



HANO News

Spring 2010

Creating Communities. Building Trust.

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Guste Homes	(504) 529-5339
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Fischer Homes	(504) 210-8824
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HUD Secretary opens Columbia Parc



HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan stood shoulder-to-shoulder with former Mayor C. Ray Nagin and Resident Council President Cantrese Wilson to cut the ceremonial ribbon announcing the opening of Columbia Parc on April 12.

"I'm proud to stand with you today to celebrate real movement from recovery to revitalization -- as we welcome families into their new homes here at Columbia Parc and help usher in a new era of progress and leadership across the city," said Donovan.

"And at HUD, I've made it one of my top priorities -- viewing New Orleans as a model for smart, sustainable urban planning as part of a long-term disaster recovery strategy. "

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David Gilmore
Administrative Receiver

Keith L. Pettigrew
Deputy General Manager for
Operations

Leslie Dews
Deputy General Manager
for Administration

George Gates, IV
Deputy General Counsel

Shelley Smith
Vice President of Strategic Planning

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Eddie Scott
Director of Client Services

Valerie Pruitt
Director of Housing Choice Voucher Programs

Tracy Mercadel
Vice President of Asset Management

David Jackson
Director of Communications

Nicole Barnes
Vice President of Homeownership

Kenneth Wood
Director of Informational Technology

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HANO News Staff
David Jackson
Editor-in-Chief

RIBBON CUTTING, from page 1



Secretary Shaun Donovan, podium, addresses the crowd at the new Columbia Parc Community.

The new mixed-income community is being built on the site of the former St. Bernard public housing community, which sustained extensive damage following Hurricane Katrina.

"Indeed, no city more deeply demonstrates the need to plan and build our communities--our homes, schools, transportation, and job centers--so that they provide the most opportunities and choices to the people who live there," added the HUD secretary.

Wilson said she had the same doubts and fears as all residents when she learned of the demolition of the St. Bernard. She said she wondered where her kids would go to school or where she would live.

But after viewing the new Columbia Parc site, Wilson was relieved.

"There's a word for it, when you do what you say you're going to do," said Wilson. "It's called credibility."

HUD Assistant Secretary Sandra Henriquez was also present and spoke during the ribbon cutting. Henriquez said she was proud to see the Columbia Parc community and believes continued development will help bring HANO families back.

"There's a saying that goes, 'Go big or go home,'" Henriquez said. "But in New Orleans it should be 'Go big and come home.'"

After the ribbon cutting at Columbia Parc, Donovan toured the sites of the other Big Four developments: B.W. Cooper, Harmony Oaks and Lafitte. At each site, Donovan spoke with resident leaders about their concerns and the redevelopment plans.

Currently, there are 101 units available onsite. By the end of 2010, 466 units are projected to be completed at this model site. Amenities at Columbia Parc include a cyber café, onsite 40-seat theater, pool, splash park with future development plans that include an K-8 charter school, on-site library, recreation center, senior housing, and commercial/retail space.

HANO launches new user-friendly website



A screen shot, left, shows HANO's new website design. The new site will be more user-friendly and client interactive.

HANO's new web site, www.hano.org will make it easier for clients, community stakeholders and employees to take care of business with the authority.

"Making our services easily available is of great importance to us," said HANO Administrative Receiver David Gilmore. "The ability for our clients to get information without having to physically come into the office will save them time and money."

The task of updating the website was one of many new initiatives planned by Team Gilmore to help usher HANO into the future.

In addition to finding information, residents will be able to contact their caseworkers via email, report a problem or request services. Prospective landlords will also be able to list their properties on the Section 8 waiting list.

When fully functional later this year, future residents will be able to check their number on the public housing and Section 8 waiting lists. Landlords will be able to check their rental receipts and updated tenant information.

NEW FEATURES AVAILABLE ON HANO.ORG

- Search for a Section 8 property
- Apply for the Homeownership Program
- Register as a HANO vendor
- Report a crime or quality of life issue
- Post a property on the Section 8 Waiting List
- View development, news videos
- View Calendar of Events

Dynamic HANO staff keeps stimulus funds



Everyone loves a challenge, and this year, HANO senior staff found themselves with a big one.

In December, the Inspector General's office completed an audit and recommended that HANO return its federal stimulus funds. It appeared that HANO could not properly allocate the funds for specific programs by the government's deadline and would be in danger of losing the entire amount.

Instead, HANO Administrative Receiver David Gilmore announced at the March board meeting, "We won't be returning one nickel."

Thanks to hard work by HANO's finance, procurement, management and development departments, the agency dedicated the entire \$34.6 million before the March 17 deadline.

"This is really a testament to the work of our staff," said Gilmore. "I am happy to say that this money will not be sent back to Washington, but will be used to help improve conditions here in New Orleans."

The final \$73 million in stimulus funds will be used to:

- Reroof the Sojourner Truth Community Center near the Lafitte housing redevelopment
- Install cabinets and appliances at Guste Homes

- Renovate the Guste high-rise elderly center
- Demolish scattered-site buildings,
- Replace more than 300 refrigerators in various HANO apartments with green models
- Repair apartments
- Replace aging electrical panels and plumbing at the Iberville community

"This is really a testament to the work of our staff. I am happy to say that that money will not be sent back to Washington, but used to help improve conditions here in New Orleans.

***-David Gilmore
HANO Administrative Receiver***

HANO, Project Home Again help resident



Tracy Brown, left, signs her closing documents for her new home. Thanks to the HANO Homeownership Department and Project Home Again, she received a spacious house in Gentilly, below.



Tracy Brown felt as though she was victimized twice. First by Hurricane Katrina, and then by a shady contractor.

"I really wanted to rebuild but I had no more money, and even less hope," said Brown.

After losing her Road Home money to a contractor who left town after receiving half of the payment to repair her home, Jones called the HANO Homeownership Department.

The staff helped create a relationship between Brown and the non-profit organization Project Home Again (PHA). The agency's mission is to build homes for low and moderate-income families whose homes were severely damaged or completely destroyed by Katrina.

Jones qualified for the program and received a new home in the Gentilly area.

"It's really a blessing," said Jones. "After working so hard to close on my own home before the storm, and then to have it destroyed was difficult. Then with all of the struggles to return to the city and rebuild, it was almost impossible."

PHA "gifted" the home to Jones by placing a forgivable mortgage on the residence that is equal to the appraised value. The mortgage will be gradually forgiven over the course of five

years and will reach zero at the end of the fifth year, as long as the owner uses it as their primary residence.

"We were happy to be a part of the solution," said HANO Homeownership Director Nicole Barnes. "We were with Tracy when she transitioned from the Section 8 program to our program, and now to a new residence is amazing."

Post-Katrina, the HANO Homeownership program's focus has been directed toward families' most pressing need — repairing their damaged homes. Fifty-six homeowners were displaced due to the extreme damage to their homes during the storm. HANO staff sponsored an initial workshop for homeowners that featured representatives from both the Road Home and SBA to assist them in navigating the process. Subsequently, staff worked with each family to resolve the obstacles preventing them from returning home.

As a result of the efforts, 52 of these homeowners have completed their repairs and returned home. This result is a tremendous achievement, which stands, in stark contrast to the thousands of New Orleans families still struggling to repair their homes.

Walker softball star bags academic scholarship

Howie (Howeisha) Tyler used to play volleyball, until she fell in love... with softball.

"I love softball. I love everything about softball," says W.P. Walker High School's third baseman.

Next year, Tyler, a graduating high school senior, will be competing for a coveted spot on the 2010 SWAC softball champions, Alcorn State University's Lady Braves in Mississippi. But, to the surprise of many who have seen her exploits on the diamond, Tyler will not be attending Alcorn on a softball scholarship.

"I have an academic scholarship," Howie says proudly, attesting to the many hours of study and hard work that earned her a spot on Walker's honor roll. She also scored a 24 on her ACT test, another proud achievement.

Her favorite subject is math, and her goal is to study accounting and business.

"I feel good," she says. "I'm ready to go to college and then go on and get a good job."

She attributes part of her success to the help she received from her teachers, her mother, Michelle Tyler, and her softball coach.

Michelle, a resident of HANO's New Fisher community, feels very blessed.

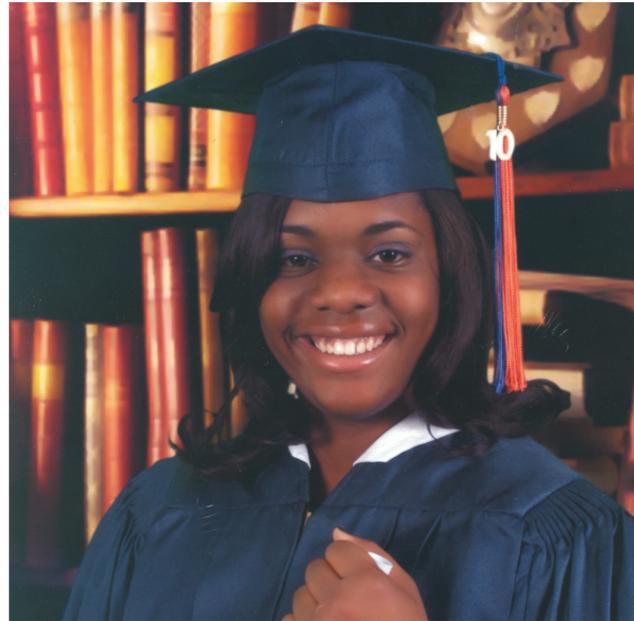
"Thank the Lord my son graduated from high last year, and my daughter will graduate this year," Michelle says. "She is a very respectful child. She's always been a hard worker, and she's very good in school."

The family lived in the old Fisher development before Katrina. After the storm, they spent several months in Texas – "in a place I didn't like" according to Michelle – before returning to New Orleans.

"It was hard on the kids," admits Michelle.

Still, she did her best to make sure Howie did well in school.

"I tried to keep her in line, told her to pay attention and block everything out. And she did just what I wanted her to do –



Howeisha Tyler, above, earned a scholarship to attend Alcorn State University. Although she was highly recruited to play softball, she earned her tuition through academic excellence.

go on to the 12th grade and to college."

When Howie is not playing softball and studying, she hangs out with her friends who, she says, are very supportive of her academic achievements.

And she still finds time to play her once-favored sport – volleyball.

"I feel good. I'm ready to go to college and then go on and get a good job."

-Howeisha Tyler

Fischer Community a hub for senior services



Senior Services Coordinator Lillie Walker Woodfork, left, speaks with a senior resident in the Fischer Community Center. Walker-Woodfork and staff members provided extended services for the elderly.

When Wanda Johnson moved from the Iberville Housing Community to Fischer Senior Village several months ago, she knew very little about the Westbank and wondered how she would adjust and fit in to her new life.

"The senior programs are fantastic," she says now. "I was a bit apprehensive because the area and people were unfamiliar to me."

Like Johnson, all 97 Fischer Senior Village residents are living on small, monthly-fixed incomes. Basic services such as food, electricity and medication take a big bite. Outside help makes a big difference.

Lilly Walker-Woodfork, Fischer Resident Council President Constance Haynes, and representatives from the Fischer Community Church have teamed up to provide hot meals, groceries, transportation, paperwork assistance and many other valuable services to seniors in the public housing community.

"I had a medical issue recently and Constance (Haynes) and Ms. Lily (Walker-Woodfork) came to check on me every day. They really eased my mind and made me feel more secure," says Johnson.

By providing senior citizens with groceries once a month, a prepared, hot lunch every Monday and assistance in paying high utility bills every month, the partnership has become a vital program in many seniors' lives. Although senior programs are not unique to HANO communities, the Fischer provides a more comprehensive menu of services that helps seniors with many facets of their lives.

"Do I get medicine or food?" said Walker-Woodfork, who also serves as president of the Citywide Tenants Association for the Housing Authority of New Orleans. "This is a question that our seniors have to answer on a monthly basis."

The Fischer Community staff also provides senior village residents with transportation to and from doctor's appointments, free cell phones and vouchers to receive fresh fruit – which helps ensure seniors have a nutritious diet.

"There are so many different food programs and utility bill programs to help us," Johnson said. "We even have a computer lab where we can send emails to our family or friends. It's really like a family back here. If they don't hear from us in a couple of days, they always come and check on us to see how we're doing."

Intern learns “uniqueness” of New Orleans

Shotgun doubles, wrought iron balconies, French door brackets and camel backs. To the average New Orleanian, these are terms that mean home. But to an architectural student from Staten Island, NY, there's a bit of a learning curve.

HANO intern Mark Anthony Smith is quickly becoming familiar with some of the nuances of New Orleans' architecture.

“The thing that left a lasting impression on me was that New Orleans has its own unique culture,” said Smith. “That can't be found anywhere on earth, everything about the culture stands alone. It's not comparable to anything else. I've never been to a place quite like this.”

Smith first came to New Orleans as a college student helping to clean

up after Katrina in 2008. He scored an internship with HANO after meeting with Client Services Director Eddie Scott and IMS Falcon Principal Gordon Sprewell.

Smith, who is majoring in architectural planning and interior design, works with project managers to learn the process of creating a house from design to final build. To get his license, he needs 5,600 program hours to qualify to take the exam.

“He's very bright,” said Sprewell. “He's enthusiastic and we think that he can help us. It's nice to have a true intern who realizes what we do.”

Smith said his biggest adjustment is transferring book knowledge to practical application.

“In school it's all theoretical knowledge,” he said. “But



HANO Intern Mark Anthony Smith looks over a map of the redeveloped Marrero Commons site.

here you see it firsthand the sites and the construction. And you have to have interpersonal skills. You're working with so many different people. You also have to be able to think on your feet.”

Smith noted that everything has to be both architecturally and culturally functional in order to be approved.

Sprewell is excited for Smith because he knows this is a time to gain valuable experience in redesigning communities after a disaster.

“With these projects in particular, I think he'll get a chance to learn about the buildings that were flooded-damaged by Katrina and need extensive rehabilitation,” said Sprewell. “Not all of the damage can be seen. As an architect you have to be able to handle unforeseen circumstances. These are things that you can't get in the classroom.”

Students celebrate MLK day at Iberville



A Tulane student, left photo, watches as a small child draws on the sidewalk during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. The Shack Brown Drill Team, right, closed the event with a drum line and march.



While most students relish their time off for Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, university students Alex Glustrom and Steve Kennedy used their time to embody King's dream with a day of service at the Iberville Community.

Glustrom, along with more than 40 college students from across the New Orleans area, hosted a day of group activities for children ages 5 to 17 near the Iberville Community Center on Monday, Jan. 18.

“This is something that I think will help us as students branch out into the community,” said Glustrom, a sophomore at Tulane University. “Many times on campus we live in our own bubble. But hopefully, after this event, we will see that there are people who really need our help.”

HANO partnered with “The Day On” college volunteer organization (which provides lunch, transportation and service events for the student volunteers) to organize the day of service in the public housing site. HANO provided food, art supplies, shirts, tables and employee support.

The event, which served more than 150 children, featured arts and crafts, group team-building sessions, sporting events, games and lunch for children in the community.

“This is really not just about us,” HANO Client Services Director Eddie Scott said. “It's about the students who are using

their time to come out and encourage our children. They could have done anything they wanted with their day off, but to come here and volunteer speaks volumes about their character.”

Kennedy, who is a senior studying Urban Planning and Development at the University of New Orleans, thought that it was equally important for the children who live in the community to be exposed to the college students.

“I grew up in the projects. We never had mentors,” said Kennedy. “People should see that there is a possibility of going to college. And from the kids perspective I think the children were glad that some people came to spend time with them.”

Brother Willie Muhammad from the Iberville Peace Keepers spoke about Dr. King's legacy during the event. Finally, the Shack Brown Drill Team closed the day with a parade.

Scott, Kennedy and Glustrom used the day as a kick-off event to a larger client services' initiative. The MLK Day of Service project has now evolved into an afterschool tutorial, counseling and mentoring programs staffed by college students.

Other partners for the event were the May Day Project, Iberville Peace Keepers, the Shack Brown Drill Team, the Iberville Resident Council and the Boys and Girls Club.

In & Around HANO

News of people, places and events in the Housing Authority

'Treme' filming at B.W. Cooper



HBO films shot "Treme" at the B. W. Cooper in January. The production company "Fee Nah Nay" brought in more than 20 tractor trailers filled with equipment to recreate a New Orleans only three months post-Katrina. BW Cooper RMC Finance Director Eric Lily, left, listened to the director through a headset. The location fees for the production went to help the community service programs at the RMC.



Allen named Human Resources Director

Ms. Marilyn Allen (right) was recently appointed Director of Human Resources for the Housing Authority of New Orleans. Ms. Allen holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and has more than 20 years experience in Human Resources. Her most recent position was at the Houston Housing Authority where she served as the Director of Human Resources.



Breakfast, thanks for ARRA obligation

HANO's executive staff held a breakfast to thank all employees who worked diligently to dedicate all of the Federal Stimulus funds. HUD's Inspector General's office originally thought HANO could not meet the federal deadline. HANO designated the funds to massive renovation projects throughout the city.



Residents' Advisory Board meets for 2010

HANO's Resident Advisory Board met with Administrative Receiver David Gilmore to discuss the agency direction for the upcoming year. The meeting lasted for more than three hours as they discussed the possibilities for the future. Strategic Planning Director Shelley Smith, Client Services Director Eddie Scott and Real Estate Development Director Judith Moran were also available to answer any questions.

