



# THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

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## San Francisco Housing Authority's Hope SF Leadership Academy



*Leadership Academy participants on a study tour of Lions Creek Crossing in Oakland, CA. Photo: SFHA*

the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Housing. The program is open to any SFHA public housing resident over 18 years of age and living in a HOPE SF site. The Academy covers the housing redevelopment process and teaches leadership skills to help participants connect with and organize their fellow residents. Program graduates educate others about the redevelopment process. At the Sunnyside Housing Project residents staffed a revitalization table at a community basketball tournament to provide information to young people and ensure that residents understand the HOPE SF process. Similarly, a group of graduates from Hunters View Housing organized an afternoon of activities where residents enjoyed card games and food while learning about revitalization. In addition, each graduate is required to bring at least one other person to development meetings, which has markedly increased attendance.

HOPE SF Leadership Academy recently graduated its third class of residents. The positive and far-reaching impact of the program is clear: meeting attendance has increased, and residents' needs are being addressed. For example, residents of the Potrero developments got approved for a community garden. Now this garden is being used as a model for future sites. Alumni have also used their new skills to gain volunteer and employment opportunities in the housing development arena. Six out of the 29 alumni have been paid for their participation and input through positions with the HOPE SF developer teams, the SFHA, and a local organization which focuses on community revitalization.

Other alumni say the program helped them gain a renewed sense of self-esteem and empowerment. One graduate, Uzuri Pease-Greene, even credits the Leadership Academy with helping her stay clean and sober. Since graduating from the program, Pease-Greene was elected vice president of her tenants association, obtained a job as a painter in her community, and then was hired directly by her HOPE SF developer as a full-time Junior Community Builder. She recently returned to school to obtain a bachelor's degree in business management. "I looked at our Academy instructors and thought, 'I can do that! If they went to school then I can go to school too.' I want to teach about leadership and maybe I'll teach the Academy someday."

San Francisco's program is a shining example of the wide-ranging effects that a public housing authority's (PHA's) commitment to residents' education and involvement can have on individuals—as well as the community as a whole.

To learn more: <http://hope-sf.org/resident-leadership.php>

To learn more about HOPE VI: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/>

## UPCOMING DATES

- » **February 15, 2011 - 2pm-3:30pm**  
Healthy Neighborhoods webinar:  
Caring for the Mind  
<http://bit.ly/eKpekg>
- » **March 15, 2011 - 2pm-3:30pm**  
Healthy Neighborhoods webinar:  
Healthy Aging  
<http://bit.ly/eKpekg>

# New Bill Would Secure Future of Choice Neighborhoods

Recently, New Jersey Senator Robert Menendez introduced the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Act of 2010. Based on a proposal from the Department in 2009, the Choice Neighborhoods program would work to improve the condition of troubled communities. Congress allowed HUD use of up to \$65 million in HOPE VI funds for the Choice Neighborhoods pilot that begins this year. The Senator's efforts would make Choice Neighborhoods permanent, with enough funding to transform neighborhoods and improve the lives of future generations.

The program will change some distressed neighborhoods and public and HUD-assisted housing projects into viable and sustainable mixed-income neighborhoods. Choice Neighborhoods builds on the successes and lessons learned from revitalizing public housing under HOPE VI. Through HOPE VI, HUD learned that only focusing on the distressed public housing site will not provide the desired results for residents and the surrounding neighborhood. Choice Neighborhoods allows grantees to address other HUD-assisted housing and requires a more holistic plan for the whole neighborhood.

Choice Neighborhoods will emphasize local community planning while providing support for maintaining and improving public and HUD-assisted housing. Soon, HUD will be announcing awardees for the first Choice Neighborhoods Planning and Implementation grants.

Eligible applicants for these grants include local public housing authorities, local governments, non-profit, and for-profit organizations. Selected projects will help transform neighborhoods into places where people choose to live and can access education programs, services, businesses, recreation spaces, and public transportation.

In addition, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative is an important part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative led by the White House. This multi-agency Federal initiative uses a local strategy to support communities in developing the tools they need to revitalize neighborhoods with a high concentration of poverty.

To read Senator Menendez's Act: <http://bit.ly/eflZrU>

To read about the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative: <http://bit.ly/c3nCNB>

To read about the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative: <http://bit.ly/gS5hD>

# TIPS

## Financial Education



The current financial and housing crises make clear how important an understanding of finance is for helping people and communities hold on to their money and personal property. The more you know about credit, consumer rights, and banking services, the more likely you will be able to steer clear of risks, save for your dreams, and better manage what you already have. One place to begin is with the Money Smart program.

Money Smart is a financial education course from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). It is designed to help people who may never have had bank accounts learn how to use banks, credit, and money to improve their financial lives.

There are two ways to use Money Smart. It can be taught in a classroom or small group setting, or you can study at your own pace with a version that can be downloaded to your computer or used on the Internet. The Money Smart units cover topics such as bank and credit union services, checking accounts, spending plans or budgets, consumer rights, the importance of saving, loans, and credit. For the classroom version, all the units can be taught in order or you can pick and choose the ones of interest.

Money Smart is available **free of charge**. Your resident council or PHA can sponsor a series of workshops or one on a particular topic of interest to residents. You can contact the FDIC to help locate local organizations or trainers to conduct the training.

For more information, go to: <http://bit.ly/hu1HIQ>

For information on the individual Money Smart modules, click on Money Smart Adult Financial Education Curriculum. For assistance in identifying organizations that sponsor financial education in your area, click on "Contacts."

## Contact us:

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## HELP CORNER

Does your savings plan need a boost? America Saves is a nationwide campaign led by nonprofit, corporate, and government groups that want to help individuals and families save and build wealth. The Web site offers information, advice, and encouragement on topics including paying down debt, building an emergency fund, saving for big ticket items like cars, saving for a home, saving for an education, or saving for retirement. While a lot of the information and activities are on-line, there are also some local groups, which may offer events or get-togethers to support saving.

To learn more: <http://www.americasaves.org/>