



THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

June 2011 | Volume 2, Issue 6 | www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/



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UPCOMING DATES

- » **Father's Day Events**
June 18, 2011
Check with your PHA!
Or register your event at:
<http://hud.gov/fathersday2011>
- » **2011 Health Care for Residents of Public Housing Training**
July 13-15, 2011
Washington, DC
<http://bit.ly/imACFQ>
- » **Healthy Neighborhoods Webinar: Public Health Partners: Online Public Health Information**
July 19, 2011
2:00-3:30 p.m. EDT
<http://bit.ly/eKpkg>

Youth from Bethlehem Housing Authority Make Art with BananaWORKS



Residents and artists pose before a BananaWORKS mural. Photo: BHA



Mural of Bethlehem, in the BHA Central Office. Photo: BHA

As summer approaches, some youth in Bethlehem, PA, are planning vacations while others are signing up for summer school. One select group of young people from the Bethlehem Housing Authority (BHA) will be making their mark on the community—with a paintbrush.

"In Bethlehem an agency called ArtsQuest runs most of the arts development and arts projects in the city," said Mark C. Iampietro, Deputy Executive Director of BHA. "They reached out to us and we partnered with them on a program that combines at-risk teenagers with art projects—and actually they're employment opportunities, too."

The program is called BananaWORKS; it is named for the youth education and outreach arm of ArtsQuest, the Banana Factory. Banana WORKS is a different approach to the ordinary youth summer jobs program. In BananaWORKS, local young people design and paint murals in different areas of Bethlehem. Beyond beautifying public spaces, the program aims to prepare these youth for the working world. "They have to show up on time; they have to keep a time card; they know that if they don't show up for work for a couple of days that there are penalties involved," said BHA Executive Director Clara Kendy. "Also, some of them who think they might have a flair for art, they learn in the first week or two if this is their thing."

BHA has participated in BananaWORKS for 7 years. Each year the PHA has contributed \$5,000 and a wall in one of its community buildings. During the summer, a mural is painted on the donated wall. For its 7 years of involvement, BHA now has seven unique murals, each in a different building within the housing authority. BHA has not been alone in its support for BananaWORKS; the project has also received sponsorship from local businesses and institutions.

When starting a project within the housing authority, the BananaWORKS teens consult with the residents to learn what type of mural they would like to see in their building. This is how the mural in BHA's central office was developed. "The kids sat down with the residents of the building and asked the residents what they wanted to see and they [the residents] just kept coming back to how they loved Bethlehem and the downtown, so it evolved into a mural of sights around Bethlehem and it's really a beautiful, colorful mural that depicts a wide range of sites in the city," said Iampietro.

However, according to Kendy, more than just ideas develop during this process. "The elderly tenants that live in the building or the disabled tenants kind of take the kids under their wing and they become friends with them. They treat them and have good conversations, so there's more to this than just art."

To learn more, visit BHA at: <http://www.bha645.com/> and ArtsQuest at: <http://www.artsquest.org/>

Neighborhood Networks Meets Needs of Diverse Communities



At Plough Towers in Memphis, TN, the residents speak in many different languages. This assisted housing high rise for low-income seniors is home to native Russian-, Chinese-, and Spanish-speakers. Many of the residents live some distance from their loved ones. Since visits to their former homes or expensive long-distance phone bills are out of reach for Plough Towers' residents, it is difficult for them to keep in touch. Such isolation can have an impact on mental and physical health, and decrease the ability to continue living independently. However, through their HUD-funded Neighborhood Networks Center, these senior citizens are mastering computer skills that help them connect—and reconnect—with family and friends.

The Plough Towers Computer Learning Center teaches seniors to use computers with keyboards that use alternate characters. A language setting on the Apple operating system allows the Chinese-speaking residents to type in Chinese on the computers. Some residents have used this technology to create Russian language greeting cards to sell and others to communicate with far-flung family. One Russian-speaking resident cried the first time she received photos in email attachments from Moscow written in Russian with Cyrillic letters.

The Center has also taught residents to use an unfamiliar technology to talk to far away friends and relatives face-to-face. Skype is a software program that allows free video calls between any computers with Skype. Residents have rebuilt friendships and strengthened families ties with calls across the United States, to Canada, and even as far away as the Ukraine. Using Skype, one Russian-speaking couple at Plough Towers has reconnected with a couple who'd been members of their wedding party 48 years ago in the Ukraine. For these seniors, the Computer Learning Center has given them a new set of skills that overcomes

To learn more, contact Ms. Dorothy Robinson at: tyncie@gmail.com

TIPS

Summer Fun with a Purpose

With school letting out for the summer, where can children safely have fun and maybe also learn a thing or two over the break? For residents of public housing, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and 4-H are two possible choices. Both groups run clubs or activities within public housing communities. These national youth development organizations test their fun and educational programs to be sure they will help children and youth at each stage of development to improve important life and leadership skills.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America has 4,000 locations throughout the country, serving children 6 to 18 years old. You must contact the Club directly to apply for summer programs since fees and registration deadlines will vary by Club. The annual fee for Clubs can be \$10-20 and camp fees may range from \$30-\$100 a week—but Clubs have scholarships and sliding fees.

Boys & Girls Clubs offer sports, art, and recreation, as well as drug abuse prevention, health and nutrition, and education programs. Typically, a Club has a games room, teen center, learning/tech center, arts and crafts area, and gymnasium. To find out more about Boys & Girls Clubs of America and to find a club near you, visit <http://www.bgca.org/Pages/index.aspx>

4-H is a youth development organization which is well known in rural communities; however, 4-H is not just for youth who live in the country. More than 6 million youth and children attend clubs, camps, afterschool, and in-school 4-H activities. These are located in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Programs grew out of the four "H's" of the name—head, heart, hands, and health—focusing on science, healthy living, and active citizenship. There are no State or national dues for 4-H clubs; local clubs might charge a fee. Most 4-H programs are for youth aged 8-18, but some areas have programs for younger members too.

To find out more information about 4-H and to find your local office, go to <http://bit.ly/9Y9gcd>.

At the American Camp Association, you can search a database for camps according to cost: <http://bit.ly/9T4REh>. Ask about scholarships. Other organizations that offer scholarships or financial aid to summer camps include the YMCA, <http://bit.ly/lxiJel>, and the Girl Scouts, <http://girlscouts.org/> especially through their local service unit camps. The National Association of Police Athletic/ Activities League (NPAL) has 400 chapters nationwide and offers sports and activities, <http://www.nationalpal.org/>.

Contact us:

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HELP CORNER

More On Father's Day 2011

Father's Day 2011 will take place on June 18. HUD has invited all PHAs to host events to bring fathers and their children together to celebrate fatherhood and family while also learning about local resources. At least 194 PHAs have registered. At HUD's Web site, you see if your PHA is holding an event, watch a Web-cast about the event, and more.

Visit: <http://www.hud.gov/fathersday2011/>