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CMHA Offers Innovative Programs to Meet Community Needs



CMHA Youth program participants

Connecting Public Housing residents with local social services is an important step to having residents become financially independent. The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) in Cleveland, OH, has developed several programs which have a positive impact on the lives of residents. The housing agency is a leader in providing programs that connect residents with community resources.

CMHA offers several programs for youth; one such program is the 21st Century Program. It provides the young people with Community Learning Centers at two of the housing agency's developments. At the centers, children can receive homework assistance and a healthy snack, and participate in skill development

activities. The housing agency also offers Generation Success: Teens Achieving Greatness (GS:TAG) a youth leadership academy. The program was created to help high school students develop leadership and academic skills, as well as strengthen their work ethic. It also offers actual office work experience through community partners.

Deborah O'Neal, a former GS:TAG member, said, "The program gave me exposure to things I didn't know before, like scholarship opportunities and office settings, where you have to deal with so many different kinds of people."

The agency also works with [YouthBuild](#), a national community and youth development program that addresses core issues facing low-income communities. YouthBuild programs offer low-income youth full-time construction training as they build affordable homes in addition to working on their GEDs or high school diplomas.

"I have developed great friendships and I feel lucky to be a part this program," said Shequetta Washington, a CMHA YouthBuild graduate. "In order to succeed, I've learned to be very determined, know how to manage my time, and be very devoted."

The housing agency also offers programs for adult residents. One example is D.J.'s Boutique. Operating out of CMHA's Social Services Mall, the boutique provides free clean, new, or gently used clothing, bedding, and other household items to residents. CMHA Board Vice Chairperson, Doris V. Jones has been the main force behind D.J.'s Boutique which is stocked from generous donations from local organizations and individuals. Since the boutique opened in August of 2010, it has assisted nearly 10,000 residents.



GS:TAG program participants



D.J.'s Boutique volunteers

Cont'd



Family enjoying back-to-school rally

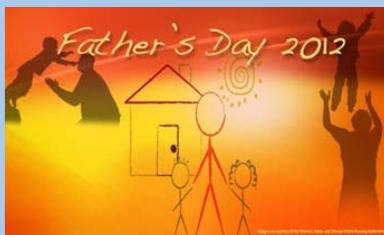
"It is very rewarding to be a part of DJ's Boutique," said Jones. "It's something I've wanted to do for a long time. I'm really proud of its success and the resource it provides for the community."

Finally, CMHA hosted a series of back-to-school giveaway events, where school uniforms and supplies were distributed. Families were also given tools, tips, and resources for school readiness and success. These back-to-school giveaway events are a partnership between the PHA and local organizations including Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland, Lighthouse, and Cleveland Z107.9 radio station. "This is a wonderful partnership that will have a deep impact on the community and the residents' families," stated Jeffery K. Patterson, the housing agency's CEO. "CMHA is proud to be a sponsor and part of such an important and uplifting effort."

CMHA's many programs for residents reflect a commitment to the community that goes beyond rent collection and maintenance calls. Its successes highlight the best of what happens when residents, the housing agency, and the general community work together. To learn more about CMHA's programs, visit: <http://www.cmha.net/>.

All photos courtesy of: CMHA

HUD Focuses on the Role of Dads with Father's Day 2012



This summer, HUD is encouraging Public Housing residents, housing agencies, and communities to participate in the second annual Father's Day celebration. Inspired by a 2010 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) fatherhood program, *Father's Day* combines fatherly bonding opportunities with supportive services for dads. To help make the event a success, HUD has partnered with several organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), the National

Fatherhood Initiative, and Greatschools.org.

Last June, HUD held its first *Father's Day*; 209 Public Housing agencies (PHAs) received the support of Federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and professional sports franchises. This event provided fathers with the opportunity to connect with their children as well as with supportive services available in their communities. Nationwide, an estimated 22,000 fathers, children, mothers, and other community members enjoyed a *Father's Day* event in their community.

The District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA) is one housing agency that held a very successful event last year. Their *Father's Day* event included more than 100 fathers, children, and mothers. Riddick Bowe, two-time World Heavyweight champion; Ken Harvey, former linebacker for the Washington Redskins; and former Denver Broncos player Orlando Gary all made appearances as speakers or special guests. DCHA also held talks whose topics included parental rights, bonding with children, and workforce development, among others. Adrienne Todman, DCHA Executive Director, told the attendees, "Today is just the beginning. This isn't a one-day initiative, this is a movement."

This year, HUD is hoping to continue this wonderful tradition and achieve even greater success. HUD is asking PHAs to host *Father's Day 2012* events on or around Saturday, June 16, 2012. Residents, Resident Councils, and PHAs can learn more information about potential help with planning a *Father's Day* event or even watch a video that highlights last year's celebration. Currently more than 100 events across the country are scheduled. PHAs can register their *Father's Day 2012* events at <http://www.hud.gov/fathersday2012/register.cfm>.

BGCA is partnering with *Father's Day 2012*. Kevin McCartney, Senior Vice President of BGCA, said local Clubs can "offer facilities, offer staff, offer additional resources, [and] help with planning," of *Father's Day 2012* events. Local Clubs can be found through the BGCA Web site at <http://www.bgca.org>. The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse at <http://www.fatherhood.gov/> also provides a number of resources including a map of local organizations providing Fatherhood programs. At the Web site, readers can also take the President's Fatherhood Pledge, read the DadTalk Blog, or learn how to become a mentor to a young person in need.

Focusing on father and child relationships for one day is great, but building long-term, continuing relationships is the goal of *Father's Day 2012*. Ongoing activities from organized sports events to education mentoring sessions are encouraged and allow fathers to have increased interaction with their children. PHAs can also work with social support service groups to help with upward mobility for fathers. To address this broader focus, HUD has developed broader vision under the name Reconnecting Families and Dads. PHAs and residents can learn about the new initiative, which seeks to strengthen relationships between fathers and their children all year long, by visiting: <http://www.hud.gov/fathersday2012>. HUD will be providing YouTube videos on topics related to fatherhood and other Web-based resources throughout the year.

President Barack Obama accurately said, "To be a great Dad is the most important job in a man's life." *Father's Day 2012* is an opportunity for PHAs and residents to work together for stronger families. For further questions about *Father's Day 2012*, feel free to contact the Father's Day Team at PIH_Fathers_Day_2012@HUD.gov.

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