



Creating a community that works

North Lawndale Employment Network

NLEN News

Volume 3, Issue 2

Spring 2003

Remember to attend our Quarterly Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 9:30 am, at S.C.I.!

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NLEN participates in dialogue between Congressman Davis and Chicago Grantmakers

On April 15, 2003, the Donors Forum of Chicago sponsored an event that brought together Congressman Danny K. Davis and local foundations and grant-makers for a dialogue about the intersection of public and private funding for the Congressman's four priority areas: transition opportunities for ex-offenders, low income housing, youth, and education. The Donors Forum selected NLEN's Ex-offender Employment Service Network (EESN) program to participate in a site visit that was included in the meeting to present an example of an effective community program supported by public and private funding.

After a welcome by the President of the Donors Forum of Chicago, Valerie Lies, Congressman Davis gave opening remarks. He spoke of his long-time connection and involvement with the community

of North Lawndale, recalling his own experience as a former resident. He stated that "finding employment for people is a problem...finding affordable housing is a problem," and that "education is a big need." Declaring that "community organizing comes at the base" of these efforts, he closed by stressing the importance of "helping people learn how to solve their own problems, how to meet their own needs, organize their own resources...and empower themselves."

NLEN Executive Director, Brenda Palms-Barber, put a lighthearted spin on the site visit for the audience as she interviewed NLEN staff members, NLEN partners, and EESN clients in a conversational talk-show style. Joseph Thomas of

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First NLEN Class Graduates from Training Program at Advocate Trinity

NLEN would like to congratulate and recognize the achievement of **Horace Goodrich, Anthony Lakes, Dale Pilows, and Vincent Thomas!** On February 20, 2003, Advocate Trinity Hospital held a graduation ceremony honoring NLEN's first class to complete its hard-skills training program with the Support Services Department.

Established through a partnership between NLEN and Trinity, the seven-week program consists of both work readiness soft-skills training and on-the-job hard-skills training. NLEN provides workforce readiness training for the first four weeks, and Trinity provides onsite maintenance skills training for the remaining three weeks of the program.

All four of the participants who en-

tered the training program graduated. One graduate, Vincent Thomas, described what the ceremony meant to him. "It was like a high school graduation. It was something really special for them to accept me and recognize my achievement and make my training a success. I will take it to my grave. There was joy and love and happiness and peace in the room, nothing fake about it."

Family members of participants, as well as community leaders, attended the ceremony. Congressional District Director Dan Cantrell, Alderman Shirley Coleman, and a representative from Alderman Todd Stroger's office also attended the ceremony, showing their support of NLEN and Trinity's partnership and the good work being done in the community. ♦

EESN Alumni Spotlight: Vincent Thomas

Those who meet Vincent Thomas can't help but noticing his positive attitude and outgoing, jovial nature. Maybe that is because as a proud alumni of the NLEN's Ex-Offender Employment Service Network, Vincent Thomas is committed to turning his life around. After completing the EESN job readiness training program, Vincent went on to graduate from the three-week maintenance skills training program at Trinity Hospital, established in partnership with NLEN. Now he is a full-time employee in the Support Services Department of Trinity Hospital and is working towards rebuilding stability in his life.

After being released from prison, Vincent sought drug treatment and went to a recovering halfway house before hearing about NLEN through a friend. Vincent describes that when he arrived at EESN, he "wasn't ready for the change, but they told me to give myself a chance and make the program a part of me. If they [NLEN staff who are also ex-offenders] can do it, I can do it. Everything they were teaching me, I estab-

"I am a citizen of a new life. I am a taxpayer."

lished in my mind to use in everyday life."

Vincent explained what he valued in the EESN program: "I got stability out of the program and learned to humble myself, put my best foot forward, and strive for the best." During the training program at Trinity Hospital, Vincent learned floor technician and housekeeping skills and trained in using machinery. He said, "The training program gave me a chance to show [Trinity] that I could learn, do things correctly, follow rules and regulations, and do work decent and orderly."

He went on to declare that he was "standing out for all ex-offenders as an example of how life can really be, getting from where I was to where I am now. Everyone at the hospital respects me because of how I do my work. As long as I'm there, I can advance and get more training. I am working, getting full benefits — thanks to NLEN and Trinity. I am a citizen of a new life, a taxpayer."

When asked what his future plans and goals were, Vincent shared his dream of opening a halfway house and helping ex-offenders and drug addicts: "To give back what was so freely given to me — life." ♦

Building Beyond Update

Congratulations! NLEN is proud to announce another group of *Building Beyond!* graduates. *Building Beyond!* is NLEN's out-of-school youth job-training program offered in partnership with the Neighborhood Technology Resource Center (NTRC) and Family Focus Lawndale.

On March 25, 2003, **Kyle Lee, Christopher Letcher, Anita Hemp, Steven Rosenthal, and Maurice Thomas** completed the C-Tech Telecommunications Technician Training program, for a graduation rate of 100 percent. These five individuals first came to NLEN in October and have shown great dedication and commitment to finishing the training. In addition to the Telecommunications training, all five students completed the Beginning to Work it Out curriculum and job readiness components of the program.

The graduation ceremony featured a guest speaker, Christine Coleman, Public Relations Representative from Lincoln Technical Institute. Ms. Coleman spoke to our youth about additional educational opportunities that are available to them.

Interested? If you know of any youth who may be interested in the program, or if you are interested in partnering with NLEN on this initiative, please contact Alona Lerman, Program Manager, at (773) 542-2000 x 3635. ♦

AmeriCorps News Corner

On March 10, 2003, the Corporation for National and Community Service announced the lift of the nationwide freeze that had prevented the AmeriCorps program from replacing or converting slots to bring on new members. NLEN's AmeriCorps is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Workforce Advantage project. ♦

Donors Forum Site Visit at NLEN cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

the Institute for Clinical Social Work discussed their partnership with NLEN to provide comprehensive EESN support services.

Three representatives from Trinity Hospital — John Schwartz, Chief Executive, Gretchen Van Natta, Director of Human Resources, and Hedy Gist-Haynes, Volunteer Coordinator — spoke about the success of Trinity Hospital's new maintenance training program established in partnership with the Network.

EESN Clients, Vincent Thomas and Brian Carr, recounted their positive experiences with the EESN program and described their current employment situations. Vincent Thomas graduated from Trinity's maintenance training program and is now working as a full-time employee of the hospital. Brian Carr described his struggles to find steady employment, expressing his appreciation to NLEN for continuing their supportive services beyond the EESN program and providing him with multiple job opportunities and placements.

NLEN was honored to be a part of the important dialogue between Congressman Davis and local funders and is excited to continue its good work in North Lawndale. We thank our partners for participating in this event and making it a success! ♦

Community Announcements - Creating a Community That Works

NLEN RFP for Job Readiness Training

Experience in Interview skills, resume writing, and job searching required.

RFP Release Date: May 1, 2003

Due Date: May 30, 2003

If you are interested, contact NLEN Office Manager at 773-542-2000 ext. 3305

Case Manager Position Open

NLEN seeks an experienced case manager for the *Building Beyond!* out-of-school youth initiative.

- Prior knowledge of WIA and TRAC forms required.
- Position starts July 2003.

Email a cover letter, resume, and salary history to the *Building Beyond!* Program Manager, Alona Lerman, at leral@sinai.org.

Save Up! IDA "Housing Choices Fair"

The Save Up! IDA Program will host a "Housing Choices Fair" at the Homan Square Community Center on May 10th to share with area residents what housing is available to buy on the West Side, especially in North Lawndale. Home developers, mortgage lenders, non-profit housing organizations and realtors holding properties in North Lawndale will have tables displaying properties available as well as programs and services in which residents may be interested. This fair aims to connect families interested in purchasing property on the West Side to the developers and realtors who make them available, and inform them about all of their choices — single-family homes, 2- or 3- flats, bungalows, condos, or town homes. The Save Up! Program hopes to see you there on May 10th!

When: Saturday, May 10th, 9 am-2 pm
Where: Homan Square Community Center,
3517 W. Arthington St.
Call 773-533-2350 ex.2 for more information!

EESN Transitional Guides

Order your copies of the EESN Transition Guides today! For only \$3, you can connect clients to a wide array of supportive services such as housing, food, clothing, substance abuse treatment, and employment and training. Discounts on bulk orders. To order, please call (773) 542-2000, ext. 3305 or ext. 5588.

Carole Robertson Center for Learning Adult Learning Institute

Summer GED Classes!

Registration Dates:
April 14-17, 2003
April 21-24, 2003
(BY APPOINTMENT ONLY!)

Location: 2929 W. 19th St.

CLASSES START MAY 27, 2003
For more information, call Erica Carter
(773) 521-1600, ext 174



North Lawndale Employment Network

2653 W. Ogden Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608

Phone: 773/542-2000, ext. 3305 Fax: 773/257-6644

Creating a Community That Works

Date of Application: _____

Yes! I want to become a member or renew my membership with the North Lawndale Employment Network!

I have enclosed a **\$100** check payable to the North Lawndale Employment Network for dues.

Please send me an invoice for the **\$100** membership dues.

Please complete the following information to update our records

Name _____ Title _____

Organization Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Number (_____) - _____ - _____ ext. _____

Work Fax (_____) - _____ - _____ ext. _____ Email _____

Preferred method of contact: Email Fax U.S. mail Phone (voicemail)

Name of other agency representatives. Please include their titles.

- | Name | Title |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

Which committees are you interested in participating on or learning more about?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Careers Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Ex Offender Advisory Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> North Lawndale Industrial Development Team | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AmeriCorps Volunteer Initiative | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Development Account, Save Up! Collaborative | |

If you have any questions, please call (773) 542-2000, ext. 3305

NLEN is making a big push to increase and strengthen memberships to the Network. We ask that old members renew their membership and pay dues — NLEN needs its members’ support in order to continue our good work in North Lawndale in creating a community that works. Please fill out and send in the membership application on page 4 to become a part of North Lawndale Employment Network today!

Collaborate with us..

JOIN NLEN TODAY!

Your membership dues (\$100 each year, per organization or individual) enable NLEN to continue providing much needed services and programs to the North Lawndale residents, service providers, and employers.

Membership benefits for Employers:

- Access to a work-ready supply of workers through NLEN member training providers
- Seamless invisible support systems for workers from North Lawndale
- Variety of retention-driven products and services
- Networking opportunities
- Information about and access to numerous tax incentives and subsidies
- Increased presence in the community

Membership benefits for Service Providers

- Access to comprehensive system of services for your clients through all NLEN members
- Strong collaborative funding strategies and proposals
- Links to committed good employers with good jobs
- Networking opportunities
- Shared web-based data collection and referral process
- Exchange of employment and best practices

Contact the Office Manager at (773) 542-2000 ext. 3305 for more information on NLEN Membership

EX-OFFENDER EMPLOYMENT SERVICE NETWORK (EESN)

UNITED BAPTIST CHURCH, 4220 WEST ROOSEVELT RD, 10:00 AM— 2:00 PM, 1st and 3rd FRIDAYS of every month

Anyone interested in joining the network of employment and support services offered by the EESN should attend this orientation to the program. Contact Walter Boyd at (773) 542-2000 x 5588 for details or to make a referral.

SAVE UP! IDA PROGRAM

BASIC BUDGETING CLASSES

- **April:** Every Tuesday (April 15, 22); 6-9 pm
- **May:** May 12, 14, 19, 21, from 6-9 pm
- **Location:** Neighborhood Housing Services, NHS, located at 3555 West Ogden Ave

Save Up! is a special matched savings account program that helps North Lawndale residents build assets. These Basic Budgeting classes are free and required to enter the program. For more information, contact Olethia Williams at (773) 533-2350, ext 2.

NLEN REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

- **Quarterly Membership Meetings**
2nd Wednesdays in June, September, and December, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Sinai Community Institute.
- **Board Meetings**
3rd Fridays in April, June, August, and October, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Sinai Community Institute.
- **Quarterly Ex-offender Advisory Committee Meetings**
3rd Wednesdays in June, September, December, 12:00-2:00 p.m., United Baptist Church, 4220 West Roosevelt Rd; lunch is served.
- **Health Care Committee Meetings**
3rd Wednesdays of every month (May 21, June 18, July 16), 9:30-11:30 a.m., Sinai Community Institute, 2653 West Ogden Ave.
- **North Lawndale Industrial Development Team**
Contact Tom Wetzel at (773) 542-2000 ext 4881 if you are interested in attending.

2653 West Ogden Phone: (773) 542-2000 x 3305
Chicago, IL 60608 Fax: (773) 257-6644

Creating a community that works



NORTH LAWNDALE EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

Please contact Lily Kim at (773) 542-2000 x 2565 if you would like anything included in future newsletters!

NLEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debra Wesley-Freeman, Sinai Community Institute (Chair)
Robert Wordlaw, Chicago Jobs Council (Vice Chair)
Brenda Mitchell, Advocate/Bethany Hospital (Secretary)
Donna Ducharme, The Delta Institute (Treasurer)
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Val Jordan, APL Plastics and Teaching Factory
Gail Nelson, Carole Robertson Center for Learning
Kevin McCauley, formerly IDHS
Douglas Werman, Law Office of Douglas Werman
Tiffany Hamel, World Business Chicago
*denotes ex-officio status

NLEN STAFF

Brenda Palms Barber, Executive Director
Aletra Nicholson, Associate Director
Tom Wetzal, Director of Business Relations
Anthony Burton, Director of Re-entry Program Services
Walter Boyd, EESN Program Manager
Pamela Thomas, EESN Client Services Manager
Alona Lerman, Building Beyond Program Manager
Victoria Cammon, AmeriCorps Coordinator
Mosi Mwamba, Data Collection Specialist
Philip Light, Office Manager
Lily Kim, Program Associate

New EESN Client Service Manager

The Network is very pleased to announce the recent hiring of Pamela Thomas as the Client Services Manager of Ex-offenders Employment Service Network (EESN). Her addition to the EESN team will help us in our pursuit in meeting the workforce development needs of the North Lawndale community residents and employers.

Pam has been a dedicated member of NLEN staff for the last two years, serving as NLEN AmeriCorp Volunteer before joining the staff in 2001. Prior to this appointment she served as the Case Manager for NLEN's *Building Beyond!* out-of school youth initiative. Ms. Thomas begins her duties as Client Services Manager on Friday, April 4, 2003. She will assume the position and duties previously occupied by Melanie Carldwell. Ms. Carldwell recently resigned from her duties at the Network to pursue other career opportunities. We wish her success in her new endeavors.

Please join us in congratulating Pamela Thomas on her new position within the Network and welcoming her to EESN. ♦