



THE COLLABORATIVE CONNECTION

A Publication of the Washington, DC Healthy Families Thriving Communities Collaborative Council

May-June 2006

DC Council Supports Expanded Funding for Prevention

The District of Columbia's 2007 budget as approved by the City Council includes almost \$2.9 million in new funding for primary and secondary prevention services. The funds were added to CFSA's budget by the Committee on Human Services on a motion offered by Councilmember Marion Barry. Of this allocation, \$1,881,000 will be used by the DC Collaboratives to provide intensive wrap around case management to nearly 300 additional families, and \$1 million for primary prevention will be available to community-based organizations to fund less intensive home-based services to another 400 families.

In the budget markup session, DC Councilmember Marion Barry said, "The Collaboratives have done an excellent job to reach out, keep families together, and keep children out of foster care. Restoring funding for prevention is a very strategic investment that saves families."

Councilmember Vincent Gray said that the decrease in the number of children in foster care reflect the work of the Collaboratives. "We need to assure that the resources to support families and engage in effective early intervention is expanded," he said. "The Collaboratives should be the front end of our child welfare system with prevention and early interaction. No matter what arena, the value of the Collaboratives has been discussed in glowing terms, but the resources are not there," he said.



Collaborative representatives testify before the DC Council Committee on Human Services. From left: Karen Feinstein, Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Collaborative; Jacquelyn Henry, Collaborative Council; and Eugene Kinlow, Far Southeast Collaborative

Prior to budget approval, Collaborative representatives and others testified before the Committee on Human Services in support of increased funding for the Collaboratives in the CFSA budget. Eugene Kinlow, chairman of the Far Southeast Family Support Collaborative told the Committee that the Collaboratives have become "the house brand for community-based services," and are called upon to "deliver services that are not pricey, taste good, and always appear to be available." Kinlow asked the Council members to "recognize that the Collaboratives have been historically underfunded; that year-to-year increases fail to keep up with market realities; that we're not given sufficient opportunity or resources to develop human capital and institutional assets in the neighborhoods in which we are planted; additional work must be accompanied by new dollars; that multi-agency funding is needed in order to carry out our mission...."

Karen Feinstein, executive director, of the Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative, discussed how the Collaboratives can contribute to strengthening front-end reinvestment by CFSA, DMH, and other systems, and urged restoration of the \$5 million that was eliminated from CFSA's budget at a time when the agency had been making critical inroads into addressing the increased demand for child welfare services.

Jacquelyn Henry, HFTCCC executive director, pointed out that already this year, the Collaboratives have met 72.8% of its annual service target for CFSA referred cases. She said that the Collaboratives are experiencing "referral strain" and "will likely hit our contractual limits by mid-summer in all categories." Henry noted that CFSA would like to refer additional cases to address current gaps between capacity need for community-based service. She said that in order for the city to meet its child welfare reform goals, it must:

- Expand the basic service capacity of the Collaboratives across the city, particularly in Wards 8, 7, and 5 where the gaps are most pronounced.
- Target the utilization of Collaborative services to high-need populations.
- Extend the partnership with CFSA by piloting evidenced-based practices to promote intensive secondary prevention services to at-risk families, further implementing neighborhood co-location of CFSA staff; and aggressively supporting community-based interventions for young people who are currently driven into residential placements funded by CFSA due to our city's service gaps.

In This Issue

Immigrants are Not the Only Target	2
Together is Better Initiative Launched	3
Quenching the Father Thirst	3
Parents of Successful Students Graduate	4
Bridges Initiative Brings Together Elders and Youth	5
FSFSC Holds 7th Annual Conference	6
Forums Yield Feedback to Address Youth Concerns	7
Edgewood/Brookland Collaborative Celebrates 10 Years	8
Browne Gymnasium Cleared for School and Community Use	8
Georgia Avenue Has PEP	9
GARCEC Community Spotlight	9
Youth Violence Prevention Workshops	9
NCCI Registers Youth for Summer Employment	10
NCCI Community Forums Focus on Housing	10
Education Issues Addressed at SWWR Forum	11
Transitions	12

Immigrants Are Not The Only Targets

By Jessica Alvarez, Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative

Immigrants are not the only targets of the “Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005” (HR-4437). In fact, employers, social services and faith communities are enforcement targets. On December 16, 2005, HR-4437 passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 239-182, and sparked massive demonstrations around the country. This proposed legislation threatens the stability of immigrant families across the United States, and directly attacks the historic reasons why people migrate to the United States – to work and reunite with family members.

Social service providers across the country have voiced discontent and concern with the proposed legislation because of the provision that states that any person or organization knowingly assisting an individual without documentation “to reside in or remain” in the United States, or with “reckless disregard” of the individual’s legal status would be liable for criminal penalties and five years in prison. This could include church personnel, who provide shelter or other basic assistance to an undocumented individual. In addition, property used in these acts of assistance would be subject to seizure and forfeiture.



Many representatives of community service organizations participated in the immigration rallies held in Washington.

HR-4437 would jeopardize the well-being of poor children, youth, and families in our neighborhoods because it would directly challenge the ability of families to thrive in our communities. Community-based organizations have historically provided services to families in our city regardless of immigration status or nationality.

HR-4437 would allow state and local law enforcement officials to enforce federal immigration laws, and those

Continued on page 4

Mark Your Calendars



**Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives
Annual Conference and 10th Anniversary Celebration**

October 12-13, 2006

**Kellogg Conference Hotel at Gallaudet University
800 Florida Avenue, NE**

The First Annual Conference of the Collaboratives and the Collaborative Council will challenge participants to join the Collaborative Movement in strengthening and empowering families and communities in the District of Columbia. The conference will consist of a series of workshops that will focus on a variety of issues, including: using formal and informal resources within the community to build systems of care; strengthening communities by promoting family preservation; extending the reach of family support; credentialing for community-based workers; and maintaining stress-free environments for employees. An institute will present various logic models and their use in work with families in the child welfare system, as well as the use of data in informing practice and quality assurance.

For more information, contact the Collaborative Council at 202-299-0900.

THE COLLABORATIVE CONNECTION

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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 fullest potential.

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Nonprofits Launch Marriage Initiative

Newlyweds Sandra Corley-Graham and Winston Graham, low-income residents of the Benning Terrace Housing Project in Ward 7, believe that their decision to marry has changed their lives and the lives of their five children for the better. The Grahams and others shared their stories at “A Community Conversation About Healthy Relationships and Marriage” – the kick-off event of “Together is Better: The Campaign to Strengthen DC Families, Marriages, and Communities” – which was held on April 27, 2006, at the Kelly Miller Middle School.

The campaign, which is dedicated to promoting the well-being of children by helping couples develop skills and knowledge to form and sustain healthy marriages, is being implemented by the East Capitol Center for Change (ECCC), the DC Metropolitan Area Healthy Marriage and Relationships Coalition (HMRC), the National Center for Fathering (NCF), and the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative. It is being funded by a DC appropriations line item that was supported by Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) and Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS). The appropriation also provides for Marriage Development Accounts (MDAs) and pre-Marriage Development Accounts (pMDAs) to encourage low-income married and engaged couples to

save for post-secondary education, first-time home purchase, or the start-up or expansion of a small business. The Capital Area Asset Building Corporation (CAAB) is administering the accounts, and participating couples will be eligible for a 3:1 match on up to \$3,000 of personal savings, for a total of \$12,000 to purchase qualified assets. As a requirement of participation, couples will receive financial training through CAAB and its network of service providers.

The city-wide kick-off engaged residents, community leaders and organizations from every Ward and featured dialogue from primarily low-income residents.

Congresswoman Norton delivered the keynote address, stating that marriage has been the institution of the Black family – including both the father and the mother at its head – and has gotten African Americans through tragically unjust periods in US history. She also said that public policies that have helped to make marriage less and less the norm absolutely must change. “Only the dogged determination of members

Together Is Better
The Campaign to Strengthen
DC Families, Marriages & Communities



Representatives of ECCC, HMRC, NCF, and ERFSC at the kick-off event for “Together is Better.”

of DC’s African American community can ultimately turn the situation around fully and restore healthy marriage to its proper place in our culture,” she said.

Other speakers included Curtis Watkins, president, ECCC, Dianne Hampton, convenor, HMRC, and George Williams of NCF.

Continued on Page 12

Quenching the Father Thirst

DC’s Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives, beginning this May, are training men to become responsible fathers/father figures that love, know, and guide their children to success. They will be using a new breakthrough curriculum – “Quenching the Father Thirst: Developing a Dad” – developed by the National Center for Fathering.

The curriculum addresses the role of the father, systemic barriers to fathering, and provides training in specific skills to help men become the father that the child needs. Staff from six of the Collaboratives have been trained to teach the curriculum by the National Center for Fathering.

The training, offered free of charge to fathers, include the following lessons:

Part I: The Foundation of Fatherhood

- Lesson 1: The Father Thirst Epidemic
- Lesson 2: What About the Children
- Lesson 3: It Takes a Man to be a Father
- Lesson 4: My Challenges as a Dad
- Lesson 5: My Father and Family History
- Lesson 6: My Mother and Women Relationships

Part 2: Fathering Skills

- Lesson 7: The Father-Mother Partnership
- Lesson 8: Commitment to Child Development
- Lesson 9: Emotional Encouragement
- Lesson 10: Communicating to Connect
- Lesson 11: Social Involvement
- Lesson 12: Leading by Training

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Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative

Parents of Successful Students Graduate

The Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative, in conjunction with the Marie H. Reed Educational Learning Center held its first graduation for 30 parents who participated in the “Parents of Successful Students” program. The objective of the six-week bilingual training program is to provide parents with tools to increase their engagement in their children’s education and, ultimately, increase the academic and social success of children in Columbia Heights/Shaw.

Although this program was intended for a group of 10 to 15 individuals, its popularity attracted 53 parents. Twenty-three parents are continuing to pursue their diplomas.

The training program, which was composed of both African American and Latino parents, began with activities to promote peer understanding and identification of common ground. The workshops provided step-by-step guides to navigating the school system and applying for college, and tools for parent to use to prevent and/or intervene in risky behavior by teenagers and school age children. They were conducted by law enforcement professionals, mental health providers, education advocates, school administrators, and social service providers. At the completion of the program, parents shared common obstacles to raising children in the District of Columbia.

“These classes gave me the encouragement as a father to question the school system about services for my son who requires special education,” said Orlando Orellana, the father of two Marie Reed Educational Learning Center students.

Program coordinator Fani Cruz of the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative expressed the need for such programs across the city. “This and any program that brings information and encouragement to parents is a necessary tool. Digestible information brought directly to the parents in a non-threatening format, and the willingness of the school to strengthen the communication with the parents made this program a success,” she said.



Participants of “Parents of Successful Students” program display their certificates of completion.

Aberagh Merid, a parent of a Marie Reed Educational Learning Center student, said, “As parents we speak to our children everyday, but I learned to communicate with my children. I learned to invest time and to look at communication with my kids from a different perspective.” Program participant Marta Azucena said during the graduation, “The area that interested me the most, was the presentation of the obstacles and pressures teenagers’ face which diverts them for successfully completing school. The presentation from the police department about prevention of gang involvement empowered me to take charge of my

unruly child. As a parent, I now know that I can call the police; as a mother, I have the right to seek help; and as a community member, I will share this information.”

A social work student from Gallaudet University provided simultaneous interpretation during all sessions with the parents.

For more information about this and other parenting programs sponsored by the Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support Collaborative, contact Fani Cruz at 202-518-6737, or e-mail her at fcruz@chsfsc.org.

Immigrants Are Not the Only Targets (from page 2)

state and local governments that don’t enforce the laws would be subject to the loss of federal funding. This provision would hinder the work of community safety and community policing initiatives in our area and result in under-reporting of crimes such as domestic violence and child abuse or neglect.

The proposed legislation eliminates programs such as the visa lottery, which has allowed 50,000 immigrants each year to permanently reside in the US.

Contrary to many anti-immigrant myths:

- Immigrants pay income, property, and sales taxes at the federal and state levels. Studies indicate that immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes.

- Immigrants enter the US to work and to be reunited with family members. The ratio between immigrant use of public benefits and the amount of taxes they pay is consistently favorable to the US. In one estimate, immigrants earn about \$240 billion a year, pay about \$90 billion a year in taxes, and use about \$5 billion in public benefits.
- The monetary benefit of immigration to the US is nearly \$10 billion annually. Former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan stated that 70% of immigrants arrive at prime working age. That means we haven’t spent a penny on their education, yet they are transplanted into our workforce and will contribute \$500 billion toward our Social Security system over the next 20 years.

How does HR-4437 affect you, your neighborhood, place of worship, place of work and friends and family? What are you doing about it?

(Sources: “Immigrant Workers in the New England Labor Market: Implications for Workforce Development Policy,” Andrew Sum, Mykhaylo Trubskyy, Ishwar Khatiwada, et al., October 2002; “Questioning Immigration Policy – Can We Afford to Open Our Arms?,” Friends Committee on National Legislation, January 25, 1996; HR-5537 Facts, www.justiceforimmigrant.com, 2006)

Editor’s Note: The Senate has passed “The Immigration Reform Act of 2006”—which would tighten border security, establish an immigrant guest worker program, and offer a path to citizenship for millions of illegal immigrants already in the United States. The House and Senate must work out a compromise.

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative

Bridges Initiative Brings Together Elders and Youth

Although research shows that America is growing older, some say that today's children and older people don't have sufficient opportunities for meaningful interaction, and that the generations are divided emotionally, physically, and socially.

According to East River Family Strengthening Collaborative, many of the children who live in Ward 7 do not have the benefit of historical, cultural and community traditions that are passed from senior family members and/or community elders to the young. To address this issue, ERFSC and its partner, Sign of the Times, developed the "Bridges Initiative" under the Marshall Heights Weed and Seed, with the primary focus on interaction among youth and seniors. The program consisted of a series of dialogues and discussions on "coming of age" issues such as dating, music, and fashion, as well as issues such as personal responsibility, work ethic, political/social apathy, and negative stereotypes that may be related to the proliferation of youth violence.

In a discussion on music, led by Gwen Jones, coordinator of the project, youth were asked whether or not today's music impacts youth behavior. During this discussion, one of the more acceptable rap songs was played for the elders in attendance to hear. While the majority of the lyrics were clean, there was still some negativity in the song, yet one elder said that she agreed with the song's basic message.

Youth participating in this discussion felt that music focusing on sex, money, drugs and violence don't have an impact on them, because they know right from wrong. One participant stated that the music is produced because "negativity sells," that "it addresses the state of mind that America is in," and that "producers won't produce music with clean lyrics." During this session, the adults introduced the young people to music of the 1950s and 1960s, showing copies 33rpm albums, a music format that preceded compact discs. The adults expressed their opinion that the old music had more meaning.

Jones said that participants enjoyed coming to the sessions, and believed that the younger people left more empowered.

Latisha Atkins, community services director, responsible for the Weed and Seed program, said that one of the goals of the program is to pass down the history of communities from generation to generation, and that she is hopeful that the participants will continue to participate in community activities, set examples, and help make change.

Mae Best, ERFSC executive director, said that the program demonstrated that kids and adults can learn from each other.

The program ended with a ceremony where participants received certificates.



Adults and youth in a dialogue on music



Participants of the "Bridges Initiative" at the closing ceremony

ERFSC Holds First Job Fair

ERFSC, in partnership Marshall Heights Community Development Organization, DC Department of Employment Services, Upper Room Baptist held its first job fair this spring, attracting close to 200 participants. The week before the event, ERFSC conducted a workshop focusing on resume writing and other essential skills that job seekers need to obtain employment. A

Continued on page 11



Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative

FSFSC Seventh Annual Meeting: Circle of Safety

“Circle of Safety” was the theme of FSFSC’s Seventh Annual Business Meeting and Community Conference, held April 22, 2006, at Ballou Senior High School. Speakers included Marion Barry, Ward 8 councilmember; Brenda Donald Walker, deputy mayor for children, youth, families and elders; and Audrey Sutton, deputy director, operations, Child and Family Services Agency. This year’s event attracted more than 300 participants and 35 exhibitors.

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in the following workshops:

- Education: Truancy, Vocational and Special Education – provided an opportunity for parents to talk to William Lockridge, DC Board of Education, and Darlene Allen, Citywide PTA president
- Grandparent Caregivers – Donald Hoffman, CFSA Grandparents Caregiver Program, and Luis Davis, AARP provided information on resources now available to grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren
- Media in the Mind – an interactive workshop aimed at building an awareness of elements in the media – was conducted by Carol Dyson, Multimedia Training Institute and Tendani Mpulubusi, FSFSC youth development specialist
- HIV and AIDS – Solomon Irwin Royster, project director, Ophelia Egypt Teen Clinic, addressed myths and misconceptions due to fear and ignorance surrounding HIV and AIDS
- Redevelopment of Ward 8 – Residential, commercial and retail development plans were discussed by Robert Hayden, Department of Housing and Community Development, Charles E. Thomas, Ward 8 transportation planner, and Donnie James, project manager for Ward 8, DC Waterfront Corporation

A highlight of the event were awards to the community. Recipients are as follows:

- President’s Award – Nathaniel Howard, FSFSC board member and president, Congress Heights Community Association
- Resident of the Year Award – Phillip Pannell
- Organizational Partner Award – Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness
- Family Strengthening Award – Renee Robinson Family
- Outstanding Mini-Grant Award – Have Faith In Me Project
- Employee of the Year – LaJuan Massie



Above: Jacquelyn Henry, Kathleen Holly, Eugene Kinlow, I. Toni Thomas, Judith Dobbins, Nathaniel Howard, Marion Barry, Perry J. Moon, Tanya Morten, Thomas Gore DeLise Bernard.

Below (clockwise): Participant gets blood pressure checked; one of the five workshops for residents; the Ballou Senior High School marching band; children attending event enjoyed face-painting.



FSFSC Forums Yield Feedback to Help Youth

Participants attending three youth forums conducted by the Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative provided valuable input on the needs of youth in Ward 8. The purpose of the forums, which were held in January, February and March, was to “effectively document the needs of youth in Ward 8,” according to Tendani Mpulubusi, FSFSC’s youth development coordinator. “We wanted youth to communicate with us about the things that help and hurt them so that we can match resources in the community to address their needs,” he said.

Mpulubusi said that, through these forums, FSFSC has learned that:

- Young people are under-served in the area of mental health.
- Some community centers are not safe.
- There needs to be more programs focusing on computer and audio/visual technology, and music production.
- There needs to be outlets for music performance, and art, and other creativity so that creativity doesn’t get funneled into negative activities.
- Youth who are truant are not going to school because they feel they are not a part of the educational process.
- Youth who are getting into trouble would rather be working – there are not enough employment programs and a lot of the programs don’t reach the people who need them.
- A lot of the so-called service providers are not providing service.
- Youth are looking for mentors who really care.
- Youth don’t feel they are respected.
- Services that are in the community for the children need to be in the school system as well as in before- and after-care programs.
- There needs to be more counseling available for the children who are not with their parents.

“FSFSC’s approach to addressing the needs will be an asset-building approach,” Mpulubusi said. “We will focus on what youth can do and not their deficiencies.”

Tendani Mpulubusi



FSFSC Employee of the Year



LaJuan Massie, FSFSC information and resource/intake specialist, was presented the Employee of the Year award at the organization’s Annual Business Meeting. The FSFSC Employee of the Year Award is presented to an employee who has been with the organization for at least a year, has shown strong commitment to the Ward 8 families and communities, uses creativity in performing his or her job, and is a team player, among other criteria. “I enjoy working with the staff and the community,” said Massie. “We are all family.”

Massie joined FSFSC in 1999 as a health advocate, and also served as a family support worker before assuming her current position in 2002. Before joining the organization, she held positions as a security guard at Assurance Security Company, and as receptionist/community service, at the DC TANF Office.

Massie is a graduate of Ballou High School and is a recipient of the Collaborative Council Cornell Family Development Credential.

FSFSC Family Strengthening Award



The Renee Robinson Family was the recipient of the Family Strengthening Award. Ms. Robinson entered the FSFSC Visitation Program, “Milestones,” in March 2005 and completed the program on December 13, 2005. She came to FSFSC dissatisfied with social service systems, angry, confused, and withdrawn. During the time she was in the program, she demonstrated the ability to overcome long-standing substance abuse issues with the assistance of the Community Action Group and the Family Treatment Court Programs. She engaged in therapeutic services that assisted her in addressing her anger, family and social history. This resulted in her being awarded unsupervised visits with her daughter, and ultimately reunification of the family. She obtained her own apartment, employment, and opportunities to be a guest speaker at several functions where she presented her poetry that reflected her struggles and triumphs.

Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative E/BFSC Celebrates 10th Anniversary

“Measuring 10 Years of Service in Our Community...Forging a Legacy of Strengthening Families and Building Vibrant Communities” was the theme of E/BFSC’s 10th Anniversary Celebration, held May 18, at the Washington Times Arbor Center.

Louvenia Williams, executive director, briefly recounted the history of the organization, which she said began in a two-bedroom apartment in Edgewood Terrace.

Ward 5 Councilmember Vincent Orange said, “There’s no greater unit than the family unit,” and that educational policies should be adopted that ensure success for children. Orange presented E/BFSC with a resolution from the Council recognizing E/BFSC’s 10th Anniversary. In presenting the organization with a mayoral proclamation, Uma Ahluwalia, Child and Family Services Agency interim director, said: “The work of protecting our children and keeping families together is the hardest work there is.”

Judge Lee Satterfield received the E/BFSC Richard Greene Caring for Children Award; Albert J. Browne Jr., received the Rogerline Nicholson Building Vibrant Communities Award; and Councilmember Vincent Gray received the Violet Collins



From left: Robert Graham, E/BFSC Membership chair-elect; Kevin DuPree, E/BFSC membership chair; Vincent Gray, Ward 7 councilmember; Albert J. Browne, Jr., E/BFSC board president; Louvenia Williams, E/BFSC executive director; Uma Ahluwalia, CFSA interim director; Kim Bright, former E/BFSC Board president; Judge Lee Satterfield.

Strengthening Families Award. In accepting his award, Gray noted that there has been a 25 percent drop in kids going into foster care since the inception of the Collaboratives. “I believe that we can strengthen families so that there is not one child in foster

care. . . .The day will come that not a single child will have to live outside of their families,” he said.

Look for more information and photo highlights in the next issue of the Collaborative Connection.

Browne Gymnasium Cleared for Community Activities

For more than 10 years, the gymnasium at Browne Junior High School has been used as the school’s storage area, housing computers, furniture, books, and other materials. This spring, the Edgewood/Brookland Family Support Collaborative, in cooperation with the school and the community, spearheaded an effort to clear the gym so that the space can be used for school assemblies and for enrichment activities for the community. The cleanup began with participation of Browne 9th graders, and ended with participation of staff, teachers, and E/BFSC and its community partners.

“Our goal with this and other endeavors with Browne Junior High School is to improve the environment in which our children learn and provide space for after-school and community activities that do not interfere with the day-to-day operation of the school,” said Louvenia Williams, E/BFSC executive director.

The next step of this project will involve the efforts of the William C. Smith Company in renovating the space.

Since 2004, Browne has been E/BFSC’s partner in the organization’s full service community school network program, the goal of which is to improve academic achievement through the delivery of essential services to children and families.



Browne Cleanup – before and after.

Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative

Georgia Avenue Has PEP

The Georgia Avenue Collaborative has kicked off its Parent Empowerment Program (PEP), which is designed to empower parents beyond the task of raising their children by increasing their knowledge and using community resources; decreasing stress and isolation; and enhancing the education, understanding, and sensitivity of school professionals as it relates to the importance of parental involvement in the schools.



“Strong families are the key to healthy and stable neighborhoods,” said Reverend James Cunningham, community resources manager for the Georgia Avenue Collaborative. “... If we are to have strong, healthy and safe neighborhoods, it will only come through enlightened parenting.”

The Parent Empowerment Program offers:

- Workshops/classes for parents, families, educators, service providers and other professionals;
- Encouragement, problem solving, and information to help parents make informed decisions;
- Connection to other families and networking opportunities; and
- Resource center for parents.

“Parenting is the hardest job there is,” said Mary Turner, a grandmother of five children. “I am thankful for the Parent Empowerment Program at the Collaborative. I’ve received mounds of help with my grandchildren.”

The Parent Empowerment Program was conceived through the vision of the Collaborative’s partnership with Roosevelt Senior High School psychologist Tina Milledge and MacFarland Middle School social worker Michelle Johnson-Bakasara. They organized the PASS Program (Parent And Student Support) which is designed to teach parents:

- How to communicate and give clear messages to children;
- How to set and define family rules;
- How to use praise and implement consequences effectively;
- How to model and teach self-control;
- How to help children stop negative behavior(s)
- How to make family decisions; and

- How to create and maintain a positive home environment.

PEP is one of the tools that the Georgia Avenue Collaborative is using to fulfill the organization’s mission to work with community-based organizations and residents to help children, youth, and families become healthy by choice, empowered by knowledge, and connected to community support. Through PEP, the Collaborative marshals an array of resources to empower parents and, through them, the entire family.

Twenty adults graduated from the PEP program in March. For more information, contact Shakira Gantt at 202-722-1815 ext. 351.

Community Spotlight



Mary Turner

The GAREC extends a special thanks to collaborative member Mary Turner. Ms. Turner is a grandmother who takes care of five children, seven days a week. In addition, she has found time to serve as the president of the Clark Elementary School PTA, and has been working to reorganize its structure.

Youth Violence Prevention Workshops

The Georgia Avenue Collaborative recently partnered with Sasha Bruce Youth Works to host a series of violence prevention workshops for youth ages 14-18. These workshops were conducted in response to Collaborative and community members who were concerned about outbreaks of violence in area schools.

The workshops focused on all the types of violence that can occur, why it happens and how that violence impacts youth, families and the surrounding community. The topics were: “Violence and the Media,” “Family Violence,” “Dating Violence,” “Bullying,” “Teens and Violence,” and “Stalking.” During these hour-long workshops, Michelle Sewell, the workshop facilitator, led the youth into discussions about their personal experiences with violence and ways that they can get help for themselves or a friend.

Although the workshops addressed all aspects of youth violence, the main focus was on violence in dating relationships. Many of the participants had at least witnessed a schoolmate being hit, pushed, or cursed out by a boyfriend or girlfriend. Not only did the

participants discuss the different behaviors that can be considered abusive, but they also examined behaviors that show consideration, love, and respect in a relationship. All of the youth completed a “Dating Relationship Promise,” which detailed the behaviors that they would not accept from a partner and the names and contact numbers of three people and/or organizations that they could contact if they ever needed help.

These meetings gave the youth a safe place to express their concerns about violence and how they can play a part in stopping it in their communities. “We need to have more activities like this for the children,” stated Pastor Lynette Gregorio of the Capital Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The Collaborative will continue to engage youth in similar workshops in order to continue the dialogue regarding youth and violence in the community. For information about upcoming workshops, contact Shakira Gantt, program assistant, at (202) 722-1815 ext. 351.

North Capitol Collaborative, Inc.

NCCI Registers Youth for Summer Employment

The NCCI Family Services Division coordinated the Passport-to-Work summer youth employment registration within the NCCI service area in April. NCCI assisted 51 youth with completing summer employment applications at its two neighborhood sites (1420 North Capitol Street NW and 113 Q Street NW). Participants in the registration process included 26 males, ages 14 to 20; and 25 females, ages 14 to 19.

The majority of the males applied for mechanic and office assistant positions, and the majority of females applied for day care and office assistant positions.

Two staff members from the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) worked with NCCI staff to ensure that all required documents were available. NCCI has been assured by DOES that the 51 youth will be given priority due to NCCI's early start in signing up its youth.

Young job seekers get help in finding summer employment from NCCI.



Community Meetings Focus on Housing

As the District's New Communities Initiative moves toward implementation, the North Capitol Collaborative, Inc. works to stay abreast of a myriad of community issues and concerns. At the March Community Networking Meeting, NCCI heard from three key stakeholders in the affordable housing arena of the District of Columbia: representatives of Manna Community Development Corporation, Enterprise Community Partners, and New Columbia Land Trust. A representative of the DC Department of Housing and Community Development was also present.

The March meeting was a follow up to NCCI's February meeting where residents of the Sursum Corda and Northwest One communities discussed challenges to the proposed development of their area. According to the city plans, Northwest One – which at the southwest end of NCCI's service area – is scheduled to be the first of three city sites to be developed. The other two are The Barry Farms Housing Community and Lincoln Heights, both in the southeast area of the city.

The organizations represented at the March meeting have proven histories of community success. Manna CDC serves low- to moderate-income families by renovating and building affordable housing, educating first-time homebuyers about home purchasing, and training residents throughout the city to become community leaders. Manna CDC was established to coordinate home ownership opportunities in the Shaw community.

Since 1982, Enterprise Community Partners has raised and invested \$7 billion to improve low-income communities, and currently, invests at a rate of \$1 billion a year. This investment has resulted in approximately 190,000 units of affordable housing and strengthened communities over two decades.

New Columbia Community Land Trust is a community-based development organization working in the central city neighborhoods of Washington, DC. It was created as a result of the efforts of Washington Inner City Self Help, which organized a land trust with the New York Avenue Foundation, Robert Pierre Johnson Housing Development Corporation, and the Downtown Cluster of Congregations' Shaw Neighborhood Initiative. NCCLT works to stem the tide of displacement of low-income families, to eliminate substandard housing and to create an option for a permanent placement of



David Haiman, Manna CDC; Pam Jones, New Columbia Community Land Trust, and Deborah Stevenson, Enterprise Community Partners.

attractive, affordable housing for low- to moderate-income people. Pam Jones, NCCLT executive director, explained that the organization is unique, in that it owns the land on which housing is built, in order to keep the housing affordable. She said that many people in the District are being displaced, because they are unable to afford the high cost to rent or purchase housing. Jones said that is important for residents to get involved and take a stand for affordable housing in the city.

South Washington/West of the River Family Strengthening Collaborative

Education Issues Addressed at SWWR Forum

The South Washington/West of the River Collaborative recently brought together representatives from several organizations that provide resources to help parents navigate the education system. The forum was held at the John Tyler Elementary School. In opening remarks, the school's principal Michelle Pierre-Farid said that she looks forward to continuing to build partnerships within the community to help students succeed.

Tabitha Meadows of DC Parent Smart explained that the organization provides resources, training, outreach, and individualized assistance to all DC Parents, with special attention to those whose children attend schools designated as "in need of improvement." Meadows asked a series of questions, used in DC Parent Smart workshops, aimed at determining how effective parents are in engaging their children. She asked if discipline and punishment are the same. Meadows reminded participants that parents are children's first teachers, and that it is important to know the difference between discipline and punishment. She said that one of the principles taught at Parent Smart is effective praise – letting the child know what he or she did well. She said that any parent whose child qualifies for free or reduced lunch is qualified for free parent workshops at DC Parent Smart.

Lauren Breland of Concerned Black Men explained that CBM's parent education program focuses on adult literacy, and assists parents in the pre-GED stage, including reading, writing, math, and preparing for the test. She said that one of the wonderful things about

the program is that it provides child care and transportation, and is linked into different resources to ensure that nothing prevents participants from doing what will enrich their lives. She said that the program, which is targeted to residents in Wards 6, 7, and 8, helps parents understand the policies and procedures of the education system in order to assist them in ensuring that their children have a successful educational experience.

Kim Jones, co-founder for Advocacy for Justice in Education, said, "The work that I do is a labor of love, and one that I think is important for the future of our city and for the children." She said that Advocacy for Justice in Education was founded to empower parents to access services on behalf of their children with special needs. She told of her struggles to get support for her brother, who had a head injury, and how she became aware of the need to help assist parents to navigate the system. "Our goal is self-advocacy for parent. The parent has to be involved. At the end of their time with us, parents should be able to do some part of the work themselves. We provide the information, and tools for them to do the work themselves. Jones said that Advocacy for Justice in education is the only legal service provider in the city that represents parents in discipline, suspension and expulsion proceedings, and that the organization provides free training, regardless of income. "The reality is that some may see us as an adversary," she said, "but we really want to improve the quality of education for all children."

Jennifer Finch, representing DC Public Schools Special Education, said that the DC Public Schools serve more than 11,000 children with disabilities. "We are all here for the same reason – to empower parents," she said. "Parents have the ability to help us in our mission, which is to provide high quality special education."

Angela Brown, coordinator of the DC State Improvement Grant, explained that the Board of Education was awarded a five-year grant to implement systemic change initiatives to improve the quality of education for all students, and thereby improve results for children and youth with disabilities. She said that DC is known for having a high percentage of its student's requiring special education, and that her program wants to make sure that parents know that there are resources available to help children without going to special education. "If the child has problems writing, we don't have to amputate the hand. Some parents are being misled into thinking that special education is the only option for their children," she said. She said that a "support team" system aims to work with the parent, in partnership with the school, to do what needs to be done to help the child. "Too many of our students, particularly boys of color, are being referred for special education," she said. "Our job is to help our teachers become prepared to work with these students. We are here so that the children are successful."

The speakers at this meeting fielded a variety of questions from parents relating to testing children for special education, best practices in getting parents involved, bullying and harassment, and effective after-school programs.

ERFSC Job Fair (from page 5)

representative of the DOES said that the agency will hire 10,000 youth.

The YMCA representative said that if a person has commitment, is personable, and has good customer service skills, they can be trained for jobs at the agency, including physical fitness instructors, camp counselors, and health and wellness instructors.

The representative from the DC apprenticeship office said that people can get paid to learn a trade, but that they must be committed to coming to work on time and to working hard.



The DC Office of Apprenticeship and the YMCA were among the employers at the job fair.

Transitions

East River Family Strengthening Collaborative



Latisha Atkins, JD, is the new community services director replacing Artherelle West, who is now the director of youth services (Second Responder). Latisha comes to ERFSC from the DC Children's Trust Fund where she was responsible

for producing the DC KIDS COUNT annual fact book, writing grant proposals and reports, and communications. At ERFSC, she will handle the Weed and Seed program, New Communities Initiative, special projects, and resource development, communications, and fund development, among other responsibilities.



Joyce Henson, a resident of Lincoln Heights, was recently hired as assistant housing coordinator. Joyce was one of five apprentices trained by ERFSC in family support. She has worked as a volunteer at Project Blessings in Lincoln Heights and is a

graduate of Morgan State.



Gwendolyn W. Jones recently joined the ERFSC as housing coordinator, after several years of teaching in the DC public schools. Prior to teaching she worked in social and human services and returns to this field out of "commitment and dedication to serve the African American community." Gwendolyn is a graduate of Howard University.



Robert Jones has been hired as the new healthy marriage coordinator. Robert comes to ERFSC from North Capitol Collaborative, Inc., where he was a family support worker and

brings a great deal of experience. Robert emphasizes his passion for work with fathers and his love for case management and other related family strengthening services.



Katie Campbell-Odom is the new family support worker II. Katie comes to ERFSC from Hope Community School where she was as an assistant kindergarten teacher. Katie has extensive skills in development, case management, and administration. She has a

bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Florida.

Departing:

Sam Gatewood recently resigned as the Marshall Heights Weed and Seed coordinator from the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative. Sam began employment at ERFSC as community resource manager in October 2001 where he made his biggest impact with the agency's housing program. Sam was also well respected in the Ward 7 community where he represented ERFSC on the Ward 7 Core Team. Sam will be greatly missed.



North Capitol Collaborative, Inc.

Carlos Harvin is the new community relations specialist. He is an established Washingtonian who has worked in the faith-based and

community-based sectors. An ordained bishop in the African-American Catholic Congregation, he serves as senior pastor for Imani. Carlos has worked with Rev. Jesse Jackson's "Ministers on Wall Street" project and has served as a member of Mayor Anthony Williams's Interfaith Council. He is a former employment counselor with the Center for Youth Services and has taught religion at St. Anthony's High School.



Alleceia Walker recently joined NCCI as the organization's representative for the Youth Truancy Reduction Intervention Program. Alleceia is the founder and president of Project ESTEEM & RESPECT, mentoring

program; Parent Power, a support group for single parents; and Sisters-In-Touch, which brings together women of diverse backgrounds for public service. A graduate of Howard University, Alleceia has also held a number of positions with the Chicago public schools.

Far Southeast Family Strengthening Collaborative

FSFSC recently hired staff include Rhonda Abney, family support worker-visitation; Eldridge Allen, community engagement director; Brian Atkins, family specialist-second responder/truancy; Dominic Gibson; Selia Koroma, family specialist-second responder/truancy; Craig Leak, family support worker-second responder; Kirby Madden, accounting specialist; Chester Marshall, family services director; Tanya Morten, executive assistant; Tendani Mpulubusi, youth development specialist; Frank Owens Jr., case manager, aftercare.



FSFSC staff: Kirby Madden, Charlotte Williams, Karen Jones, Selia Koroma, Barbara Shorter, Shirley Williams and Lamont Bomar, Karen Wilson, Tendani Mpulubusi, Monica Walker, Eldridge Allen, Wanda Nettle, LaJuan Massie, Andrea Morgan-Bailey, Rhonda Abney, Chester Marshall, Juan Davenport, Craig Leak, Perry Moon, Brian Atkins and LaKisha Palmer.

Marriage Initiative (from page 3)

The event's master of ceremonies was renowned radio host, singer, and motivational speaker Willie Jolley, and entertainment was provided by Jive recording artist Raheen DeVaughn and local rapper Kyanna Bradley.

Together is Better campaign activities begin this summer and include the following:

- Relationship strengthening workshops for seriously dating, engaged, and married couples
- Training for youth on remaining abstinent in a sexually charged society
- Minigrants to organizations with programs that promote/enhance healthy relationships and family stability or provide healthy and wholesome experiences in which children, youth, and families may develop leadership skills
- Orientations for pMDAs and MDAs

For more information, contact ECCC at 202-610-5211.

In Memory



Rita B. Bright, a community activist and senior staff member of the Columbia Heights/Shaw Family Support Collaborative, died on May 14, 2006. Over the last 30 years, Rita touched many lives. She designed and implemented a number of grassroots programs focused on helping individuals and families to help themselves. With Valerie Gibson, she conceived and developed MAVA (Mothers Against Violent Acts), a family building support group of community mothers who successfully worked to save their sons from illegal drug activity while providing them with opportunities for job placement and educational enrichment. She was a co-founder and board member of BIG WASH, a community-owned and managed laundromat which was maintained, staffed, and operated by community residents.

In the mid-1990s she and her colleague Ann Oliva helped launch a project to collect evening gowns and distribute them to high school girls for their prom. They were featured in PEOPLE Magazine in 1998 for their efforts.

Rita also led the development of the Belmont Community Care Center, working with the young people of the neighborhood to create opportunities for leadership and recreation. Most recently, Rita had been one of the driving forces in the #10 Boys and Girls Club Parent Association's successful organizing to save the local club. This effort has resulted in a renewed commitment from DC government to the Boys and Girls Club and reinvigorated community involvement in Boys and Girls Clubs throughout the District of Columbia. Rita also helped found the Community of Hope and served as Thrift Shop manager, office manager, program director, and chief operating officer. She served as neighborhood projects coordinator for the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness prior to joining CHSFSC where she specialized in housing advocacy and parent leadership development.