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WEED & SEED

# INSITES

M A G A Z I N E

*Look Inside!*

Weed and Seed efforts to  
combat homelessness and  
promote home ownership

## Weed & Seed In-Sites

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## From the Director



The 2001 Weed and Seed National Conference is right around the corner. Now is the time to renew our commit-

ment not only to our neighborhoods, but also to each other. Whether you're a local community police officer or a Safe Haven volunteer who tutors children, we urge you to renew your commitment to the people you serve and the causes you support.

I've been proud to see, firsthand, the success of the EOWS Accreditation Series. In April 2001, EOWS awarded the first round of certificates in Atlanta, Georgia, to participants who completed the 8-day training. The positive spirit in that room indicated to me and other EOWS staff, including series planner Nancy Ware, that this training was much needed and very successful. The curriculum was a new approach for us. Site representatives who attended the 1999 National Conference in Houston, Texas, told EOWS that they

wanted more intensive training. We responded by developing a curriculum to provide core training to sites new and old. I recently received a letter from a colleague in Arizona detailing how one of his site coordinators used information from the Accreditation Series to properly train a new coordinator at another site. This is when I realized that we had reached one of our major goals: to give site representatives the tools they need to properly mentor other site partners on the Weed and Seed strategy. It is our intention that each officer, coordinator, and resident feel confident enough to fully reaffirm—with renewed energy and increased knowledge—their commitment to their local Weed and Seed strategy.

The next few months will be full of activity for sites participating in DEFY and other summer camp programs. EOWS staff will be busy as well, visiting some of these DEFY camps and working on the agenda for the National Conference program. Please continue to inform *In-Sites* magazine about your ongoing progress . . . and we'll see you in Philly!

*Stephen Rickman*  
Director, EOWS

### A Letter of Thanks

Determining a strategy and carrying it out in the complex neighborhoods in which we serve has been most challenging. The reward is knowing that it will make a difference in the lives of the people who can not help themselves. The accreditation training has been the most rewarding tool for me as a coordinator. The contents of the training have allowed me to revisit current goals and objectives and make them applicable. I thank you for the vision.

*—To EOWS from Karen Rogers, Atlanta Weed and Seed*

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# Youth Growing Up With the Young Astronaut Program

Cecelia Blalock

What is it like to live and work in space? What do Martian volcanoes reveal about the Red Planet? How do airplanes fly? These are just some of the questions that students at Weed and Seed sites across the Nation are investigating as members of the Young Astronaut Program. These young astronauts are part of an international network of students, educators, and other volunteers who are experiencing the fun and adventure of learning. More than 2 million children worldwide have performed experiments, entered contests, and attended Young Astronaut International Conferences since the White House established the Young Astronaut Council in 1984 to develop and oversee the Young Astronaut Program.

During his presidency, Ronald Reagan believed the Young Astronaut Program would encourage children to become more interested in science,

of the Young Astronaut Council and supported program efforts in various ways. For example, President George Bush hosted a Young Astronaut event at the White House in 1992 that featured a live hook-up with astronauts aboard the space shuttle.

Like other groups across the Nation, participating Weed and Seed sites use the Young Astronaut Council's curriculum, *Mission: Science*, to explore space-related topics through hands-on activities. *Mission: Science* incorporates the latest science education standards and



*The Young Astronaut Council helps children in Weed and Seed sites learn to understand their world and beyond.*

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If kids are to gain reasoning skills and ready themselves for the challenges they will face in an increasingly technology-driven, competitive world, then they must understand science and its principles. Over the years, educators have pushed to increase children's literacy in math, science, and engineering. Through a grant from EOWS, the Young Astronaut Council helps children in Weed and Seed sites learn science with their hands . . . and their heads.

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math, technology, and other related subjects. By participating in activities that involve science, children not only gain knowledge but also develop the critical thinking skills they need to achieve academic and social success. Every sitting U.S. President since 1984 has served as Honorary Chairman

reinforces classroom lessons while children solve problems, think creatively, and work with others. The curriculum's user-friendly format is designed for use by any adult volunteer. Most important of all, the curriculum is fun and interesting to children.

One activity, *Space Station Alpha: The Encounter*, offers a fictional adventure on CD-ROM that challenges students to investigate an abandoned alien spacecraft. Children uncover the results of the aliens' attempts to study the solar system, study flight technology, and learn about the U.S. space program. Students eventually discover that the aliens' models are wrong or incomplete; it becomes their responsibility to examine and complete these models using their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. If the students successfully reconstruct the models, they gain access to the spaceship's control room. The students also view videos from Space School, participate in Young Astronaut live television courses (for grades 4-6), and keep up with Young Astronaut activities and the latest in space and science developments on the Young Astronaut Web site ([www.YoungAstronauts.com](http://www.YoungAstronauts.com)).

Each year the Young Astronaut Council sponsors a national contest that draws on students' creativity and imagination. Some contest challenges include designing a space classroom, a

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# The Link Between Affordable Housing and Homelessness

Today, while many people celebrate their newfound status as homeowners, others continue to find it more and more difficult to secure or maintain affordable rental housing. The National Coalition for the Homeless states that the growing shortage of affordable housing, coupled with a simultaneous increase in poverty, is largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past two decades.

According to a 1998 HUD report, 900,000 rental units that were affordable to very low income families were lost between 1993 and 1995. This implies that very low income families are living in overcrowded conditions, paying high percentages of their incomes for dilapidated housing, or becoming homeless. A strong correlation exists between the economic boom, the depletion of the Nation's affordable housing stock, and homelessness. As the depletion of today's affordable housing stock attracts more attention on the Federal and State front, it is vital that communities take action to secure plans for their lower income, working-class residents at the local level. Although substance abuse and mental illness are commonly held as contributors to homelessness, it is important to understand that in most cases, homelessness can be attributed to other factors.

## Social and Economic Contributors

Domestic violence, sudden loss of employment, increases in rent, job-related injury . . . a good portion of society has experienced or will experience at least one or more of these situations in their lifetimes. The position a person is in at the time of such a socioeconomic setback has everything to do with his or her ability to sustain a home.

A great number of people in today's workforce live paycheck to paycheck. They do not maintain savings accounts

or have assets to fall back on if they lose their jobs or are unable to work. Studies show that 44 percent of homeless people reported that they had worked at least part time the month prior to resorting to life on the street, and 42 percent reported that what they needed most was a job.

## Homelessness and the National Minimum Wage

"Help wanted" signs are displayed in the windows of thousands of restaurants, gas stations, and hotels in this country. As a result, many people think that if a person is homeless, he or she is jobless because he or she is lazy and doesn't want to work. The reality is that it takes more than the hourly pay rate of the national minimum wage to live above the poverty line. For those individuals with limited job skills or work experience, opportunities to get jobs that pay a decent and liveable wage are few and far between. The cost of living in every State throughout the Nation demands that a person earn more than the minimum wage to afford a rental apartment.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a worker earning minimum wage would have to work the equivalent of 86 hours per week to afford the median fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit. These 86 hours are required to pay rent; they do not include moneys needed to pay for daycare, transportation, medicine, clothes, food, utilities, or other basic needs. Low income workers who find themselves in a financial crisis may apply for a housing voucher to supplement the costs associated with housing. According to recent surveys of the Nation's largest housing authorities, however, an applicant can expect to be put on a waiting list for an average of 22 months before getting into a voucher program. A family may find themselves evicted before they climb to the top of this list.

## Welfare Reform

Until August 1996, many poor families relied on the Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program for assistance. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 repealed the AFDC program, and the block grant program Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) was created. While TANF has been met with varying levels of criticism and acclaim, research conducted in 1998 by the Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless suggests that, although more families are moving from welfare to work, only a small fraction of these former welfare recipients' new jobs pay above-poverty wages.

Thousands of respected publications and online resources detail the state of homelessness, housing policies, and reasons for the disparity between today's rich and poor. At the local level, Weed and Seed sites use common sense approaches to improve the quality of life for all residents, including homeless people. Sites that incorporate job training programs into their Weed and Seed strategy have found that their residents are able to locate higher paying, full-time jobs. Other Weed and Seed sites have pooled resources from within the community that help homeless people get back on their feet. Finally, corporate/community partnerships with Weed and Seed sites have provided residents with the tools they need to move their families from a rental unit to a home of their own. Learning to work carefully and sensitively with this diverse population is vital to the success of any community response initiative. This issue of *In-Sites* takes a look at a few effective Weed and Seed efforts that may serve as models for other sites to follow. Readers are encouraged to reference the resource page and contact site coordinators for more information. 🏠

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# The Weed and Seed Online Community Center: [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/commcent.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/commcent.htm)

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The Weed and Seed Online Community Center was created by EOWS to provide a forum for sites to exchange strategies. A site coordinator recently accessed the Web site and submitted a great question about youth involvement on steering committees. Here, *In-Sites* presents the e-mail exchange that took place to encourage other sites to take advantage of the Online Community Center.

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## Steering Committees and Youth Involvement

"I'm trying to get information together about youth advisory boards or youth participation on a steering committee. We want to see models of what other sites are doing so we can evaluate and develop our own model."

*Marcia Roberts, Site Coordinator,  
Tucson Weed and Seed*

"At the Freeport, Illinois, Weed and Seed, we invited youth from the

Youth in Community Policing Project to join the Weed and Seed Steering Committee. Weed and Seed youth participating in the community policing project are selected from the Kids and Police Serving (KAPS) program, which is part of the Coalition for a Safe Community funded through our Title V grant (Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

KAPS youth work with community police officers to enhance youth and

police communication and dispel the myths the groups have about each other. The 30 active KAPS members range in age (from 6th to 12th grade). The KAPS group is totally run by the youth, while the adults act as program mentors. At this time, two community police officers, one school resource officer, the coordinator for the Coalition for a Safe Community, the coordinator for Weed and Seed, and two parents serve as adult mentors for KAPS. The youth on the Weed and Seed Steering Committee are ages 15 to 19. They actively participate at steering committee meetings by reporting on the projects they are working on and the community services they are involved with. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 815-235-4240, extension 27, or Lana Varner (Freeport Weed and Seed Coordinator) at 815-235-4240, extension 24."

*Pam Werntz, Freeport Weed and Seed*

## Fair Housing Act Commemoration

On April 11, 2001, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft met with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Mel Martinez to commemorate the 33d anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Ashcroft and Martinez signed the following pledge at the celebration: "We pledge to support the Fair Housing Act of 1968 as amended in 1988 and aggressively fight to end housing discrimination because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap."

Ashcroft identified three actions that the U.S. Department of Justice can take to eliminate illegal barriers to housing:

- Fight redlining and predatory lending.

- Promote accessible housing design, making sure that the building industry abides by requirements for handicapped accessibility.
- Continue to test programs that enforce fair housing.

Federal law prohibits housing discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, or disability. If you have been trying to buy or rent a home or apartment and you believe your rights have been violated, you can file a fair housing complaint by calling HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at 1-800-669-9777.

Visit [www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov) to access the U.S. Department of Justice's current press releases and publications.

# One Block at a Time

Nancy Kronen

When Syracuse's northside neighborhood was officially designated a Weed and Seed site in 1996, it was an area in significant social and economic distress. The neighborhood that had traditionally been a neighborhood of choice had become a community plagued by crime, deteriorating housing, and problem renters. Nearly 80 percent of the residents were renters. The majority of problem renters lived in large apartment buildings on James Street. The buildings mostly contained rental efficiency units, and the police often were called because of drug dealing, drug use, prostitution, burglaries, and vandalism in the area. The activities in and around the buildings were quickly bringing down the quality of life for law-abiding residents and businesses and their clients. To stop further deterioration of the area, the Syracuse Weed and Seed community devised a plan that would give the neighborhood back to its law-abiding residents.

## Surveying the Community

The increase in crime that began in the late 1980s and escalated further in the early 1990s had caused businesses to flee the area. The James Street corridor, once the premier business district in Syracuse, was only 30 percent occupied in 1995; 290,000 square feet of once-prime commercial space stood vacant. It was clear that a comprehensive strategy was necessary to significantly change this area, and the Weed and Seed strategy fit the bill.

Residents, business people, law enforcement, human services agencies, and other government resources came together to rebuild this critical area of Syracuse. Neighborhood surveys revealed that a major source of concern for residents of James Street was crime in the large apartment buildings, along with street-level drug dealing and prostitution.

## Weeding Out the Problem

The multiagency Weed and Seed Task Force worked collaboratively

to alleviate crime in the targeted apartment buildings and throughout the neighborhood. As many as 75 police officers were enlisted at one time to conduct large strikes by sweeping through the area. Drug dealers were quickly removed, and it was made clear that the neighborhood would not tolerate crime.

While the police were organizing to clean up the neighborhood streets, the U.S. Attorney's Office provided prosecutorial support by targeting not only the drug dealers in the neighborhood, but also the owners of problematic buildings. In one instance, the owner of one of the area's most problematic buildings was in fear of having his property seized by Federal authorities. The Weed and Seed Task Force recommended that the owner secure the

community development—that many programs that helped low to moderate income people buy homes were available. Requirements of the Community Reinvestment Act called for public and private government funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant funding and loan programs at local banks. It became clear that the goal of putting community residents in homes of their own was going to be a great challenge.

## Improving Poor Housing Conditions

Because housing conditions in the James Street corridor were so dilapidated, it became apparent that the area would not attract many buyers. Efforts immediately focused on

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Creative approaches to retaining residents in the target area and the solid commitment from both the corporate and non-profit community help Syracuse Weed and Seed weave a model neighborhood restoration initiative into their strategy.

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responsible management services of a local company that had recently purchased a nearby problem building. Pressure from the authorities to shape up was enough for the landlords to bring in new property managers: individuals willing to rent out units responsibly by screening tenants.

## Developing Creative Seeding and Programming

Once problem activity in and around the large buildings was under control, Syracuse Weed and Seed began a multifaceted neighborhood restoration strategy to increase home ownership and improve the quality of both rental housing and owner-occupied residences. It was clear to program planners—some of whom were bankers or worked in

educating every resident—the renter and homeowner alike—and landlords in the community. Outreach efforts encouraged residents to consider first-time homebuyer programs, offered funding and repair assistance to owners of homes that were in obvious need of repair, and informed landlords about their rights and New York tenant laws while persuading them to improve the condition of their units and encourage better behavior from their tenants.

## Promoting Home Ownership

Home ownership opportunity workshops were conducted at area businesses and community events, including parent/teacher *(continued on next page)*



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meetings at local schools. These workshops were coordinated in partnership with local banks and Home Headquarters, a local NeighborWorks Organization.

Results of the workshops were instant. For example, Diane Gillings, a nurse working at a hospital in the Weed and Seed neighborhood, qualified for a mortgage and purchased a home only 5 weeks after taking the Home Buyer Education course. The 10-hour course offered participants training sessions on various topics, including responsible home ownership and steps to secure a housing loan. Gillings qualified for a special program offered by Chase Manhattan Bank and obtained a 30-year, fixed-rate mortgage and moved into her home using less than \$1,000 of her own money. The single mother of two children had always dreamed of owning her own home but had been busy working, taking care of her children, and struggling to get ahead. Her dream of ownership came true and her monthly payment—including principal, taxes, and insurance—was \$10 less per month than what her rent had been. After factoring in the income tax advantages of home

ownership, her savings amounted to even more than \$10 per month.

### Promoting Curb Appeal

Even if they have the funds, owner occupants in a distressed neighborhood are reluctant to invest money into their homes when neighboring property values have declined. As a result, exterior repairs, including the repair of broken windows and dilapidated fences, often are left undone. The Syracuse Weed and Seed strategy seeks to retain these owner occupants while improving the look of the neighborhood by providing owners with grants for exterior repairs through the Home Owner Assistance Program. By offering the opportunity to improve curb appeal, it was hoped that people who attended the Home Owner Assistance Program workshops would be encouraged because they would see that improvements were being made on other houses. It was determined that portraying an image of community investment would encourage neighbors to remain and attract new residents to the Weed and Seed neighborhood.

To create visible change, improvements were made on a block-by-block basis.

Owners were invited to participate in the Home Owner Assistance Program, which would provide them with the funds necessary to fix up their properties. Syracuse Weed and Seed procured the money for this program by applying for a Challenge Grant from a local bank. The award from the bank served as the catalyst for other businesses to match the Weed and Seed funds allocated from the core grant; \$15,000 per year in Weed and Seed funds became at least \$45,000 in funds available for grants to owner occupants. Owners were also encouraged to combine this grant for exterior repairs with low- or no-interest home improvement loans from HOME Headquarters, a consolidated private/public effort that offers services to low- and moderate-income people interested in buying existing or new housing, fixing their existing properties, or obtaining information and counseling on purchasing a property within the city. These loans would provide for more extensive exterior or interior repairs that could not be performed through the Weed and Seed grant. Owners who had watched their houses deteriorate throughout the years thought the program was too good to be true, but many of them became believers in the north-side Weed and Seed neighborhood.

### Promoting Responsible Property Management

The challenges of residential rental in a depressed market can be overwhelming. Even the good landlords can let their standards plummet when faced with economic reality. It also becomes difficult to justify doing major repairs because questionable tenants often severely damage the units.

Working with landlords has become an important piece of the effort in Syracuse. The Landlord Training Program, developed in conjunction with the city of Syracuse and Campbell DeLong Resources, was critical to educating landlords in the area. The approach used to target landlords was relatively easy and extremely effective in ensuring that an effort was made



*A new home on Green Street built by Weed and Seed partner Northeast Hawley Development Association.*





*The Pavilion on James, an \$8.5 million facility, was built by a company that decided to invest in the corridor because of significant improvements made on the street.*

residents of the target area. Through efforts with the Onondaga County Department of Social Services, the county has developed an important housing initiative. Social services recipients no longer dwell in substandard housing, landlords do not receive rent for unacceptable units, and tenants are held accountable for any poor housing behaviors. In addition, collaborative efforts with the city's code enforcement division and police department and the county's health department seek to improve the quality of housing for renters in Syracuse.

The housing problems in Syracuse Weed and Seed have not been completely resolved; however, the course has been set. By striving to increase owner occupancy, improve the quality of owner-occupied and rental units, help landlords manage property responsibly, and more effectively coordinate government services, the effort will create lasting change.

As mentioned earlier, the James Street corridor was only 30 percent occupied in 1995. The Weed and Seed strategy incorporated a plan to help neighborhood residents reap the benefits of community reinvestment. Today, the corridor is almost 100 percent occupied, and thriving businesses are an important component of the entire neighborhood restoration effort. Through government funding and private investment, a beautiful new \$8.5 million senior assisted-living facility recently opened in the same neighborhood, indicating that progress has been made and positive things are yet to come. 🏡

to contact those who would benefit from the training. The home ownership initiative used several approaches to reach out to the landlords, including

- Piggyback mailing with the U.S. Department of Social Services' monthly voucher payments.
- Piggyback mailing with the Syracuse Housing Authority Section 8 payments.
- Requiring landlords in violation of tenant rights or proper property maintenance as required by city code to take the training—per the Syracuse Police Department's request—as a part of the nuisance abatement process.
- Asking the city's Division of Code Enforcement, the county's health department, and others familiar with the program to refer landlords in violation of city code to the program.
- Advertising in local newspapers.

Word eventually spread to other landlords that the training was landlord friendly and that the effort was just

part of a larger strategy to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

The daylong workshops were free of charge. A manual was developed for use in the program, providing nearly 100 pages of information about New York Real Property Law, all topics covered in the workshop, and a directory of contacts and resources available in the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County.

Perhaps the most valuable outcome of the landlord training effort was giving the landowners the opportunity to manage their properties responsibly. Evaluations from landlords have been overwhelmingly positive, and it is clear that not all landlords fit the stereotype of "slumlords." In fact, many of the landlords in the northside area attended the training more than once, saying that they received useful information each time.

### Ongoing Efforts

Syracuse Weed and Seed Community Partnership constantly works with other entities involved in housing to develop new ways to improve housing and increase home ownership for the

In 1977, Congress enacted the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) to encourage federally insured banks and thrifts to meet the credit needs of their entire community, including low- and moderate-income residents. Visit [www.fdic.gov/regulations/community](http://www.fdic.gov/regulations/community) for complete information.

# The Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project

Carole Ciokiewicz

In the early 1990s, an increasing number of citizens, city officials, and nonprofit organizations focused on designing a program that would address the needs of homeless people in the Clearwater, Florida, community. By 1993, the community had growing concerns about the city's ability to address the presence, problems, and needs of homeless individuals in the near-downtown area.

Clearwater Police Chief Sid Klein first responded to these concerns by recommending that the Clearwater City Commission establish a special task force of community stakeholders to determine alternative approaches to dealing with the homeless in the community. From the outset, the task force tried to be responsive to the needs of the entire community—including residents, the business community, and the homeless people themselves—and to find a logical, realistic, and longlasting solution. The task force shied away from “quick fixes” that would simply keep the homeless out of sight.



*Clearwater police officers Steve Sears and Carl Conyers are part of the downtown bicycle team that keeps the streets of Clearwater safe.*

only by homeless people, but also by the community as a whole. By assessing the matter at hand from the very beginning, project partners hoped to better serve the community further down the road.

however, the Cold Night Shelter program survived its first winter.

## Confronting Issues and Dismantling Barriers

The task force proceeded to design a program that would not only shelter individuals, but also would confront homeless individuals to identify how they became homeless and what barriers prevented them from securing housing and becoming self-sufficient. The Salvation Army—which already had a day center for homeless people—agreed to operate a night shelter on the grounds of Everybody's Tabernacle on a trial basis. The Clearwater Police Department also recognized the need for an overnight shelter and a drop-off center to serve as an alternative to incarceration; they donated and moved a doublewide trailer to serve as the new shelter. The city commission also provided partial funding for the project. The shelter officially opened in October 1994, 1 year after the city had launched its pilot Cold Night

The Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project (CHIP) opened the CHIP Center doors in April 1998. Under the leadership of Clearwater Police Chief Sid Klein, the CHIP program has had an impact on thousands of lives by directing those individuals who have found themselves in the “ranks” of the homeless toward self-sufficiency.

The task force's pilot project was a temporary cold night shelter in a vacant building on the edge of the downtown area. This winter shelter program sought to gain a better understanding of the numbers of individuals and types of issues faced not

A disturbingly large and unexpected number of individuals sought shelter at the winter facility. Because of the cooperation and partnership of Everybody's Tabernacle (an established street ministry), the Clearwater Police Department, and the Salvation Army,

*continued on page 19*

# Tucson DEFY Youth Meet Gary DEFY Youth

*Marcia Roberts*

Sometimes things gel together for no other reason than that the right ingredients are in the right place at the right time. DEFY's (Drug Education for Youth's) Train-the-Trainer Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, provided the opportunity needed to bring together three Weed and Seed sites: two from Tucson, Arizona, and one from Gary, Indiana. At a training last January, both Tucson and Gary sites decided that, based on their obvious chemistry, their DEFY programs should partner together at some point in the coming year. The "Southwest Meets Midwest" DEFY Trip gelled at that moment.

When the Tucson/South Tucson group planned its Phase II activities for 2000-01, staff wanted to include a trip to the Grand Canyon in the program. It became an important part of the year's planning. Youth and adults alike started to attend more DEFY meetings and activities just so they could ensure their places on the trip. Early in the year, Tucson DEFY program planners tried to recruit other DEFY sites to join their group for a trip to the Grand Canyon because they believed that exposing the youth to a different group of campers would be exciting. However, the dates didn't work out for other sites.



*DEFY youth and their mentors hike the Grand Canyon on the "Southwest Meets Midwest" DEFY Trip.*

For the "Southwest Meets Midwest" DEFY Trip, Tucson (Arizona) and Gary (Indiana) pull their "troops" together to learn about nature, each other, and themselves.

At the DEFY Conference, Gary Weed and Seed member Leona Gray came into the picture. Gray's excitement made her group a natural partner for Tucson DEFY, and plans and negotiations started immediately. Tucson DEFY agreed to provide all the resources for the trip, including planning excursions and supplying the food, if Gary DEFY youth also went on the trip. The deal was sealed in 5 minutes!

The Tucson/South Tucson group got food, vans, maps, and other supplies together for the 4-day adventure. While heading north toward the Grand Canyon, the Tucson groups stopped to visit Casa Grande National Monument's ancient American Indian ruins and the Pioneer Arizona Living History Museum to see what the old west was really like. The contingency from Gary DEFY then joined the Tucson group in Phoenix for the remainder of the trip. Once all three DEFY groups reached the Grand Canyon, they stayed at Camp Navajo, courtesy of the Arizona National Guard. The military facility provided the campers with bunks, showers, a classroom facility, and all other essentials.

In total, 27 youth and 17 adults participated in the 4-day adventure. The agenda for the trip included a wide range of activities, including trips to

American Indian pueblo ruins, museums, Northern Arizona University, and, of course, the Grand Canyon. The group even managed to complete a tough 2-day hike (a shuttle bus was onsite for those who couldn't complete it). The group only went partway down the canyon, but youth were able to see the beauty of the site and its surrounding scenery, and they were amazed by the size of the Grand Canyon.

The most exciting part of the trip was seeing the youth take leadership roles. Tucson youth chose to act as hosts, introducing the other participants to local fauna and flora. All the youth found leadership roles in various hiking groups by leading the hikes and watching out for others. They also took ownership of their chores in the dormitories, doing their assigned jobs and doing them well. The youth had numerous opportunities to express their feelings and communicate, something that became more important as the group rushed from place to place.

The expectations set by all three DEFY groups were met before they saw the Grand Canyon. Moments after meeting for the first time, adults and youth alike took to one another as though they'd known each other forever. Color, heritage, age, abilities, and culture became invisible.

Plans are underway for another trip next year, and all hope to once again include DEFY sites from the Midwest. 🏡



# Weed and Seed Police Officer Receives Officer of the Year Award

Kim Norman

He's polite, soft-spoken, and has a smile that can light up a room, but his extraordinary qualities don't stop there. In fact, Officer Louis Bazile is a tough, street-smart officer who knows how to eliminate drug dealers from the streets of St. Louis. He is a dedicated DEFY counselor who saved the life of a boy by putting his own life on the line. All of these qualities earned this Weed and Seed police officer the title of St. Louis Officer of the Year in 2000.

Bazile joined the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department in April 1996, and he is currently assigned to the 8th district as a Weed and Seed police officer. In January 2000, Bazile was involved in apprehending 26 suspects who were arrested on 19 felony charges, 10 misdemeanor charges, and 59 city charges. Crack cocaine, marijuana, heroine, drug paraphernalia, and several guns were seized during the arrests. "During the entire year of 2000, Officer Bazile has proven to be consistent in his dedication and exceptional performance," said Antoinette Fillia, captain of the 8th district police department.

Being a good community police officer requires other special talents. Bazile and fellow Weed and Seed officer Eric Lingard have been the children's favorite DEFY counselors for several years. Both police officers reach out to

children during camp and all year long to send a message that police officers do care about children in Weed and Seed neighborhoods.

It was Bazile's actions in December 1999, however, that made him a hero. Bazile and his partner Bryan Notheis were searching a nearby home for evidence of possible drug activity when they heard gunfire. Three subjects armed with semiautomatic rifles and pistols were firing at a 17-year-old boy. Bazile and Notheis ran through the shots to help the victim. The subjects continued to fire even after the officers began the chase. The victim, confused and frightened, continued to run until Bazile grabbed and forced him to the ground, shielding him with his body while Notheis exchanged gunfire with the shooters. Because of both officers' heroic deeds, no one was injured, the suspects were apprehended, and



Weed and Seed Officer Louis Bazile stands in the lot where he shielded a young boy from gunfire.

weapons and a stolen car were recovered. The victim told the police officers, "If you guys hadn't helped me, they would have killed me for sure."

Fillia nominated Bazile for the award, but Bazile also had many other supporters, including Notheis. EOWS also recognized the brave efforts of Bazile. In November 2000, EOWS Deputy Director Bob Samuels presented Bazile with the Distinguished Service Award during a press conference at St. Louis' police headquarters. Bazile humbly accepted the award in front of many spectators, including St. Louis dignitaries, fellow officers, the media, and Weed and Seed residents and partners. 🏠

## Do You Know a Winner in YOUR Community?

If so, tell *In-Sites* about this person!

The leaders of each Weed and Seed site are all winners, but *In-Sites* would like to highlight those individuals who have received special recognition from their communities and peers. E-mail stories about a winner in your community to [soltysik@ojp.usdoj.gov](mailto:soltysik@ojp.usdoj.gov).

# The Washington, D.C., 2000 DEFY Program Brings Parents and Partnerships to the Table

Michelle S. McIver

In 1997, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia (D.C.), the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, and the Marine Corps of U.S. Naval Station-Washington, D.C., partnered with four Weed and Seed communities to establish their first D.C. DEFY (Drug Education for Youth) program. With the assistance of 15 volunteers, the program provided 33 youth with a nonresidential camp. This year, D.C. DEFY's program will serve more than 65 youth from 6 local Weed and Seed sites under a permanent partnership with the "I Have a Dream" Foundation, the D.C. National Guard, and the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department. The DEFY program has been instrumental to Washington, D.C.'s effort to provide at-risk youth with the core mentoring they need to lead productive lifestyles.

With the strong commitment of Weed and Seed partners today, D.C. DEFY provides a 9-day Phase I residential camp in the summer and Phase II

D.C. DEFY has celebrated many years of success. More than 65 youth from 6 local Weed and Seed sites are currently involved in Phase II. D.C. DEFY is a perfect example of how partnering and creative thinking can play an effective role in DEFY programming.

mentoring programs throughout the school year. More than 50 volunteers from community groups, government agencies, churches, and businesses support the program. DEFY parents meet monthly to discuss parenting issues and to plan future DEFY activities, further advancing the program's desire to serve the family of each child on a long-term basis. D.C. DEFY goes a step further by also providing families with educational opportunities and referrals for health care, employment, and other medical, economic, and social needs.

DEFY youth are constantly involved in new and exciting opportunities that are educational and build self-esteem. In addition to standard Phase II activities like ice skating and trips to the MCI Center and Baltimore Aquarium, the DEFY program and its affiliates have exposed its youth to other unique opportunities. In December 2000, D.C. DEFY youth and staff were recognized in front of more than 1,300 D.C. National Guard personnel at the annual D.C. National Guard Awards and Decoration Ceremony. The Honorable Togo D. West, Jr., Secretary of Veterans Affairs, congratulated the youth for maintaining a drug- and violence-free lifestyle.

In January 2001, 14 DEFY youth participated in the first annual D.C. DEFY Essay and Poster Contest, which was organized by the DEFY Parents Club. The youth wrote essays and created posters based on the theme, "What DEFY Means to Me." Many contestants expressed their appreciation for the time that DEFY mentors have given them over the past few months. Each participant received a trophy and/or certificate for his or her work. Some of the youth's artwork will be published in the next edition of *Hill Rag*, a local newspaper that serves Capitol Hill and Northeast Washington, D.C. *(continued on next page)*



D.C. DEFY youth learn about nature at the Point Lookout Wildlife Center in Maryland.



*D.C. DEFY youth enjoy each other's company at Camp Riverview in Scotland, Maryland.*

*(continued from previous page)* Jean-Keith Fagon, publisher of the newspaper, is an active member of the Weed and Seed Steering Committee.

In March 2001, 10 DEFY youth who also are involved with the "I Have a

Dream" Foundation's program at Brent Elementary School were recognized at the D.C. Bar Association's 2001 Winter Convention. A sponsored luncheon, appropriately titled "Lawyers in Schools," gave tribute to

legal organizations that have partnered with schools, community organizations, and nonprofit organizations to improve the quality of education for youth in the Nation's capital. Numerous attorneys, educators, and community leaders from the Washington, D.C., area attended the conference. The youth also were greeted by "I Have a Dream" Foundation founder, Eugene M. Lang.

Future Phase II activities will showcase DEFY youth at "Law Day," an event sponsored by the local U.S. Attorney's Office, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Through workshops and presentations, DEFY youth and staff will teach other youth about the benefits of staying drug free.

# WEED & SEED'S 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

*The Executive Office for Weed and Seed 2001 National Conference*

## A Decade of Weed and Seed ... Leave No Neighborhood Behind

*Please Join Us To Celebrate Our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

Date: August 26-30, 2001  
Hotel: Philadelphia Marriott  
1201 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

This conference will attract close to 2,000 attendees and more than 100 exhibitors from Weed and Seed national partners and individuals from across the country to celebrate a decade of neighborhood renewal. Philadelphia Weed and Seeders have planned an exciting conference with block parties and local talent! Nationally known speakers and trainers will join us to provide challenges for the future and discuss lessons learned.

Learning labs and training topics will include—

- ◆ Innovative Ways To Promote Your Site
- ◆ Law Enforcement Strategies
- ◆ Drug Interdiction and Gun Abatement
- ◆ School Violence Prevention
- ◆ Using Cutting Edge Technology in Your Site
- ◆ Special Emphasis Initiatives
- ◆ Economic Development and Community Mobilization Strategies
- ◆ Promising Practices

For further information, visit  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/philly.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/philly.htm)



# “Call SoNo Home” Partnership Helps Single Mother Realize Her Dream

Paul Nonnenmacher

Norwalk, Connecticut, resident Magalie Semexant-Coffy is a single mother of four who recently finished law school—with the student loans to prove it—and isn’t yet earning enough money to qualify for a conventional mortgage. But thanks to “Call SoNo Home,” a partnership between Norwalk Weed and Seed, the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency, Fannie Mae, and People’s Bank, she has purchased a home—and the yard is big enough for her children to run and play.

Semexant-Coffy and her children are one of the first five families to purchase homes in South Norwalk through Call SoNo Home, a unique program designed to help residents learn the home buying process and overcome barriers to buying a home.

“We are all thrilled that the first five families have purchased homes as part of the Call SoNo Home program launched in May 2000. This is just the beginning, and we are confident that more families will join the ranks of homeowners in the near future,” said U.S. Attorney Stephen C. Robinson. “Creating safe, healthy communities is a primary goal of the Weed and Seed program. We are beginning to see the fruits of our labor in South Norwalk.”

Semexant-Coffy is working at Housing Court in Bridgeport and Norwalk while she prepares to take the bar examination. Law school drained her resources, and having just started a new job diminished her attractiveness to lenders, even though she could get help with a down payment and closing costs from the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency and Adopt-a-House in Stamford.

“I had to buy a home,” she said. “I have four children and I work in Housing Court and I know what it’s like to rent. Just after getting out of

law school, the amount of money I’m making by itself isn’t enough to qualify me to buy a decent home.”

Call SoNo Home was launched in May 2000 during a community event that not only introduced the partnership project but also offered an initial home ownership seminar in three languages. Through Call SoNo Home,

- **People’s Bank** provides its trademark home buyer education class, “Unlocking the Possibilities of Homeownership,” and has committed \$1 million in mortgage financing for first-time home buyers and others seeking to purchase homes through this program.

Fannie Mae’s Community Lending mortgage products, designed to help borrowers overcome the two primary barriers to home ownership: lack of downpayment funds and qualifying income.

Semexant-Coffy enrolled in the People’s Bank home buyer education course, through which she met Carlos Teran, People’s Bank Assistant Vice President and an affordable lending officer, who took a closer look at her situation and her potential. “He said, ‘I think we can make this work.’ I said, ‘No way,’” she recalled.

“She had gone to several lenders and no one would prequalify her—and

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With a strong commitment to promoting home ownership and the support of the community, Norwalk Weed and Seed was able to help resident Magalie Semexant-Coffy overcome a host of challenges, making her dream a reality: purchasing a home of her own.

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- **The Norwalk Redevelopment Agency** provides prepurchase counseling and has earmarked \$100,000 to provide no-interest downpayment and closing cost assistance loans for qualified buyers.

- **The U.S. Department of Justice’s Weed and Seed program** brings together local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies to help communities “weed” out crime and develop strategies to “seed” neighborhoods with programs and resources that help begin the process of revitalizing these communities.

- **Fannie Mae** has agreed to purchase the loans approved by People’s Bank. People’s Bank is providing

without prequalification your buying power is diminished,” said Waldo Emerson Williams, People’s Bank Vice President for Residential Lending. “At People’s we believe that we need to look beyond traditional income requirements to knock down the barriers to home ownership.”

The Call SoNo Home program continues to help Weed and Seed residents like Semexant-Coffy secure the loans needed to become homeowners. Semexant-Coffy feels she will never forget the days she struggled to provide shelter for her family. “There’s a fine line between being able to buy a house and living in a shelter.” 🏡

# Reclaiming Abandoned Properties

The presence of abandoned properties is perhaps one of the most universal problems in Weed and Seed neighborhoods. Regardless of whether it is a dilapidated warehouse in which industry once thrived or a neglected single-family townhouse, these properties destroy the quality of life for the entire neighborhood. For many years, cities have hired companies and developers to demolish these “eye-sores.” However, demolished buildings often turn into abandoned lots that soon become dumping grounds for illegal activity. Therefore, reconstruction of abandoned buildings and the land they

stand on should be considered before calling on demolition crews.

Housing rehabilitation programs vary depending on several factors, including the intentions of the program sponsor and the historical value and structural conditions of the neighborhood. Some rehabilitation programs try to reduce high vacancy and turnover rates in distressed neighborhoods by helping people improve their homes. However, citizens who are frustrated with the substandard level of quality of life conditions in their neighborhood often consider relocating to neighborhoods with newer homes and a sense of community

investment. Neighborhood revitalization efforts that recognize the elements that bring down the quality of life in a target area can best serve the community and retain residents. Coordinating a “quality of life” community survey can provide much information and lead to a well-directed rehabilitation program.

When residents begin to move out of a neighborhood because they feel the community is no longer healthy, the neighbors they leave behind often become discouraged. These residents may react to the condition of their homes and the neighborhood by not paying their mortgages, rents, utility bills, or property taxes. As property conditions deteriorate and tax liens accumulate, property values plummet, leading more owners and occupants to abandon rather than rehabilitate their property.

*In-Sites* is looking for stories from the field that provide details on how abandoned properties were turned into housing opportunities for neighborhood residents. These properties may include Brownfields projects, initiatives funded through Community Development Block Grants, and areas that used community Individual Development Accounts. If you have any questions, please call the *In-Sites* desk at 202-514-0709. E-mail your stories, comments, or other input to [soltysik@ojp.usdoj.gov](mailto:soltysik@ojp.usdoj.gov). 🏠



Hazelwood (Pittsburgh) Weed and Seed's strategy is supported by a strong neighborhood revitalization plan.

Leaders at the Federal, State, and local levels have got to do a better job of making affordable housing a reality for all of America's working families. In these times of relative prosperity, it shouldn't be optional for every family in America to have a roof over their heads.

—Marc Morial, New Orleans Mayor and Vice President, U.S. Conference of Mayors

# Got Community Problems? Find Community Answers!

It is not news that communities have problems; however, how they choose to deal with their problems can be of major concern. Working to resolve community-level problems can be difficult. It isn't easy to bring people together to the table; varying personalities pull the issue into opposite directions, and it is often difficult for people to accept that there even is a problem. That is why it is so important to identify community resources before a conflict or situation arises.

Most neighborhoods offer many resources for community problem solving. For example, a Weed and Seed Steering Committee is a great source for local mediation. Community mediation centers can play an instrumental role in the community because they help local stakeholders—represented in the Committee—identify problem areas, discuss conflicts, and work toward solutions before the problems get out of control. As reported in the National Institute of Justice's publication, *Community Mediation Programs: Developments and Challenges*, community mediation programs have become very active in handling a wide range of disputes.

As many Weed and Seed sites have witnessed, public policy conflicts can easily emerge in the areas of public safety, general welfare, and community revitalization. The lack of well-lighted streets, safe drinking water, and adequate housing are just a few of the issues that cause conflict between community leaders and city management. Community mediation programs can facilitate meetings and hold mediation sessions to bring diverse interests together. Groups at the table may include governmental agencies, community organizations and advocacy groups, business groups, school boards, and others.

For example, the Orange County Dispute Settlement Center in North Carolina recently handled a dispute that involved a local landfill. They brought together citizen representatives from local neighborhoods and officials from three local governments. Over the course of four facilitated sessions, they addressed 22 areas of citizens' concerns, including water quality and noise abatement, and reached an agreement that satisfied everyone.

In New York City, the Washington Heights Beacons Community Center intervened in gang disputes that had become the source of community violence. Their programs also have sought to deal with conflicts between various ethnic and racial groups in their locale, such as conflicts that arose as a result of verdicts in the Tawana Brawley and Rodney King cases. Last fall, the Western Justice Center in southern California worked with community and government officials to develop a series of dialogues on race in the aftermath of flared racial and ethnic tensions.

Over the years, Omaha Weed and Seed has partnered with its local community mediation center in a number of ways to address group and interpersonal disputes. Omaha Weed and Seed also has agreed to provide mediation and facilitation services to neighborhood residents and associations through the Community Resource

Center, a division of the Omaha Police Department. The mediation center and the statewide dispute resolution training institute have trained community relations specialists, who serve as community liaisons, and several community leaders in conflict resolution skills. At a recent meeting in Omaha, Law Enforcement Coordination Specialist Anne Camp, Community Mediation Center Director Mary Lee Brock, and Weed and Seed Site Coordinator Joanne Singleton explored potential ways to share resources, including inviting mediation center staff to attend the Neighborhood Builders Association meeting and to be included in the new Greater Omaha Prevention Online Directory.

These examples provide a look into the diversity of community mediation centers and demonstrate how these centers can help communities resolve most issues before they become problems or find effective solutions to major community problems. Every site has the opportunity to get involved in proactive problem solving. If you need help contacting community mediation centers that serve your area, call Kathleen Severens of EOWS at 202-514-8827 or e-mail her at severens@ojp.usdoj.gov. Web users also can consult the Community Dispute Resolution Web site at [www.usdoj.gov/cdr/index.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/cdr/index.html) to obtain more information. 🏠

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Sometimes a situation can seem overwhelming because nothing appears to be working very well. Trash may be in the streets, businesses may be closing, the prevalence of gangs may be increasing, or problems with drugs may be escalating. What should be done? People can fight, take flight, or try to work the problems out.

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# The Racine Weed and Seed Children's Art/Calendar Contest

"Great People and Great Places Make a Great Weed and Seed" was the theme for the Racine Weed and Seed 2001 Neighborhood Calendar Contest. In-Sites asked Racine Weed and Seed Executive Director Melanie Bohl a few questions about her site's annual promotional project.

## In-Sites Magazine (IM): Who is eligible to enter the calendar contest?

**Melanie Bohl (MB):** It is promoted as a children's art contest. For about a month or two, we ask the entire community, including community centers, afterschool programs, and classrooms, for artwork (entries). We try to get a broad range of ages.

## IM: How much does it cost to coordinate, market, and produce the calendar?

**MB:** The cost of this year's project was leveraged from people vested in our community. Weed and Seed sold calendar sponsorships to local businesses. We have businesses that donated \$500 for a "Gold Sponsorship." That level of contribution gave each of these businesses exclusive sponsorship for 1 month—with their name and logo displayed accordingly—and we will give them 50 free calendars. Businesses that contributed \$250 became "Silver Sponsors," which

entitled them to a 1-month cosponsorship and 25 free calendars. The calendars make nice gifts for sponsors' employees. We plan to print about 2,500 and will distribute them at community centers, sponsors' places of business, and downtown businesses. The cost, which will be slightly more than \$4,000 this year, is completely covered by selling sponsorships.

## IM: Was it difficult to get local businesses to buy into the project?

**MB:** We had to do a lot more outreach for the first year of the project; we went door-to-door to solicit businesses and organizations and met prospective supporters. We also had to use more of our own funds to support the production of the calendar. This year—our third year—our only costs were the mailing of solicitation letters for sponsorships. We didn't have to go door-to-door because the mailing brought us the business and community support we were looking for.



Mauricha Hudson, grade 3, submitted her rendition of a clean Weed and Seed neighborhood.

Executive Director Melanie Bohl credits much of the project's success to Barbara Berman of the U.S. Attorney's Office, who worked with the local project committee to keep the project afloat when the project was without a coordinator.

The winner of this year's calendar contest, ninth grader Tina Phillips, was selected by a committee of judges that included U.S. Attorney Thomas Schneider. (The award-winning design is featured on the back cover of this issue of *In-Sites* magazine.) The Weed and Seed steering committee awarded the young artist a \$100 gift certificate to Kohl's Department Store. ■

The Racine Weed and Seed 2001 Neighborhood Calendar Contest has turned out to be a great outreach tool, encouraging local businesses and organizations to become involved in the community's Weed and Seed efforts.

# The Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project

*continued from page 10*

Shelter program. Because the 15-bed facility filled to above capacity every night, the homeless intervention project was moved to the nearby Salvation Army facility, and the trailer left at Everybody's Tabernacle became a kitchen and dining facility for homeless people.

The task force continued to recruit members who could bring new insight and additional resources to the table. In 1998, the task force transcended into what is known today as the Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project (CHIP), an IRS-registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The group continued to search for property that would be accessible to the homeless population and provide sufficient space for case management and counseling services. When Chief Klein discussed this search with the St. Vincent de Paul Society, a charitable organization that had supported the Chief's efforts from the beginning, the society stepped forward and offered CHIP property adjacent to the society's existing soup kitchen. The property had the space needed to implement the best possible program, and its

connection to the soup kitchen meant that homeless people would not have to travel across town to get from one service to another.

## Looking From the Outside In

A police substation was planned within the facility to be staffed by bicycle-equipped officers. This unique police program, funded by a grant from the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, U.S. Department of Justice, would help the CHIP program provide heightened community outreach, promote public safety, and make an important contribution to the neighborhood's sense of community and the planned redevelopment of downtown Clearwater. CHIP also established a Neighborhood Advisory Council of CHIP officials and neighborhood residents to build an effective partnership between the CHIP shelter and its neighbors. The Neighborhood Advisory Council—with the full cooperation and participation of CHIP staff and clients—became a springboard for community action, pride, neighborhood crime watch, and neighborhood cleanup.

Today, CHIP is not just another homeless shelter. It also is a community center that bands together Clearwater's citizens, officials, social service professionals, businesses, and private residents to find a solution to the common problem of homelessness. All problems that relate to homelessness—including the need for food and shelter and the threat of loitering, littering, addiction, and exploitation of the poor—need to be addressed in a realistic way. CHIP has created a continuum of service and opportunities that enable any individual who so chooses to actively and responsibly solve the problems that contribute to his or her homeless condition.

## The Project's Mission

Three words govern CHIP's mission: compassion, respect, and responsibility.

### Compassion

The natural compassion that people feel toward fellow human beings is the reason that people care about what happens to the homeless. It is what causes the community to pitch in and provide the homeless person with the minimal comforts that sustain life, regardless of who he or she is or why he or she is homeless. Compassion also is the driving force that causes people to wonder why an individual succumbs to living on the streets. CHIP uses this driving force to ask those tough questions that will help assess each homeless person's needs and what must be done to overcome the situation.

### Respect

CHIP respects the basic human rights and dignity of every individual, regardless of whether he or she is homeless. Respect is earned, not simply assumed. Clients are expected to treat one another with respect, respect the CHIP program and its volunteers and staff, and respect the law and private property. If clients do not abide by these rules, they—like all people—must suffer the consequences.

### Responsibility

To increase the likelihood of a client's success, each person is required to take responsibility for his or her own actions. CHIP fully expects its clients to contribute to their own well-being and take positive steps toward solving their problems. In its broadest context, CHIP helps homeless people access services around town and challenges them—through partnership with the local police department—to respect the rights of others and to conduct themselves in a responsible manner while they are on the streets. CHIP also challenges the community to support the program by providing CHIP and its clients with financial support, resource development, jobs, and decent and affordable housing. 🏠



*CHIP's mission is to teach people about compassion, respect, and responsibility.*



*Are you interested in learning more about today's housing crisis or ways to get involved in causes to end homelessness? Here, Web Sight takes a look at a few online resources that support a variety of causes fueled by today's housing issues.*

The **National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)** is dedicated to ending America's affordable housing crisis. The amount of information NLIHC collects and posts online makes its Web site anything but a quick surf. NLIHC's Web site, [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org), offers up-to-date press releases and answers to countless questions regarding homelessness and the depletion of America's affordable housing stock. Do you want to learn all there is to know about recent changes affecting developments with expiring contracts under the project-

based Section 8 program? Visit [www.nlihc.org/marktmarket](http://www.nlihc.org/marktmarket), a valuable bookmark for municipal housing officials and community advocates alike.

The **National Coalition for the Homeless (NCH)** engages



in public education, policy advocacy, and grassroots organizing. Thirty percent of the 38-member NCH board are former homeless men and women. NCH's Web site, [www.nationalhomeless.org](http://www.nationalhomeless.org), offers information about each of the organization's many projects, including the National Welfare Monitoring and Advocacy Partnership, which supports the monitoring of welfare at the community level to help local communities advocate on their own behalf. Web users also can click on this site to download several NCH publications and papers.

Many *In-Sites* subscribers have read about Weed and Seed's effort in Rochester, New York, while others have participated in presentations with Rochester site representatives at EOWS conferences. *In-Sites* discovered that the city of Rochester's Web site, [www.ci.rochester.ny.us/apps/sprawl.nsf](http://www.ci.rochester.ny.us/apps/sprawl.nsf), boasts some incredible features. Visitors can take the Mayor's online tour of Rochester to witness the effects that urban sprawl has had on the city over the past few decades. Hop on the "virtual tour bus" with

Homeless veterans are our Nation's tragedy. There are more than 271,750 homeless veterans on any given night in the United States.

—Linda Boone, Executive Director,  
National Coalition for Homeless  
Veterans ([www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org))

Thirty-five to forty percent of the Nation's homeless population are veterans that have served in World War II, the Korean War, military efforts during the Cold War era, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, or the military's antidrug cultivation efforts in South America.

Conservatively, one out of every four homeless males who is sleeping in a doorway, alley, or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served our country.

This information was provided by the Disabled American Veterans Web site ([www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)).

a click of the mouse, or click on the glasses icon to "get off the bus" and view photographs that illustrate points in the text. Check out this Web site for more on the creative ways Rochester is educating the public! 🏠

## Youth Growing Up With the Young Astronaut Program

*continued from page 4*

rescue vehicle for the international space station, and a space toolbox. In past years, students developed a Space Bill of Rights and created a poster that NASA used for the International Space Year.

At the annual Young Astronaut International Conference, children from around the world participate in workshops, visit sites of local interest, meet

astronauts and scientists face-to-face, and develop lasting friendships with other students. Members of the Young Astronaut Program take turns hosting the event. Conference sites have included Washington, D.C.; Houston, Texas; Orlando, Florida; China; Korea; the Ukraine; and Australia. The 2001 Young Astronaut International Conference will be held in July in Kanazawa, Japan.

The Young Astronaut Council received its first grant from EOWS in 1989 to pilot the Young Astronaut Program with children in four Weed and Seed sites. The following year, the program provided an additional 12 sites with this fun and educational offering that expands children's horizons and helps them understand their world and beyond. 🏠



## CONFERENCE CORNER

### The Weed and Seed Accreditation Series

Sites in 21 States and the U.S. Virgin Islands have completed the Weed and Seed Accreditation Series training. The 8-day curriculum helps site teams further understand and better implement the intricate elements of the Weed and Seed strategy. EOWS has received positive feedback from sites, and each "graduation" has

been a celebration. EOWS congratulates each person who attended the trainings and recognizes that each graduate's dedication and commitment are what make Weed and Seed a growing success. A special ceremony for Accreditation Series graduates will take place at the Weed and Seed National Conference in August. Please visit the EOWS Web site for more information about this training. Photos will be posted online as they become available ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/whatsnew.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/whatsnew.htm)).

### EOWS To Host Methamphetamine Workshop

The increasing number of clandestine methamphetamine labs in the United States has put both rural and urban communities at great risk. Certain

aspects of this drug's production, distribution, and consumption pose a threat to both public health and safety unlike the challenges of other illegal drugs. As early as 1983, California's illicit methamphetamine production was noted as a significant problem that warranted law enforcement's considerable attention.

On July 20, 2001, EOWS will host a 1-day workshop in Washington, D.C., for Weed and Seed sites that practice Methamphetamine Lab Cleanup or Anti-Drug/Alcohol Abuse Strategies. The goal of the workshop is to provide an exchange between EOWS staff and law enforcement officers, local prosecutors, U.S. Attorney's Office staff, and community residents in Weed and Seed areas. The workshop will provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to combat the methamphetamine problem and will discuss treatment approaches from within the community. Please call EOWS Grant Manager Andrew Press at 202-307-5965 for more information or to register for this important workshop. The registration deadline is June 15, 2001.

### The Weed and Seed Community Training Series

On February 22, 2001, "Crime Fighting in Rural America," part of the Weed and Seed Training Series, aired live via satellite broadcast. EOWS Director Stephen Rickman served as the series host, welcoming experts in rural law enforcement to discuss modern trends and challenges. Seasoned

Weed and Seed leader Capt. Stan Caveness of Dyersburg, Tennessee, shared the stage with Sgt. Jim Skinner, a narcotics investigator with the Vernon, Texas, Police Department, and Sheriff Marvin Van Haaften of Des Moines, Iowa. The 1-hour broadcast also looked at issues in other rural areas, including Boise, Idaho, and Tupelo, Mississippi.

The broadcast revealed that the increase in methamphetamine production in rural communities is a tremendous threat to law enforcement and public safety, one that Sergeant Skinner feels will far surpass the crack epidemic that surfaced in the 1980s. Sergeant Skinner detailed the characteristics of methamphetamine, how easy it is to produce, and the dangers it presents not only to law enforcement but also to the entire community. Each guest on the panel discussed the various obstacles he encounters while trying to enforce and maintain public safety, yet each guest also credited the same resource for his biggest success—the community. In Des Moines, Iowa, Sheriff Van Haaften set up a hotline at the local courthouse so residents would notify him when there were problems in the community; he also relies heavily on his Sheriff's Reserve of 30 volunteer officers. In Vernon, Texas—where methamphetamine production increased 300 percent in the past year—officers are reaching out to motel operators, farmers, and pharmacies to help an agency of just 22 officers identify potential "meth cooks."

Officially Recognized Weed and Seed sites can call EOWS at 202-616-1152 to order free copies of this satellite broadcast. The next broadcast in the series will air on June 21, 2001, and will focus on community prosecution in Weed and Seed. Visit the EOWS Web site for more information about this broadcast series.

*For a complete list of all upcoming Weed and Seed meetings, video broadcasts, and partner-supported conferences, visit [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/conferences.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/conferences.htm).*



*Carlottia Scott facilitates a class at the EOWS Accreditation Series in Atlanta, Georgia.*



## Weed & Seed

### Staff Update

EOWS recently welcomed Anita Snyder, who will serve as Special Assistant to EOWS Director Steve Rickman. She will spend her time at EOWS working with the four Weed and Seed sites in Washington, D.C. Snyder is a recent graduate of Pepperdine University's School of Law in California and a member of the New York State Bar Association. She also serves as Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

In April 2001, Program Manager Eric Chin bid farewell to EOWS to accept a position with the Office of the Comptroller at the Office of Justice Programs. For 2 years, Chin managed sites throughout the Nation, most recently monitoring and providing guidance to sites in Hawaii, Minnesota, and Michigan.

### The FBI Executive Fellowship Program

The FBI Fellowship Program encourages leaders in law enforcement to come to Washington, D.C., for a 6-month period. Part of their time is spent with EOWS learning about Weed and Seed communities, the role that law enforcement plays in community partnerships, and asset forfeiture monitoring. In turn, participants bring

to EOWS an infinite amount of intelligence and experience.

After participants complete and leave the fellowship program, they are not forgotten. EOWS often is pleased to read about former participants' successes once they return to their respective agencies. For example, EOWS recently read about former program participant Peter Curcio in the April 8, 2001, online edition of the *New York Daily News*. Curcio serves as Deputy Warden of Rikers Island Correctional Facility, the largest municipal prison in the United States, and also is the commander of New York State's Department of Corrections' gang intelligence unit. In the news article, Curcio explains that anti-gang initiatives adopted by New York State 6 years ago have dramatically reduced the level of gang organization at Rikers and on the streets of New York City. Visit the EOWS Web site to access the entire article.

### A Decade of Weed and Seed . . . Leave No Neighborhood Behind

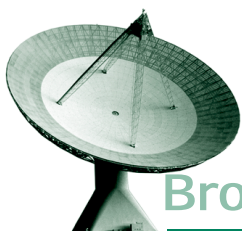
The 2001 Weed and Seed National Conference is quickly approaching! At this time, Officially Recognized sites should identify their team representatives (a site coordinator, community

resident, and law enforcement representative), make travel arrangements, consider becoming exhibitors, and collect submissions for the Weed and Seed National Poster Contest from youth in their communities. Visit the official EOWS National Conference Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/philly](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/philly) for the latest information.

### Online News

Policies and procedures for FY 2001 asset forfeiture funding for EOWS and Weed and Seed sites have changed significantly. Sites that use asset forfeiture funds or are interested in applying for such funds can now access the EOWS Asset Forfeiture Frequently Asked Questions document online at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/aff.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/aff.htm) to obtain any information they may need.

The expansion of the EOWS Web site in the past year has afforded *In-Sites* the growing room it needed as a newsletter to transition into a magazine. Conference Calendar, Mailbox, and Photo Gallery—all featured sections that were popular with newsletter readers—are now updated and posted exclusively on the EOWS Web site almost weekly. To date, both *In-Sites* readers and Web site visitors have responded favorably to the changes that have been made. 🏡



## Satellite Broadcast Series

### The Weed and Seed Community Training Series

On June 21, 2001, from 4 to 5 p.m. e.t., EOWS will air "Community Prosecution" live via satellite broadcast. Sites can register to view this broadcast for free! Learn how prosecutors work strategically with community residents to prevent crime, address quality of life issues, and improve neighborhood conditions through nuisance abatement and locally coordinated programs. Visit [www.letn.com](http://www.letn.com) to register, or call Mary Breen at EOWS (202-616-0289) for more information.

## For More Information

Contact these organizations, connect to these Web sites, or obtain copies of these highlighted publications for more information on articles featured in *In-Sites*, or visit the EOWS Web site for related links at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/publications.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/publications.htm).

### Page 4: Youth Growing Up With the Young Astronaut Program

Cecelia Blalock  
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202-682-1984  
youngastronauts@aol.com  
www.yac.org

Katherine Mera  
Executive Office for Weed and Seed  
202-616-2599

### Page 5: The Link Between Affordable Housing and Homelessness

The U.S. Conference of Mayors  
Report on Hunger and Homelessness in the United States  
www.usmayors.org

The National Welfare Monitoring and Advocacy Partnership  
www.nationalhomeless.org/ww2pr.html

Fannie Mae Fulfillment Center  
1-800-471-5554  
*Layman's Guide to Major Federal Housing Programs*, Code Number CAO6OU  
*Consumer Guide to Fannie Mae's Community Lending Mortgages*, Code Number LM123C

### Page 7: One Block At a Time

Nancy Kronen  
Project Coordinator  
Syracuse Weed and Seed Community Partnership  
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315-474-1939, ext. 30  
nancyk@homehq.org

### Page 10: The Clearwater Homeless Intervention Project

Janet Skinner  
Assistant Grants Manager  
Clearwater Police Department

Clearwater, Florida  
727-562-4347  
jskinner@clearwaterpolice.org  
www.clearwaterpolice.org/chip/success.htm

William C. Daniels  
Assistant LECC Coordinator  
U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida  
Tampa, Florida  
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william.daniels@usdoj.gov

### Page 11: Tucson DEFY Youth Meet Gary DEFY Youth

Marcia Roberts  
Westside Coalition Weed and Seed  
Tucson, Arizona  
520-791-4499, ext. 1585

Leona Gray  
Horrace Mann Weed and Seed  
Gary, Indiana  
219-886-0255

### Page 12: Weed and Seed Police Officer Receives Officer of the Year Award

Kim Norman  
Executive Director  
Operation Weed and Seed  
St. Louis, Inc.  
St. Louis, Missouri  
314-539-2773

### Page 13: The Washington, D.C., 2000 DEFY Program Brings Parents and Partnerships to the Table

Michelle S. McIver  
Weed and Seed Program Coordinator  
Community Prevention Partnership  
Washington, D.C.  
202-514-6930  
michelle.mciver@usdoj.gov

### Page 15: "Call SoNo Home" Partnership Helps Single Mother Realize Her Dream

Paul Nonnenmacher  
Media Relations Officer  
Corporate Communications  
People's Bank  
203-338-3478

Delcie Thibault  
LECC Coordinator  
U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut  
New Haven, Connecticut  
delcie.thibault@usdoj.gov

### Page 17: Got Community Problems? Find Community Answers!

Kathleen Severens  
Director, Community Dispute Resolution  
Office of Justice Programs  
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kseverens@ojp.usdoj.gov  
www.usdoj.gov/cdr

### Page 18: The Racine Weed and Seed Children's Art/Calendar Contest

Melanie Bohl  
Executive Director, Racine Weed and Seed  
262-681-7371  
moeboh@aol.com

Additional resources are available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), such as

- *Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods: Does It Lead to Crime?* NCJ 186049.
- *Evaluation of Boys & Girls Clubs in Public Housing*, NCJ 185559.
- *Keeping Illegal Activity Out of Rental Property: A Police Guide for Establishing Landlord Training Programs*, NCJ 148656.
- *National Training and Information Center: Empowering Communities To Fight Crime*, NCJ 182903.
- *Solving Crime Problems in Residential Neighborhoods: Comprehensive Changes in Design, Management, and Use*, NCJ 164488.

To order your copy of any of these publications, visit the NCJRS Web site ([www.ncjrs.org](http://www.ncjrs.org)); call 1-800-851-3420 or 301-519-6500 (local and international); or write NCJRS Publication Ordering, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000.



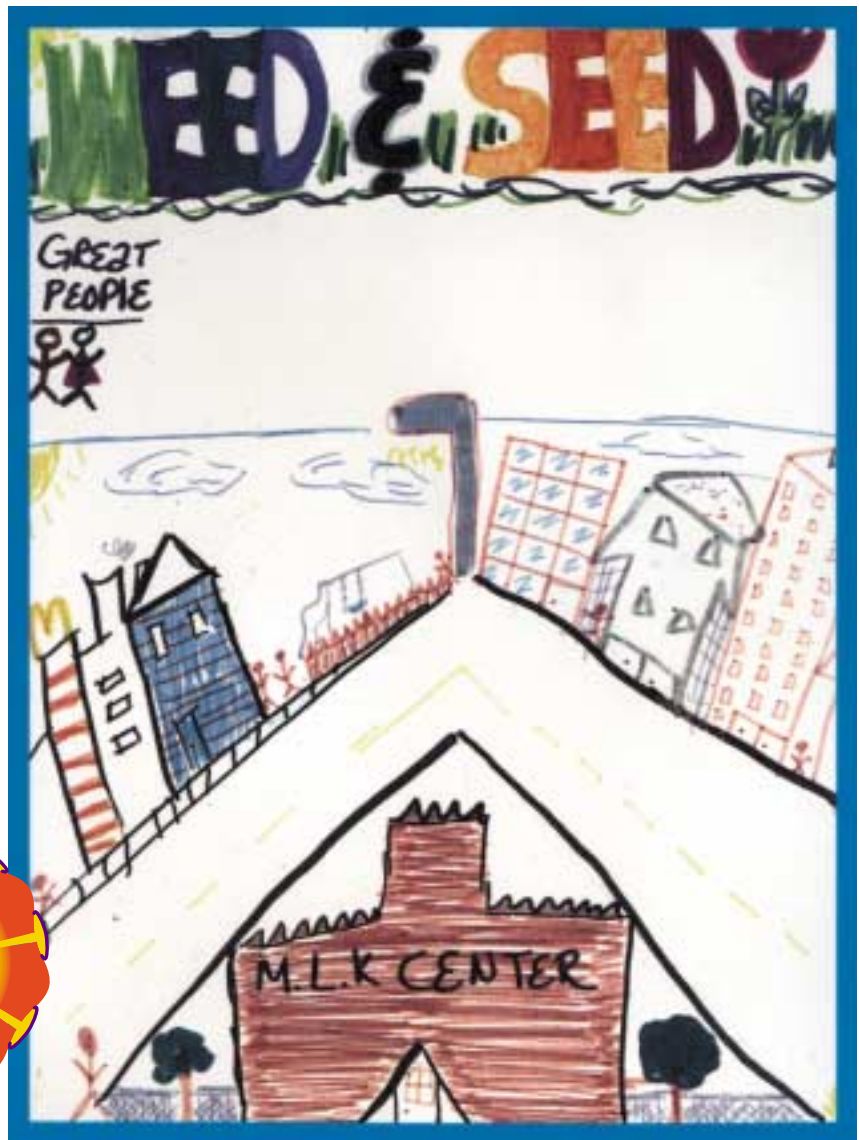
# Grand Prize Winner

2001 Racine Weed and Seed Neighborhood Calendar Contest

## COMMUNITY STANDARD:

Great people & great places make a great Weed & Seed

Artist: Tina Phillips  
Grade: 9



See page 18 for more details!

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Justice Programs  
*Executive Office for Weed and Seed*

Washington, DC 20531

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