LMHA’s Special Programs department recently held a training and professional development program for LMHA staff to increase cultural awareness about Louisville’s Somali Bantu immigrant population. The Somali Bantu are now the largest immigrant population living in LMHA communities. "The presentation was designed to promote inter-cultural communication among LMHA staff and to help address the unique challenges facing the Somali Bantu population," said Camille Robinson, Community Supportive Services Coordinator, who organized and helped conduct the program. Other speakers included: Matt Kull, KY Office of Refugees; Mohammad Karow, KY Somali Bantu Community; and, Mary Touray, Presbyterian Community Center. A wide range of topics including the historical context of the Somali Bantu immigration movement to the United States, Somali Bantu social and cultural norms, and the needs of the Somali Bantu community were discussed. Over 30 staff members from Special Programs and other LMHA departments attended the presentation that was held at the Liberty Green Community Center. Special thanks to Kathryn Tillett, a Kent School of Social Work intern, for developing the program.

Twelve students from the University of Missouri spent their spring break working alongside Meyzeek Middle School students to create a colorful new mural in Smoketown. Metro United Way helped the Missouri students connect with students in Meyzeek’s Collaborative After School Program (CLASP) as part of an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) project. ASB programs provide college students with volunteer opportunities that can make a real impact on the community they serve. The students chose to visit Louisville after being inspired by the city’s wide array of health-focused initiatives. Meyzeek’s CLASP students have a visible memory of the week they spent with their “painting mentors” as the mural brightens up the side of the new Dollar Plus Healthy in a Hurry Corner Store on Preston Street. Dollar Plus leases the building from LMHA.

One of the most satisfying aspects of my position here at LMHA is working with staff to create new housing and innovative programs that respond to the needs of our residents. From complex, multi-year projects like the recently awarded Sheppard Square HOPE VI grant, to Liberty Green that received a design award from the Kentuckiana Masonry Institute and silver LEED designation for the Community Center - our staff continually generates creative approaches to meet the complex challenges we face at LMHA.

What often doesn’t make headlines though – at least outside of this agency - is the smaller, inventive endeavors that constantly take place throughout LMHA. Two examples in April were the professional development training held by our Special Programs department that increased our staff’s understanding of the Somali Bantu population living at LMHA sites, and the Earth Day Plant Sale for LMHA employees that raised funds to provide educational programming for Smoketown youth this summer at the St. Peter Claver Garden.

Never underestimate the power of the original thinking you bring to your job, and how it impacts the lives of the residents we serve. Your creativity is how we continually uphold excellence in the public housing sector, while launching programs that promote inter-cultural awareness and the importance of good stewardship. I extend my personal thanks to each and every one of you for your part in creating these successful efforts.
LMHA Earns Masonary Design Awards

The Kentuckiana Masonary Institute (KMI) recently presented LMHA with two prestigious awards at their 31st Annual Architectural Awards Ceremony. The awards included a 2010 Special Project Award of Merit for the residential buildings at Liberty Green, and a 2010 Brick Award of Honor for the Liberty Green Community Center. “Liberty Green is a shining example of how redevelopment can be done in an architecturally sensitive way, and how attention to architectural details creates an environment in which people want to live and work,” said Mayor Greg Fischer at the award ceremony.

KMI honors architectural designs that bring public attention to outstanding masonry projects. Architectural design was provided by Sherman-Carter Barnhart for the residential rental buildings at Liberty Green and by Jeff Lewis Smith for the Community Center. Abstract Construction and Masonry was the masonry contractor. Judging for the awards was based on overall excellence in design as well as the appropriate and innovative use of masonry construction.

Safety Matters

Guard Against Potential Hazards in the Kitchen

The Electrical Safety Foundation is challenging people across the country to evaluate the electrical safety of their homes. While in the kitchen, where two-thirds of all home fires start, please be sure to “Cook up Safety” with the following do’s and don’ts:

- Do keep your range, oven and exhaust hood clean and free of debris.
- Do make sure there is adequate room behind electrical outlets and test the outlets every month.
- Do not keep combustibles, such as dish towels, napkins and potholders around the range or oven.
- Don’t use appliances with cords that are frayed, cracked or otherwise damaged.
- Don’t leave your toaster, coffee maker, or other counter top appliances plugged in when not in use.
- Don’t use electrical appliances that have been wet, as water can damage electrical motors.

For additional information on saving energy and reducing electrical safety hazards in your home, see www.electrical-safety.org.

Are You Puzzled?

The following answers are to the puzzler published in the March/April 2011 “Briefly Speaking” newsletter: 1) Forever and a Day; 2) Up in Arms; 3) Too little, too late; 4) Forgive and forget; and 5) I understand.

The winner of the puzzler is Janice Burns, Executive. Please stop by Vikki Stone’s office to pick up your price! If you would like to submit any puzzles or brain teasers for future consideration, please send them via e-mail to vstone@lmha1.org.

Happy Birthday To:

May

Karrina Beeler, Vine Street
Phyllis Brown, Vine Street
Cheryl Edwards, Parkway Place
Linda Fort, Doser Manor
Kriebrum Howard, Beecher Terrace
Michele Johnson, Special Programs
Bryan Lindsey, Auto/Grounds
Sean McColl, HVAC
Michael Newman, Doser Manor
Anna Price, Lourdes Hall
Russell Sanders, Avenue Plaza
Christine Smith, Doser Manor
Eric Talbot, Information Technology
Jermount Taylor, Auto/grounds
Tyron Thomas, Doser Manor
Terri Thornton, Vine Street
Chirl Wakefield, Operations
Chad Williams, Parkway Place

Spring Spruce-up at Avenue Plaza

Despite a very soggy spring, Central Office employees donned comfortable clothes and a can-do attitude again this year for our annual beautification project at Avenue Plaza. Each year, staff put their green thumbs to work by tidying up the landscaping, and topping it off with flowers and fresh mulch.

What better way to demonstrate our pride in our workplace and commitment to the environment than this annual “Greening of the Grounds.” Thanks again to everyone who participated in this fun event.

Staff Update

New Hires

Temporary

Komi Abooukou
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Lorinda Baker
- Hospitality Coordinator – Operations

Melvin Boyd
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Linda Dorsey
- Key Control Monitor – Construction Admin.

Jon Harvey
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Ronald Johnson
- Hospitality Coordinator – Operations

Michael Kennedy
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Mary McDonald
- Tutor/Computer Instructor – Special Programs

Alicia Murrell
- Hospitality Coordinator – Operations

Gloria Phillips
- Key Control Monitor – Construction Admin.

Marla Powell
- Key Control Monitor – Construction Admin.

Portia Shouders
- Key Control Monitor – Construction Admin.

Garmonyu Sawah
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Andrew Taylor
- Maintenance Worker I – Auto/grounds

Kathryn Tillet
- Case Management Coordinator – Special Programs

Chirl Wakefield
- Hospitality Coordinator – Operations

Full-time

Connie Simrell
- Assistant – Special Programs

Resignation

Darrence Hampton
- Maintenance Worker I – Shepherd Square

Retirement

Charles Mitchell
- Property Manager II – Parkway Place

Juanita Mitchell
- Property Manager II – Avenue Plaza/St. Catherine Court