



THE COLLABORATIVE CONNECTION

A Publication of the Healthy Families ♦ Thriving Communities Collaborative Council

January-February 2007

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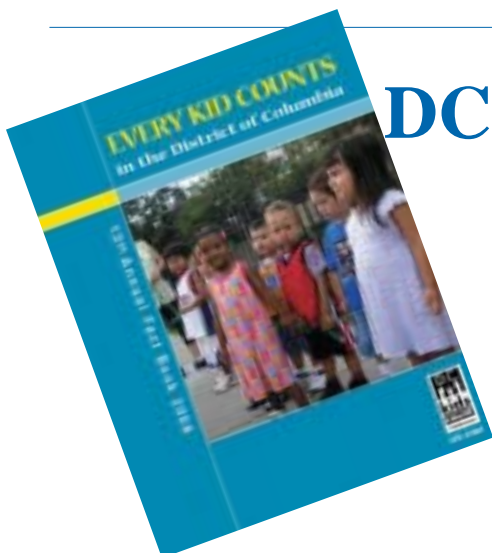
By Elaine W. Smith

DC Council Chairman Vincent Gray said in a January 12 interview that the city should invest more child welfare resources in prevention, and that a simultaneous focus on housing, education, and jobs will materially change the outcomes for more people in the District.

Gray said that the idea of establishing the Collaboratives "was a move in the right direction," but that the city has not done nearly enough to eliminate abuse and neglect and to invest in the front end in prevention and early intervention programs. "Most of our money is still being invested in the back end of a child welfare system that spends tens of millions of dollars on foster care, but spends very little on the investment of family support, family preservation and family building," he said. "I think we are not even spending five percent . . . on [these] efforts. Until we realize the return on that we will not have maximized our potential."

Gray noted, however that in a positive sense, the city has seen a drop of 1,000 children in the foster care system in the past four or five years. "While there is no single factor that accounts for that, there's no question in my mind that the Collaborative Movement has made a major contribution to our efforts to keep families

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DC Kids Count Report Released

The overall well-being of children in the District of Columbia needs improvement, especially in critical areas such as overall poverty levels, homelessness, and sexually transmitted diseases, according to the 13th annual report of the DC Kids Count Collaborative. The report also indicates that the city showed progress in several critical areas examined by the report, including child abuse, foster care, and teen obesity.

The report *Every Kid Counts in the District of Columbia, 13th Annual Fact Book 2006*, released last month at a briefing at the Urban Institute, contains the most recent data on 41 indicators of child and family well being in the District of Columbia.

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Register Now for the Collaboratives' Annual Conference

The Collaboratives' First Annual Conference and 10th Anniversary Celebration, will be held as follows:

Conference

Thursday and Friday April 26-27, 2007
Kellogg Conference Hotel
800 Florida Avenue, NE
Gallaudet University
Washington, DC

10th Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, April 26, 2007
6:00 pm
Kellogg Conference Hotel

Workshop topics include the following:

Framework of the Collaborative Movement

- How to Use Asset Mapping to Engage Partners
- Developing Capacity to Build a Neighborhood-Based Family Support System
- Practice Approach to the Collaborative Model
- Child Welfare Law and Policy in the District of Columbia – An Introduction

Housing Challenges and Opportunities

- Housing First: A Model to Drive Practice with Vulnerable Families
- The District's Response to the Housing Crisis Supporting Youth and Families
- Implementing a Youth Crime Prevention Strategy in the District of Columbia
- Effective Strategies for Working with Transitioning Youth
- Collaborative and School Partnerships Addressing Truancy

Resources to Support Families and Communities

- Family Economic Success and Child Welfare: One Community's Response
- Parent Empowerment Groups: A Tool to Educate, Engage, and Support Parents

Accessing Resources in DC

- Taking Care of Self
- DC's New Communities Initiative
- Family Group Conferencing
- Family Development Credentialing
- Together Is Better: The Campaign to Strengthen DC Families, Marriages, and Communities

Fathers Count

- Fatherhood Programs That Work
- Why Bring Dads to the Table

The Conference will also include three general sessions and exhibits.



Sponsors

The Annie E. Casey Foundation



For sponsorship and exhibit information, please call 202-299-0900.

Conference Fees

Conference (includes 10th Anniversary Celebration): \$200

One-Day Registration: \$125

Continuing Education Units (Add \$15)

Exhibits Only: Free

10th Anniversary Celebration Only: \$50

Exhibitor Fee: \$100 (nonprofits)

Visit www.hftcc.org to get full descriptions of the workshops from the conference registration brochure and to register. For more information, call 202-299-0900.



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The Collaborative Council provides technical assistance, training and advocacy for a network of seven neighborhood-based Collaboratives in Washington, DC. These Collaboratives, each with its own governance board, offer a range of services directed toward strengthening at-risk families and building supportive communities so that all residents can reach their full potential.

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Collaboratives

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Child Welfare Information Gateway

A service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Child Welfare Information Gateway consolidates and builds upon the services formerly provided by the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse.

Among the resources on this Web site are those related to:

- Family-centered practice – includes information on specific family-centered practice approaches, such as family group decision-making. Also includes resources on cultural competence, casework practice, and providing and evaluating family-centered services.
- Preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect – information on signs and symptoms, statistics and prevalence, types of child abuse and neglect, risk and protective factors, the impact on individuals and society, child fatalities, recognizing and reporting abuse, family support, positive parenting, prevention programs, public awareness, and more. Also includes information on intake, investigation, and assessment of reports; case management; and responding to child fatalities and families affected by child neglect, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and substance abuse.
- Supporting and preserving families – resources and information on family support and family preservation services.
- Out-of-home care – includes information on family foster care, kinship care, treatment foster care, and residential and group care.
- Achieving and maintaining permanency – resources to support professionals in ensuring a legally permanent, nurturing family for every child in out-of-home care through family reunification, adoption from foster care, guardianship, and permanent placements with relatives.

Visitors to this Web site can conduct library, state statute, and statistic searches and find child welfare national organizations and conferences.



DC Kids Count Report (from page 1)

The report cited other reasons for concern, as follows:

- In 2005, the number of District residents (both adults and children) living below the federal poverty line was 19.8 percent compared to 17.9 percent in 2004. In addition, nearly 34 percent (40,057) of children living in the District were estimated to be living in poverty in 2005, which means that children in the District are two times more likely than adults to fall below the federal poverty line.
- Homelessness in the District has also increased for the fifth consecutive year. In January 2006, the total number of homeless people was 9,369, a four percent increase over the year before. However, the number of families applying for emergency shelter at central intake, decreased by 11.7 percent, which was the first decrease in six years. The number dropped from 3,326 in 2004 to 2,936 in 2005.

“The fact that one out of three children in our city lives in poverty is quite troubling and has a cyclical effect. Child poverty is linked with other negative outcomes such as poor nutrition in infancy, increased chances of poor academic performance and emotional distress,” said Kinaya Sokoya, executive director of the DC Children’s Trust Fund. “Our community needs to recognize that young children are impacted the most by poverty and homelessness.”

The reported cited these signs of progress:

- The number of cases filed for child abuse decreased for the third straight year, by 32 percent

in 2005, reaching their lowest level since 1991. However, cases filed for child neglect increased sharply from the previous year, breaking a steady downward trend recorded from 1998 to 2004. Despite this year’s increase, child neglect cases are below the numbers recorded in 1992 and 2001.

- At the end of fiscal year 2005, there were 2,554 children and youth under 22 in the foster care system. This represented a 7 percent decrease from the previous year.
- Deaths to young adults age 20 – 24 dropped by more than 22 percent in 2004. The reported 67 deaths represented a 34 percent decrease from 102 deaths in 2003. The District averaged 150 deaths to young adults annually between 1990 and 1995, with a peak of 170 deaths in 1995. Most of the deaths to young adults in 2004 were males and most were violent (homicides, accidents, suicides).
- The percentage of obese high school students in the District decreased between 1999 and 2005 and was lower than the national average. The report states that 11 percent of high school students were overweight in 2005, a two percentage point decrease from 13 percent of students in 1999. These percentages are slightly lower than the national average of 13 percent.

The report includes a series of recommendations and strategies that are closely tied to the indicators. These recommendations incorporate the input of key stakeholders within the community and relate directly to the data reported. The report’s recommendations are specific to families, parents, businesses, government,

public officials, and community leaders; and incorporate strategies that will help increase a healthy and supportive environment for children.

“If conditions in the District of Columbia are going to improve, all segments of the community must address the issues presented in this report,” said Sokoya. “When family support systems are dysfunctional in one area, the entire system may be impacted. This is why we need a concerted effort by District residents to make these recommendations a reality for the betterment of the lives of the District’s children and families.”

The DC Kids Count Collaborative for Children and Families is an alliance of public and private organizations using research to support advocacy for changes in human, social, and economic policies and practices of government, the private sector, families, neighborhoods, and individuals. Its mission is to fight for the interests and well being of children and families and to ensure their healthy development and future in DC.

For more information about the report or the Kids Count Collaborative, contact Ms. Kendra Dunn, DC Kids Count project director, at (202) 667-4942.

The Collaborative Connection is now accepting advertising. For a media kit, call 301-808-2166.

Councilmember Wells's Mission: Substantially Reduce Child Abuse and Neglect

By Elaine W. Smith

Newly elected Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells has been appointed chair of the Human Services Committee by Council Chairman Gray. In a January 17 interview, Wells said, "How humbled I feel to be entrusted with the responsibilities of serving the most vulnerable people in DC to get what they need either under the law or according to need." Wells said that any committee oversight is a lot of responsibility, but "it is a special burden that you carry when you have human services."

Prior to being elected to the City Council, Wells was executive director of the Consortium for Child Welfare. Wells said that his agenda for child welfare is to reduce child abuse and neglect. "I would like to see our city make substantial progress in eliminating child neglect and abuse. . . . I feel fairly passionate that in my part of the Council world that children being neglected and/or abused is a symptom of a poverty index or a misery index," he said.

In his capacity as chair of the Human Services Committee, Wells said he first wants to see if the city is "meeting the expectations to prevent abuse and protect vulnerable citizens" and then "see how we can



raise our expectations to do everything better as a city." He explained that he will review the mission of the Commission on Poverty to determine if it pulls together a number of issues such as homelessness and health care.

Wells said that he also wants to ensure proper treatment of people who need help from the government. . . . "I believe that whenever the government helps someone . . . the important thing is that we first treat them humanely. . . and then the best that we can hope for is that we can actually be life-giving to the folks that we help."

With respect to education, Wells said he supports education as a priority and that the proposed legislation "seeks to eliminate the artificial boundaries or turfs between schools and other services provided by the city to help the underserved with a coordinated response." He said that as he works with stakeholders like the Collaboratives, part of his job is to "navigate those boundaries, to provide strategic political leadership so that those boundaries

don't appear to exist. . . . I think that the most important thing is to do a full environmental scan of who the leaders are, what they control and what they want to do, and we bring that together. I think everyone recognizes that poverty, however you want to define it, has no boundaries."

Wells addressed the importance of taking a different approach in dealing with youth. He said: "In dealing with youth in any of the agencies, my approach will be to try to promote and support parental and family accountability for children, and I want to look at how the Department of Youth Rehabilitative Services involves families in their approach rather than focusing on the punishing of the youth. So I am interested in some of the learning that we have from family group decision-making at CFSA [Child and Family Services Agency] and I am also interested in approaches taken by other states and countries that require a full family intervention rather than just intervention in the child's life when a child commits a crime."

Finally, Wells said that the Collaboratives "are an extremely important tool among all the resources that the city has to improve the lives of children and families in the city, and I think that we're very smart as a city to have the neighborhood-based Collaboratives." He said that his vision for healthy families/thriving communities "is creating safe, liveable, walkable neighborhoods for everyone."

Tommy Wells photos by Marvin T. Jones

Fenty Announces Human Services Priorities

Mayor Fenty has issued a 33-page report outlining his priorities for his first 100 days in office. On Human Services, he said, "Our aim must be to end poverty in our city ...[and] to see that every family in the community has an income it can actually live on....Our strategy should be fourfold: work, opportunity, security, and community – all of which must come together to build families that not only survive, but live successfully in safe neighborhoods. . . ."

Among his priorities for human services are the following:

- Make Mental Retardation Developmental Disabilities Administration a cabinet-level agency

- and change the name to the more appropriate Department of Disability Services
- Design a comprehensive workforce development strategy
- End the 90-day moratorium on new Medicaid Waiver placements for people with disabilities
- Award contract for the construction of a new Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services facility
- Propose solutions to resolve the shortage of family shelter spaces
- Initiate Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services assumption of responsibility for education and mental health at Oak Hill

- Work with a private nonprofit to initiate an effort to explore a Housing First policy to address homelessness
- Hold an Interagency Summit to bring together youth-serving agencies and their constituents
- Create new and clear pathways into the job market for youth at risk of disconnection from school and work by developing a pilot career training requirement
- Explore family group decisions-making strategies for youth crime reduction

Look for Mayor Fenty's interview with the Collaborative Connection in the March/April issue.

Gray Discusses Housing, Education, Jobs (continued from page 1)

intact and to keep kids from out-of-home placements in the first place," he said. "We ought to use that information as a catalyst to continue to invest in the front end of the system."

When questioned about his agenda for child welfare, Gray said: "The agenda is to eradicate foster care. Because if you do that, you have strengthened families to a point where every child has a real family...."

With respect to the mayor's placing education as the top priority, Gray said that he is glad to see that the mayor's legislation includes language on integrated services recognizing that there are health issues and social influences in the lives of children that predispose them to failure. "Many times, the behavioral qualities and skills that children have to

adopt in their particular communities are not the ones that serve them well in an institutional environment like the schools, so they get into this conflict where in order to survive they have to do certain things," he said. "But those survival skills get them into difficulty in a school environment where discipline and structure are routine because there are certain expectations of all children."

Because of this, Gray said more has to be done on the front end and that he supports universal Pre-K. "Rather than wait until five or six years old when these children go to kindergarten and they are not ready . . . let's provide input when they are two, three, four years old, so we can compensate for what they may not be getting at home," he said. "And again, I strongly believe that the Collaboratives have a role to play. We need to do more to build the strength of families." Gray continued, "Rearing, as I call the fourth 'r,' needs to be introduced to children at the very earliest point in which they go to school. It needs to be a part of our K-12 curriculum. Reading, writing, arithmetic, and rearing, so they learn everything from the mechanics of reproductive biology to the social responsibility of being a parent. . . . The reality is that this doesn't happen in a lot of homes today."

On housing needs for the poor, Gray said that the large housing developments that we have created are "pockets of poverty and social pathology" and "there is no way to tinker with them to make them better because what we've done is put a lot of people in the same place who have the same challenges." He said that the New Communities Initiative will create denser communities, integrated living environments, and will not displace people.

Gray said that there needs to be three areas of focus. "They are housing, education and jobs, which are inextricably tied to one another, and our focus



simultaneously on those three things, will materially change the outcomes for far more people in the District of Columbia." He said that education will be only as good as the conditions from which people come and that it has to be connected to "outcomes that prepare you for something" and "tuned to the reality of what the future job market is in the city." He noted that the city does not have a comprehensive workforce development strategy and that he has appointed Councilmember Schwartz to chair the Workforce Development and Government Operations Committee, a committee that prioritizes workforce development.

Speaking on his decision to make workforce development a standing committee, Gray said that this decision sends a message to the Council that it is important. "It is a way of saying that it is one of the three principal components that will have to work well to help change things for those who are unfortunately part of the long-term underclass."



Vincent Gray photos by Robinson Photography

Collaborative Families Receive Special Attention During Holidays

Scores of families across the city were treated to food, entertainment, and gifts during holiday events sponsored by the Collaboratives and partner organizations.

On December 16, Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative, in partnership with Metropolitan Police Department (Third District), and DC Idol Hands provided entertainment and holiday cheer to 80 youth detained in the Mt. Olivet Youth Detention Center. Staff and supporters also donated items like socks, underwear, thermals, and toiletries. On December 17, Santa Claus arrived at 14th and Otis Streets, NW, in a fire truck to distribute gifts to more than 150 children at the Winter Wonderland Event.

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative teamed up with Ward 7 Project KEEN (Keep Elderly Eating Nutritiously) to treat senior citizens to an elegant holiday lunch, live music, and gifts. “We are grateful to be able to serve our seniors. They are like precious jewels,” said Lisa Bryant, director of Ward 7 Project Keen. In addition to providing nutritious meals on a daily basis to senior citizens, Project KEEN also operates centers where seniors can come in to socialize and participate in a variety of activities.

Seniors were also the focus of an Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative holiday event, which featured music, dancing, food, and gifts. EBFSC also operated its annual Christmas store where needy families “shop” for gifts donated by community partners and the Nordstrom “Giving Tree.”

Board members of Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative were honored to serve a buffet meal to families attending the Christmas party. The party featured a performance by the Ballou High School Choir and photos with Santa Claus.



Scenes from holiday events, from the top: Delbert McFadden (CHSFSC), Officer Billie Davis, MPD, and Paul Jones (CHSFSC); MPD police officer hands gift to twins; Ange Anglade (EBFSC) distributes gifts to seniors; seniors dance at EBFSC event; ERFSC display gifts for seniors; Ballou High School choir entertain FSFSC families; NCCI families receive gifts; Gwen Jones (ERFSC), Lisa Bryant (Project KEEN), and Rita Smith-Stewart (ERFSC).

Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative

Green Team Provides New Opportunities

By Jssica Alvarez

When literacy rates are at their lowest and the DC unemployment rate is at its highest, jobs, training, and public safety become rare commodities in our communities. These realities are even more apparent when juxtaposed with the massive economic development in the inner city. The Green Team Program, a unique public/private collaboration, has been established to address these realities by linking support for local businesses and economic growth with the employment of DC residents in need of employment and a new opportunity.

The program provides Green Team members with ongoing support and coaching in achieving their professional and personal goals. Green Team members receive intensive training in customer service, life skills, neighborhood history, and landscaping in order to provide services to the community.

Green Team Program partners are Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative, the United Planning Organization, Mid-City/14th & U Street Business Association, and Shaw Main Streets and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development.

“Everyone wins,” said Ward One Councilmember Jim Graham, “The Green Team means jobs for people who need it the most and clean, safe neighborhoods for everyone.”

The goals of the Green Team are to:

- Create a safe, beautiful, and hospitable business district in the heart of historic DC
- Improve economic status of Green Team members and help stabilize family systems
- Enhance the range of educational and career opportunities
- Sustain and stimulate economic investment in historic business corridors
- Develop funding to sustain and grow the program to meet expanding community needs

Benefits of the program include the following:



Members of the Green Team keep business corridors clean.

- Community residents have the opportunity to participate in the economic revitalization by accessing the jobs being created
- Community residents provide unique, rich, and resourceful support to businesses and their customers
- Businesses support and employ DC residents
- Businesses that are connected to neighborhood residents are likely to re-invest in those communities and create more opportunities for both ownership and employment as small businesses expand

Kamal Ali of Ben's Chili Bowl is one of many in the business community who has pledged support to foster the continued growth, sustainability, and prosperity of

the members of the Green Team.

Charlie Whitaker, CHSFSC Green Team program coordinator, said, “We are giving real low-income people the opportunity and power to work and help their neighborhood. This is a chance for all people to participate in the development of our neighborhoods and to be a part of change.”

Current members of the Green Team are: Allen Davis, Alonzo Pleze, Arnetta Jackson, Edward Hammer (crew chief), Joseph Smith, Marcita Thompson, and Michael Pye.

“From the training to the work, this program really cares about the people that are working for the Green Team,” said Marcita Thompson.

CHSFSC Participates in Truancy Initiative

By Jessica Alvarez

A 12-week pilot truancy program at Garnet Patterson Middle School, in which CHSFSC was an active participant, has resulted in great improvements. Eighty percent of students completing the program achieved higher academic and attendance levels.

The pilot program was part of the DC Truancy Court Diversion Program, adopted by the DC Family Court, The Mayor's Office for Children Youth, Families and Elders, DCPS, Child and Family Services Agency, and

other partners to tackle truancy problems in the District of Columbia. The DC program is based on the Truancy Court Diversion program developed Kentucky Family Court Judge Joan Byer to address the root causes of truancy. Byer's program principles include family attention and involvement, weekly contact between family and judge, and positive reinforcement for the student and families involved.

Under DC truancy laws, when a child demonstrates a pattern of unexcused absences, the child and the parent can be referred to the Office of the Attorney

General and the District of Columbia Family Court, and neglect or criminal charges may be filed under the DC Compulsory School Attendance Act. Traditionally, the involvement of courts has been a measure of last resort for truant students and their families, but studies and judges have noted that punitive forms of addressing truancy do not improve attendance. Truancy is only a symptom of unaddressed family problems that cannot be resolved by the courts alone. The DC Truancy Court Diversion

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East River Family Strengthening Collaborative New Plans for Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings

Thanks to the hard work of ERFSC Board member Patricia Malloy and other community residents, the DC Council in December 2006 adopted a plan to revitalize the Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings under the city's New Communities Initiative.

The Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings neighborhood is located in the northeastern section of Ward 7, within the boundaries of East Capitol Street to the south, Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue to the north, 48th Place to the west and 57th Street to the east.

Consistent with the New Communities Initiative, the goal of the Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings plan is to transform the public housing development and its neighborhood into a mixed-income, mixed-use community. In this new community, residents will have access to high quality housing options that are affordable at all income levels and to the human

services necessary to help prepare them to take advantage of the new economic opportunities and changes that are coming their way.

The revitalization plan consists of three components:

- A human capital plan to meet the current needs of residents and to prepare them to benefit from the changes coming to their community
- A physical plan for the redevelopment of sites throughout the neighborhood
- A development and financial strategy for implementing these plans

A resident of Lincoln Heights for 29 years, Malloy is president of the Lincoln Heights Resident Council, chair of Lincoln Heights/Richardson Dwellings New Communities Advisory Council, and a Ward 7 advisory neighborhood commissioner. Malloy explained that when she saw on the news that Northwest One was becoming a new community, she e-mailed Councilmember Vincent Gray and asked if Lincoln Heights could become one. She said that Gray said, "Why not?" Malloy said that the Advisory Council was established over a year ago to help guide the development of the revitalization plan, and meetings were held at least



weekly before the revitalization plan, including renderings, were drafted.

The revitalization plan seeks to improve the neighborhood by:

- Creating a mixed income community of various housing types which includes 630 on-site and off-site replacement units together with new affordable and market-rate units for a total of 1,469 units



Left: Community meeting on the revitalization plans

Above: Patricia Malloy

Continued on page 9

ERFSC is a Partner in Together Is Better Initiative

The East Capital Center for Change, East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, and the Capital Area Asset Building Corporation (CAAB) are implementing Together is Better, a program dedicated to sustaining healthy relationships and marriages. A key component of Together is Better is an eight-week Basic Training for Couples, developed by the Wedded Bliss Foundation, that teaches couples how to improve communications, manage stress, plan their financial life together, and help their children succeed, among other topics. To date, more than 40 people have participated in the training.

"We want people who want to be together to participate in our training where we cover everything needed to assist them in establishing a healthy relationship," said Jones. "It is real important for couples to learn the importance of spending quality time together with and without their children, going on vacations, and allocating time for family growth and development." He said that one component of the program for married couples focuses on "10 great dates," providing ideas for things couples can do

together to keep relationships healthy and fresh. For couples who are not married, Jones said that the program provides insight on how to experience "hot monogamy."

Jones said that the Together is Better campaign also encourages engaged and married couples with combined earnings of \$50,000 or less to save by opening a Marriage Development Account with CAAB. Under this program, couples receive a 3:1 match on up to \$3,000 of personal savings that can be invested in higher education, a small business, or a first home.

To get the word out about the program, Jones recruits student volunteers to distribute information and a free "slow jams" music CD in targeted areas throughout the city.



Couples celebrate completion of Basic Training at Philips Restaurant.

Launched in the spring of 2006, the program is funded with a grant to ECCC from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, contact Robert Jones at 202-397-7300, ext. 132.

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative FSFSC Launches Men and Boys Program

FSFSC launched the Men and Boys Program in December 2006 to empower and strengthen men who are raising boys. The program, which is a part of the organization's Fatherhood Initiative, provides case management, advocacy, information and referrals, parent training for fathers, support groups, and monthly forums. The program will also provide services to boys in high school.

The objectives of the program are to improve mental health through social and emotional development, and to connect men and boys with community services and support by providing social and therapeutic services, character education, and life management training.

In December, the Men and Boys Program held its first forum, which was attended by more than 25 fathers and some of their wives and children. The forum included discussion on coping with stress during the holidays. FSFSC Men and Boys project staff stressed that spending quality time with family during the holidays provides a memorable experience, whether or not material things are provided.

"We are very excited about the newly created Men and Boys Program here at Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative," said Chester Marshall, family services director and project leader. "Perry Moon was very clear in his intent to establish a program directed toward black men. . . . The ultimate goal is to have a cadre of highly functional and successful African American men who reside in Ward 8, and who are connected with community and are effective members of their families."

FSFSC has new headquarters space in Suite 304 at 2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue. An open house is being planned.



Above: Participants in Men and Boys Program.

Right: The Men and Boys Program team: Chester Marshall, LaShawn Dunn, Ralik Turner, and Juan Davenport.

Lincoln Heights New Community (from page 8)

- Building a vibrant mixed-used town center at Nannie Helen Burroughs and Division Avenues to provide new neighborhood retail
- Introducing a new residential street grid to eliminate the neighborhood's current isolation from surrounding communities
- Proposing the creation of a new primary care health care facility, a new indoor swimming pool at Kelly Miller Middle School, and a new

community education and learning campus on the redeveloped H. D. Woodson High School site

- Improving coordination of District programming and support for Marvin Gaye Park

Community partners in the revitalization efforts include:

- East River Family Strengthening Collaborative
- Day Break

- Marshall Heights Community Development
- Washington Parks and People
- Habitat for Humanity
- ANCs 7C and 7C01
- Kelly Miller Middle School
- DC Parks and Recreation

Meetings are held the first and fourth Monday of each month, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Kelly Miller Middle School.

Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative

GARCEC Welcomes New Board Members

By James Cunningham

On December 12, 2007 the Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative membership elected five new members into its Board of Directors. They are: Michael Leon, program coordinator, Latin American Youth Center's Ward 4 Enrichment Programs; Hermela Kebede, executive director, Ethiopian Community Center; Luz Marie Aguirrebena, accounting manager, El Tiempo Latino; Terry Goings, president, Calvin Coolidge High School PTSO; and Reverend Dwight Davis, teacher, Whittier Elementary School. "With the addition of the new members GARCEC's Board is now complete with 12 members. All are eager to take on the task of building, strengthening, and maintaining the Collaborative presence and working in Ward 4," said Karen Feinstein, executive director.

When asked why he joined the GARCEC Board, Michael Leon said, "I have accepted membership on the GARCEC Board to help bring more resources to families and children. I want to bring more access for the community to existing services for both the immigrant and minority population." Hermela Kebede said, "I want to contribute in the areas of my expertise, to see resources reach immigrant and minority communities and anyone who needs services."



New members pictured left to right: Dwight Davis, Terry Goings, Luz Marie Aguirrebena, Hermela Kebede and Michael Leon

"I'm here for the children," said Terry Goings. "I want the Collaborative to become more in tune with the entire Ward 4 community by reaching out to other small community organizations, and forging partnerships that support children and youth."

GARCEC Partners with Hannah House to offer Parent Empowerment

By James Cunningham

GARCEC partnered with Hannah House transitional living project to graduate eleven participants from the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP) on January 11, 2007. PEP is dedicated to helping parents increase confidence in their parenting skills using cutting edge resources to positively affect the behavior of their children.

Parents who participated in the class learned how to communicate and give clear messages to their children. They also practiced techniques to help children stop negative behavior using the praise and prevention teaching methods. Parents learned in the most clear and explicit way how to model and teach self-control.

The skills acquired in the eight-week class are paramount for dealing with family crises, resolving conflict, teaching children responsibility, and assisting children in setting and reaching goals.

Karen McNeal, program director of the Hannah House, said, "The parents were excited throughout the



James Cunningham, GARCEC community resource manager, with PEP graduates.

training about what they were learning. Most of our parents felt [that] as a result of the training, they became closer to their children."

GARCEC's Parent Empowerment Program offers workshops and classes for parents, families, educators, service providers, and other professionals.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Karen McNeal



GARCEC is proud to spotlight Ms. Karen McNeal of the Hannah House transitional facility for her years of service to women and families in need. Ms. McNeal is a tireless worker and champion in providing support for women and children who have fallen on hard times.

Through the Hannah House programs, women receive a second chance in breaking the cycle of addiction and abuse through rigorous one-on-one case management, life skills, job readiness training, peer support, and financial management skills. Women in the program participate in a mandatory savings plan to transition them into independence.

Ms. McNeal, GARCEC salutes you in the work you do.

North Capitol Collaborative, Inc.

Lessons From a Father

By Tony Dugger

It was about midday when a community partner called, one whom I had courted for a few years to build a new and lasting rapport. My efforts paid off; he wanted the North Capitol Collaborative to have first dibs at servicing his residents. He is the chief operating officer of a notorious housing cooperative, now under new management. In an effort to rebuild the complex and its members, he requires all nonworking residents to participate in training and personal development courses. A young father seeking housing entered while he was talking to me on the phone. He happened to have several units available and offered one to this young father under the condition that he participates in the fatherhood program. The father consented immediately and the referral was a cinch. I scheduled him for intake.

He arrived several days later and, amazingly, on time. He was dressed appropriately, well-groomed; I was impressed, a bit out of the norm from the young guys I see. Most of them sport the “urban look”; sagging pants is a major part of it. I am savvy enough to know that this cannot be judged by an older guy like me; rather, it is to be understood. Every culture is a statement about a group of people with their own identity. Urbanized African American males think, talk, and dress a certain way. Trying to change who they are is disastrous. Teaching them how to negotiate between their worlds and that of the greater society in which they live is more realistic. Surprisingly, they always figure out what’s comfortable for them.

This young man is just 23 years old. He has one child born out of wedlock currently in his custody and just married a young single mother with a child. Together, they have a beautiful daughter. A sixty-year old neighbor describes them as two families becoming one and two young parents trying to make a go of it. I agreed with an emphasis on a young African American male trying to do the right thing for his family.



When the North Capitol Collaborative interviewed this young dad, he reported not knowing his father and being raised by a single mom. He shared that his siblings are still at home, and how perplexed he is because he can’t leave them, neglect his family, work, and hopefully obtain the career he wants. His spirit was amazingly open too, almost like an innocent child who, himself, wanted to be taught what to do. A rarity this day, he didn’t have all the answers, and he didn’t appear to want to take a short cut. He came to my office wanting to be helped and ready to receive it. This was moving, so I invited him to join me and another staffmember to take the “The Quenching the Father’s Thirst Training” with the National Fatherhood Institute (NFI). This training was for practitioners only but I wanted to see how he would respond to the new

curriculum. As I anticipated, he did so in a thoughtful and responsible way.

Notably, he was training with some real fatherhood advocates, and the energy was literally hypnotic. Every older gentleman seemed to care for this father like his own son. Each mentored him in a special way. And he was the perfect sponge. NFI trainer George Williams was particularly effective using two cups to illustrate every child’s thirst for his dad. A large cup demonstrated the father, and a small cup demonstrated the child. Every cup’s purpose is to hold its content. If a cup is empty, then it has nothing to give to the smaller cup. So are the generations of fatherless children waiting to be filled by their fathers.

At the end of the training, the young father had an opportunity to share his purpose, vision, and dream for his family, and it sounded real good to all of us. Perhaps, he taught us a real lesson at the end—that fatherhood is a tangible and concrete concept for young fathers.

Several days after the trainings, I went looking for this young man. I found some money in my budget, and I wanted to sponsor his training to become a CISCO networking specialist. The North Capitol Collaborative fatherhood specialist called him for days and he couldn’t reach him. Finally, the young father surfaced. He only had a few minutes to talk to us because he was working a full and part time job. His wife was working also and going to school. Between their busy work schedules, they were caring for the children. Polite as he was when I first met him, he really didn’t have a lot of time, and I could really respect that. I just wanted to let him know that the North Capitol Collaborative was just checking in to see how he and his family were doing and that we are just a phone call away if he needed anything.

“Thanks,” he said. As I hung up the phone, in my mind I could visualize that boyish face with a grin. In my heart though, I knew I was talking to a man and to a father. These are some of the collective rewards of the fatherhood movement in the District of Columbia.

Truancy Program (from page 7)

Program becomes involved when students are reported to have five or more unexcused absences.

The goal of the 12-week program at Garnet Patterson was to increase school attendance, improve academic performance and improve student behavior through an early intervention and strength-based family systems approach model in addressing school attendance. The program consisted of six vital partners – the family court judge, school principal, attendance counselor, court social services, community family advocates, and the juvenile resource coordinator. From the beginning of the 12-week process, the CHSFSC family support workers provided intensive case management, weekly home and school visits, and coordinated additional services required by the family. For additional support to the families, CHSFSC also

assisted and participated in coordinating student and parent support groups within the school.

“With the show of support from the adults in their lives, students take responsibility for their academic and behavioral success by developing behavioral contracts,” said Wyneshia Hicks, CHSFSC family preservation specialist assigned to the Truancy Court Diversion Program.

At the start of the new academic year, the Truancy Court Diversion team has geared up for a new group of families to support. For more information on the Truancy Court Diversion program, contact Patricia Sullivan, Truancy Diversion Program Team Leader at 202-518-6737 or via electronic mail at psullivan@chsfsc.org.

Program Success Story

The Jones family was referred to the Truancy Court Diversion program because 15-year-old Latisha had accumulated 25 absences since the beginning of the school year. After suspensions, detentions, and threats of expulsion, the absences continued. The Jones family volunteered to participate in the program, come to meetings before and after school, sign behavioral contracts, and enter the challenging process of attendance accountability. The family received ongoing attention from the judge and social services support from CHSFSC. The family, as a unit, completed the 12-week program, and Latisha was promoted to the next grade with an improved attendance record and a grade point average of 3.5.

South Washington Family Strengthening Collaborative SWWR Celebrates Accomplishments

Over 100 community residents, clients, and partners gathered at Westminster Presbyterian Church in December for the South Washington/West of the River Annual Meeting which celebrated SWWR's 2006 accomplishments. This event reinforces the Collaborative's effort to report out to the community its work with children, youth, and families on an ongoing basis. SWWR reported that 214 families with 394 children received case management services; six community workshops and skill-building forums were held with over 124 parents in attendance; 160 parents participated in the weekly Parent Support Groups; and 38 parents completed the Parent Education Program. In addition, 20 families were assisted in locating affordable housing.

SWWR recognized three "Families of the Year" for the success they had in making positive changes and strengthening their families. Also acknowledged were the many partner agencies and volunteers who shared in the successful work done with families over the past year. Samuel Tramel, executive director, in delivering the "state of the Collaborative" said, "It takes a village to raise a child. Today we see change –



SWWR Chair Rev. Ruth Hamilton presents Volunteer of the Year award to Marian Bright Todd.

a chance to build upon a new spirit with intent provoked by passion, ideas, and true partnerships that impact lives. SWWR is not an isolated agency, but the culmination of many partners, volunteers and residents collaborating together to strengthen families, children, and communities."

Employment Opportunity

The **DC Metropolitan Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (FAPA)** has an excellent opportunity for an experienced manager to lead the organization as its first executive director. FAPA is a membership organization dedicated to strengthening foster, adoptive, and kinship families. The executive director will be responsible for day-to-day operations, as well as membership development, fund raising, event planning, fiscal management, and long-range planning. The executive director also serves as the organization's spokesperson and liaison with local government agencies and other organizations.

The ideal candidate is a multi-tasker with excellent leadership, organization management, and written and verbal communications skills.

This is a part-time position, reporting to the Board of Directors. Send resume with cover letter to FAPA at 1436 U Street, NW, Suite 203, Washington, DC 20009, or fax resume to 202-299-0901.

Transitions

New Hires

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative



Minnie P. Allen is ERFSC's new assistant family services director. Minnie comes to ERFSC from Fihankra Place, Inc., where for two years she was senior case manager overseeing the clinical case management of four independent living programs designed to serve wards of the court of the District of

Columbia. Minnie held positions at the Child and Family Services Agency, and at the Department of Social and Health Services in Tacoma, Washington. She received her bachelor's of health science from the Governors State University, University Park, Illinois, and her master of social work from the University of Washington, in Seattle.

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative



Troy D. Dorsey, has joined FSFSC as executive assistant to Perry J. Moon, executive director. Troy is a former member of the US Army trained in personnel and finance. A native Washingtonian, he is a graduate of Ballou Sr. High and Howard University. He is an active

member of Star Bright Christian Fellowship Center in Northeast Washington.



Diane Hall is intake specialist for FSFSC, responsible for obtaining information from a variety of referral sources and maintaining case files. Prior to joining FSFSC, she served as a special education assistant in the DC public schools, providing one-on-one academic

assistance to students, tutoring, and coordinating group activities. She is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in information systems at Trinity University.



Karen KouKou is the FSFSC's new administrative assistant, responsible for providing support for operations, family services, and human resources. Karen comes to FSFSC from BDO Seidman, LLP in Philadelphia, a national professional services firm providing assurance, tax, financial

advisory, and consulting services, where she served as human resources assistant. She has also held positions at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass), where she received a bachelor's degree in psychology.



Dionne T. Reeder has rejoined the FSFSC as director of community engagement, after serving as the Ward 8 neighborhood services coordinator. As director of community engagement, she is responsible for the coordination, implementation, and monitoring

of community engagement activities, developing and

coordinating the agency's marketing plan, and providing oversight to new initiatives and programs. Dionne previously served in this position in 2004. She is a graduate of West Virginia State College, a certified prevention specialist, and is pursuing a master's of divinity from Howard University.



Robinette Willin is the administrative assistant responsible for providing support to the community engagement department. Prior to joining FSFSC she held positions at Future Endeavors Credit Solutions and Consulting Services and with the

Environmental Protection Agency.

Calendar

Free Tax Preparation

For Ward 7 residents who earned \$36,348 or less in 2006. Residents with children can take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative

3732 Minnesota Ave NE Washington, DC 20019
Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Second and 4th Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
February 10 & 24; March 10&24, and April 14
 Call (202) 397-7300 ext. 101 to schedule an appointment.