



Creating a community that works

North Lawndale Employment Network

NLEN News

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter 2003

Remember to attend our Quarterly Membership Meeting coming up on Wednesday, March 12, 9:30 am, at S.C.I.!

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NLEN Hires Director of Re-entry Program Services

The Network is pleased to announce that the newest member of our team, Anthony Burton, will be joining NLEN as the Director of Re-entry Program Services. We are very excited to work with someone who has long demonstrated his commitment to community through his organizing and advocacy work in economic and workforce development initiatives.

Anthony's diverse positions have ranged from Community Coordinator and Ex-offender Re-entry Project Manager for UIC's Chicago Project for Violence Prevention, to producer and facilitator of the CeaseFire Call-In Television Show, to Project Manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers. His blended experiences of community organizing and corporate experience makes him both an effective policy designer and a strong program director. The Going Home initiative will require his fresh perspective and passion as well as his expertise in developing effective strategies and policies.

We also wish to extend our sincerest appreciation and thanks to the following individuals for participating as interviewers and better informing our decision-making process: Phil Barber from TASC, Reverend Crawford from FAITH, Dennis Dougherty from St. Leonard's House, Rick Guzman from Illinois Dept. of Corrections, Noah Jenkins, Brian Banks from Loyola University Chicago, Roberta Fewes from IDOC, Ralph Grayson from IDOC, Ginger Ostro from Chicago Metropolitan 2020, Cerathel Burnett from the Carole Robertson Learning Center, and Bob Wordlaw from the Chicago Jobs Council. Our interview process involved 6 applicants and two separate interview teams, each with 8 interviewers.

It was a highly competitive process that ultimately led to identifying and hiring the best candidate for the position. Anthony will officially join the Network on March 3, 2003. We hope you will come and join us at our March 12th membership meeting to meet our new Director of

NLEN Forges New Business Partnership with Health Care Provider

NLEN has begun a new partnership for training and employment with a south side health care provider. After completing NLEN's four-week soft skills training program, clients have the opportunity to participate in a three-week hard skills training program at the south side business location to gain maintenance and custodial skills.

The Operations Manager of the Environmental Services Department will teach NLEN clients the ins and outs of the business, with a special focus on floor

maintenance. He recounts, "I ran a similar program in the past with Chicago Vocational School students. It worked out really well. I was able to teach the students and serve as their mentor."

Referred by the Office of Congressman Davis, the Director of Volunteer Services contacted NLEN last fall to propose the partnership. "It was a good opportunity

"It was a good opportunity for the facility to reach out to the community... and provide opportunities to residents who have been marginalized."

for the facility to reach out to the community in ways other than health care and provide opportunities to residents who have been

(Continued on page 3)

NLEN Staff Highlights

Victoria Cammon at 10th National Roundtable Women in Prison Conference

On June 20, 2002, NLEN's AmeriCorps Coordinator, Victoria Cammon, attended the 10th National Roundtable for Women in Prison hosted by the Women's Prison Association and Home, Inc. The conference brought former prisoner, advocates, and service providers together to share information on the factors that contribute to substance abuse and incarceration. The Family and Corrections Network interviewed Victoria and published her profile in their report of the conference. An excerpt from her interview:

"I sat in one session (here at the conference)...some kids were telling a story about their parents being incarcerated. It was just so hard for me to hold my composure together...

I didn't grow up in a safe place. There was nobody that was there to connect with me, and

(Continued on page 4)

Mosi Mwamba, NLEN Data Collection Specialist

Mosi Mwamba joined NLEN in late November last year to serve as our Data Collection Specialist. Mosi has been in the IT field for more than 8 years and has worked in the nonprofit sector for more than 6 years in organizations such as Chicago Commons Association and South Central Community Services. Combining a strong IT expertise with his commitment to community change, Mosi is a valued addition to the NLEN family.

Mosi is skilled and experienced in multiple operating system platforms, such as Unix and Microsoft 2000 server environments, SQL database administration, and Microsoft exchange server set up and administration. He

has been trained in the use of telecommunication systems, including Nortel PBX.

At NLEN Mosi is responsible for developing and implementing the organization's technology plan, as well as initiating and managing Client Track. He also functions as the primary IT Liaison with Mt. Sinai's MIS Department.

Mosi's vision for NLEN's technology is a stable and sound data and telecommunication system that fully utilizes the productivity of the NLEN staff. On his experience so far working at NLEN, he comments, "I'm encouraged by the dedication and hard work shown by Brenda and the rest of the staff."

O'Reilly Factor Features Pamela Thomas on Issue of Incarcerated Mothers

NLEN's *Building Beyond* Case Manager, Pamela Thomas, appeared on the Fox News TV show, *The O'Reilly Factor*, to discuss the question: Should formerly incarcerated women receive custody of their children upon their release from prison? Also participating in the discussion was Joanne Archibald, Director of Visible Voices, a nonprofit that advocates for formerly incarcerated women.

During the discussion, Pamela related her own experiences with incarceration and loss of custody of two out of three of her children. She explained, "My children were with my mother [while I was incarcerated]. When I went back [to prison] the last time, it was to my knowledge that my children would be with my mother until I was released, and once I was released and got it together, they

would be returned to me. But that was not the case."

Bill O'Reilly asked her if she felt that she was treated fairly by the system, to which Pamela responded, "No, I don't feel that I was treated fairly by the system. For one, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) — I was supposed to have a case manager. I had no legal counseling, I had no knowledge of what was going on. The day that my parental rights were terminated, I was given an ultimatum. It was sign this or this is going to happen."

Currently, Pamela is able to see all of her children. During the interview, Pamela and Joanne stressed the need for changes in the incarceration system, focusing on drug addiction as a medical condition that should be handled differently during incarceration.

Business Partnership cont'd.

(Continued from page 1)

marginalized," the Director commented. The pilot program begins in February and has strong potential for growth. "There is a real opportunity for this program to be duplicated with other health care providers, both within and outside our network," expresses the Director.

Three to six NLEN clients may enter the program each month. NLEN supports clients with transportation during the program, while the health care facility will provide lunches to participants.

Upon successful completion of the program, clients will receive a certificate in custodial maintenance and either be hired directly by the facility or referred to other health care providers and related businesses within the facility's network.

AmeriCorps Update Corner

- On November 13, 2002, the Corporation for National and Community Service announced a nationwide freeze, which prevents the AmeriCorps program from replacing or converting slots to bring on new members. The National Service Trust lacks funds to support additional members at this time. NLEN began the year with 13 members in our program, but due to the freeze we have already lost 2 slots for this year's program. NLEN's AmeriCorps is funded through the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Workforce Advantage project.
- NLEN's AmeriCorps held their first Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration at the Marcy Center on December 18, 2002, where over 100 youth and adults were in attendance. The celebration brought African-American families together in North Lawndale to share and understand concepts and values of African culture.
- AmeriCorps will be hosting a **Conference for Youth of Incarcerated Parents**. The theme is "It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child." The conference will be held on April 15, at the Lawndale Community Church. For registration information, please contact Pamela Thomas at 773-542-2000 ext. 6386 or Victoria Cammon at ext 6386.
- Message from AmeriCorps Coordinator, Victoria Cammon: Thanks to all of the AmeriCorps members for their hard work and commitment. A special thank you to our team Leader Avais Tillman for doing a remarkable job.

Re-engineered EESN Prepares for Going Home Initiative

The largest segment of the prison population is made up of low risk, non-violent offenders. However, the return of a smaller segment of the prison population, labeled high-risk offenders, is of immediate concern for the receiving communities, the Illinois Department of Correction's (IDOC) parole authorities, and the Chicago Police Department.

The Going Home Initiative is a partnership between IDOC, NLEN, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), United Baptist Church, and other community and faith-based organizations that will collaborate to roll out a re-entry program to effectively reduce recidivism.

The Going Home Initiative in North Lawndale is part of Illinois' response to an RFP issued by the Department of Justice (DOJ) calling for the states

to each pilot a prisoner re-entry strategy with the goal of reducing recidivism amongst high-risk offenders. The fundamental goal of the pilot program is to be innovative, effective, and replicable.

Towards the goal of creating an innovative model that can be effectively replicated in other communities, NLEN staff and subcontractors who support the EESN collaboration have been engaged in a series of planned sessions to carefully review EESN programmatic outcomes, efficiency of systems, and vision. This re-engineering process has resulted in the fine-tuning of EESN's best practices and further codifying of its rules and policies. EESN looks forward to working with the new Director of Re-entry Services and the other Going Home Collaboration members to effectively serve this population and our community.

NLEN Participates on Gov. Blagojevich's Prison Reform Committee

NLEN was asked to serve on Governor Blagojevich's Prison Reform Committee and provide input on recommendations on prison reform. Three staff members from NLEN participated on the Committee, which comprised of NLEN Executive Director, Brenda Palms-Barber; NLEN Program Manager, Alona Lerman; NLEN Client Services Coordinator, Pamela Thomas; former County State's Attorney, Dave Neal; and CEO of Positive Anti-Crime Thrust, Howard Scaffold.

IDA Collaborative Update

The IDA Collaborative has hired Olethia Williams as their new IDA Program Director to replace Anne Bracken, who is leaving the Collaborative to pursue graduate school. Currently, a total of 148 IDA accounts have been opened with some accounts steadily moving closer towards the goal of home ownership. 28 IDA accounts have been used towards a college education or an adult education.

Cammon Profile cont'd.

(Continued from page 3)

so through tutoring with kids, through mentoring, through being AmeriCorps coordinator at my job, through my performance work, through my poetry, I try to inspire individuals to be who they are regardless of where they come from. And to let them know not to be ashamed, to embrace your past, to be who you are, to never ever forget where you've come from because that is what makes you who you are as an individual."

Community Announcements - Creating a Community That Works

Center for Economic Progress and the First Accounts Program

First Accounts program is a financial literacy and economic development partnership between the Center for Economic Progress, Accounting Aid Society of Detroit, and ShoreBank. Funded through a US Treasury grant, *First Accounts* is designed to help unbanked individuals open accounts.

- Free income tax preparation and electronic filing
- No-cost/low-cost savings and checking accounts at ShoreBank
- Direct deposit of tax refunds, paychecks
- Financial management workshops on savings and checking accounts
- Monthly savings club to learn more about asset building, loans and retirement funds, correcting credit reports, and more
- One-on-one financial education counseling

Contact Sylvia Love, Director of Financial Education Programs, at 312-252-0280, ext. 103



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Gads Hill Child Care Center

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All incomes accepted. Come visit us!

Open 6 am - 6 pm.

**To enroll call Burma Weekley or
Ericka Barber-Gaddy at
(773) 521-1196**

Center for Economic Progress Offers Free Tax Services in North Lawndale

The Tax Counseling Project offers free electronic tax return preparation and tax information for a family with income under \$35,000 and individuals with income under \$15,000.

Where: **Homan Square Community Center**
3517 W. Arthington

When: January 25-April 15, 2003
Mon, Tues, & Thurs, 5:30-8 pm
Saturdays 10 am-2 pm

Bring: **All W-2s and 1099s** (if any)
Copy of 2001 Tax Return
Social Security Cards or Individual Taxpayer identification Numbers for all family members

Sommers Consulting

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Help plan, develop, implement, and support programs for workforce development initiatives

Contact: Stephanie Sommers
773-862-9512 Fax: 773-645-8622
2449 N. Monticello Ave
Chicago, IL 60647
SSomm1111@aol.com



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 6 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

- **February:** Every Tuesday (Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25); 6-9 pm
- **March:** Every Monday (Mar. 10, 17, 24, 31) 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 Anne Bracken at (773) 277-2724, ext 2.

NLEN REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

- **Quarterly Membership Meetings**
2nd Wednesdays in January, April, July, September, and December, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Sinai Community Institute.
- **Board Meetings**
3rd Fridays in February, April, June, August, 9:30-11:30 a.m. at Sinai Community Institute.
- **Quarterly Ex-offender Advisory Committee Meetings**
3rd Wednesdays in March, 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 (Feb. 19, Mar. 19, April 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 Chicago, IL 60608
Phone: (773) 542-2000 x 3305 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)
Sheila Barber, Bank One
Greg Darnieder, Steans Family Foundation
Margaret Davis, Healthcare Consortium of Illinois
Sam Flowers, H.I.C.A.
Davis Jenkins, UIC Great Cities Institute
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 Wetzel, Director of Business Relations
Anthony Burton, Director of Re-entry Program Services
Walter Boyd, EESN Program Manager
Melanie Carldwell, EESN Client Services Manager
Alona Lerman, Building Beyond Program Manager
Victoria Cammon, AmeriCorps Coordinator
Pamela Thomas, Youth Client Services Coordinator
Mosi Mwamba, Data Collection Specialist
Philip Light, Office Manager
Lily Kim, Program Associate

EESN Transitional Guides

Order your copies of the EESN Transitional 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.