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Hospitality Academy Provides Job Training, Opportunities for 20 CHA Residents

Program Prepares Residents for Careers in Hospitality Industry

CHICAGO (July 28, 2006) –Twenty Chicago Housing Authority residents were honored Wednesday for their completion of the Hospitality Academy Training Program at an award ceremony held at Navy Pier. A one-of-a-kind partnership between the City Colleges of Chicago, the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) and the CHA, the Hospitality Academy provides the training residents need to prepare for new careers that will provide financial independence and family stability..

“The hotel and restaurant businesses are two of the most exciting and prevalent in Chicago and the Hospitality Academy helps provide training for residents and skilled staff for businesses,” said Terry Peterson, CEO of the CHA. “The partnerships created here, and throughout the Plan for Transformation, ensure the success of residents living in CHA developments.”

While 20 CHA residents were honored Wednesday night, seven residents are graduating and thirteen are moving on to the intensive internship portion of the Academy. The Hospitality Academy prepares residents for careers at hotels, restaurants and at various location including Navy Pier and McCormick Place. Careers in these fields offer residents the opportunity for advancement, competitive salaries and benefit, in addition to flexible hours.

Graduation from the Hospitality Academy is contingent on the student’s completion of two phases of learning. The first portion of training is an eight-week program, consisting of 30 hours of training per week where residents learn business ethics, business writing and professional presentation in the workplace. They are paid \$6.50 during this period and are encouraged to begin saving for the future.

The second aspect of the Hospitality Academy is an 18-week internship where students learn-by-doing at job locations throughout Chicago. They also meet bi-weekly to learn team building and problem solving skills. By engaging residents in the internship program, the Hospitality Academy provides businesses with skilled workers ready to hit the ground running once hired.

“It is always exciting to see another class of CHA residents graduate from our Academy and then begin exciting new careers in Chicago's vital and vibrant hospitality industry,” said Leticia Peralta Davis, Chief Executive Officer of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, the agency which owns and operates McCormick Place and Navy Pier. “We are especially pleased to continue our partnership – now becoming an Academy tradition – with the CHA through our career-focused Hospitality Academy program.”

Service Connectors provide referrals and options for residents looking for employment, including training opportunities like the Academy, as well as transportation and child care assistance to help make a smooth transition into the workforce. They also help residents meet the Hospitality Academy requirements which include an interview, a literacy test and drug screening.

“I would like to personally congratulate all of these residents for their dedication to achieving their goals,” Peterson said.

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

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Note For Editors: Photos of the Ceremony are available at the following websites.

Photo #1: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/hosgradthomas.jpg>

Suggested Caption: “With help from Elmo, Hospitality Academy graduate and class representative Michelle Thomas congratulates her fellow classmates and honors their teachers at a ceremony held Wednesday, July 26 at Navy Pier.”

Photo #2: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/Radiantclassgrads.jpg>

Suggested Caption: “Graduates from the Hospitality Academy celebrated their achievement Wednesday, July 26 at Navy Pier.”

Photo #3: <http://www.mkcpr.com/filebin/staterepjefferies.jpg>

Suggested Caption: “State Representative Elga Jefferies (26th), addresses and congratulates residents graduating from the Hospitality Academy on Wednesday, July 26 at Navy Pier.”