



A newsletter for Participants in the Chicago Housing
Authority Housing Choice Voucher Program

Summer 2012

Meet Our New Board Members

Mark Cozzi

Commissioner Mark Cozzi is currently Senior Managing Director for The Electrum Group, the investment arm of the Kaplan Family.

He is involved in numerous civic and charitable activities including: treasurer of West Lakeview Neighbors; board member of Equality Illinois; Board of Regents member of the Point Foundation; and member of the Society for Contemporary Art (part of the Art Institute of Chicago).

Commissioner Cozzi received his MBA from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University and his BBA in accounting and finance from the University of Wisconsin.

Harriet Johnson

Commissioner Harriet Johnson is retired from the University of Illinois Hospital, where she worked in various administrative positions for 32 years. She has been a resident of the CHA's Zelda Ormes Senior Apartments since 2002, where she has served as the building president since 2005.

In her role as president, Commissioner Johnson has addressed issues such as building maintenance, community safety and the overall needs of seniors in her community. She has also been successful in planning and coordinating special events for residents in an effort to energize and keep the constituents healthy and active.

Commissioner Johnson has received several honors and awards, including a *Certificate of Excellence* from the West Pullman Park Senior Alive Club and a *Volunteer Certificate of Appreciation* from the Senior Housing Central Local Advisory Council. Commissioner Johnson is a mother of three, grandmother of 12 and great-grandmother of six.

Inside: What You Need to Know

- New website for after-school programs – [Page 2](#)
- CHA hosts Moving 101 workshops – [Page 3](#)
- CHA Special Programs: Part II – [Page 3](#)
- CHA and Operation Warm provide coats to Chicago children – [Page 4](#)

Erie Neighborhood House Helps Spanish-Speaking Families

We are pleased to announce an exciting new Latino outreach initiative, *Buen HOGAR*, a collaboration between CHA and Erie Neighborhood House that was initiated in late 2011.

Through *Buen HOGAR*, Erie Neighborhood House serves as a liaison to the Latino community and Spanish-speaking individuals and promotes awareness of CHA programs and services in predominantly Latino neighborhoods throughout the city of Chicago. Erie House site offices in West Town and Little Village are accessible to Spanish-speaking HCV Program Participants and Property Owners/Managers as well as CHA public housing residents.

This year, Erie Neighborhood House celebrates its 142nd anniversary of offering comprehensive social services and assistance to families. Since its inception in 1870, Erie Neighborhood House has served a diverse group of immigrants from Germans to Latinos as the demographic composition of the West Town neighborhood it served changed. In 2004, Erie Neighborhood House expanded its outreach and services to families by opening an office in Little Village.

The mission of Erie Neighborhood House is to promote a just and inclusive society by strengthening low-income, primarily immigrant families through access

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

to critical resources, skill-building opportunities, advocacy around important policies that impact Erie Neighborhood House families and collaborative action. Erie Neighborhood House advances the mission of the organization by providing services such as child care, technology and computer literacy classes, youth programs, English classes, citizenship classes and adult literacy education.

Buen HOGAR, Erie Neighborhood House's newest service program, offers educational workshops and informational seminars to facilitate the distribution of CHA programs and services to the Latino community in Chicago. Recently, *Buen HOGAR* has focused its efforts on engaging the participation of Property Owners in the HCV Program through informative meetings at the Erie Neighborhood House sites and helping facilitate the



enrollment process for those interested in the Program who primarily speak Spanish. However, the *Buen HOGAR* team is also available to assist CHA tenants with questions related to completing and submitting documents requested by CHA and updating information such as family composition and changes in income as well as connecting them with pertinent CHA staff and departments.

For questions about any of the CHA services now available through Erie Neighborhood House, please contact your *Buen HOGAR* Outreach Coordinators:

West Town

Cristina De La Rosa
1347 W. Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60642
312-666-3430, ext. 2130
cdelarosa@eriehouse.org

Little Village

Evelyn Rodriguez
4225 W. 25th Street
Chicago, IL 60623
773-277-0805
erodriguez@eriehouse.org

Did You Know...

You can now find out the date and timeframe of your next inspection through an automated call system or text message? All you need is your Event ID. To access the system, call or text a message to **312-544-0302**. If texting, please make sure to only include your 6-digit Event ID; anything more and you will receive an instruction message on how to use the system.

New After-School Program Website to Launch Fall 2012

Beginning this fall, just in time for the 2012-13 school year, parents and students will be able to visit a single, comprehensive website to help them find and register for after-school programs offered by various city departments, agencies, community groups and non-profits.

The "one-stop-shop" site will provide information about out-of-school activities and programs for youth ages 6 to 21 that are offered by Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Park Districts, Chicago Public Library, Department of Family and Support Services and several non-profit program providers. The new site will allow users to search for programs in a variety of ways, including activity, location, time and cost.

Major community organizations such as the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, United Way, UCAN, Metropolitan Family Services and After School Matters are working on this project to ensure that teens and families have easy and reliable access to information about the quality and availability of after-school opportunities.

"Our youth at CHA are the future. Future businessmen/women, educators, artists, etc. This new website will provide opportunities to help mentor our youth to not only stay on the right path, but to be an example to their siblings and community—all in one easy-to-use location," said Deonna Wheeler, Assistant Director for CHA's HCV Program.

After-school hours include before and after school, weekends, holidays and summer break.



Chicago Park District Fall Vouchers Now Available!
Registration Begins: Aug. 18
Session Runs: Sept. 24 - Dec. 12
Cost per Child Registrant: \$15

Get one for your child today.
 Simply set up an account on the Chicago Park District website — www.chicagoparkdistrict.com, print your registration confirmation and bring it into any CHA HCV Program Regional Office to request your fall voucher.

HCV PROGRAM PARTICIPANT PORTAL

Coming Soon!

CHA is launching a new online tool that will keep you connected with the HCV Program 24/7.

- Report income and household changes
- Check your voucher and unit size
- Search for vacant units
- Download Program forms/materials
- Keep up to date with what's new
- And much more!



Watch your e-mail for details on how to sign up!

CHA Hosts Moving 101 Workshops

CHA's HCV Program has developed a new initiative to help Participants understand the processes that go along with having a voucher. The first workshop topic of this new HCV Program Educational Series – **Moving 101** – provided an in-depth look at the ins and outs of moving.

Several **Moving 101** sessions were held at locations around the city this summer. During each 2-hour workshop, attendees learned about a number of useful issues, including:

- how to plan a move (what to do and when)
- how to make sure that a unit is move-in and/or move-out ready
- what scenarios may cause CHA to deny a request to move
- the rights and responsibilities of Participants and Owners (including Fair Housing laws)
- what resources are available to assist with the moving process and how to be a positive part of the neighborhood

In addition, CHA staff along with a representative from the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS) were on hand after each session to answer questions and address individual issues.

Thank you to all who were involved in helping to make these workshops such a success. To view the Participant Moving Guide and video footage of this educational workshop, please visit www.thecha.org/education. We are currently in the planning stage for several more topics and will be sending out an announcement soon.

CHA's Special Programs: Part II

Did you know that CHA offers three special programs to help qualified HCV Program Participants find housing and financial and education opportunities? CHA offers the *Mobility Counseling Program* to help Participants find housing in Chicago's top neighborhoods, the *Choose to Own (CTO) Program* to help Participants purchase a home and the *Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program* to help Participants achieve educational, financial, professional and personal goals.

Following is Part II of this series, detailing the *Choose to Own Program* and how you can get involved.

Choose To Own (CTO) Program – Homeownership for HCV Program Participants

As a part of the CTO Program, a Participant can use their monthly rental subsidy toward mortgage payments to allow them to buy a home within the city of Chicago. The CTO Program provides homeownership counseling to support Participants from the beginning to the end of the home-buying process.

To qualify, a Participant must meet the following requirements:

- Be in good standing with the HCV Program and current lease
- Earn a minimum annual household income of \$14,500 (exceptions exist for seniors and heads-of-household with a disability)
- Maintain a credit score of at least 620
- Have personal savings of at least \$2,000

Buying a home with the support of the CTO Program is similar to a traditional home purchase. It is not a "rent-to-own" program, so in most cases a Participant cannot purchase their current unit.

If you are interested in learning more about homeownership (and you meet the requirements listed above), attend one of CHA's orientation sessions at the HCV Program Regional Offices or the Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center (FIC). Please visit CHA's website at www.thecha.org/cto for a calendar of upcoming sessions and information on how to register.

Going Places

Chicago Housing Authority
HCV Program Communications, Going Places
60 E. Van Buren, 8th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605

Contact Us

Phone: 312-935-2600 • E-mail: hcv@thecha.org

CHA and Operation Warm Provide Coats to Chicago Children

Do you have children on your lease that were born on or after Jan. 1, 1998? Are your children in need of a brand new winter coat? If yes, CHA can help.

For the fifth year in a row, CHA and Operation Warm will distribute brand new winter coats to children who live in CHA households, including HCV Program Participants.

To participate, simply follow the steps below:

1. Pre-register at www.chayouth.org on or after Tuesday, Sept. 4th. All you need to enter is your last name and CHA Client ID (Voucher #) or the last four digits of your social security number. Then, select your child's gender and specific coat size. Make sure you make a selection for each eligible child on your lease as coats will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis by gender and size.
2. Pick up your coat(s) at the UIC Forum, located at 725 W. Roosevelt, on **Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012**. A confirmation letter will be mailed to you with the specific time (between 9 a.m. and noon) for you or a designee (you must name your designee during the online registration process) to pick up your coat(s). Coats not picked up by noon will be made available to families on a stand-by list.

3. Stop by the Resource Fair that will also take place at the UIC Forum on Saturday, Oct. 27, 2012. Here you will have access to an array of services and giveaways including licensing services from the Secretary of State, free flu shots, utility assistance, job training and employment opportunities, child care assistance, youth programming and free grocery products*.



Note: Only those families who pre-register at www.chayouth.org and have eligible children on their lease will be able to attend this event.

Don't forget to visit www.chayouth.org on or after Tuesday, Sept. 4th to pre-register. If you experience any issues with the registration process, please call the CHA Operation Warm help line at **312-786-3621**.

**Some giveaways may be limited and not available to all who attend the resource fair.*

Proposed changes to the Amended FY2010 HCV Administrative Plan will be open for public comment Aug. 24 – Sept. 25, 2012. A hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Sept. 12 at CHA's Central Office, 60 E. Van Buren, 9th Floor.