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CHA Residents Take Steps Towards New Career Path, New Lives

11 Honored at Hospitality Academy Awards Ceremony

CHICAGO (August 4, 2005) – On their way to new careers and new lives, eleven CHA residents were honored last night at the Hospitality Academy Awards Ceremony, the culmination of a comprehensive job training and placement program in the hospitality industry, developed through a partnership of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA), the

Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), and other local agencies. The program assists graduates with leads in hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues like Navy Pier.

“We believe strongly in providing opportunities to CHA residents across the city and are proud to see tonight’s graduates and interns on the road to new careers,” said Terry Peterson, CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority. “CHA is fortunate to have built a partnership with the Hospitality Academy – which is in fact one of many ways we are reaching out to residents and opening the door to self-sufficiency. We applaud this year’s graduates and their families for their hard work and determination and for seizing this opportunity to succeed.”

The Hospitality Academy hosted the awards ceremony last night at the Prairie Center at Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Conference Center at 2233 S. Martin Luther King Drive. The ceremony was attended by Leticia Peralta Davis, CEO of the MPEA, Terry Peterson, CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority and State Representative Kenneth Dunkin. While two CHA residents graduated from the 6-month intensive job training program for careers in the hospitality industry last night, another nine residents will embark on an 8-week internship phase of the program, and are slated to graduate next March.

“Since 1994, the MPEA has helped dozens of CHA residents on their way to a new career path,” said Leticia Peralta Davis, CEO of the MPEA. “Through a comprehensive curriculum and job referral program, we assist graduates in receiving the skills they need to be successful in the work place. It is our hope that the Academy will give the graduates the competitive edge that they need.”

“As a result of going through the program, I was able to get a good job downtown in the Loop,” said Gloria Williams, a CHA resident who graduated last night from the program. “My new job has benefits and a 401(k) plan. Through the program, I learned how to interview and represent myself professionally—it changed my life tremendously. I taught my children what I learned at the academy and now they have jobs too.”

CHA residents are admitted into the program through referrals by CHA move-in providers who help residents meet job requirements that allow them to move in to new mixed-income developments. Participants also must meet a few basic requirements, including passing a reading test, passing a drug test and going through an interview.

In order to graduate from the program, students must complete two phases: the first, an 8-week program of 30 hours a week earning a \$6.50 per hour stipend where they are immersed in a variety of topics, from Business Ethics to Business Writing and how to have a professional image; the second phase involves an 18-week internship in which the participant learns on the job in the hospitality field and also attends a bi-weekly meeting at the Hospitality Academy where they learn problem solving and teamwork as well as job success and promotion.

The Hospitality Academy was founded in 1994 by the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA). There have been 25 classes to date. Class size varies; maximum is 30 participants. There are generally two classes per year, one in February and one in June.

For information about the program, please call the MPEA at (312) 791-6237 or visit www.mpea.com.

Note to Editors: Photographs from the Hospitality Academy Graduation Ceremony can be downloaded from the following websites:

WEBSITE: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/DunkinPeraltaGRAD.JPG>

SUGGESTED CAPTION: CHA resident Gloria Williams (center) proudly holds a certificate of achievement for completing the Hospitality Employment Training Program through the Hospitality Academy. She received her Food Service and Bar Code licenses and was one of eleven CHA residents recognized during a ceremony at the Hyatt Conference Center at McCormick Place. On hand to congratulate her were State Representative Ken Dunkin (left) and the CEO of the Metropolitan Pier & Exposition Authority, Leticia Peralta Davis (right). The CHA encourages residents to seek training opportunities in growing, potentially lucrative fields like the hospitality industry which includes a wide range of possible career paths.

WEBSITE: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/SueAndyGRAD.JPG>

SUGGESTED CAPTION: Hospitality Academy Director Susan Wasylik (left) and Andrew Teitelman, Deputy Managing Director of Relocation and Supportive Services at the CHA (right) congratulate CHA resident Gloria Williams (center) for completing the Hospitality Employment Training Program through the Hospitality Academy. She received her Food Service and Bar Code licenses and was one of eleven CHA residents recognized during a ceremony at the Hyatt Conference Center at McCormick Place.

WEBSITE: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/ErielaFavors.jpg>

SUGGESTED CAPTION: Eriela Favors was one of eleven CHA residents recognized during a ceremony at the Hyatt Conference Center at McCormick Place. Ms. Favors completed the initial 8-week training through the Hospitality Employment Training Program through the Hospitality Academy and will now move on to the second phase of the program, an 18-week internship.

WEBSITE:

<http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/CHAResidentsLaTonyaWrightandLatriceGrant.jpg>

SUGGESTED CAPTION: LaTonya Wright (left) and Latrice Grant were two of eleven CHA residents recognized during a ceremony at the Hyatt Conference Center at McCormick Place. Ms. Wright and Ms. Grant both completed the initial 8-week training through the Hospitality Employment Training Program through the Hospitality Academy and will now move on to the second phase of the program, an 18-week internship.

WEBSITE: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/TerryPeterson.jpg>

SUGGESTED CAPTION: Terry Peterson, CEO of the Chicago Housing Authority, addresses the audience at a ceremony hosted by the Hospitality Employment Training Program of the Hospitality Academy at McCormick Place which honored eleven CHA residents last night.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE

*TASTING A DREAM

Each photo has a suggested caption. Photos are courtesy of CHA and no photographer credit is necessary. If you have trouble using the photo, please contact Amy Pickett at 312-822-0505 or apickett@mkcpr.com .

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Do you have a vision for CHANGE?