

Inside this issue:

New Directions

Battersea chosen as first
United for Progress
Neighborhood 2

New Directions...continued 3

AmeriCorps Members...
continued 3

Candice Streett joined Virginia LISC as its new executive director in January of this year. She may be new to her role as executive director of Virginia LISC, but she's not new to her role as a community development advocate. Candice has spent more than two decades fighting for quality housing in the Commonwealth. With her wealth of experience, she knows positive development doesn't occur in a vacuum and she welcomes John Benesole, a vice president at Capital One, as chairman of LISC's Local Advisory Committee.

Both Candice and John's background as active community participants and advocates for quality housing made them obvious choices for their new roles at Virginia LISC said Greta Harris, vice president for the southeast region of LISC. "Candice is not only skilled in community development, but she's a proven visionary leader capable of looking beyond what's already been done," Harris said. "Add to that John's key technical expertise and reach in the business community--we've suited up a powerful team."

Candice, who comes to Virginia LISC as the state battles its way out of the economic downturn, lauds the organization for positively impacting lives through its programs. "LISC is a very strong change agent. LISC's resources have made a big difference in the environment of communities through collaborations with community development corporations," she said. "It has made great improvements in the quality and quantity of affordable housing in Richmond. We're lucky to have LISC. Not every community has that resource to bring together community development groups, government, business

Continued on page 3



Candice Streett working with volunteers

Meet the AmeriCorps Members

The Virginia LISC AmeriCorps members are performing services ElderHomes, Pathways, Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation and Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH). In this quarter's newsletter we are introducing members Jamaal Davis and Miriam Regan, both of whom are serving at Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (SCDHC).

Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (SCDHC) is a non-profit community development corporation based in the Old South District of Richmond. SCDHC was established in 1988, to help area residents obtain safe, clean and affordable

Continued on page 3

Battersea Neighborhood first UP Neighborhood

Petersburg's Battersea first neighborhood chosen for Virginia LISC improvement plan

Between the Appomattox River and Petersburg's main thoroughfare, Washington Street, sits the Battersea neighborhood. Residents of this area, with its prime location, historic buildings and local park, will now receive another asset: a voice.

Battersea residents will be asked how they want their neighborhood to look, including what services and businesses should be welcomed.

Battersea is the first neighborhood chosen for this quality of life improvement program by the Virginia Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). Virginia LISC will provide technical support, grant money and expertise and has selected Pathways, a Battersea-based non-profit to learn from residents and help put a plan in action. The initiative, called *United for Progress* or *UP Neighborhoods*, doesn't impose a plan, but rather poses questions, because every neighborhood is different.

"This is a citizen-led, neighborhood planning process," said Veronica Jemmott, senior program officer at Virginia LISC. "Many neighborhoods have been subjected to plans by universities or cities, here LISC is helping the neighborhood come up with its own plan and identify priorities."

In other cities, the "Sustainable Communities" programs have spawned outdoor markets on the West Coast and a small business and art incubator in Washington, D.C., each at the residents' request.

"This initiative is being done nationally," Jemmott explained. "We found building great physical structures in neighborhoods hasn't gone far enough to change the lives of the people in the neighborhoods, which may still have challenges with crime, teen pregnancy and other issues. We also found that low- and moderate-income wealth didn't appreciably improve at the same rate that the physical environment improved. This initiative deliberately and strategically works to support neighborhood

groups to build their own capacity, build a plan and implement it."

Jemmott said Pathways was a natural choice to be the hands-on community group to conduct the 50 to 100 interviews that will launch the project.

"They've been a part of this neighborhood for 14 years, Pathways is committed to Battersea," Jemmott said. "Pathways dedication and experience in this community made it hands down the best choice."

Dwala Ferrell, executive director of Pathways, said the organization is most interested in hearing from the community members during this process, which could last two years. "I hope that we have many members of the community involved in sharing their ideas, hopes and dreams," Ferrell said. "We are coming in with no preconceived notions of what we want out of the project. We hope to get lots of community participation and then make it happen together."



UNITED for PROGRESS
NEIGHBORHOODS

The initiative, called *United for Progress* or *UP Neighborhoods*, doesn't impose a plan, but rather poses questions, because every neighborhood is different....



Fulton Neighborhood of Richmond is next UP Neighborhood

Candice Streett and John Benesole....continued

Candice calls LISC's most valuable assets its partners, which is why she's pleased to come aboard at the same time LISC welcomes John Benesole as the new leader of its Local Advisory Committee.

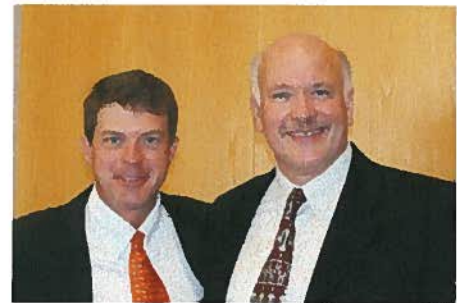
associations and faith-based organizations.”

Candice, who most recently served for almost a decade as deputy director of housing and director of external affairs at Virginia Supportive Housing, is most excited about LISC's sustainable communities program called the United for Progress Neighborhood initiative. This initiative chooses a local, active community organization to poll residents about what change they desire in their neighborhoods and helps the residents devise and implement a plan. “It is very exciting and brings about the conversion of business, governments, educators and the community. It moves them to a plan of active involvement at the neighborhood level. It is dynamic! It extends beyond improving buildings to improving the fabric of the community.”

John, who serves as a vice president and the chief technology officer for Capital One's U.S. card business unit, said the organization's work has personal significance to him. “My wife and I owned our first home in a neighborhood in transition and witnessed firsthand the dramatic impact that neighborhood revitalization efforts

can have on the families who work and live in those communities”.

“What's really powerful about Virginia LISC is how it brings together corporations, nonprofits and government entities to collectively build stronger communities. That collaboration among both the public and private sector is crucial in meeting our shared vision for driving meaningful community and economic development,” said John.



Harry Turton and John Benesole



Jamaal Davis cutting materials for ramps during Martin Luther King day service project

AmeriCorps Members....continued

housing. Its overall mission is to transform economically distressed neighborhoods into viable, thriving, and sustainable communities by providing quality affordable homes and home-ownership counseling services. SCDHC is also a leading HUD-approved housing counseling agency and a member of the HomeFree USA network of 80 affiliated housing counseling agencies.

Meet Jamaal

Jamaal Davis is learning first hand about the problems people in Richmond have leading up to the bank foreclosing on their home. Jamaal is serving as an Intake Specialist at SCDHC for his year of service as a Virginia LISC AmeriCorps member. Jamaal is on

Continued on page 4

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Miriam Regan building ramps during Martin Luther King day service project.

AmeriCorps Members....continued

the front line gathering clients' information, learning about their issues and about their late payments. He enters everything into a database and then sends out information to help clients know what to do next.

Jamaal is also currently in school working on a master in urban and regional planning. He feels his work at SCDHC is giving him everyday experience to apply to his school work. "I feel that serving as an AmeriCorps member at SCDHC has been a great and interesting experience and I have met a lot of new people".

Meet Miriam

Miriam Regan is working with the intake specialist in the office translating Spanish into English to answer questions about foreclosure. She also is working on a brochure for Spanish-speaking clients.

Miriam moved here from El Salvador almost 20 years ago with a bachelor's degree in architecture (although she is not licensed in Virginia). Prior to becoming an AmeriCorps member she was working as an assistant with a local architecture firm That is until the economy starting turning downward and she lost her job. Miriam immediately called her mortgage company to talk to them about her payments and they referred her to Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation for foreclosure counseling.

At SCDHC she met LaTanya Davis, a housing counselor for foreclosure prevention. Miriam told Ms. Davis that she was a hard worker and was looking for a new job. When Virginia LISC's AmeriCorps program started LaTanya gave her a call and encouraged her to apply. Now Miriam is helping others. She knows first hand how scary all of this can be. "I am enjoying helping others, especially translating for the Spanish-speaking population, and would love to continue with this line of work in the future".

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build communities