



ST. PAUL'S AMERICORPS PROGRAM

Paterson, New Jersey

News Beats

"a leader is a dealer in hope" -Napoleon Bonaparte

March 2011

A Message from Our Interim Executive Director

A Holistic Holiday Message! by June Smith Bryant



*Interim Exec. Director,
June Smith Bryant*

The mission of St. Paul's Community Development Corporation is to serve as an agent of hope, partnering with others to provide needs driven services that improve the quality of life and encourage greater self-sufficiency.

As we approach difficult challenging times we are able to witness more oppression, depression, self-medication, hopelessness and desperation. The list of emotions continues. The pendulum swings from one extreme to the other.

Yet, we are able to do some amazing work! Princess Diana said it best, "Every single one of us needs to demonstrate how much we care for our community, care for each other and in the process, care for ourselves."

My calling at St. Paul's is of a divine assignment. Many have asked "why Paterson? Why non-profit? Why not New York? I totally see you as corporate." I simply chuckle. I have been there and done that and by no means should we think that non-profit does not mean corporate.

We have some of the same struggles and challenges. We have budgets to balance, headaches, back aches, rib aches, stomach aches, but we laugh, we console, we celebrate, we advocate and yes we reprimand, set expectations, and hold our employees and each other accountable for their actions.

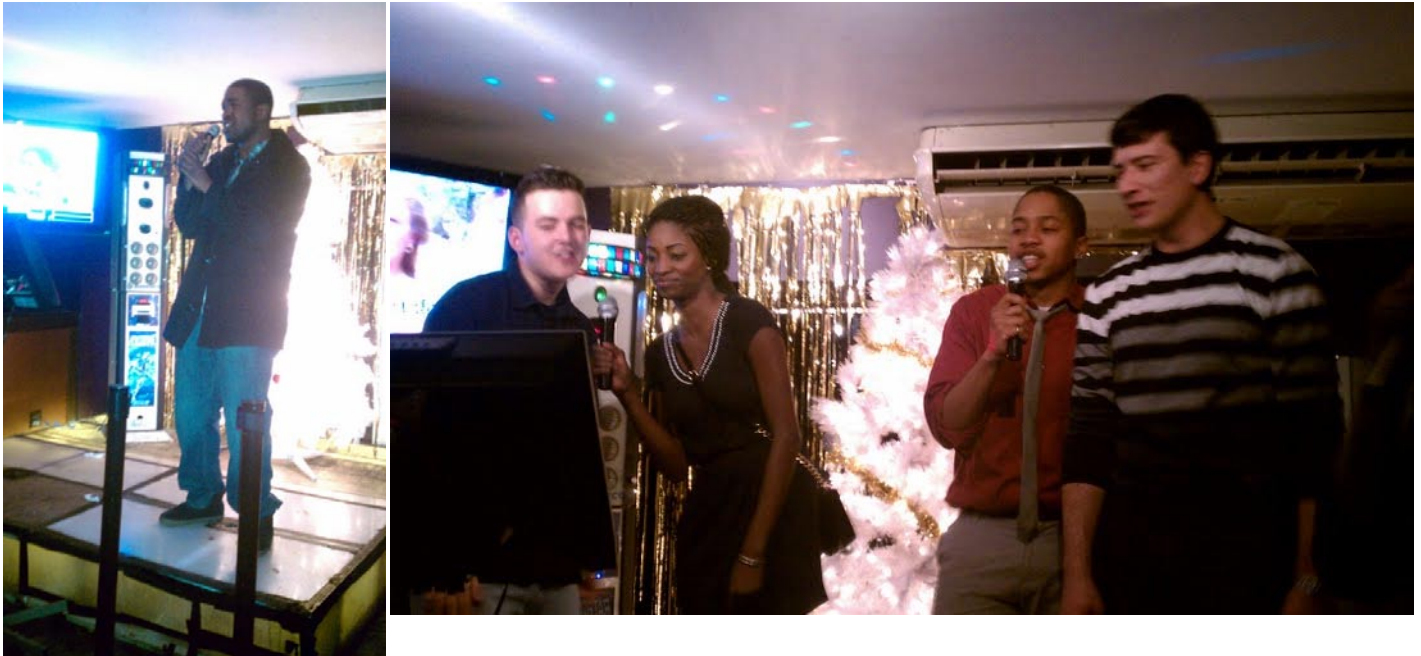
We have had some very arduous times. However, we would truly be unable to celebrate the good times if we didn't experience the challenging times. We are not able to appreciate the highs without the lows.

***"My staff
knows that
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AmeriCorps Members Belt it Out in NYC

On Saturday, December 3rd, AmeriCorps members and friends met in New York City to let loose, sing, and get to know each other better. There was plenty of entertainment, including Jordan Blakney's rousing rendition of Toni Braxton's "Unbreak My Heart," and a sing off between Jomaira Rincon and Nana Ama Afari-Dwamena channeling their inner Monica and Brandy. Hats off to Jordan for organizing this wonderful event and all of our other AmeriCorps social gatherings!



What's Happening at Our Sites!

St. Paul's Food Pantry by Jordan Blakney

The St. Paul's Food Pantry is an intricate part of St. Paul's CDC. Leading the Pantry's mission is a band of loyal AmeriCorps members as well as some volunteers. St. Paul's Food Pantry supplies food to some of Passaic and Bergen Counties most needy residents while also supplying food to the CDC's men's shelter and the Church's after-school program. We are the second largest food distributor in Passaic County outside of CUMAC. Our latest event was our yearly turkey handout. It was very successful and lots of families were served. With the continued support of volunteers and AmeriCorps members alike we can continue our mission to end hunger and strengthen the community.



AmeriCorps members work hard during the Thanksgiving turkey distribution

An Update from Next Step by Jesse Zatloff

While working with St. Paul's Next Step Workforce Development Program has certainly been challenging and often chaotic, it has been a rewarding and productive experience. There are two members currently working with Next Step as Case Managers/Classroom Aides, **Jomaira Rincon** and **Jesse Zatloff**. The goal of Next Step is to equip adults, young and old, with the skills and knowledge needed to re-enter the workforce and gain greater self-sufficiency. Despite our challenging times regarding employment and economic security, we are confident that our students can achieve their goals. This conviction is evidenced by four of our students this past month. Three of these students will be leaving our class shortly to begin new employment opportunities, and one recently scored above average on his TABE test (Test of Adult Basic Education), indicating his readiness for higher education. Jomaira and I wish them luck in their new endeavors and hope that the new year will bring similar successes to all of our students.



AmeriCorps members, Jesse Zatloff and Jomaira Rincon are class instructor/case manager aides for the Next Step program



Next Step students attend a financial workshop hosted by the North Jersey Federal Credit Union



Paterson Ave. UMC/Madison Park Epworth UMC by Mario Benitez

The Southwest Cooperative Parish consists of Madison Park Epworth United Methodist Church and the Paterson Avenue United Methodist church. Both churches have been serving Paterson's spiritual well being for decades. The churches have food pantries that serve over 3000 people a year. Paterson Ave. UMC also provides an after-school program, The Tutoring and Literacy Center, which has helped and guided more than 30 children per year since its inception in 2008. Paterson Ave. UMC also provides English as a second language and bible study classes.



Food Drive:
Adam Aguirre and Nereida Bello collected over 12 carts of food and over \$300 in cash donations

Mario Benitez is an AmeriCorps member serving both churches and he is an aide for the after school program. He arranges for speakers from the community to address the youth and provides computer classes for the parents. In addition, he provides administrative and hands-on assistance with the food pantries. He is finishing his second year with the site.

Partnership for Healthy Living: Adopt-A-Family Program by Nana Ama Afari-Dwamena

On December 20th, 2010, St. Paul's CDC hosted its annual Adopt-A-Family program in Paterson, NJ. To commemorate this gift-giving program, volunteers lent a helping hand by wrapping up the many gifts that were donated for the families participating in the program. AmeriCorps members also participated in the program by dressing up in Christmas costumes, working at the registration table, and helping clients with their gifts. Prior to the event, donors were matched with the Christmas wishlists of agency families; families that could not afford to buy gifts during the holidays. With the help of many donors, St. Paul's CDC served over 200 families during this holiday season. A big shout-out goes to **Marlene Williams** for coordinating this year's program. Her presence is missed at PHL.



Volunteers wrapping up gifts donated by donors



Some AmeriCorps members who participated in Adopt-A-Family this year.



Families pose with Santa and his helpers after receiving their gifts

Paterson Habitat for Humanity by Neil Goldman

Paterson Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization supported by the private donations and time of individuals, churches, foundations and businesses. Paterson Habitat has been building houses in Paterson for 26 years in partnership with lower income families to end poverty housing.

Pictured below is a "House Dedication" for the Watson family. During "House Dedications," crowds gather to bless the house before the family moves in. Thanks to Paterson Habitat for Humanity, the Watson family has a beautiful home to live in.

"Building Houses, Building Lives"



The Watson Family



Reverends speaking at the dedication

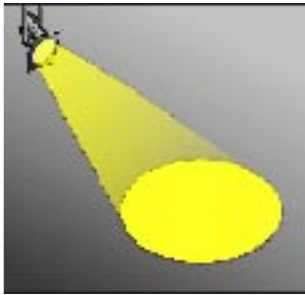


Crowd gathered to bless the new home

AmeriCorps Member Spotlight

Favorite Quote:

“To be or not to be”



Marlene Williams
Shelter Coordinator/Case Manager
AmeriCorps Member 2008-2009,2009-2010

Fave Color: Off white/ All black

Fave Food: Seafood- Crab legs, lobster, shrimp

School: Berkeley College (Graduating with a B.S. in Business Administration in May 2011)

Fave Movie: Ghost

Hobby: Cooking and shopping

Why AmeriCorps?

I saw the need in my community and wanted to help.

What have you gained thus far from AmeriCorps?

Leadership skills, motivation and determination.

Fave AmeriCorps service project thus far? Why?

Adopt-A-Family

We gave over 200 families gifts and toys for the holidays



Quote of the Newsletter

“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Message from our Interim Executive Director ...cont. from page 1

Service is what I know, it's what I do and it's who I am. Yes, as Interim Executive Director, the work falls on my shoulders, but I am not about to expect my team to care if I don't care. In my faith, scripture shares that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, so who am I? I am humbled by my work, your giving, your presence and your interest.

My staff knows that I have an open door policy. Yes, I am extremely busy but never too busy to connect, to listen, to touch, to feel. We have many exciting things planned for St. Paul's Community Development Corporation (SPCDC), we are putting our finger on the pulse and we are feeling your energy. My presence is not always top to bottom, my presence is symbolic of the circle of life, love and dedication. I love my work, and I hope I can effect change and convince you to understand not only do we love and appreciate you, but we want and need you to continue to make our hearts beat.

Love, Peace, and Blessings for a "fantabulous" and prosperous 2011!

-June Smith Bryant

News and Events



M.L.K. DAY

When: January 17, 2011

Time: 10:00am - 2:00pm

Where: St. Paul's Episcopal Church
(451 Van Houten St. Paterson NJ,



Children between the ages of 7-12 participated in workshops, presentations, and arts & craft projects focused on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Many thanks to AmeriCorps member **Sandrine Rogers** for organizing and overseeing this exciting event!!!



St. Paul's CDC and The United Way of Passaic County offers free tax preparation services for households earning \$49,000 or less. If you qualify for the earned income tax credit (EITC) you can receive up to \$5,666 in tax refunds.

Many thanks to **Paula Harrison-Smallig** for overseeing this important service for the community!

MUST BRING:

Photo IDs

Social Security Cards (or ITINS) for everyone listed on the return

All W2 and 1099 forms

List of childcare expenses and agency ID #

Voided check for direct deposit

By appointment only! Call (973) 278-7900 x36

ST. PAUL'S CDC

456 VAN HOUTEN STREET, PATERSON, NJ 07501

HOURS: MON, WED, THU 6pm-9pm

PATERSON PUBLIC LIBRARY

250 BROADWAY PATERSON, NJ 07501

HOURS: WED 10am-3pm, SAT 10am-1pm

Greetings from the "News Beats" staff!

Thank you everyone for your contributions, and a special thanks to Sergej for his tireless efforts in helping us assemble this newsletter. Look out for the next edition of "News Beats" in early June!!!

Jesse, Jomaira, and Nana



Look for our Twitter page:

***St. Paul's Community
Development Corporation***

Or visit us on the web at:

www.stpaulscdcnj.org



Look for our Facebook group:

***St. Paul's Community
Development Corporation***

