



View From the Hill

Reservoir Hill . . . A Community Blooming with Opportunity!

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, 2001 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217; Tel: (410) 225-7547; Fax: (410) 225-7455; www.reservoirhill.net

Community Briefing September 2009

August Was A Big Month for Reservoir Hill Events

Over 200 residents attended **National Night Out** on 4 August at the Reservoir Street Park along with a number of city officials. There was a great performance by the band Simply Black, and the DJ played some wonderful music that got everyone dancing. The food was great thanks to the volunteers that helped. We won't name people specifically because there were a lot and we don't want to leave anyone out, but we do want to give special thanks to Ruthie Wilder and the residents of the Reservoir Hill Mutual Homes for not only sponsoring this event but for doing the shopping, assisting with the set up and clean up, and for serving the food.

The annual **School Giveaway and Basketball Tournament** and the **Fourth Annual Resource Fair** were held on the same day. RHIC, Rodell Baley-El and Francine Bennet sponsored the School Giveaway and Basketball Tournament and St. Francis Neighborhood Center sponsored the Resource Fair. Over 1,000 people, mostly young, took part in the Giveaway and Basketball Tournament. RHIC offers a special thanks to Dream Nation for hosting their parade at the Giveaway, and neighborhood resident Jawana Greene and the MTA for distributing scholarships for school clothes. RHIC, John Eager Howard Recreation Center, Pennrose Management and Linden Liquors provided in-kind donations to support the Giveaway. The Resource Fair provided backpacks to school children, and health and education information to local families, Over 300 people participated, enjoying food and hearing some great music with a DJ, live entertainment, and a marching band. Baltimore Community Foundation and PNC Bank provided support to the Resource Fair. There was a constant stream of people roaming the community, and hundreds of kids are better prepared for school this year than they would have been without these events. In the end, it's all about the kids and the community.

Around the Community

RHIC Member Organization Dues Are Due

The annual \$75.00 dues for each Member Organization are now due. Only Member Organizations that have paid their dues may nominate or vote for candidates for the RHIC Board of Directors the 2009 Annual Meeting to be held on 27 October. Please make checks payable to Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, and mail to: 2001 Park Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21217. Checks can also be dropped off Monday through Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Please call ahead to confirm someone will be in the office. Occasionally, all staff end up at meetings or on projects at the same time.

Project Contact: Rick Gwynallen, (443) 984-4058, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net



Reservoir Hill is a Healthy Neighborhoods community

Upper Park Avenue Fountain Renovation

The fountain in the 2200 block of Park Avenue is currently under renovation and should be completed by the middle of September. Fountaincrafters, the fountain's original maker, is performing the current renovations. The project is funded by Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

New Signs Along Whitelock Street

RHIC installed three new signs along the Whitelock corridor with the assistance of Tyrone Sol of Next Level Boxing. The signs were designed and created by Kids on the Hill. Tyrone Sol and Father Tom Composto constructed the frames for the signs. The signs read as follows: "Recycle, Reduce and Reuse," "Associate, Participate and Communicate," and "Pride in Reservoir Hill is picking up." These signs emphasizing recycling and sanitation are a part of RHIC's extensive environmental awareness and community organizing programs.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

New School Year Underway

John Eager Howard Elementary School and the Parent-Teacher-Community Organization (PTCO) will host its Back to School Night on 16 September at 5:30 pm. Long-time neighborhood resident Georgia Winder is our new parent liaison, and we look forward to working with her this year along with our other partners, Tellin' Stories Project from Washington, D.C. and the John Eager Howard Recreation Center. Anyone wishing to help with youth and school activities should contact the RHIC office.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

St. Francis Summer Newsletter Available

St. Francis Neighborhood Center has released its Summer 2009 newsletter. For a copy, contact the St. Francis office or go to the St. Francis website:

<http://www.stfranciscenter.org/category/publications/newsletter/>

Project Contact: Sarah Tarhigi, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

Join the Friends of Druid Hill Park

Druid Hill Park is a gem not only for the Westside of Baltimore but the whole city. Still, it's our backyard, and we encourage everyone to take part in activities hosted there, and just go run, hike, or picnic there to enjoy the beauty of the park. But also, you can help promote and improve the park by joining the Friends of Druid Hill Park. Check the group out at <http://DruidHillpark.org> or call 410-383-0603. You can also visit the Friends on My Space: <http://www.myspace.com/druidhillpark>

Project Contact: Anne Draddy, (443) 984-4058, friendsofdruidhillpark@gmail.com

Housing

Healthy Neighborhoods Loan Pool Interim Financing

Healthy Neighborhoods has been informed that the Federal Office of Thrift Supervision has directed Bradford Bank to no longer provide interim financing for the Healthy Neighborhoods Loan Pool. Bradford Bank provided interim financing for and managed the loan program since its inception. They are working to identify a source of interim financing for the program. This action will have no impact on borrowers or loans which are closed or homes under renovation. Bradford will continue to manage and service their loans.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Healthy Neighborhoods Loan Rate at 3.65% - Lowest Rate Yet!

The current rate for the Healthy Neighborhoods Acquisition/Rehab and Refinance and Rehab loan is 4.27 percent. Reservoir Hill homeowners interested in completing \$5K to 40K in home repairs should take advantage of an all time low rate of 2.25 percent.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

CDBG'S First-Time Homebuyer Program

Beginning 1 August, the Office of Homeownership established a new program designed to assist first time homebuyers. First time Baltimore homebuyers with a counseling certificate from a City Approved Counseling Agency are eligible. The program called the Community Block Grant Program, can give qualified first time homebuyers \$5,000 toward down payment and settlement expenses.

Upon receiving a counseling certificate, the borrower can then find a property and sign a contract to purchase. Once executing a contract, the borrower must bring that contract back to the Counseling Agency to have the CDBG program application completed. The property must be inspected utilizing an HQS inspection. Please be absolutely certain that there is no peeling, flaking, chipping paint inside or outside the purchased property.

Additionally, active City employees may already qualify to receive \$3,000 in home buying incentive funds. If you attend the Eastside Trolley Tour September 12th at City College High school, you may qualify for another \$3,000. Also, if you purchase before November 30, you may qualify for the \$8,000 Homeownership Federal Tax Credit. The new CDBG program has income limitations and you must be within certain income limitations to qualify for this program. For information contact Carl Cleary.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Permit Fee Changes Effective July 1, 2009

Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development has announced changes in its permit fee schedule. To view the new fees go to: http://static.baltimorehousing.org/pdf/permits_fees.pdf Baltimore Housing's Office of Permits & Building Inspections enforces the Baltimore City Building Code, as well as state laws pertaining to construction and occupancy. This office issues building permits and provides subsequent inspections for; construction, alteration, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work in both commercial and residential structures. File your completed application in person at: The One- Stop Shop, 417 E. Fayette St., Room 100. Not sure if your project requires a permit? Call 410-396-3360,

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Some Advice for First Time Homebuyers and Tips on Refinancing

Buying your first house is exciting and filled with details. Recently, RHIC prepared some simple guidelines for those involved in their first purchase of a home, suggestions that will help provide a basis for sound decision making as you enter the home buying process. The paper is called "Buying Your First House." In addition, RHIC offers some tips for those considering refinancing in "The Dos and Don'ts of Refinancing." You can both of these informational sheets from the RHIC website at <http://www.reservoirhill.net/>

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

"Hope for Homeowners" Program to Help Struggling Families Keep Their Homes

The *HOPE for Homeowners* program will refinance mortgages for borrowers who are having difficulty making their payments, but can afford a new loan insured by HUD's Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The program is available only to owner occupants and will offer 30-year fixed rate mortgages. The *HOPE for Homeowners* program began 1 October 2008 and ends 30 September 2011.

For more information, go online to: <http://www.hud.gov/hopeforhomeowners/>

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

American Dream Downpayment

Baltimore City has announced funding for BALTIMORE CITY "ADDI" a homebuyer assistance grant being made available for Baltimore city residents to help reduce the upfront money obstacle that prevents many would be first time homebuyers from buying. The maximum \$10,000 grants have homebuyer education requirements and can be used with other buyer assistance programs.

Project Contact: Baltimore City - Office of Homeownership, (410) 396-3124

Greening Reservoir Hill

RHIC Tree Canopy Project Update

RHIC has ordered 46 street trees to be planted and 26 stumps to be removed across six streets in Reservoir Hill during autumn 2009. The tree requests were based on places that have empty tree wells and areas where people requested new trees and agreed to maintain them. We will be having a neighborhood community planting day in October on Eutaw Place. Please let Christiana Usenza, RHIC Environmental Projects Coordinator, know if you have interest in volunteering for this.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Volunteer Day at Garden

On Saturday, 26 September, RHIC is hosting a third (Community Greening Resource Network) CGRN Garden Action Day!! This one will be at the Sculpture Garden and the Morris Street Flower Garden. Come help us to weed, plant, clean, and fix the bricks in the fountains from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm! RSVP to Christiana Usenza so she knows how many gloves tools to bring.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Free Trees for Residents in a Healthy Neighborhoods Communities!

TreeBaltimore is a part of Mayor Sheila Dixon's Greener Baltimore initiative. This fall, TreeBaltimore is launching its TreeNeighborhood program to provide FREE trees to residents of designated Healthy Neighborhoods. In order to take advantage of this special deal, neighborhoods must order a minimum of ten trees. Because of its designation as a Healthy Neighborhood, trees for Reservoir Hill ordered through RHIC TreeNeighborhood program will be free.

Tree orders will be collected through September 14th, and trees will be delivered to Reservoir Hill in October. Upon delivery, RHIC will host a planting party and will provide tools to those who need them. For more information about the TreeNeighborhood program contact Christiana Usenza order a tree, let Christiana know how many you would like and if you want a **shade tree** or **flowering tree** and if you plan to plant it in your **front** or **back yard**? For more information about TreeBaltimore, contact Anne Draddy, TreeBaltimore Coordinator, at anne.draddy@baltimorecity.gov.

Trees planted in the right place save on energy costs, provide shade, and cool and clean our air and water. TreeBaltimore's TreeNeighborhood program represents a great opportunity for you to beautify your neighborhood, increase the value of your property, and reduce your energy costs. Join us in creating a Greener Baltimore!

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Reservoir Street Park Renovation to Start After 11 September

While RHIC has not been supplied with an exact start date, the renovations for Reservoir Street Park are slated to begin after 11 September. The Park's design will include more green space, handicapped accessibility, more sidewalks and a larger area to hold community events.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

The Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge (BNEC) needs your voice!

The Office of Sustainability, in partnership with the Baltimore Community Foundation, is launching BNEC to motivate households to reduce their energy use and cost. In its initial phase, BNEC will be a 9-month pilot program in eight Baltimore communities designed to raise awareness, reduce residential energy use, and stimulate demand for energy conservation services. The program is made possible by neighborhood captains who commit to spreading the word about their own steps towards energy efficiency and share the available resources so others may make take similar steps. Captains will also score a FREE energy upgrade for their home, a bag of energy-conserving goodies, and a short informative and empowering training session. Become a Neighborhood Energy Captain today! Reservoir Hill needs you!

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Recycling Update

RHIC was awarded a Recycle More grant from the Baltimore Community Foundation. With these funds we were able to supply 80 free bins to Reservoir Hill residents who cannot afford them. We were able to increase our publicity around recycling. And we hired Kids on the Hill to design, paint and construct two new signs to encourage people to recycle and to keep the neighborhood clean. These have been placed along Whitelock Avenue.

RHIC continues to offer recycling bins to Reservoir Hill residents. Just call or come by during our office hours to order or purchase one. The City now offers lids for the 25-gallon recycling bins. These are an additional \$3. If you would like a lid from the city, you can order through RHIC.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

RHIC Tool Shed

Available tools include: hoes, rakes, metal rakes, brooms, shovels, pick axes, trowels, wheelbarrows, and cultivators. Large lawn & leaf bags are also available. Residents may check out tools for no more than two weeks at a time. The tools can be signed out and picked up at the RHIC office on the "Hill" at 2001 Park Avenue from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. It's best to call ahead. You will be responsible for returning the tools to the office in good condition when you are finished so other people can use them too. Best wishes on all your projects.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Around the City and State

New Code Enforcement Measures

Neighborhoods are finally getting some relief from housing code violations. The Permits and Code Enforcement Division of Baltimore Housing has instituted aggressive new measures to ensure that all required permits are obtained before any construction work begins in Baltimore City. For the new rules and regulations, permits, and searches, visit: http://www.baltimorehousing.org/ps_permits.asp

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Resources

Healthy Neighborhoods Loans - Remodel Your Home at the Lowest Rate in 4 Years

Get a low-interest Healthy Neighborhoods loan to remodel your home! Free architectural advice and low-interest rehab loans are available through Healthy Neighborhoods. Other exceptional loan features are: an ability to borrow more than the after-rehab value of the home, as well as no mortgage insurance requirement.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Looking for Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, etc.?

The Mount Royal Improvement Association maintains a very good directory of contractors and other workers recommended by Bolton Hill residents. You can view the directory at http://www.boltonhill.org/resources/r_hird_listings.html

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Calendar of Events

Historic Arabbers Sunday Market – Westside Market Open Every Sunday

As of 3 May, the Historic Arabbers Sunday Market is open every Sunday until October from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm at Legends Park at Fremont Avenue and Laurens Street. Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Redevelopment collaborative, the market offers fresh locally grown fruits and vegetables, flowers, herbs and spices, an international food courts, and arts and crafts market, and music by local Gospel choirs. Reservoir Hill folks, this Westside market is only a little over a mile away!

Project Contact: Linda Richardson, (410) 669-5397, backacre@live.com

Crime Prevention for Youth – 16 and 23 September

John E. Howard Recreation Center is deeply committed to saving our youth through education and crime prevention programs. The center will host two presentations by City Deputies to help young people understand how they can be a part of preventing crime. The first will be for females and will be on 16 September from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. The second will be for males and will be held on 23 September from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Both will be held at John Eager Howard Recreation Center, 2100 Brookfield Avenue.

Project Contact: Carolyn Newton, (410) 396-7849, carolyn.newton@baltimorecity.gov

Back-To-School Night – 16 September

John Eager Howard Elementary School and the Parent-Teacher-Community Organization (PTCO) will host its Back to School Night on 16 September at 5:30 pm. Anyone wishing to help with youth and school activities should contact the RHIC office.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Next Reservoir Hill Peace Patrol Walk – 21 September

The Reservoir Hill Peace Patrol will hold its next walk on 21 September. The walks commence at 7:00 pm from St. Francis Neighborhood Center at 2405 Linden Avenue. Peace Patrol members are volunteers who patrol their communities. Residents do not take enforcement action; they only observe. Peace Patrol volunteers do not carry weapons and are encouraged to avoid confrontation.

Project Contact: Joe Lazazzera, (410) 669-4060, grlazazzera@verizon.net

Volunteer Day at Garden – 26 September

On Saturday, 26 September, RHIC is hosting a third (Community Greening Resource Network) CGRN Garden Action Day!! This one will be at the Sculpture Garden and the Morris Street Flower Garden. Come help us to weed, plant, clean, and fix the bricks in the fountains from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm! RSVP to Christiana Usenza so she knows how many gloves tools to bring.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, (410) 225-7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

St. Francis' 1st Annual Fall Fiesta Gala – 26 September

St. Francis Neighborhood Center will honor the Baltimore City Police Department at its 1st Annual Fall Fiesta Gala. The Gala will be held Saturday, 26 September from 7:00 pm – 11:00 pm at Café Azafran on the Johns Hopkins University campus, 3700 San Martin Drive, Baltimore, Maryland 21218. The Gala includes Latin Ballroom Dance Instruction, Live Music – Big Band Caliente, a Silent Auction, Mexican Buffett, Free wine and beer, and raffles and games. There is free parking in the garage adjacent to the Café Azafran. Tickets: \$75 for the general public. \$55 for Baltimore City Police Department personnel and St. Francis center members. For more information or to purchase tickets, call the St. Francis office or go online to <http://www.stfranciscenter.org/2009/05/fall-fiesta-gala/>

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

Chamber Music at First Unitarian Church – 9 October

On Friday, 9 October 2009 at 8:00 pm, the 2009-2010 Concert Series opens with Peabody Faculty member Courtney Orlando, violinist, leading other faculty and students in a performance of *Contemporary Strings* featuring Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklaerte Nacht* for string sextet, and Lisa Bielawa's piece for singing violinist, "Kafka Songs." The concert is free and open to the public. Contributions will benefit the Historic Niemann Organ Restoration Fund. Location: The Enoch Pratt Parish Hall, First Unitarian Church of Baltimore, Charles and Franklin Sts. For information contact musiccommittee@firstunitarian.net

Project Contact: musiccommittee@firstunitarian.net

RHIC Annual Meeting – 27 October

RHIC's 2009 Annual Meeting will held on Tuesday, 27 October, doors opening at 6:30 pm. The location is to be announced.

Project Contact: John Ruffin, (410) 225-7547, jruffin@reservoirhill.net

Next Homebuyer Workshop – 28 October

The next homebuyer workshop is scheduled for 28 October from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at St. Francis Neighborhood Center, 2405 Linden Avenue. The workshops provide a broad overview of each step of the home buying process, including budgeting and affordability, working with realtors, purchase and sale agreements, credit and credit reports, mortgages and the mortgage process, home inspections, settlement and closing costs, and post purchase counseling. The workshops are free, but pre-registration is required.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

2009 Poinsettia Tour – 5 December

Upper Eutaw-Madison Neighborhood Association will once again sponsor the Poinsettia Tour, a holiday tour of historic homes on Eutaw Place and Madison Avenue to take place on Saturday, 5 December 2009, Noon – 4:00 pm. Planning is underway. Save the date on your calendar!

Project Contact: Cynthia Lewis, (202) 327-0003, cmajor@jhmi.edu

Use This Link to Make a Donation to RHIC Online! Thank You!

<http://www.reservoirhill.net/donate.htm>

Any questions relative to the policies or programs of RHIC should be directed to Executive Director John Henry Ruffin at 410.225.7547, or by email to jruffin@reservoirhill.net.

Mission

RHIC unites, empowers, and mobilizes residents and organizations as a vehicle by which to define and take action on issues common to the Reservoir Hill Community.

Goal

To revitalize the physical and human infrastructure of Reservoir Hill without resulting in full-scale gentrification and significant displacement, including rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings; alleviating poverty and its attendant problems, including, sanitation, public safety, education, low homeownership, and unemployment; and making the organized, informed voice of residents influential and effective.

Strategy

As an umbrella organization, the foundation of RHIC's approach is to aggregate the power of local associations and institutions through a community-wide infrastructure for educating residents, training leaders, promoting mutual support among community associations, developing common perspectives and strategy, and implementing collective projects and campaigns. The underlying principles of this strategic approach are that organized people and economic development lead to community empowerment; empowerment achieved as a result of networking, combining talents and resources, and wielding the power of an educated, united citizenry in a program grounded in economic and social equity.

Reservoir Hill is a



Community