THE PRESIDENT COMES TO COLUMBIA PARC

Also in this issue:
Bike Giveaway in Iberville
Teen Resident Travels World
Connie Moves Into Fischer
Thank you for picking up a copy of our newly designed HANO News. We hope this newsletter will be both informative and entertaining. I would like to thank everyone for welcoming me to New Orleans. I am thoroughly enjoying the music, culture and of course, the cuisine. We are making tremendous progress rebuilding HANO into a housing agency that this great city deserves.

I am pleased to announce that we have submitted our final work plan to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The construction of the work plan has been open to the public with comments being taken through our website. Also the Resident Advisory Board reviewed our work plan and gave us valuable input. The final plan was approved at the last board meeting and will eventually bring the agency back to prominence and ultimately under local control.

In this issue of the HANO News you will find that we are in the middle of a Renaissance at the Iberville Community. In conjunction with City of New Orleans, HRI and the resident-led Iberville Redevelopment Working Team, we are submitting an application for a Choice Neighborhoods Grant. This grant has the potential to transform Iberville into a modern, fully-functional neighborhood while revitalizing the Central Business District.

On the administrative side, we submitted a balanced budget for the first time in years, and saved the agency millions by bringing valuable programs in-house and cutting outside contractors. We’ve also hired from our resident population to fulfill many of our Section 3 goals.

Again, thanks for picking up a copy of our newsletter, and as always please feel free to email me at dgilmore@hano.org if you have any questions or comments that will make the Housing Authority of New Orleans a better agency.

David Gilmore
Administrative Receiver
The Housing Authority of New Orleans and the City of New Orleans applied for a HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant that has the potential to transform the Iberville neighborhood into a new community. After several developers responded to a Request For Qualifications on our website, a group of housing experts, resident advisors and HANO staff members selected the development partnership of HRI Properties and McCormack Baron Salazar to apply for the grant.

“Iberville can no longer support a quality of life its residents need and deserve,” said HANO Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “We want to rebuild Iberville into a stunning community.” To date, HANO has held two resident and two public meetings in order to gain valuable input from Iberville community members on housing, educational, recreational and transportation needs in the immediate area and surrounding neighborhoods.

The Choice Neighborhoods initiative is a HUD grant intended to transform distressed neighborhoods and public and assisted projects into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods by linking housing improvements with appropriate services, schools, public assets, transportation, and access to jobs. In order to receive the grant, a strong emphasis will be placed on local community planning for access to high-quality educational opportunities, including early childhood education.

“The city is enthusiastic about all of the applications,” said Mayoral spokesman Ryan Berni. “We are specifically partnering with HANO on the redevelopment of Iberville for HUD’s Choice Neighborhoods program because it offers another transformative opportunity for our citizens and replicates the great models currently at work in New Orleans.”

Iberville residents also cast their votes to elect four resident-representatives to the Iberville Redevelopment Working Team. This group of residents will work hand-in-hand with the development team to make sure the needs of the community are met. Fifteen people qualified to run in the election.

Members of the Iberville Redevelopment Working Team are Cody Marshall, Rochelle Trotter, Cary Reynolds, Sr., Glenda Graves, Rochelle George, Elaine Robiho and Kim Piper. More than 24 percent of the Iberville households voted in this election.
President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, and New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu visited Columbia Parc on Sunday, August 29th.

During a full day of appearances, speeches, and interviews to commemorate the 5th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the President made time for a tour of Columbia Parc and was also interviewed for NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams from inside the community.

The White House staff used Columbia Parc as a symbol of the awesome recovery of the City of New Orleans. The former St. Bernard site, which previously held up to eight feet of water, is now replaced with a beautiful new mixed-income community.

President and Mrs. Obama also visited the home of HANO resident Maude Smith, formerly a resident of St. Bernard. Mrs. Smith and her grandson David Robichaux, Jr. had to be rescued by boat after Katrina and spent time in Houston and Baton Rouge before returning to New Orleans.

Smith offered chocolate cake and peppermints as the Obamas sat down to hear her story. “We sat and talked for a while,” said Smith. “We talked about my experiences in the Superdome after Katrina. He asked me how I felt about New Orleans’ recovery so far. But more importantly, he told me that he loved me and my family and that he would keep in touch with us.”
PING PONG CHALLENGE
More than 100 kids and young adults ages 16 to 24 worked with the Housing Authority of New Orleans to learn career skills, job readiness and gain work experience during the eight-week Summer Employment Program which began on Monday, June 14, 2010.

“This was a great opportunity for teens and young adults to gain valuable experience and learn about different types of careers,” said HANO Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. “Because of the nature and scale of our work, we employ architects, lawyers, accountants, computer specialists and urban planners. It’s an agency where young people can really find out if they fit into a particular career.”

HANO partnered with the Resident Advisory Board, who interviewed kids for job placement, to create a program that would be fulfilling to both the participants and the staff. The weekly work schedule featured on-the-job training, and concluded each Friday with life skills sessions that featured motivational speakers, conflict resolution classes and various workshops.

All of HANO’s communities participated in the National Night Out Against Crime on August 3, 2010.

Parties were held in The Estates in the ninth ward and cook out celebrations at Columbia Parc and Fischer. Families at Iberville and River Garden walked the neighborhood to celebrate, while the residents at Guste set up Space Walks and a DJ to provide entertainment for children.

“This yearly event is a symbol of the community’s commitment to take back the streets,” said HANO Police Chief Mitchell Dusset.

The National Night Out campaign involved citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from more than 15,000 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide.
CONNIE MOVES INTO FISCHER COMMUNITY

Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, Fischer Resident Council President Constance Haynes and dozens of other families moved to scattered-site units while HANO redeveloped the Fischer Community in the wake of the storm.

But instead of moving back into her small third-floor apartment last month, Haynes and the other families moved back into spacious New Orleans-style homes.

“I didn’t want to be like Moses and not reach the promised land,” said Haynes. “I knew the Lord meant for us to come back. But I didn’t know we would come back to a home like this.” Haynes’ new unit features a front and back porch, environmentally-friendly appliances, a washer and dryer, and a large living area.

Fischer is in the final phase of its residential redevelopment. Phase IV includes 124 single family dwelling units consisting of 70 affordable rental units, 10 public housing units and 44 affordable homeownership units.

Although Haynes lived in a scattered-site unit, she still kept her job serving families in the Fischer Community. Her new unit allows for her to live on-site while helping provide social services for residents in Fischer.

“I love the new community. I’m back with my family and friends,” she added. “When people come and visit me, they want a house just like mine.”

Haynes, who has been a resident leader since the 80’s, will be part of the new Resident Management Team at Fischer. Usually residents call Haynes to say thanks for her hard work, but this time she was quick to give praise to the HANO Executive Office and the Client Services Department.

“I really thank God for this unit. Things moved a lot faster when Mr. Gilmore got here,” she said. “Client Services, Angie (Harper), Iris (Conerly), and Eddie (Scott) also played a huge part in keeping us together. They used their weekends off to come out and help us.”
In an effort to recognize and bond with the community, the New Orleans Police Department has participated in monthly crime walks of the New Orleans Public Housing communities. Since July 14, 2009, there has been a dramatic decrease in crime in the Iberville neighborhood. Along with increased HANO security and dedicated NOPD officers to the neighborhood, HANO Police Chief Mitchell Dusset attributes this progress to the installation of community-wide crime cameras. To celebrate this success, NOPD officers joined community members and the Shack Brown Drill Team in a drum-line around the Iberville neighborhood.
As part of their continued community interest and development efforts, members of the New Orleans Police Department recently joined Iberville community resident leader Kim Piper in hosting a bicycle give-away and salon day. Officers handed out about 10 free bikes, and several charitable women from Beads n’ Braids salon in Baton Rouge came out to provide free salon services for the children.

The girls were delighted to have their hair and nails done, and waited patiently for their turn to be styled. Meanwhile, as the bicycles were being handed out, officers talked with the kids about what it meant to be given a bike. HANO Officer Harris Stanley recalled how one young man spoke about never before owning a bike, and how excited he was to learn to ride.

The HANO Police Department upgraded their squad cars, retiring several aging police vehicles for six brand new 2010 Crown Victorias and Ford Explorers. Each car is fully loaded with police packages as well as brand new decals and logos. Aside from the fresh look, the new vehicles will allow HANO Police to better protect and serve the housing communities.
Both Troy Cooks and Cleordia Jackson joined the ranks of America's homeowners when they closed on their homes this month. Both homeowners were previously a part of HANO's Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) before attending classes with HANO's Home Ownership Department.

The HANO staff guided them through the process of home ownership and transitioned their voucher payments into an escrow account. “It's always rewarding when our families walk away with the keys to their new homes,” said Home Ownership Director Nicole Barnes.

The HUD authorized agency-turnaround specialist team Gilmore Kean, LLC, has successfully used this format to reform troubled organizations throughout the country.
In many ways high school student Rinata Williams is just like the typical teenager. But when she’s not on Facebook or on her cell phone, she takes the time to represent her country and travel the world as an academic ambassador.

The Iberville resident has been twice selected to travel to other countries because of her outstanding academic achievement and stellar conduct. In order to be selected to the program, a student must maintain between a 3.3 and a 3.7 grade point average (GPA).

Her first excursion came as an eighth-grader when she was chosen to travel to Switzerland. While she was there, she began to absorb the culture and learn more about the world.

“It made me look at high school totally different,” said Williams. “It made me want to be more like them. It made me want to get out of the United States more and expand my views of the world.”

Williams said that Switzerland was extremely clean and the people were very well educated. But she confessed that some of the trends took a little time to get acclimated. “Women greet each other with a kiss on both cheeks,” she said.

This year Williams adds a stamp to her passport with a trip to Australia. The Sci-Academy student has kept her GPA high and is ready for another excursion.

Williams credits her mother with supporting her travels and academic excellence. She also said that the main thing she learned that will help her back home is to continue to work hard and ignore negative comments.

“They are more success oriented than our teens. They don’t allow people to put them down,” she added.
The holiday spirit is in the air at Harmony Oaks. Shortly before the holiday, senior residents were treated to a Thanksgiving feast with all the trimmings at My Redeemer Baptist Church. Accompanying the food, there was a vocal performance by a local resident, Mr. Miles Daniels. David Gilmore, Administrative Receiver for HANO, joined the festivities to give a few kind words to those in attendance. He spoke about the need for the housing communities in New Orleans to regain some of their former glory. He also spoke about the deep commitment of most lifelong residents to their community, and how this commitment exists nowhere else in the world. HANO is working hard to honor that commitment by rebuilding the communities that were ravaged by Katrina.
Fischer Senior Village resident Mother Turner celebrated a milestone 98th birthday this past November. To commemorate her special day, Resident Council Leader Constance Haynes and friends brought over cake, ice cream, and a singing birthday card.

The HANO Human Resources Department put together a staff-wide cooking contest to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. Contestants brought a food dish and prizes were awarded to the winners in several categories, from appetizer to entree. After the prizes were distributed the staff of HANO dined on the remainder of the food, which was a considerable feast.
IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Main Office (504) 670-3300
Harmony Oaks (504) 894-8828
The Estates (504) 949-1888
Iberville (504) 529-1591
Guste Homes (504) 529-3392
B.W. Cooper (504) 822-8840
Fischer Homes (504) 210-8824
River Garden (504) 412-8216
Columbia Parc (504) 284-4769
Scattered Sites (504) 529-1591