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ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY



Community

CONNECTION

Allegheny County Housing Authority
625 Stanwix Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

questions about how efficient they are in how they do business. But it's worked out really well between us."

Truth be told, the after-school program — renamed in honor of its founder, a former deputy director of Children, Youth and Family Services who passed away in 2001 — is really not an after-school program at all, having evolved into a year-round project since 1999. Today, a staff of 50 is employed throughout ACHA locations in McKees Rocks Terrace, Burns Heights, Hawkins Village, Hays Manor, Ohioview Acres, Prospect Terrace and Sheldon Park.

According to Dr. Rose Smiley, BJWL Program Director, the project's mission is enhanced by the needs of the communities it serves.

"It's very rewarding to know we have an opportunity to help shape the lives of children who otherwise might not have opportunities that are essential to grow and be successful," she said. "All kids have a need to feel loved, valued and cared for by adults. They also need to experience opportunities that promote self-esteem and value of their culture."

Smiley, who provided technical assistance for the program in 1998 before assuming the director's duties in 1999,

said a key component to its growth (19 locations overall) and success has been its ability to tailor its offerings for each community.

"Residents have input in this program," she said. "We believe that good relationships are formed [within] communities. Often, programs are introduced without taking into account what the community wants. They simply aren't considered. This project tries to form a partnership to help the community design something that they believe will be most effective for their kids."

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Children from Hawkins Village BJWL program show their friendship while taking a break from their activities.

A Jewel of a Program

The ACHA and The Pittsburgh Foundation team up to make a difference for kids and families

At face value, the Barbara Jewel Wall-Lovelace Fund for Children's Program offers what many other after-school programs do: academic tutoring, arts and crafts, nutrition, physical activity, friendship and fun. But look a little deeper and it's clear the program offers something more ...

Hope.

Began in 1995 as The Children's Fund, the

program is a public-private partnership between city and county housing authorities and The Pittsburgh Foundation, a downtown-based nonprofit endowment group. It currently serves seven Allegheny County Housing Authority communities, providing a safe and nurturing environment for 350 children ages 5-12.

"What's good about this is it's a partnership between a private foundation and a public agency, which is a unique situation," said Philip Manion, ACHA Director of Resident Services. "Most private foundations don't work with public agencies because of

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But the program doesn't limit itself to assisting children. It also offers a chance for parents, usually single mothers, to improve their lives as well.

"The program gives people a chance to change careers," said Manion. "Many women who started out as trainees are now counselors. It also addresses the needs of the larger community to help get mothers off welfare [Transitional Assistance for Needy Families] who otherwise would have no job skills; so that's important."

Primary funding for the program comes from a number of sources, including the Allegheny County Children and Youth Services, The Pittsburgh Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education, and other grants. In addition, the Heinz Foundation also contributes to a reading skills project operated at 12 sites. A computer skills program is also offered, courtesy of government surplus equipment.

For the individual communities, the benefits are tangible. According to Ruth Johnson, BJWL program coordinator at Sheldon Park, there is no greater reward than seeing children tap into their academic talents and dream about the future.

"We're trying to prepare them for the outside world," said Johnson. "When a teacher writes on their report card how they're improving and how hard they're trying, that impresses me."



ACHA Department of Public Safety and Allegheny County Emergency Services Department train residents on 911 procedures.

One Step Closer

HOPE VI grant paves way for Ohioview Acres redevelopment

Having received the green light by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, courtesy of a \$20 million

HOPE VI federal grant, the Allegheny County Housing Authority is moving forward with its long-awaited plans for refurbishment of the Ohioview Acres family development in Stowe Township.

The 250-unit community, situated on 30 acres overlooking the Ohio River, has a long history of serving low-income and "temporary" residents since its construction in 1942, when it provided no-frills shelter for military factory workers and their families during World War II.

Now, after 61 years, the ACHA is on track to completely revitalize the site as part of a \$60 million improvement project which will also address homeownership in South Fayette Township and Forest Hills as well as social and job training projects. The grant, approved by HUD in March, is valid for four years and will provide one-third of the overall cost, with roughly \$33.5 million in tax credits, \$3 million in county funds and \$3.5 million in ACHA resources covering the remaining budget.

The revitalization of Ohioview Acres is expected to be completed by June 2006, one year earlier than the time allotted by HUD.

"The clock has started ticking," said Walter MacFann, ACHA Director of Real Estate Investments. "We fully anticipate being done within three years. The faster it's done, the less the cost."

Currently, 150 Ohioview residents have completed the process of relocation to other ACHA sites, including Groveton Village,



Hays Manor and Uansa Village, as well as other family and Section 8 residences in the county. Relocation costs are covered by the ACHA.

"Overall, it's been a very smooth process," said MacFann. The residents have been very understanding and cooperative. They are very pleased with the design of the new residence and are focused on the self-sufficiency and job training opportunities the grant will offer."

In addition to the construction cost, \$2 million in grant money has been earmarked to provide

benefits ranging from five nursing assistant scholarships with the Community College of Allegheny County to job analysis and life skills training, which teaches participants about etiquette in the work place and at home. Also

included is a youth program called "The First Tee" which introduces children to the game of golf. The national program, offered locally at Schenley Park Golf Course, exposes boys and girls to "nine core values of life" inherent to the game: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgement.

Residents who wish to return will have to be engaged in a job training program, employed and in good standing, and pass a housekeeping inspection.

In all, the new Ohioview Acres will provide 181 larger and more contemporary units, plus 15 on-site single-family homes for sale.

Under the HOPE VI grant, other projects are being addressed, including a 25-unit homeownership development in South Fayette.

Elsewhere, MacFann said the ACHA is moving ahead with the acquisition of 11 condominium units for the elderly at Centurian Commons, located in Forest Hills. Purchase of the units (in the 90-unit complex, built in the late 1980s) is part of the ACHA's continued commitment to provide homes for the elderly in other areas

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BREAKING THE CYCLE

The ACHA's Public Safety Department addresses domestic violence with award-winning program

A monster is lurking in our society. It hides behind closed doors and is satiated by power, silence, stigma and fear. It preys on the weak, the young, the elderly and does not discriminate among sex, ethnicity or income.

Odds are, you or someone you know is quite familiar with this monster. It goes by the name of domestic violence and is an animal that Michael Vogel, Chief of Public Safety for the Allegheny County Housing Authority, and his staff are striving to eliminate.

To this end, Vogel introduced the Family Forum, an award-winning program created in 2000 which, among its many goals, incorporates education on domestic violence. The Forum also provides insight and education on such topics as internet safety, children's behavior as well as 9-1-1 classes for kids.

But it is the issue of domestic violence — be it physical, sexual, emotional or economic — that takes precedence.

"The ACHA has gone above and beyond to place additional police protection within our communities," said Vogel, head of the public safety department since 1998. "But there's really no preventative police measure you can take on domestic violence since this goes on [in the home], so I decided to try and do something about it."

While crime statistics in Pittsburgh have declined — according to the Pittsburgh Bureaus of Police, serious crimes reported to law enforcement fell 0.2 percent in 2002 vs. 2001 — domestic violence continues to be a troublesome issue.

"What we're trying to do is educate people

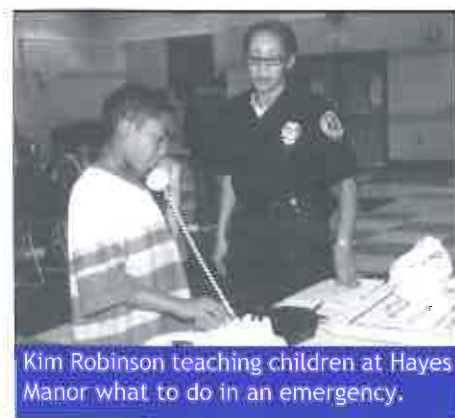
on how not to become a victim," said Vogel.

According to Kimberly Robinson,

ACHA Public Safety Investigator and Forum presenter, the key to breaking the cycle of abuse is to recognize the warning signs which precede violent relationships. Victims include women, children, the elderly and, contrary to popular belief, even men.

"Common warning signs include choking — which most victims don't associate with abuse because it doesn't result in black eyes or broken bones — as well as intimidation, threats, stalking and possessiveness, particularly among teenagers," said Robinson.

One obstacle that continues to challenge Forum coordinators is the lingering stigma

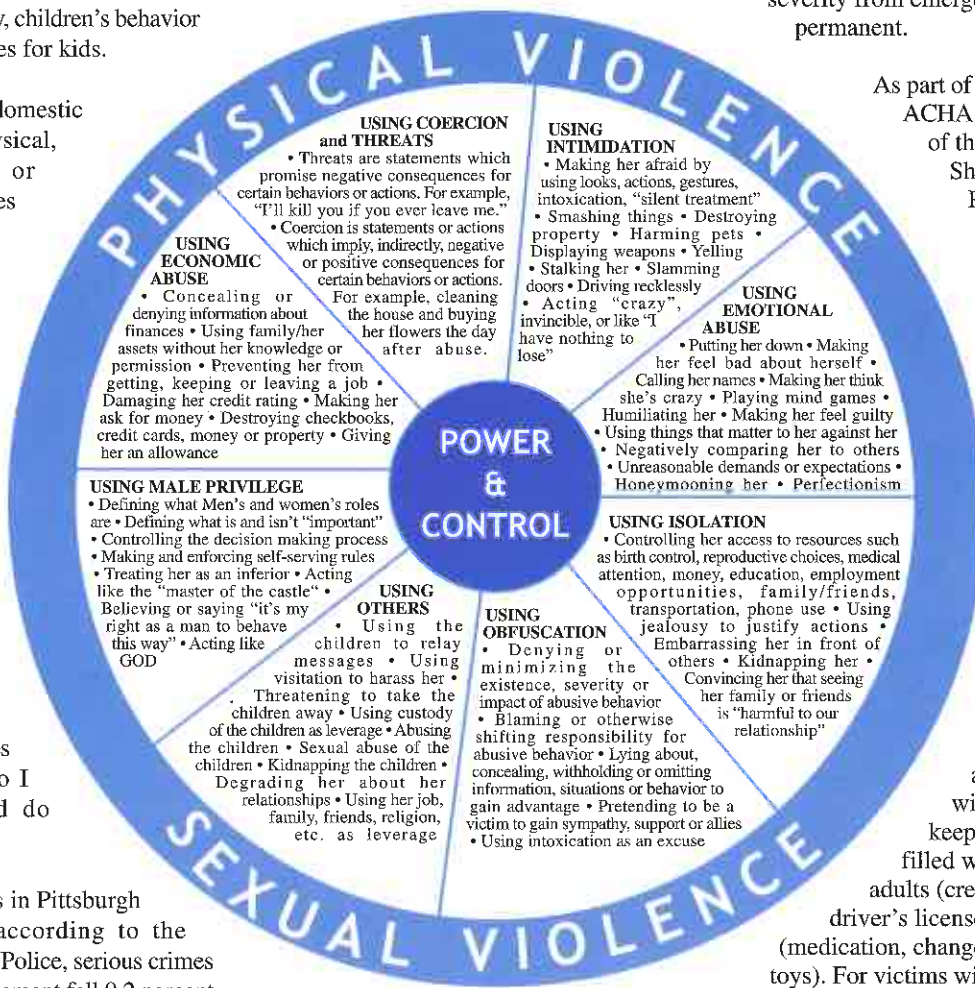


Kim Robinson teaching children at Hayes Manor what to do in an emergency.

attached to domestic violence by victims, who often assume they are at fault for their own abuse.

"Things have improved, but on average, it still takes a victim seven to eight attempts before they leave an abusive relationship for good," said Robinson, who added that Forum attendees also gain information on Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders, which range in severity from emergency to temporary to permanent.

As part of the Forum program, the ACHA has enlisted the services of the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, which offers victims and their families free housing and day care, plus legal and medical advocacy. Group discussions and individualized counseling are also available. The Center offers a number of beneficial tips for people involved in an abusive relationship, such as creating a "personal safety plan," which includes knowing the layout of a home's doors and windows, as well as keeping an emergency bag filled with essential items for adults (credit cards, cash, driver's license) and children (medication, change of clothes, toys). For victims with children, code words



POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL
(*Revised)

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*Revised by Alternatives to Domestic Aggression (ADA) Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County, Ann Arbor, MI. Originally created by Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth, MN.

One Step Closer (Ohioview Acres - Continued from Page 2)

of Allegheny County. Approval of the purchase is expected by the end of the year.

For more information on the First Tee program, log on to www.thefirsttee.org or contact Bruce Stephen, Schenley Park Golf Course Executive Director, at 412-682-2403.



Children and staff of the BJWL program engaging in educational activities at Hawkins Village.

BREAKING THE CYCLE (Continued from Page 3)

are also important, so the child can be warned about possible violence.

"In three short years, the Family Forum's impact on domestic violence within ACHA communities has been significant," said Vogel. "Incidents of domestic abuse have declined by 67 percent since the program's inception."

For its efforts, the ACHA Family Forum program has been recognized nationally with a 2002 Award of Merit and Award of Excellence by the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). The Authority also garnered a 2001 Merit Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Housing Agencies.

For more information about domestic violence, or to speak with a domestic violence counselor, please call the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh hot line at 412-687-8005.

SUMMER SAFETY PROGRAM

During the Summer of 2003, ACHA launched a number of safety programs which enabled residents and their families to enjoy the season. The programs, coordinated by ACHA Safety Director Mike Vogel, were as follows:

- The 911 VAN - a program in conjunction with the Crime Prevention Association of Western Pennsylvania and the Allegheny County Emergency Services Directors at which children are taught how to deal with an emergency.
- "TELL MOMMY" - a program designed to teach children and their mothers how to communicate in regards to safety issues and incidents.
- FAMILY FORUM - for women and children concerned about domestic violence.
- "THE CHARLIE CHECK" Program - promoting safety issues and actions for children in preschool and to the fifth grade.
- A BICYCLE RODEO - visits by professional safety personnel to every ACHA site to give expert advice on bike safety and to inspect the bicycles.
- INTERNET SAFETY - a program in conjunction with the Knowledge Connection of Allegheny County Library Association and geared to parents, elementary aged children; those of middle school; and teens.
- SAFETY TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, including how to foil "home invasions" and, in general, to live a good life.



Pictured above: Great fun was had at the ACHA's 2nd Annual Home Ownership Golf Classic.

From The Executive's Desk



Frank Aggazio
Executive Director, ACHA

The ACHA Makes a Difference



Concern for our community is what drives the Allegheny County Housing Authority staff

and its board. In this issue, we see the ACHA and the Pittsburgh Foundation team up to provide tutoring through the Barbara Jewel Wall-Lovelace Fund for Children's Program. The program services McKees Rocks Terrace, Burns Heights, Hawkins Village, Hays Manor, Ohioview Acres, Prospect Terrace and Sheldon Park.

We are also making a difference through our Family Forum. Michael Vogel, ACHA's Chief of Public Safety, has raised the awareness concerning the issue of domestic violence and how to protect your family from abuse.

This summer was a time of fun and education, including a series of summer safety programs to benefit our residents. It also included another successful ACHA Home Ownership Golf Classic at the beautiful Highland Country Club.

We will continue to strive to make a difference in our communities and create an environment in which residents will be glad to call ACHA their home.