Ready, Set, Learn!

The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) hosted its annual series of Back to School Jams at the Carmelitos, Harbor Hills, Nueva Maravilla, and South County (scattered sites) public housing developments. These annual events first began in 2000, and have become a welcomed tradition by HACoLA’s over 1,400 public housing youth and their families eager to make the upcoming school year a success!

HACoLA was honored to have Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard at the Nueva Maravilla event in East Los Angeles, as well as Congressman Alan Lowenthal at the Carmelitos event in Long Beach, and staff from the Office of Congresswoman Maxine Waters at the Harbor Hills event in Lomita. Each representative spent time visiting with the residents, thanking vendors for their participation and the resources they provide to families, and handing out backpacks to the students.

During the Back to School Jams, more than 60 exhibitors provided educational and health-related resources and information to some 800 families. Youth were treated to entertainment, food, dance, and raffles. However, the highlight of each Back to School Jam was the distribution of backpacks stocked with age-appropriate school supplies, and free haircuts for each public housing youth attending grades K-12. These gifts were made possible through the generous support of Target Stores and Shelter Partnership, a local non-profit organization which provides resources and housing through its S. Mark Taper Foundation Shelter Resource Bank.
On August 12, 2014, the Community Development Foundation (CDF) hosted its first Reality Check Conference for college and college-bound students of all ages and their parents at The California Endowment. This dynamic event brought over 30 speakers to discuss the basics of financial management, goal setting, interview skills, and included four different career panels. The Reality Check Conference was presented by Southern California Edison and sponsored by Aleshire & Wynder, LLP. Additionally, each participant received a book from the Molina Foundation, as well as UCLA college application materials.

The 2014 Housing Authority Resident (HAR) Scholarship awardees were also announced at the Reality Check Conference. This year, 17 scholarships were awarded to HACoLA residents with the support of Southern California Edison, Aszkenazy Development, Torres Construction, Union Bank, Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles (CDC) and HACoLA employees, and other individual donors. This year’s recipients included top high school graduates, military veterans, emancipated foster youth, single parents returning to college, and first-generation college students aspiring to succeed in remarkable careers such as mechanical engineering, social work, human resources, nursing, and more.

Since 1997, the CDF has offered HAR Scholarships on an annual basis as it fulfills its mission to end generational poverty in low-income housing. This year, and moving forward, CDF will continue to provide the Reality Check Conference and other programs focused on educational and financial empowerment for HACoLA residents. The newest program to be implemented in support of CDF’s mission is the “College to Career” mentorship. During the Reality Check Conference, mentors had their first chance to meet this year’s mentees. In 2014, the “College to Career” mentorship program will include 18 mentor-mentee pairs. Each pair is expected to meet at least four times during the academic school year, with at least one of the meetings being a job shadowing visit.

For more exciting information on the CDF, please visit us at www.lacdf.org, or contact CDF Executive Director Jennifer Blackwell-Trotter at Jennifer.Blackwell@lacdf.org, or (626) 586-1899.

Left: HAR Scholarship recipient, Michelle Rodriguez, is honored at the 2014 Reality Check Conference. Top Center: Dr. Keith Nathaniel discusses the basics of goal setting during one of the event’s break out sessions.

Lower Center: Jennifer Blackwell-Trotter with Adrian Guerra, Partner, Aleshire & Wynder, LLP, and HACoLA Executive Director Sean Ragan. Right: Keynote Speaker, Renee Martinez, President of Los Angeles City College, addresses the crowd.
With recurring reductions in federal funding, the CDC has had no other choice than to reduce staff over the last few years. Despite the reductions, the amount of work needed to administer a large urban Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, such as Los Angeles County’s, remained. To address the issue, the Community Development Division (CDD) streamlined processes and further developed their reporting and planning systems. However, during peak times and for special assignments, extra hands are definitely needed. Throughout the last quarter, CDD was fortunate to have three talented interns on board to lend a hand on various projects. It was a win-win situation for both CDD and the interns who volunteered their skills and produced high quality work while obtaining valuable work experience. CDD has no doubt that the three interns have successful futures before them.

**Intern Profiles**

**June Martinez** recently graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of Phoenix, and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Cal State University, Los Angeles.

June participated in the Urban County re-qualification process, assisting CDD’s Program Administration Team. With her excellent organizational skills, the CDC obtained the designation as the Entitlement for the Urban County CDBG Program for Fiscal Years 2015-2017. June also assisted with the completion of the County's Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report.

**Veronica Segura** holds a Bachelor's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Cal State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

Veronica assisted CDD’s Planning and Environmental Services Team by using her excellent planning skills to analyze census data to determine eligible areas, conduct field work to assess housing and community development needs, and develop narratives describing each neighborhood. Veronica also volunteered to assist the team with the annual series of community meetings which the CDC hosts to receive input on housing and community development needs.

**Erin Chan** is currently a student at the University of California, Riverside. She is majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting.

Erin was a tremendous asset to the Financial Review and Management Team. She assisted with the analytical reviews of the Single Audit Reports, a specialized audit required of any agency receiving $500,000 or more in federal funding, as well as financial monitoring reviews of grant-funded programs. Erin also provided invaluable support with the annual financial closeout activities of the CDBG Program.
Grand Opening of Jefferson Park Terrace

On August 28, 2014, the CDC celebrated the dedication ceremony and open house of Jefferson Park Terrace (JPT), a new affordable housing development that provides 60 affordable units for families, including six units for people living with HIV/AIDS.

The CDC awarded $3.1 million in former redevelopment funds for construction and permanent financing. From that financing, the development team used $100,000 to include energy efficiency living options, earning a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.

JPT provides valuable housing to address the shortage of units accessible to people living with HIV/AIDS, provides a support system to assist them in maintaining housing stability, and helps reduce the high rate of homelessness in the area. The site features a community room, activities center with computer access, laundry and mail facilities, outdoor recreation space, an edible garden and compost tumbler for use by residents and property management, as well as resident services coordination offices. Additionally, JPT contains the original Fatburger hamburger stand built in 1947. Because the hamburger stand is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Mercy Housing California, the developer, restored it to its 1952 “heyday” appearance.

Changes on the Horizon at the CRC

The CDC secured $3.2 million in capital funding for the Community Resource Center from Los Angeles County’s Fourth District Supervisor, Don Knabe, to replace the site’s existing modular trailers with a new permanent building. CDD is providing project and construction management services for this project. During the last quarter, the architectural design was complete and, with all the final pieces in place, the project was announced to community stakeholders and onsite providers.

The new facility will provide a larger and more functional reception/waiting area with computers for public use, a multipurpose room that can serve as both a classroom and meeting space, staff offices, and redesigned outdoor open space for activities, programs, and special events. A new medical clinic will increase the number of fully functioning exam rooms from one to three, and provide a separate waiting area for clinic visitors. Construction is planned to begin in October 2015, and scheduled for completion in 12 months.