

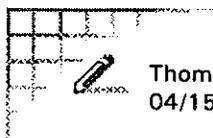
NLWJC - Kagan

DPC - Box 030 - Folder 020

Housing - Computer Project

Housing:
computer project

?



Thomas L. Freedman
04/15/97 01:33:13 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP
cc: Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP
Subject: Computers for Cities

1. Update: Cuomo is evidently planning to announce the expansion of the little-known, but successful "Neighborhood Networks" (the program that puts computers and mentors in public housing) on Friday. He'll call for an expansion from 100 sites to 500 sites by the year to 2000.

I'm meeting with their people today, anything to do? I think this ship may have passed us by, yes?

2. Lobbying: I agree that if we were to propose some new rules, it should be a thoughtful, careful solution that makes good policy sense.

Housing - computer project



FACT SHEET

Neighborhood Networks

The number of people who use computers and computer-based communication in the United States has increased dramatically in recent years. With the rapid spread of personal computers to homes and offices and the growth of the Internet, electronic media is often the chosen method of sending a business report, paying a bill, or finding out about the next PTA meeting. Not only do more personal, commercial, and government transactions take place online, but the ability to use a computer is necessary for employment in nearly every vocation.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recognizes that computer literacy and access are prerequisites for economic opportunity in the information age. Therefore in September of 1995, HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing launched Neighborhood Networks, a community-based initiative that establishes computerized learning centers in insured and assisted housing.

A Bottom-Up Approach to Community Development

Neighborhood Networks takes a bottom-up, individualized approach to community development. All insured and assisted multifamily developments—other than nursing homes—are eligible to participate. Property owners and housing residents are encouraged to form partnerships with members of their community to develop and sustain a center that best suits their own needs. The types of programs and services offered at a Neighborhood Networks Center could include the following:

- typing, word processing, and computer training
- general education and job training
- access to job data banks
- access to information on health and community resources
- access to potential collaborators and clients in the development of micro enterprises
- social awareness and integration
- participation in online civic and government forums

Interested property owners should submit a business plan to the asset management branch of the local HUD field office in whose jurisdiction the property is located. The plan must describe the types of programs proposed, how residents will be involved in the planning, what community partnerships have been formed to support the center, and how the center will be funded.

Local Support Vital to Success

Neighborhood Networks is not a grant program, so local support is vital. To ensure the success of the center, local businesses, government, educational institutions, private foundations, and other community organizations are needed to donate computers and software and provide capital funding.

In addition to community resources, property owners may use funds from their residual receipts accounts and reserve for replacement accounts to the extent that these funds are not required to meet the anticipated needs of the property. They may also borrow funds from financial institutions as long as the loan is not secured by the property. In some circumstances, HUD may fund part or all of the costs from rent increases. Resources from related grants within HUD (Public and Indian Housing, Crime Prevention and Security Division) and outside of HUD (Departments of Education, Commerce, and Justice and nonprofits like Youthlink) also may be available. Funds for developing a Neighborhood Networks Center may be used for the following:

- computer hardware and software
- wiring and servers
- minor retrofit and renovation center
- staffing/trainers
- security
- maintenance and insurance

An Initiative Whose Time Has Come

Many factors have converged to make Neighborhood Networks a timely initiative. Currently, HUD insures and/or assists about 19,000 privately owned multifamily developments that provide homes for more than two and one-half million households. But the present system of federal rental assistance will likely be eliminated or significantly reduced. This change in federal policy will affect housing residents and property owners alike. For residents eligible to receive housing vouchers, changes in federal policy will create a new freedom of choice in housing location. Owners, in turn, will be challenged to create amenities in their developments to reduced federal resources and will need to increase their personal income. All of these factors make Neighborhood Networks an initiative whose time has come.

HUD Offers Technical Assistance

To date, HUD has established at least one Neighborhood Networks Center in each of its 57 field offices, with over 100 approved planned offices by next year. Local HUD resident initiative specialists and asset managers are available to help property owners and housing residents develop a business plan and identify resources. On a national level, HUD supports Neighborhood Networks by sponsoring various long-distance learning sessions and regional conferences that provide participants with the practical knowledge they need to start a center as well as an opportunity to network with potential partners. HUD also maintains a Neighborhood Networks web site, which enables community members to track the activity of Neighborhood Networks nationwide and exchange ideas with other interested parties via an online bulletin board.

Neighborhood Networks Success Stories

- Single mother and welfare resident of **Lee Ann Apartments in Dallas, Texas**, obtained full-time employment at local business that partnered with the **Wheatland Terrace Neighborhood Networks Center's Job Network Program**.
- After getting interested in computers at the **M.L. King Apartments in Detroit, Michigan**, a former high school drop out returned to school and is now enrolled in a two-year vocational program in computer repair. He aspires to be a computer technician upon graduation.
- **Florin Meadows Apartments in Sacramento** has placed 15 to 20 residents in jobs after providing weekly job listings at the apartment's Neighborhood Networks Center.
- A 16-year-old resident from **Shelter Hill Apartments in Mill Valley, California**, helped wire the Republican National Convention in San Diego after taking Internet classes at Shelter Hill's Neighborhood Networks Center.

For Further Information

Specific information on Neighborhood Networks is contained in Notice H-95-81. For further information on starting a Neighborhood Networks Center, call the asset management branch of the local HUD field office nearest you or contact:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Housing-Multifamily
P.O. Box 6424
Rockville, MD 20850-6091
phone:301-738-6784 or 301-738-6757
fax: (301) 738-6655
e-mail: neighborhood_net.@aspensys.com

October, 1996



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*Neighborhood
Networks*

1. What is Neighborhood Networks?

Neighborhood Networks is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that uses computer technology to help residents of insured and assisted housing become more self-sufficient, employable, and economically self-reliant.

2. Why this initiative?

A 1995 study put out by RAND—a nonprofit institution that helps improve public policy through research and analysis—found that significant societal barriers have limited disadvantaged Americans from accessing computers and computer networks. Without policy intervention, these barriers—based upon differences in income, education, race, residential location, and age—will likely grow as more U.S. commercial and government transactions take place online. Subsequently, fewer and fewer Americans will be able to fully participate in our nation's economic, social, civic, and government life. Neighborhood Networks was created to lower these barriers by providing residents of insured and assisted properties with network access.

The dramatic fall in computer prices in the United States enhances the feasibility of such an initiative. Lower prices for the technologies of interest translate into significant cost savings for property owners interested in establishing a Neighborhood Networks Center.

Finally, over the next five years, the system of federal rental assistance is likely to be either significantly reduced or eliminated. Neighborhood Networks is a means of enhancing the economic self-reliance of rental assistance beneficiaries before social entitlement programs cease to exist.

3. What is a Neighborhood Networks Center?

A Neighborhood Networks Center is a facility that makes computer hardware and software available to residents of a defined community, with a primary focus on residents of insured and assisted housing. Through staff assistance and training, residents can take full advantage of a variety of employment and educational opportunities.

4. What are the benefits associated with Neighborhood Networks?

Residents can enjoy opportunities to educate themselves and their children; learn computer and job skills; telecommute; develop microenterprises; access information on employment, health, and community resources; and participate in online civic and government forums. The primary purpose of these activities is to increase resident self-sufficiency, employability, and economic self-reliance. Indirectly, such community networks strengthen neighborhoods and enhance real estate investment.

5. What properties are eligible?

All of HUD's insured and assisted projects are eligible. These are Section 8 (project-based), 236, 221(d), 202, 202/8, 811, and housing sponsored by states or local housing finance agencies that also have Section 8 assistance. The Office of Housing encourages developments to create working relationships and partnerships with other assisted housing and public housing facilities nearby. This will spread the costs and provide a potentially large core group of people who can benefit from programs offered at the center.

6. What equipment and staffing can be paid for under a Neighborhood Networks plan?

- **Computer hardware.** Costs include those necessary to set up a Neighborhood Networks Center at the property. Owners should make hardware selections that maximize compatibility with local school systems and minimize the likelihood of obsolescence within a 18-24 month period. Adequate training of staff in the use of the equipment is also important.
- **Computer software.** Software includes multimedia educational software; educational and job training software; software necessary to provide resources for telecommuting; and at least one community Internet account that allows for access to the World Wide Web, Gopher, FTP, and Telnet.
- **Maintenance and insurance.** Costs include installing and maintaining hardware and software, training in the use of hardware and software, and insurance for space and equipment.
- **Online service coordinator.** Costs for implementing the Neighborhood Networks Center and coordinating with social services.
- **Security.** Costs include space and minor refitting, locks, and oversight.
- **Resident development and training.** Costs for courses on disk, online, or presented live.
- **Distance learning equipment.** Costs include videocasting and the purchase/lease/rental of distance learning equipment.

7. From what sources can a property owner expect to pay for equipment and staffing?

Although HUD is encouraging the creation of Neighborhood Network Centers in its insured housing stock, it does not have funds sufficient to capitalize them en toto. Most owners will need to rely on dollars and resources from the community. The greater the third-party support at the initiation of the program, the more likely it will be that the center will have long-term viability. Owners of insured and assisted properties can use one or more of the following resources.

- **Grants and other third party resources.** Owners are encouraged to seek out cash grants; in-kind support; or donations from state and local government, educational institutions, private foundations and corporations. Owners should also seek to develop strategic partnerships with other community organizations who may have funds or equipment that would complement the owners' additional funds or available space.
- **Funds borrowed from a financial institution.** Owners may get loans to pay for hardware, software, and setup costs. The loan, however, cannot be secured by the property. Also, a rent increase cannot be requested to support the loan, and the loan should not jeopardize other services that the property has agreed to provide.

8. What additional resources are available to owners?

- **Residual receipts accounts.** Owners may be able to use such funds to the extent that HUD determines that these funds are not required to maintain the habitability of units or to meet other building needs.
- **Owner's equity.** Owners of limited distribution properties can increase the amount of their "initial equity investment" to the extent that they invest their own nonrepayable funds in the center. A rent increase, however, will not be approved to provide for additional yield.
- **Funds borrowed from reserve for replacement accounts.** Owners may be able to use such funds to the extent that HUD determines that these funds are not required to meet the anticipated repair/replacement needs of the property. Owners will need to submit a scheduled repayment plan illustrating how the account will be replenished.
- **Funds from rent increases under the budgeted rent increase process.** Owners may request an increase to cover the costs of establishing a Neighborhood Networks Center. These increases will be approved at HUD's discretion, subject to the availability of funds.
- **Funds from rent increases under a special rent adjustment.** Under certain situations set out in Notice H-95-81, the maximum monthly rent for units under a Section 8 contract may be increased to meet costs of a Neighborhood Networks Center.

9. What specific proposal information must be submitted by interested owners?

Interested owners must submit a Neighborhood Networks plan to the asset management branch of the HUD local field office in whose jurisdiction the property is located. Each plan must address the following questions:

- What are the specific, measurable objectives for participant residents?
- What are the action steps necessary to implement these objectives?
- What types of programs are proposed? How will residents be involved in the planning?
- What partnerships have been built that will enhance the center?
- Who will direct the program? What staffing is proposed? Who will be responsible for the equipment? What will be the center's operating hours?
- What is the proposed space/security/monitoring plan? Does retrofitting meet accessibility requirements?
- What is the first year's budget, and how will it be funded initially? What outreach will there be to women/minority-owned firms if hardware costs are over \$15,000?
- Specify the sources of funds to be used.
- How will operations be continued after start-up? How will the project become self-sustaining after the second year?
- How will resident participation be tracked and evaluated?



Neighborhood Networks

100
Neighborhood Networks Centers
in Operation
2/7/97

KBL Apartments, Anchorage, AK
Valley Garden I and II, Huntsville, AL
Ozark Homes, Ozark, AL
Creekwood Village, Tuscaloosa, AL
Rio Puerco Apartments, Ft. Defiance, AZ
Coronado Courts and Casas de Esperanza,
Douglas, AZ
Broadway House Apartments, Phoenix, AZ
Arizona Retirement Home II, Scottsdale, AZ
Charter Oaks Apartments, Napa, CA
Florin Gardens II, Sacramento, CA
Florin Meadows I, Sacramento, CA
Florin Meadows II, Sacramento, CA
Green Briar Apartments, Sacramento, CA
Whispering Pines, Sacramento, CA
Northridge Coop, San Francisco, CA
Shelter Hill Apartments, Mill Valley, CA
Crescent Park Apartments, Richmond, CA
One/Chane, Hartford, CT
Hilltop Village, Jacksonville, FL
Hollybrook Homes, Jacksonville, FL
Imperial Estates, Jacksonville, FL
Holiday Lake Apartments, Pompano Beach, FL
Homes of Oakridge, Des Moines, IA
Germano Millgate Apartments, Chicago, IL
Northwest Towers, Chicago, IL
Northeastwood Shores, Chicago, IL
The Meadows Apartments, Indianapolis, IN
Central Park Tower, Kansas City, KS
Meadowlark Housing, Newton, KS
Windridge Apartments, Wichita, KS
Lakeland Wesley Village, Benton, KY
V Carpenter Apartments, Louisville, KY
Jackson House, Paducah, KY

Forest Towers East, New Orleans, LA
Versaille Arms I, New Orleans, LA
Versaille Arms II, New Orleans, LA
Villa D'Ames, Marrero, LA
Madison Park Village, Boston, MA
Granite Place, Quincy, MA
Plumley Village East, Worcester, MA
Grant Manor, Boston, MA
Castle Square Apartments, Boston, MA
Beaver Terrace and Pelham II Apartments,
Framingham, MA
Georgetowne I, Boston, MA
Georgetowne II, Boston, MA
Fresh Pond Apartments, Cambridge, MA
Camfield Gardens, Boston, MA
Roxse Homes, Boston, MA
Cushing Residence, Hanover, MA
Jack Satter House, Revere, MA
Beth Shalom, Worcester, MA
Woodside Village, Vineyard Haven, MA
Smith House, Roxbury, MA
Madison Park III, Roxbury, MA
Genesis, Ulin, and Leventhal Houses,
Brighton, MA
Bay Ridge Gardens, Annapolis, MD
St. Joachim, Baltimore County, MD
Martin L. King Apartments, Detroit, MI
Alamo Hills Apartments, Kalamazoo, MI
Interfaith Homes, Kalamazoo, MI
Lancaster Village Coop, Pontiac, MI
Cecil Newman, Minneapolis, MN
Boulevard Village, Kansas City, MO
Lincoln Gardens, Kansas City, MO
Parker Square Apartments, Kansas City, MO

O'Fallon Place, St. Louis, MO
College Hill Apartments, St. Louis, MO
Westview Valley, Greensboro, NC
First Farmington Apartments, High Point, NC
Newgate Gardens, High Point, NC
La Grave Place, Grand Forks, ND
St. James Manor, Omaha, NE
Heritage Square, Lincoln, NE
Monarch Villa, Papillion, NE
Centennial Park Arms I and II, Las Vegas, NV
Ernest Anderson Manor, Jamestown, NY
Elva McZeal, Brooklyn, NY
Agler Green Townhouses, Columbus, OH
Brightwaters Apartments, Tulsa, OK
Kirkland Union Manor III, Portland, OR
First Erie Better Homes, Erie, PA
Montgomery Townhouses, Philadelphia, PA
Bayside Gardens, Charleston, SC
Shamrock Apartments, Honea Path, SC
CWA Plaza Apartments I, Nashville, TN
CWA Plaza II and James A. Cayce Apartments,
Nashville, TN
Wheatland Terrace, Dallas, TX
Cleme Manor, Houston, TX
Settegast Heights, Houston, TX
Villa Americana, Houston, TX
South Post Oak, Houston, TX
Rigsby Apartments, San Antonio, TX
Oak Creek Village, Austin, TX
Friendship Village, Virginia Beach, VA
Shalom Apartments, Lynchburg, VA
Tri-Cities Low Cost, Pasco, WA
Quail Hollow, Silverdale, WA
Martin Luther King Jr. Apartments, Seattle, WA
Northport Apartments, Madison, WI
Packer Apartments, Madison, WI

Program turns neighbors on to technology

BY KIA MORGAN ALLEN
STAFF WRITER

Jemika Scutchings wants to brush up on her typing skills. She doesn't want a secretary when she becomes a doctor, she said. She would prefer to do the work herself. So the 11-year-old didn't hesitate to get to the new computer lab when she learned it was right in her Friendship Village housing community.

Her can-do attitude and will to learn is consistent with the goal of what sponsors hope to get across to other residents of a community once afflicted by drugs and crime.

Residents of Friendship Village will receive free job and computer skills training and education through Virginia's first active "Neighborhood Networks" site.

Neighborhood Networks is an umbrella concept under which a variety of public and private organizations and residents are connected by computer hardware and software for job-related educational and community purposes.

"The computer training will act as a springboard to help get people off welfare by preparing them for the job market where computers are increasingly playing a major role," said Charles Farnakner, director of Multi-family Housing for the Virginia state HUD office in Richmond.

This Virginia Beach community will serve as the pilot test site and model for other programs across the nation.

The Virginia State Housing and Urban Development office, WHRO, Old Dominion University, and NASA Langley Research Center, are jointly supporting the Application of Affordable Technology to Link America's Schools, a program which brings computers programs to schools, as part of the Neighbor-



D. KEVIN ELLIOTT/The Virginian-Pilot

Nicole Hills, 6, left, and Jemika Scutchings, 11, play a game Friday at Friendship Village in Virginia Beach. A new program offers residents computer job training and an introduction to new technology.

hood Networks project within the state.

Inside a two-bedroom apartment, the Neighborhood Networks site is the first used and tested by residents. If it does well, this site will be used as a model for future programs in Virginia. It will also serve as the Internet and job skills training ground to residents.

An FBI special agent and computer specialist from the FBI's Norfolk office, will be on hand to provide support for the initial computer training sessions. Organizers asked for the FBI's assistance because the Norfolk organization heads other community programs, such as DARE, an anti-drug campaign for children.

"Usually when we come to places like this, we arrest people," said FBI special agent, Richard "Butch" Holtz. "This was a chance to show kids that we don't always carry a gun and badge and arrest people. We can also help with teaching

abilities."

Follow-up training on Internet use and job skills for the residents will be made available by teacher interns from Old Dominion University's School of Education.

As residents crowded into the computer site for the first time Friday, it was apparent that there would be no arm-twisting to get them to participate in the program.

Barbara Sexton, a three-year community resident, was one of the first to try out the new computers. She was enthusiastic as she stroked the keys of the \$2,000, IBM-compatible computer, but she knew it was not her own. Still, it was enough to encourage her to want to go to school.

"I think I want to go to school and take up computing now. I'm ready."

Many others huddled around the six computers. Adults probed for information, while kids surfed for games and fun activities in the

computer databank.

Through a federally assisted low-income housing drug elimination grant, \$4,000 was allotted for the Neighborhood Networks project. Other amenities like posters with inspirational messages were donated by groups like Birdneck Elementary School, which will work closely with the project and the 100 housing community kids who attend the school.

One long-time community resident, Jackie Dunbar, will go to Boston, Mass., for a three-day workshop to learn more about computers and the Neighborhood Networks program. When she returns, she will serve as the "expert," helping other residents get acquainted with the new technology.

"I told the head of my community council that if I can ever do anything, I would help her," the 16-year housing resident said. "So she called me on that. To break it all down, I was drafted."

Being drafted and being a model to others is something Dunbar doesn't mind doing. The children's church coordinator of New Jerusalem Church of God works closely with kids and is willing to share her new experiences.

"The biggest thing I'm excited about is learning the computer myself," she said.

Sponsors of the program are optimistic that in the coming months other housing communities will benefit from this program's success. Norfolk's Oakmont Apartments community may be in line as the next test site, officials said.

"We hope this program will hit the ground running," said Barbara Barnes, regional director of property owner VMH Inc. "And it should operate within the next 30 days."

M H
 The Virginian-Pilot 7/27/96

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Holland
uses
desktop
publishing
software
to create
reeting
cards for
holidays and
family.



The skill seekers

In a new
computer room
in an eastern
New Orleans
senior housing
complex, there's
a whole lot of
learning going on

By SIONA CARPENTER / Staff writer

COMPUTERS

The arrival of an electronic message at a computer at the Forest Towers East apartments caused quite a stir one recent morning.

"It's for Rosalie," one of the residents said.

"Rosalie has mail!"

"Oh, Rosalie, come and see."

Rosalie Routt, 75, approached the computer and read her first piece of e-mail, a note from her future son-in-law telling her he is glad she is learning to use a computer.

"Oh, this is so exciting," Routt said, then sat down to send him a reply.

Electronic mail and other computer wonders have many people excited at Forest Towers East, an apartment complex on Lake Forest Boulevard for the elderly and people with disabilities.

The center's hobby room has been transformed into a computer learning center, where residents are learning word processing, desktop publishing and computer repair; studying for high school diplomas; and exploring the Internet for the first time.

The month-old center is part of a national program called Neighborhood Networks. Created last year by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the program aims to

bridge what one HUD official calls the "digital divide" between technology haves and have-nots.

The program's mission is to help low-income families and the elderly living in HUD-insured and -assisted properties become employable and economically self-reliant by providing them access to onsite computers and training.

The Forest Towers East center is doing that and much more, residents said.

"This gives a little more life to so many of us," said Noelle Blohm, 77.

"And the things you can do! We've heard about these things, but unless you have a computer, you're a little bewildered."

See COMPUTERS, E-7

The Times-Picayune
12/5/96

Computers: There's a whole lot of learning going on

E-1

ity of the 200 residents d up for classes at the new r. There are four classes per including two afternoon uter classes.

They were tentative at first, d they would press the wrong on but still eager to learn," Debbie Howard, the center's tor.

They're very enthusiastic at it. They want to learn and / want to share what they've ned with their children and ndchildren."

Among the students is Ruth shington, 88, who is learning ic computing and studying for ED. Computer software at the iter includes a GED tutorial. A ired beautician, Washington d to quit school to work, but s always longed for a high ool diploma.

Another student, Earline Hol- id, 77, a retired bookkeeper, is ing a desktop publishing program to make greeting cards for r family and friends.

Connie Wilson, who once spent uch of her time in her apart- ent, is one of the center's most thusiastic students. She is udying for a GED, learning omputer repair and basic com- uting.

Computer learning centers ave been set up at more than 70 ousing developments around the ountry, including two others in he New Orleans area — at Villa d'Armes in Marrero and Versailles Arms in eastern New Orleans, both HUD-subsidized apartment omplexes for families. More than 600 Neighborhood Networks centers are in the planning stages nationwide.

Computer learning centers have been set up at more than 70 housing developments around the country, including two others in the New Orleans area — at Villa d'Armes in Marrero and Versailles Arms in eastern New Orleans

really about people, not about computers," said Jim Alexander, HUD's housing program adviser in the multi-family housing division and a Neighborhood Networks coordinator.

"We like the metaphor of the name, Neighborhood Networks, because we know that healthy neighborhoods are ones where people are connected through schools, church groups, clubs and organizations like Boy Scouts. And we know that computers are most powerful when they are connected together to form networks."

A key element of the program is a public-private partnership among HUD, community groups and private agencies. Partners in the Forest Towers East center are Volunteers of America, which manages the 200-unit complex, and the New Orleans Center for Successful Living, a private, non-profit community development corporation based in eastern New Orleans

The Center for Successful Living, which operates job training and business development programs in the community, oversees the computer center and provides its staff.

Funding for the computer hardware, software and staff comes from a combination of sources. The budget includes \$40,000 from the complex's savings account, withdrawn with HUD's approval. That money paid for the 10 Gateway 2,000 computers, three Hewlett-Packard printers, an assortment of software, supplies and furniture. A large chunk of the center's budget, \$81,200, came from a rent subsidies account; money created by a rent increase that raised HUD's share of the rent but didn't change the residents' share. Nearly \$21,000 will come from other sources, including fund-raising and corporate sponsorships.

The big task for HUD and the partners in the first sites is to so-

lidify the employment network, Alexander said.

"We need to invite people who have businesses nearby to come to the sites and see what they have to offer, to see future employees and to bring their employees in for training. The centers are primarily for residents but not exclusively."

It is also hoped that business will enter into contracts with the centers for data processing and desktop publishing jobs to be done by residents, Alexander said.

While job training is the main focus of centers at family complexes, the biggest goal of centers serving elderly residents is "re-kindling the human spirit," Alexander said.

"We want them to see that they have years of experience locked in their brains and it's never too late to learn.

"To improve the health of our elders, we not only need to provide them with high quality medical care, we have to show them they are still needed members of our society. There is a whole world they can explore from the safety and comfort of this room. You can feel the energy in the room."

Route puts it simply. "This place shows that you're never too old to learn."

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Office of Housing—Multifamily



Neighborhood Networks NEWS

Fall 1996

Your Online Access to Opportunity

Neighborhood Networks Receives Vice President's Hammer Award

On July 16, 1996, a representative from Vice President Al Gore's office presented the National Performance Review (NPR) Hammer Award to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for creating the Neighborhood Networks initiative.

The Hammer Award recognizes teams of federal, state, and municipal employees who are working with citizens to build a better government. Over 250 Hammer Awards have been presented to teams exemplifying the NPR principles of putting customers

first, cutting red tape, empowering employees, and getting back to basics. The team receives a wall plaque Hammer Award, and individual team members receive a Hammer lapel pin and a special certificate signed by the Vice President.

HUD's Office of Multifamily Housing launched Neighborhood Networks in September 1995. This community-based initiative uses computerized learning and online access as tools to help residents of assisted and insured housing become

self-sufficient. By forming partnerships, HUD staff, property owners, residents, and community stakeholders have established 43 Neighborhood Networks Centers throughout the United States; 491 are currently underway. Although the initiative is still in its infancy, many of these centers are beginning to produce results. Residents involved in Neighborhood Networks Centers are educating themselves and entering the job market in word processing, data management, child care, and property management positions.

Inside

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Federal Partnerships page 6



Doug Farbrother, Senior Manager, National Performance Review, presents Diana Gowlwin Shavey, National Field Coordinator, Neighborhood Networks, with Hammer Award.

Program turns neighbors on to technology

BY KIA MORGAN ALLEN
STAFF WRITER

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abilities."

Follow-up training on Internet use and job skills for the residents will be made available by teacher interns from Old Dominion University's School of Education.

As residents crowded into the computer site for the first time Friday, it was apparent that there would be no arm-twisting to get them to participate in the program.

Barbara Sexton, a three-year community resident, was one of the first to try out the new computers. She was enthusiastic as she stroked the keys of the \$2,000, IBM-compatible computer, but she knew it was not her own. Still, it was enough to encourage her to want to go to school.

"I think I want to go to school and take up computing now. I'm ready."

Many others huddled around the six computers. Adults probed for information, while kids surfed for games and fun activities in the

computer databank.

Through a federally assisted low-income housing drug elimination grant, \$4,000 was allotted for the Neighborhood Networks project. Other amenities like posters with inspirational messages were donated by groups like Birdneck Elementary School, which will work closely with the project and the 100 housing community kids who attend the school.

One long-time community resident, Jackie Dunbar, will go to Boston, Mass., for a three-day workshop to learn more about computers and the Neighborhood Networks program. When she returns, she will serve as the "expert," helping other residents get acquainted with the new technology.

"I told the head of my community council that if I can ever do anything, I would help her," the 18-year housing resident said. "So she called me on that. To break it all down, I was drafted."

Being drafted and being a model to others is something Dunbar doesn't mind doing. The children's church coordinator of New Jerusalem Church of God works closely with kids and is willing to share her new experiences.

"The biggest thing I'm excited about is learning the computer myself," she said.

Sponsors of the program are optimistic that in the coming months other housing communities will benefit from this program's success. Norfolk's Oakmont Apartments community may be in line as the next test site, officials said.

"We hope this program will hit the ground running," said Barbara Barnes, regional director of property owner VMH Inc. "And it should operate within the next 30 days."

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