



Building BLOCK

Building Community

August 2012

In this issue:

Building BLOCK - our voice is back!
Page 3

Health focus - Seeds to healthy living
Page 1

Snack Shack - In the food business
Page 2

CHA TECH and The Bennett Farm
Page 2

Fathers want you in the conversation
Page 1



Are you voting in November?

The **Pennsylvania Voter ID Law** will require that every voter present valid identification before they vote. For more information contact the office of State Representative Thaddeus Kirkland or State Senator Dominic Pileggi.

Our Mission:

Building BLOCK is the official newsletter of The Chester Housing Authority (CHA). It is printed for the CHA Residents, staff and supporters. The CHA reserves the right to refuse commentary and content deemed inappropriate for its residents and other readers.



Many youth contribute to the harvest at The Bennett Homes Garden. There are many lessons to be learned here. Come and join us!

Seeds for a healthy community

"This garden has changed my life"



*CHA Residents, neighbors and Swarthmore students work to make The Bennett Homes Community Garden a source of the freshest fruits and vegetables in the area. A part of The CHA Tech initiative, The Bennett Homes Community Garden produces everything from collard greens and peppers to watermelon and carrots. The Garden is one of many ways CHA Residents make community health a priority. **Learn how to get involved on Page 2.***

FATHERS ARE TALKING...JOIN THE CONVERSATION

All fathers - young and old - are invited to join Fathers Are Talking, a new fathers group hosted by the CHA. Fathers Are Talking is a network of fathers committed to supporting fathers, their families and their communities. Fathers talk about everything from education and children to domestic violence and finances.

"Leave your title at the door," participating fathers tell one another. When you step into our meetings, we are all equals. We are all fathers."

The CHA has hosted more than 10 father meetings and Residents Rod Powell and Jon Whittington have been with the group from the beginning.

"These meetings have become a very important part of my life," said Whittington. "I like being around other fathers who share what's important to them as fathers. Nobody cares where you work or what you do; all that matters is that you are a father."

Powell agrees with Whittington.

(Story continued on Page 3)

Fathers Are Talking

September 5, 2012

September 26, 2012

Topic: Education

1111 Avenue of the States

610-876-5561

The Snack Shack at Wm Penn



The Chester Housing Authority Snack Shack attracted long lines in the William Penn Homes this summer as the Resident youth Wakeem Moat and Omar Davis (shown in photo at right) joined forces with CHA Housing Director Norman Wise to offer delicious and inexpensive meals and snacks. With a menu selection that includes everything from hot sausage to water ice, Snack Shack was an immediate hit in its first year of operation. The Snack Shack was open from Noon to 6PM. Follow The Snack Shack on Facebook at facebook.com/WPHSnackShack.



Do you have a product or service to offer to your CHA neighbors?

Advertise it in **Building BLOCK**. For more information call 610-876-5561 or info@chesterha.org.

Seeding health in our community



A young CHA Resident (above) plants a variety of seeds at The Bennett Farm. Residents and students work at the Bennett Farm (below).

Community Health Workers Iris Ellis and Deborah Montgomery absolutely love the work they do for Residents of The CHA. In fact, they love their work so much they don't even call it work. They call it fun.

Every day, the two women have the pleasure of serving their neighbors by providing healthy lifestyle options from Wii Fit exercise to community gardening. Montgomery says the garden has changed her life.

"I look forward to spending time in the garden," said Montgomery. "I feel great after picking and cooking food I helped to plant. I'm doing all I can to get others involved."

Along with Montgomery, Ellis coordinates Resident travel to the garden, exercise at Booker T. Washington and healthy cooking classes. Once a student of CHA Tech's computer classes, Ellis jumped at the opportunity to become a health worker.

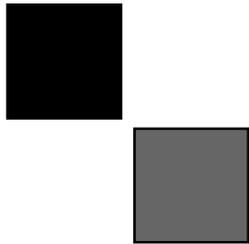
"I love the work I do in the community," said Ellis. "I get a chance to help people live better. A big part of living better is getting good food."

Beth St. Clair, CHA Tech director said The Bennett Farm is a very important part of overall community development.

"As the garden continues to expand, it plays a key role in securing a source of fresh and local produce, boosting the local economy, and further engaging Residents in community development."

<http://www.facebook.com/ChesterGardenProjectinTheBennettHomes>





CHA Residents John Whittington (l) and Rod Powell discuss their commitment to FAT.

(Fathers are Talking Continued From Page 1)

“Every time we get together, we accomplish more and more,” said Powell. “I’ve never been involved with anything like this. It’s very unique.”

The doors of the fathers meetings are always open to newcomers. The group has met at CHA’s main office and at The Bennett Homes. As many as 12 men have attended each of these meetings.

For more information about Fathers Are Talking, call 610-876-5561 Ext. 101.



CHA Executive Director Steven Fischer (left) works with Chester fathers to develop a monthly agenda.

Follow **Building BLOCK** now on



<http://www.facebook.com/ChaBuildingBlock>

Building BLOCK

Communication in our community

“Back in the day,” there was a newsletter published by the Chester Housing Authority (CHA). It was called *Building BLOCK*. The last time *Building BLOCK* appeared in the community was 2005. The last issue highlighted the hiring of an Executive Director who had solid credentials. It said he would push the CHA to levels of excellence.

In the seven years since his arrival, the new director focused on supporting the personal development of Residents. Today Residents have many educational opportunities right in their backyards. Computer training, gardening, bike repair and income tax preparation are some of the current learning opportunities.

But with all of these opportunities, something was still missing. Our community centers offered many classes, but some were saying our centers were underutilized. How could this be?

“...with all of these opportunities, something was still missing.”

Perhaps it comes down to communication. Even if there is a lot offered in the community, no one can know everything all the time. What we lacked was right under our noses - *Building BLOCK*. The new director had cut costs and created new opportunities. But he forgot about the voice of our community – *Building BLOCK*.

The new director is now the old director and older is wiser. Through this short message, please allow him to reintroduce himself to you – the community – and open wider the lines of communication. The better we know one another, the better off we will be.

Steve Fischer, the “old” Director



1111 Avenue of the States
Chester, Pennsylvania 19013
(610) 876-5561
www.chesterha.org

It's Back!

CHA's Building **BLOCK** newsletter returns!

We are proud to reintroduce *The Building BLOCK*, the official newsletter by, for and about The Chester Housing Authority (CHA). It's been seven years since we last printed this important publication and we are excited about this new and improved way to engage Residents, staff, supporters and City.

Each issue of *The Building BLOCK* will bring you news you can use, news that makes you laugh and news that motivates. In each edition you will meet new neighbors, get resources and discover great opportunities in your backyard.

CHA is also using social media tools like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter so it can get your input 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Share your gardening tips,

financial strategies and delicious recipes! Send poetry, pictures and pointers on community safety. *Building BLOCK* is back and it is here for you!

Save The Date
CHA Sustainability Committee
Meeting
October 25, 2012

Join our mailing list and we will email you a full-color copy of Building BLOCK! You can also go to www.chesterha.org and download a copy.

Quick Quotes

"It doesn't matter where you live. What matters is how you live."

- Author Unknown