

THE *Gentilly Clarion*

October 2008
Vol. 1, Issue 2

The Dillard University Community Development Corporation Newsletter



CONNECTING
with *your* community

Serving Gentilly Heights East, Lower Gentilly, Oak Park, Sugar Hill, Virgil Park, Indian Village, Filmore Gardens, Paris Oaks and Gentilly Heights/Voscoville



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Can you believe it's already fall? Though warm days still may be ahead, the hottest days are surely behind us for 2008. This has been a busy and rewarding year for our Community Development Corporation. Together we have created partnerships, developed community events and "gotten to know our neighbors."

In this issue of *The Gentilly Clarion*, we take a look at the progress our community has made and we look ahead to the future. Be sure to read the feature on NeighborWorks America, our partner for numerous revitalization projects and youth outreach programs.

As you read through this publication, I hope you will consider taking an active role in the community. We have lots of volunteer opportunities and contact information is found on this page and throughout this magazine.

Enjoy the fall,

Nick Harris
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Numerous non-profit organizations participated in the Gentilly Night Out Against Crime.

The Gentilly Clarion is published by the Dillard University Community Development Corporation. Please direct questions, comments and story ideas to 504/816-4205.

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DILLARD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

FAMILY HEALTH FAIR

SPONSORED BY BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD OF LOUISIANA
Saturday, October 18, 2008-10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dillard University Campus 2601 Gentilly Blvd. New Orleans, LA



Receive free: • Blood Pressure Screenings • Diabetes Testing • Eye Exams
Flu Shots • Glucose & Cholesterol Screenings

Get information regarding: • Mental Health • Depression • Stress Management.

On-site Blood Mobile. • On-site Mammogram Mobil Unit.

Enjoy seminars on: • Cancer Prevention and Early Protection • Prostate Cancer
Aids Awareness • Heart Disease • Stroke Prevention

Enjoy a free 5 minute massage. • CPR Demonstrations.

Enjoy giveaways! • Exhibitors! • Entertainment and much more!!!!

OVER \$1,500 OF FREE MEDICAL SERVICES

Special Guest: WDSU-TV Medical Editor, Dr. Corey Hébert!



This is a Free Citywide Community Event!

**Co-Sponsors- WBOK Radio, EXCELth, Inc. Primary Care Network,
Dillard University Division of Nursing, Dillard University Division of Student Success
Dillard University Public Health Department, United Way of Greater New Orleans,
NeighborWorks America, Daughters of Charity Services of N.O.**

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of La.
EXCELth Inc.
YMCA Dryades Nursing School
American Diabetes Association
LSU Agricultural Center
American Heart Association
NO/AIDS Task Force
La. Breast & Cervical Screening Program
Epilepsy Foundation of La.
Blue Cliff College
Dept. of Health & Hospitals
Ameriplan Healthcare
New Orleans Fire Department
East Jefferson General Hospital

St. Thomas Breast Center
Susan G. Komen for the Cure
LA Spirit
LaCHIP
Louisiana Blood Center
United Blood Services
American Lung Association
LSU Health Sciences Center
Lakeside Chiropractic
La. Dept. of Public Health
Bethany United Methodist Church
American Red Cross
Vision Source
U.S. Marine Corps

LOPA
U.S. Army
Entergy New Orleans
United First Financial
Dryades Bank
FDIC
Global Green
Paralyzed Vets of America
Families Helping Families
Morgan Keegan
Delta Aids Education
La. Partnership for Youth
Suicide Prevention

NeighborWorks® America

Works in Gentilly!

NeighborWorks America was created by Congress in 1978 with the mission to build healthy communities across the United States. The organization provides financial support, technical assistance and training for community-based revitalization efforts. NeighborWorks is actually a network of more than 230 community-based organizations similar to our own CDC.

Stretching across our country from Alaska to Rhode Island, NeighborWorks is hard at work as a vital partner and resource. Over the years, NeighborWorks has created alliances with financial institutions, law firms, insurance companies and retail businesses that support its national initiatives and assist in making ideas a reality for hundred of communities and thousands of people.

Dillard is one of only five organizations in Louisiana to receive funding for the community building and organizing initiative.

support its national initiatives and assist in making ideas a reality for hundred of communities and thousands of people.

Through a series of grants to the CDC, NeighborWorks America is helping our Gentilly neighborhoods make great strides in our revitalization efforts. In 2008 these programs have included our very successful Housing Fair and Youth Summit, as well as this month's Family Health Fair. With the success of each event, more ideas and plans continue to blossom.

NeighborWorks has made it possible for our CDC neighborhood organizers to participate in these leadership training programs:



- Community Leadership Institute in Baltimore, MD. Attendees wrote and received approval for a grant to publish this community magazine.
- Race, Place and Environment in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina
- Community Needs: Building Resources for Tomorrow
- Community Building and Organizing Initiative
- New Orleans Community Leadership. Attendees wrote and received approval for a small grant to sponsor a community outreach program.

“NeighborWorks is pleased to have Dillard and the CDC as our Louisiana partners. We are excited about all of the work they are doing around the university for the Gentilly neighborhoods,” said James Ross, State Director for NeighborWorks America. “The initial results we are seeing are very good, and we look forward to this relationship growing as we all work to rebuild New Orleans.”



HOUSING FAIR 2008



More than 700 people participated in the DUCDC Housing Fair in June. Residents were eager to learn about various avenues to home ownership and about homeowner responsibilities. The event was free and workshops included Pathway to Homeownership, The Lot-Next-Door, How to Choose a Contractor, and Insurance and Titles.

Participants were given a variety of information from event exhibitors about homeownership including financing, home maintenance, energy efficient products, and hurricane preparedness.

The Housing Fair was sponsored by Entergy, NeighborWorks America, Regions Bank, Iberia Bank, Whitney Bank, Capital One, Volunteers of America, New Orleans Redevelopment Authority and many others. "Entergy New Orleans knows that housing is one of the most critical needs for our neighbors and customers. That's why Entergy was proud to sponsor the Dillard Housing Fair. We want to help our customers learn more about energy efficiency and ways to make housing and energy costs more affordable," said Melonie Hall, director of customer service for Entergy New Orleans. "We're proud to be able to work with leaders in our community like Dillard University to make New Orleans a better place to live, work and raise a family."

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Because of its huge success, Dillard plans to make the housing fair an annual event. Many thanks to everyone who helped with the event.

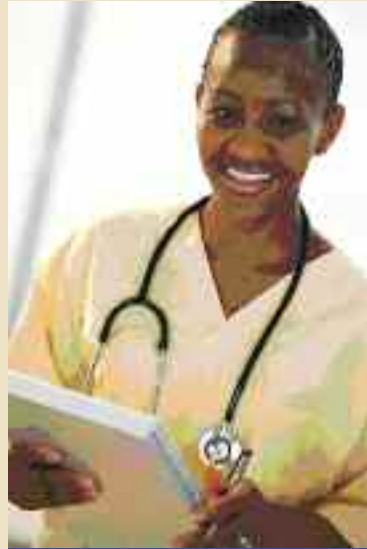




DILLARD
UNIVERSITY



Partners for Health



Administrators anticipate serving as many as 25,000 patients annually.

As part of its commitment to revitalize the Gentilly neighborhoods, Dillard University, EXCELth, Inc. and Tulane University have fostered a collaborative partnership to enhance community wellness by developing a new community health center to be located in the planned Student Union building on the Dillard University campus. The strategic intent is to:

1. Enhance the delivery of vital health services to the Gentilly community;
2. Provide primary medical health care services to Dillard University students, faculty, staff and their families; and
3. Provide pre-med, nursing, and public health students and physicians, faculty, and staff with community-oriented primary care experiences and research opportunities.

EXCELth is a private, non-profit organization that increases access to health care through projects such as this one at Dillard. Its staff will include doctors, nurses, medical residents from Tulane University and students from Dillard's nursing and public health programs. The clinic will comprise approximately 15,000 square feet of the 55,000 square-foot building. Administrators anticipate serving as many as 25,000 patients annually.

“The rebuilding of the Gentilly community will be embraced and served through the EXCELth Family Health Center that provides the model for community partnerships and community wellness for New Orleans and the nation,” said Michael Andry, CEO for EXCELth Inc. “The partnership combines the long-standing educational and service mission of Dillard University and the community development mission of the Dillard CDC with the EXCELth mission of delivery of health care to underserved populations to reduce health disparities and increase quality of life.”

EXCELth, Dillard and Tulane will collaborate to seek future grants and medical research projects. Dillard students majoring in health-related specialties will have the opportunity to use the health center as their training ground and to complete their residency requirements. Dillard and EXCELth officials hope that the clinic will also serve to help recruit minority students into health care work.

One Stop Resource Center



Through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Dillard's CDC has established the Gentilly One Stop Resource Center. The center, operating temporarily on the university's campus, is a valuable community resource for residents to find answers. Residents will be able to visit the center for referrals on these services:

- Contractor Directory (licensed and insured)
- Realtors
- Mortgage Companies/Banks
- Legal Services (homeowner assistance)
- Insurance Companies
- Business Services

Lawn Care for Blighted Property



Through a series of donations of lawn equipment from Friendship West Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and Beacon of Hope, the CDC has implemented a program to clean up blighted properties and vacant lots.

“Properly maintained lawns look nice and give residents a feeling of place,” says Nick Harris, Dillard University Assistant Vice President for Community and Economic Development.

“Providing free

lawn care service helps our neighborhoods feel more at home and allows residents to focus on more pressing rebuilding efforts,” he adds.

The lawns of abandoned lots are cut by volunteers and Harris encourages residents to volunteer for this program so that it can continue to be successful. To volunteer or to report an abandoned property that you think should be included in the program, please call 816-4704.



Night Out Unites Community



The Gentilly Night Out Against Crime was held August 5 on the Dillard University campus. The mission was to reach youth through education and mentoring and to create awareness for youth programs. More than 400 people turned out to gather information from the exhibitors and to enjoy performances by the Shack Brown Drill Team, Iberville Karate and the Sheriff's Young Marines.

"While most Night Out Against Crime events focus on crime prevention, ours focuses on directing kids and parents to activities that enhance their lives," said Nick Harris, Assistant Vice President, Community & Economic Development at Dillard University. "Our strategy is to focus on family and community values from a young age."

More than 30 community organizations participated with exhibits, food and music to further the cause. Exhibitors included: Entergy New Orleans, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts of America, Crimestoppers Cops for Kids, Total Community Action, Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living and others.

Residents also had the opportunity to connect with city officials who attended including Mayor Ray Nagin, Councilwoman Cynthia Hedge-Morrell, Congressman William Jefferson, Police Chief Warren Riley and State Representative Juan LaFonta.



Mayor Ray Nagin addressed Gentilly residents at Dillard's Night Out Against Crime.



Collegiate 100 Black Men

Dillard University is pleased to announce the formation of its Collegiate 100 Black Men organization. Participants will assist with the development of social, emotional, educational and physical needs of young black males in our community who have few or no positive role models.

Dillard's 100 Black Men will coordinate youth outreach programs through the CDC with the assistance of their advisor Nick Harris. Their efforts will strive to touch the lives of children and adolescents within Gentilly.

Raphael Richard will serve as the organization's student leader for the 2008-09 school year. "Our membership is truly excited to be the first inductees of Dillard's 100 Black Men. We are looking forward to mentoring the youth in our Gentilly community," said Richard.

The 17 members of Dillard's Collegiate 100 Black Men are: Raphael T. Richard, Marcel E. Harris, David McBride, Ricky Lewis, Sherman Coleman, Brandon Love, Gerald Lee, Ian Lawrence, Rodney Graham, Joshua Mitchell, Cory Falade, Darius Miller, Alan Carmel, Michael Kelley, D. Michael Jenkins, Michael McField and Jason Alton.

Health & Fitness Festival Leads to Healthy Outlook



Dillard's Youth Summit last February was such a success that organizers put together a physical fitness and health event for kids that was held in April. Dillard's Physical Fitness & Health Festival was made possible in part by a grant from the State of Louisiana Bureau of Minority Health. The mission of the health festival was to increase awareness of healthy lifestyles and physical fitness with special emphasis on combating childhood obesity.

About 450 students, parents and neighborhood residents took part in the one-day event that included activities and demonstrations to promote healthy living. Activities included: hip hop dancing, basketball, track, football, golf, tennis, weightlifting, rock climbing and volleyball. Workshops included mental health and nutrition. Each participant received a free health screening.



Dillard's Physical Fitness & Health Festival was sponsored by the nine Gentilly neighborhood associations, Governor's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports, the New Orleans Chapter of 100 Black Men, National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Smoothie King, New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, NeighborWorks America and EXCELth Family Health Center.



Oak Park Civic Association

Boundaries: Mirabeau Avenue, Paris Avenue, Robert E. Lee Blvd., St. Bernard Avenue
Community Liaison: **Kim Henry**

The New Technology Foundation based high school located at 6026 Paris Avenue is under construction and scheduled to open in 2010. A delegation from New Orleans visited a similar site called the Sacramento New Tech High School in California. The group was excited about the quality of students the program has produced.

Plans are underway to host a coffee social in December. Stay tuned for details.

Lower Gentilly Neighborhood Development Association

Boundaries: Gentilly Blvd., Clematis Street, Humanity Street, Elysian Fields
Community Liaison: **Lamona Chandler**

The association submitted a proposal to FEMA, the Recovery School District, New Orleans Public Schools and the Consulting & Research Management and Education Agency to revitalize Stuart Bradley Elementary School. Though FEMA has declined to pay for the costs, neighborhood sources indicate that the school will be replaced.



ALL ACROSS GENTILLY



Gentilly Heights East Neighborhood Association

Boundaries: Mirabeau Avenue, Gentilly Blvd., St. Anthony, Elysian Fields
Community Liaison: **Donna Brown**

The Importance of Being a Good Neighbor

When we talk about the character of a neighborhood we are referring to the quality of life that exists there. Ideally, we desire to have neighbors who contribute to a peaceful, wholesome, healthy, safe, family-oriented environment. Responsible homeowners understand that they ultimately have control over what happens in and around their homes. They understand what it means to be part of a community who maintain their properties and contribute to the overall status of the community.

It is vital that residents understand that a well-kept property is key to maintaining the aesthetics of the community as a whole. It is the objective of the Gentilly Heights East Neighborhood Association to help each neighbor be a good neighbor, one who will be welcomed to any community. We are dedicated to restoring our community and achieving a higher quality of life for all residents.

Gentilly Heights/Voscoville Neighborhood Association

Community Liaison: **Gwen Hawkins**

When our neighborhood association was established in 1997, the goal was to preserve a quality of life for residents of the community. Though much has changed in recent years, our goal remains the same. We are working hard to restore infrastructure of water and sewer systems in our neighborhood, street repairs, to restore our post office and library.





Virgil Park Neighborhood Association

Boundaries: London Avenue Canal, Gentilly Blvd., Paris Avenue Virgil Street
Community Liaison: **Peggy Braud**

Virgil Park continues to conduct Neighborhood Watch training with the New Orleans Police Department.

We have two community gardens and there is space available for anyone interested in starting a vegetable garden. Contact Peggy Braud at 214-3664 for details.

Gentilly Sugar Hill Neighborhood Association

Boundaries: Gentilly Blvd., Elysian Fields, Florida Avenue
Community Liaison: **Barbara Blackwell**

Our neighborhood association is once again holding meetings in the VOA building. Many thanks to Ed Bolinger for the invitation to return. Following Katrina, we held meetings at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church. On behalf of our association, I wish to express our gratitude to Father John Cisewski and the parishioners for being such gracious hosts.



Neighborhood news you can use.



Indian Village Neighborhood Association

Community Liaison: **Lynn Lee**

Residents of Indian Village are committed to the goal of reviving our neighborhood. As such, block captains have been established to monitor block activities and share information.

Thanks are extended to the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary for providing a meeting location and to Wanda Gregg for assisting with our many projects.

Filmore Gardens Neighborhood Association

Community Liaison: **Gloria DeCuir-Robert**

Filmore Gardens successfully petitioned the US Postal Service for a post office in our area. We participated in the Festival of Neighborhoods early this year to meet with leaders of the various Gentilly neighborhood associations. A variety of non-profits were represented including Habit for Humanity, Consumer Credit Counseling, The Green Project, Catholic Charities and Entergy.

Paris Oaks/Bayou Vista Neighborhood Assoc.

Boundaries: St. Bernard Avenue, Harrison Avenue, Mirabeau Avenue, Paris Avenue

Community Liaison: **Marva Adams**

The residents of Paris Oaks/Bayou Vista hope to develop our neighborhood into one of the best in Gentilly. To achieve this we meet monthly to share information on progress and concerns. We strongly promote homeownership and encourage residents to return home. We are committed to working with NOPD, city officials, area businesses and universities in all of our efforts.



New Lawns –

The Dillard CDC selected 25 homes to be in a program made possible through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and administered through Dillard's Deep South Center for Environmental Justice (DUDSCEJ). The program helped homeowners with an often overlooked home improvement: the front lawn!

The 25 homeowners in the program could actually choose from one of four home improvements: lawn replacement, new windows, sheetrock or mold remediation. Lawn replacement was the most popular project with 23; four homeowners chose hurricane-resistant windows; three residents received sheetrock installation; and one home was treated for mold.

“So many people have been struggling financially to complete their homes and move back in. Our program has given residents additional help in their rebuilding efforts,” said Bates.

Deborah Bates, project specialist for DUDSCEJ says the project is helping homeowners complete the projects that insurance and Road Home did not cover. “So many people have been struggling financially to complete their homes and move back in. Our program has given residents additional help in their rebuilding efforts,” said Bates.

For the lawn replacement project, the existing lawn and topsoil are removed. Then, the soil is tilled before new topsoil and St. Augustine sod are put down. It then becomes the owner’s responsibility to water and care for the lawn. Gloria DeCuir-Robert loves her new lawn.

“It was a final detail that we just could not afford to do



a CDC Program

at this time. Thanks to the CDC, the Environmental Justice Center and HUD, my family has a lawn that we can be proud of," said DeCuir-Robert. "I think we'll plant some flowers soon." she added.

Nearly two-thirds of these home projects have been completed and all will be finished by the end of the year. The grant also enabled the DUDSCEJ staff to conduct training demonstrations known as Environmentally Safe Renovation and Remodeling Work Practices. They targeted low and moderate income families, the elderly, Dillard's faculty, staff and nursing students as well as contractors whose clients qualify. A demonstration house was set up for the training to provide hands-on instruction along with a visual

tour. Participants learned that the number one concern should be to build a house that is environmentally safe and flood and moisture resistant. The workshops also focused on home maintenance.

"It was a final detail that we just could not afford to do at this time. Thanks to the Environmental Justice Center and HUD, my family has a lawn we can be proud of," said DeCuir-Robert.

All home projects within this program will be completed by the end of 2008. The CDC hopes to obtain additional funding from other sources to have the opportunity to offer similar services to Gentilly residents in the future.

In the meantime if you would like to learn about Dillard University Deep South Center for Environmental Justice call 504/816-4005.

Two Cheers!

State Representative Juan LaFonta has been a great leader for community revitalization in Gentilly. His efforts to connect the dots between neighborhoods and the city's overall recovery plan have been exemplary. We salute Juan LaFonta for making a difference in our community with his commitment, compassion, and leadership.



Two Cheers for State Representative Juan LaFonta!

Melton Foundation Fellows Rebuild Gentilly

Last month, Dillard University hosted the 17th Annual Melton Foundation Symposium with more than 120 Melton Fellows from five countries in attendance. This year's theme, "Climate Change: Global Perspectives on Going Green" was quite pertinent given the continued transition of New Orleans as we rebuild our neighborhoods.



This symposium focused on the impact of climate change on the ecosystems of our five Melton countries (Chile, China, India, Germany and the United States), as well as how it affects the political and social practices of humans. Those in attendance learned about appropriate ways to mitigate the detrimental effects of climate change and ways in which we can adapt to those inevitable environmental changes. Fellows visited various locations throughout the river parishes including wetland areas.

The conference included three community service activities in New Orleans. One activity was to volunteer at the Audubon Nature Institute; another was working with Habitat for Humanity; and the third was the Gentilly Community Outreach Project.

Residents of the Indian Village neighborhood were grateful to those who assisted in painting and other rebuilding efforts. Lynn Lee, president of the Indian Village Neighborhood Association, was instrumental in obtaining assistance from the Melton Foundation.

Hundreds of students from around the New Orleans area say they have a clearer path to a successful future due in part to the daylong Youth Summit held at Dillard last February.

Reaching Out to Our Youth Through Education and Mentoring was sponsored by Dillard University Community Development Corporation (DUCDC) and the Gentilly Neighborhood Associations. A host of non-profit organizations and governmental agencies participated, all with the mission to facilitate meaningful discussion and involvement concerning our youth and their future.

Young men and women, ages 13 to 18, and their parents discussed issues affecting their lives including finance, education, mental health, community service, sports, crime and voting. “Our young people have more to contend with than when I was growing up,” said Nick Harris, youth summit organizer and Assistant Vice President of the CDC at Dillard. As adults we must support all of the positive endeavors of these kids. And we have to lead them to the right kinds of activities,” he adds.

Joneisha Stewart, a middle school student, said she paid particular attention to the community service session. She plans to become a doctor to find a cure for breast cancer. “We tossed around fundraising ideas to raise money for cancer research,” said Stewart. “I’m glad I came here today.”



New Orleans Saints offensive tackles John Stinchcomb and Zack Strief along with New England Patriots cornerback Mel Mitchell spent time with the students. Stinchcomb, who was raised in a family of educators, believes that the summit would reap huge dividends. “Tomorrow is the future and we’ve got to start today with our young kids to help them make better choices and to show them the right choices to make down the road,” said Stinchcomb.

The Youth Summit also included opportunities for participating youth to provide valuable feedback about their needs and struggles. Dillard hopes to make this important event and annual community gathering.



Youth Summit Focuses on Our Youth to Focus on Our Future



DILLARD
UNIVERSITY

UPCOMING CDC COMMUNITY EVENTS



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If you would like to sponsor the Gentilly Clarion through advertising, please contact Nick Harris at 816-4704.