyer education class; entered into purchase and sales on a single family home through SWAP; secured Veterans loan financing and first time homebuyer assistance; completed over 9 hours of financial literacy education and counseling; purchased his home and applied for his $8,000 tax credit for first time homebuyers. By May of 2010, he had established good credit, which allowed him access to a low, fixed rate Veterans mortgage loan through RI Housing.

The PHA congratulates Wally on a job well done!!

“By May of 2010, he had established good credit, which allowed him access to a low, fixed rate Veterans mortgage loan through RI Housing.”

GED and ESOL Students Visit the Christmas Tree Shop

It’s become a PHA tradition! Every holiday season the GED and ESOL students from 50 Laurel Hill Avenue visit the Christmas Tree Shop as part of their holiday budgeting lesson. Students look forward to this trip and this year was no exception. On December 2nd, eighteen students attended and made Christmas purchases for their families and friends. In addition to using budgeting strategies, students were able to use their math skills (discounts; percentages) and English speaking skills. Once again, everyone found inexpensive gifts and had a wonderful time.

Pictured from left to right: Ana Fernandez, Leslie Price, Sean Pope, Larry Giorgi, Thomas Green, Ramona Rodriguez-Mejia.
Carroll Tower residents for the first time had the opportunity to participate in Yoga classes this fall. Classes were made possible by a grant from Providence College. With grant funds, the Service Learning Community Assistant, Katie McCann, purchased mats, yoga videos and snacks for participants. Katie donated water bottles for each participant and some were also provided with Spa slippers. Each class began and ended with relaxation music and techniques. An average of 5 participants attend this weekly class.

Do not miss out on this wonderful opportunity to heal your mind and body! A new class will begin this winter....

And keep on the lookout for flyers announcing these upcoming events at Carroll Tower:

- ESL class
- Yoga class
- Movie day
- Blood Pressure Screening
- Health and Insurance presentations
- Social Events

Residents from the Dominica Manor Crime Watch are recognized

Myrtle DeLuca and Lorraine Dipaolo, residents of Dominica Manor, were recognized on September 9, 2010 for their service and dedication to the Dominica Manor Crime Watch (DMCW). PHA Executive Director, Stephen J. O’Rourke, awarded a certificate of appreciation and provided each with a Visa gift card. As members of a resident-run crime watch program, Myrtle and Lorraine take turns ensuring that every visitor signs in and out of the development and pay special attention to any suspicious behavior. The DMCW provides a valuable service to residents of Dominica Manor by enhancing safety in the development.
Congratulations to Luis Vega and to all the participants in the Dexter Manor Health and Wellness Center “Healthy Weight Loss Competition.” The Dexter Manor Health and Wellness Center provides weekly health screenings, health education, and referrals through staffing from Chad Brown Health Center and partnerships with the Rhode Island College School of Nursing and The University of Rhode Island Nutrition Education program. The Center is located in an office provided by Providence Housing Authority off of the community room at Dexter Manor.

During October and November, the Health and Wellness Center ran a mini weight loss competition emphasizing healthy food choices and increasing physical activity. The event was kicked off with a healthy food demonstration and each participant received a pedometer to keep track of their steps for the campaign of move more and move often! A total of fifteen residents participated for the four week session. Each week the participants had their blood pressure checked and were weighed in by the Rhode Island College Nursing student. Residents also received weekly healthy food tips and a presentation about lowering cholesterol during the competition. The last week included a food demo and culminated with the announcement of the winner, Luis Vega - “the biggest looser”. Luis won a $25.00 gift certificate to Price Rite and will surely be using it to make some healthy food choices.

The Chad Brown Health Center was also a winner of the 2010 Governor’s Award for Wellness Innovation for the programming for healthy weight and physical activity.

Cultural Festival at Carroll Tower

Carroll Tower hosted its 3rd Annual Cultural Festival in November. As usual it was a fantastic time; residents, staff and Providence College students enjoyed food, music, dancing and lovely decorations which represented different cultures. Residents ate, danced and socialized with one another. This annual event is a success due to our collaboration with Providence College Service Learning volunteers. The event provides everyone with the opportunity to learn about each other’s culture through food, music and conversation. Congratulations to all of the residents who won a prize during the raffle!
Teen Program Hires Teens!

Ask any of our teens what they really wish they had these days and chances are the first thing they will tell you is “A job!” For two teens at Chad Brown that wish has just come true!

Andrew Berrios-Rivera, age 16, and Jordan Suazo, age 17, have been hired as Athletic Assistants to run gym programs for elementary school age children enrolled in our after school program at Chad Brown. Both residents of Chad Brown, Andrew and Jordan have completed the Providence Boys and Girls Club “Youth Employment Program” and currently volunteer to help run the evening teen program at their site. Andrew is also President of “The Club” - the name given to the new teen program in Chad Brown. Both Andrew and Jordan are outstanding role models for all youth living in Providence and we are happy to have them on board!

COX Donates Computers to Manton Heights

Through our partnership with the Providence Boys and Girls Club, the PHA received a donation from Cox Communications of 8 new computers and chairs for its computer lab at Manton Heights. Connected to the Internet, the lab will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3-6 pm for youth enrolled in our after school program. A big THANK YOU to Cox and the BGC!

New Staff Member

The PHA welcomes the latest member of our youth program team - Dwayne Wilkerson. Dwayne came on board in December as our new Teen Program Coordinator in Chad Brown. Based at the Rudolph Tavares Center, Dwayne will coordinate organized sports and recreation as well as academic assistance and personal development activities for teens enrolled in the PHA/BGC’s evening teen program recently dubbed “The Club.”

Dwayne grew up in East Providence, RI. He earned his BA in Physical Education with a minor in recreation from Bridgewater State University. While at Bridgewater, he was a member of the varsity men’s basketball team and active with the Student Athletics Advisory Committee and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Brockton, MA.

After graduation, Dwayne went on to work in the recreation sports department at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, FL as a facilities and intramural programs intern. He is also the operations and marketing director for Colts defensive back Jamie Silva LLC and an active member of the National Intramural and Recreation Sports Association. In his spare time, Dwayne enjoys basketball, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.