Dear Residents,

I want to applaud members of the community who have long fought for the re-installation of a Level 1 Trauma Center at the University of Chicago Hospital. Your advocacy has long been noticed and I am glad that the administration at the University of Chicago has responded to our needs. Through the years, I have leveraged my position by passing two resolutions through the Chicago City Council and also partnered with other colleagues, governmental bodies and institutions calling for the building of a trauma center on the South Side. Because of this, coupled with your advocacy and street actions, we’ve succeeded in making our voices heard. I thank you all for your continued involvement in advocacy as we work to improve our quality of life in the 20th Ward.

I also want to encourage you to join me in bringing forth a strong message to our current state legislators and Governor Rauner about our discontent with his lack of resource allocation. The State of Illinois has operated without a budget for the last 9 months, and it has had terrible impacts on all social services, ranging from the Chicago Public School system, college financial aid, to low-cost day care for low-income residents. Governor Rauner’s budget cuts are affecting our most vulnerable populations the most, and it’s time we stand up to our state legislators and demand effective leadership. Be prepared for a call to action in the very near future, which will give you a chance to show you do not support Governor Rauner’s current position on the 2016 budget.

Let’s continue working together to get things done in the 20th Ward.

Sincerely,

“Willie B.”

From the POAH Chicago Office

The Woodlawn neighborhood has arrived at a crucial point in its history. With construction crews busy on many streets, Woodlawn is once again on its way up.

The Choice Neighborhood Initiative’s (Choice) $30.5 million grant has served as the springboard for the next generation of neighborhood revitalization and has provided a platform for re-energizing the entire Woodlawn neighborhood with the promise of long-term sustainability and affordability.

The Choice grant has helped POAH profoundly alter the profile and feel of Cottage Grove Avenue. Construction has been completed on three family buildings, The Grant and The Jackson, which together offer 100 apartments, and one senior building, The Bumham, which offers 65 apartments. The evolution doesn’t stop there however; innovative projects will continue to augment the already transformative developments that have enhanced Cottage Grove Avenue.

Soon, building will begin on POAH’s Trionon Lofts, the first new market-rate rental housing to be built in Woodlawn in decades. In addition, after recently being awarded $1.1 million in low-income housing tax credits from the Illinois Housing Development Authority, construction will begin in fall 2016 on Cottage Grove Station, the mixed-income development slated to be built at the entrance to the CTA’s Green Line station at 63rd and Cottage Grove.

To receive this newsletter electronically please visit www.mkcpr.com/POAH-pages-72.php

© Preservation of Affordable Housing | Chicago, IL 60637 | poahchicago.org
Renew Woodlawn Homeownership Program
Off and Running With First New Buyer

Congratulations to Courtney Nelson on the purchase of her first home at 61st and St. Lawrence in the West Woodlawn community, the first home sold through the Renew Woodlawn Homeownership Program.

The sale is a big step not only for her, but for POAH, which hopes to revitalize and attract homeowners to Woodlawn’s inventory of architecturally significant but underinvested 1- to 4-unit buildings. Renew Woodlawn is the latest chapter in POAH’s Choice Neighborhoods Initiative work, a multi-phase effort that includes a multitude of local partners including Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and the Community Investment Corporation (CIC) for the Renew Woodlawn program.

In its initial stage Renew Woodlawn will acquire 20 vacant properties (of 1 to 4 units each) and recruit would-be owner-occupants to undertake the purchase and rehab of these properties with technical assistance and subsidies of up to $75,000 per buyer.

To be eligible for the Renew Woodlawn incentives, homebuyers may earn up to 120% of the area median income (i.e. $91,200 for a family of four), complete eight hours of homebuyer education and counseling from a HUD-approved agency, and occupy the property as their primary residence. Any rental units in a 2- to 4-unit property will be rented to tenants who are at or below 120% area median income.

Interested buyers should contact Paula Grant at NHS at 773.491.1347 or pgrant@nhschicago.org

Interested developers should contact Jamila Danzy at CIC at 312-258-0070 x 246 or jdanzy@cicchicago.com.

$1 Million Grant to Help Unemployed and Underemployed Residents Find Solutions to Financial Problems

Preservation of Affordable Housing’s (POAH) Woodlawn Resource Center, 6144 S. Cottage Grove, is one of seven Financial Opportunity Centers in Chicago to be awarded a $255,000 grant from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to provide unemployed or underemployed individuals with financial coaching and career planning, employment services and access to public benefits and other income supports.

POAH is matching the LISC grant to create a $1.05 million program spread over the next three years that will be implemented at its 6144 S. Cottage Grove site.

“Many clients first come into the Woodlawn Resource Center simply looking for work,” said Bill Eager, Vice President of POAH Chicago. “However the center provides multiple financial interventions that remove employment barriers and that provide participants with the necessary tools to build good financial habits and achieve their personal financial goals.”

The Woodlawn Resource Center’s job-readiness program requires clients to meet with financial coaches who tailor their services to each individual’s needs. Coaches take the time to talk with their clients, get to know their clients on a personal level and are better equipped to make assessments that go beyond work history.

The other centers being awarded sub-grants are the Center for Changing Lives, Central States SER, Instituto del Progresso Latino, Jane Addams Resource Corporation, Metropolitan Family Services and North Lawndale Employment Center.

New Apartments and Retail Development on Cottage

Momentum continues for Woodlawn Park as the Chicago’s City Council approved POAH’s plan to move forward on Trianon Lofts, a new apartment and retail complex at 803 E. 61st Street.

As POAH’s first market-rate development in Woodlawn, Trianon will provide 24 two-bedroom apartments above 7,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and 24 spaces of outdoor parking. Half of the units will be rented at market rates, and half will be affordable units.

The complex is named for the Trianon Ballroom, a ballroom founded in the Roaring Twenties that provided patrons with a place to dance and socialize for 32 years and was one of several hundred dance halls operating in Chicago during the first half of the 20th century, but this particular ballroom stood out because of its extravagant size, luxurious decor and overall elegance.

Located at 6100 S. Dorchester, Blackstone Bicycle Works is a structured free-of-charge, voluntary program open to any child who is in search of educational and vocational opportunities in a safe environment where they can have fun and learn in the process.

Blackstone operates on an apron system. Kids earn colored aprons indicating five achievement levels – gray, green, red, purple and black. These aprons function much like the colored belts in martial arts, with black signifying mastery. Kids who achieve purple and black aprons are selected for promotions, such as paid internships.

In addition to offering internships and employment opportunities to youth, Blackstone coordinates mentorship programs and links students with college advisors, offers on-site study labs and homework areas while helping kids discover the satisfaction of a job well done.

Youth and their guardians must complete the registration forms before participating. For more information on Bicycle Works, visit www.experimentalstation.org/blackstone

Artist Showcases Talents at Neighborhood Gallery

Located in the Woodlawn community, the William Hill Gallery, 6442 S. Dorchester Ave, exhibits the work of distinguished visual artists who are devoted to the critical investigation of nature, culture, race, gender and the post-colonial imagination.

With an emphasis on painting, photography, sculpture, video and installation art, these artists challenge traditional modes of representation.

Gallery hours are Friday through Sunday 11:00am to 6:00pm. Tours by appointment only – 312-351-0573.

Blackstone Bicycle Works Offering Internships and Employment Opportunities to Woodlawn Youth

Since 2006, Blackstone Bicycle Works has been a community bike shop that offers more than 175 Chicago 8 to 18 year olds the opportunity to work in a retail setting and learn about bicycle mechanics, repairs, customer service and management.

Located at 6100 S. Dorchester, Blackstone Bicycle Works is a structured free-of-charge, voluntary program open to any child who is in search of educational and vocational opportunities in a safe environment where they can have fun and learn in the process.

Blackstone operates on an apron system. Kids earn colored aprons indicating five achievement levels – gray, green, red, purple and black. These aprons function much like the colored belts in martial arts, with black signifying mastery. Kids who achieve purple and black aprons are selected for promotions, such as paid internships.

In addition to offering internships and employment opportunities to youth, Blackstone coordinates mentorship programs and links students with college advisors, offers on-site study labs and homework areas while helping kids discover the satisfaction of a job well done.

Youth and their guardians must complete the registration forms before participating. For more information on Bicycle Works, visit www.experimentalstation.org/blackstone