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APRIL 2017

We hope to see  
you there!

Check out these upcoming events! For more information, see the last page of this newsletter.

- **9th Annual Community Empowerment Fair** on April 22, 2017 at Heritage High School
- **Southeast Community Health and Safety Fair** on April 29, 2017 at Brooks Crossing (in front of Jim's Local Market)
- **Choice Neighborhood Community Day** on Saturday, May 20, 2017

If you want to join  
a Task Force or the  
Citizen Advisory  
Committee, please give us  
a call!



NEWPORT NEWS CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

**Get involved.**

For questions or to **VOLUNTEER**, please contact: Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner at [gmorgan@nnva.gov](mailto:gmorgan@nnva.gov)  
Phone: 757.926.8761 (Department of Planning)  
Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning at [bayers@nnva.gov](mailto:bayers@nnva.gov)

**Developing Skills of Existing and Emerging Community Leaders**

A key goal of the Newport News Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) planning process is to empower residents to lead the action to address long-term neighborhood challenges. That action requires information and leadership skills. Since mid-March, nearly 30 public housing residents and neighbors from the surrounding Marshall-Ridley target area have participated in a journey to discover the skills and behaviors needed to be effective neighborhood leaders and act on important community issues.

The CNI Neighborhood Leadership Series is being held on seven consecutive Thursday nights throughout March and April at the Ridley Place Family Investment Center. Facilitated by Dr. Telly Whitfield, the sessions are designed to engage residents to help transform the community. The first session provided an oral history of the Southeast Community shared by long-time residents Mrs. Artistine Lang, Ms. Ana Grace, and Mr. Ernest Thompson. The powerful oral history experience was followed in Week 2 with Vice Mayor Vick and Dr. Whitfield introducing local government structure, public budgeting, and ways

to get involved. The second session ended with an exciting – and very competitive – game of Newport News Jeopardy! Week 3 was an emotional lesson on what real, relevant leadership looks like by Cortez Higgs of The Catalyst Effect.

Still to come in Week 4 and 5 are sessions on asset-based mapping and conflict resolution. Participants will learn how to think differently about their neighborhood by maximizing individual talents and other community assets as opposed to focusing on all the negative things going on. Conflict happens in community planning. So, Ms. Delceno Miles of the Miles Agency

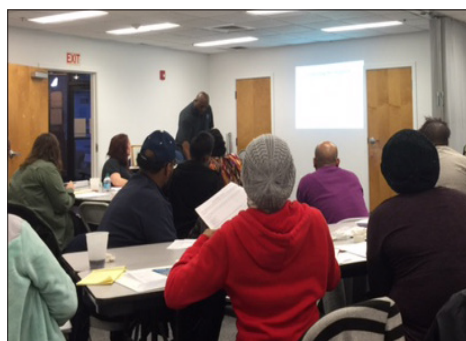
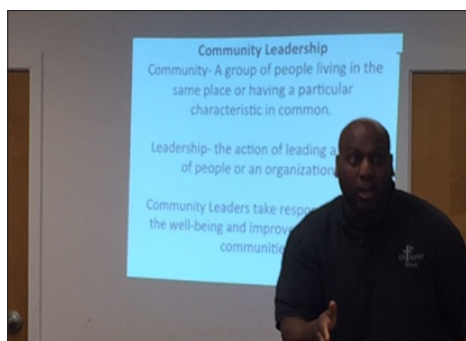


*Residents listen as Vice Mayor Vick talks about local government structure, responsibilities of various City departments, and ways for community members to get involved in making a difference in their neighborhood.*

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will join us in Week 5 to help participants become aware of their own biases (preferences) in order to resolve conflict. One of the final evenings for this first class of participants will be spent discussing the realities of stress and trauma in many of our communities. Leaders also have to deal with stress, both personally and from the community perspective.

Participants will celebrate graduation by sharing how they applied the knowledge learned and what community projects they are willing to take on moving forward. Please join us on Thursday, April 27th at 6 p.m. for the graduation ceremonies for this transformational experience. Location to be announced. Check out our website at [www.newportnewschoice.com](http://www.newportnewschoice.com) for more information.



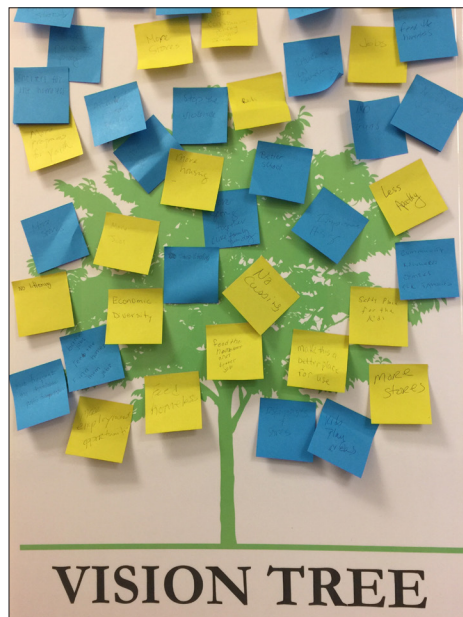
*Cortez Higgs teaches empowerment through various training courses. Here he talks to participants in the Neighborhood Leadership Series about community revitalization, encouragement and leadership.*

If you are interested in the Neighborhood Leadership Series, we will be offering the sessions again in the fall. Look for announcements during the summer or contact Dr. Telly Whitfield at (757) 926-8411 and [twhitfield@nnva.gov](mailto:twhitfield@nnva.gov) or Ms. Teresa Jones at (757) 928-3681 for more information.

### Family Fit and Fun Day Family

It was a bright, but chilly afternoon as hundreds of Southeast Community residents and visitors celebrated family, fun and fitness at Brooks Crossing. For the first time ever, the Family Fit and Fun Day – one of several events held as part of the Newport News One City Marathon weekend– took place in the grassy area in front of Jim’s Local Market. The event offered many free activities including music, fitness demonstrations, relay races, face painting, and an obstacle course. The community’s own 7 City Sounds provided the entertainment including a DJ and several local acts. Numerous community organizations and local small businesses participated in a vendor fair to share information on services and programs.

The Newport News Choice Neighborhood planning team was also on hand, taking the opportunity to talk to more residents about the planning process and get their input on needed community improvements. Residents wrote down their priorities for neighborhood improvements and posted them on the Vision Tree. This input will be shared with the task forces and committees and help form the discussion about priorities and investments.



*Residents enjoyed a variety of activities at the Third Annual Family Fit and Fun Day, a One City Marathon event.*



## Meet Kimberly Holliday, Resident and Neighborhood Advocate

This month, the Choice Neighborhood planning team had the opportunity to chat with Kimberly Holliday, long time resident of the Southeast Community. She told us about the neighborhood of her youth, the changes she hopes to see in the near future, and her thoughts on the recent trip to Charlotte, North Carolina. Kimberly is a member of the People Task Force and one of the participants in the Neighborhood Leadership Series. Recently, she also had the opportunity to share her thoughts on the Charlotte trip with the City Council at a work session.



I was born and raised in Newport News and although I have left the area a few times I always found myself back in the place I called home. There have been a lot of changes that have occurred since I was a child. Businesses that were once in abundance in the Southeast Community have long since



*Ms. Holliday had the opportunity to talk about neighborhood revitalization at a recent City Council work session.*

gone and many of the activities that once kept us entertained no longer exist. What was once a thriving, bustling community now seems desolate and dismal at times. I remember playing softball as a teen because of the enjoyment I took in watching my brother play baseball as a kid at the baseball fields that use to be at Briarfield School. I remember attending what is now Doris Miller, competing in ping pong tournaments against other recreation centers; live performances at King Lincoln Park, which was the highlight of my Sunday; my first full time summer job at 15 at Doris Miller helping the younger children, wanting to give back to the community that I felt safe and loved in; and playing until the streetlights came on with no fear of the gun violence that plagues our community today.

There was a tribal feeling that existed in the Southeast Community: in those days there were strong adults who protected and gave us good advice. There was a lot of respect for our elders then. There were strong leaders like Mrs. Jessie Rattley, whose presence was always seen in our community fighting for better days - they were our champions.

If I had the power to change anything, I would seek out businesses to return to the Southeast Community; change the job situation by encouraging more African American entrepreneurs to step up and bring money back to the community; provide more activities for the youth; and rid our community of the horrible gun violence that plagues us today.

The trip to Charlotte to view their neighborhood project sites reminded me of the pride we once felt in our community. I felt safe and you could feel the pride they all felt with the changes that had occurred. That pride and love for their community was something that I wish I could have bottled up and brought home to give back to my own community. I did, however, leave feeling hopeful for the future, certain that we can accomplish the same transformation. I believe the biggest obstacle we face is ourselves and our willingness to except our part in the demise of our own communities and our need to get involved in the changes that will occur whether we are ready or not.

## Calling all Youth and Young Adults Ages 16 to 24

Interested in the Summer Training and Enrichment Program (STEP)? Sign up now! The program is open to youth and young adults, providing them with paid work experience, field trips, and financial literacy education. Register at [www.step.nnva.gov](http://www.step.nnva.gov).

## Community Features

Is there someone you think we should feature in an upcoming newsletter? Do you want to know more about a particular community program or service? If yes, call us at (757) 926-8761 or email Garrett Morgan at [gmorgan@nnva.gov](mailto:gmorgan@nnva.gov). Tell us what information you want to see in future newsletters.

## Join Us at the 9th Annual Community Empowerment Fair

Want to find out more about which community resources are available to you and your family? Do you have health, financial, and housing questions? Are you interested in learning more about the children's activities available in the community? Then plan to visit Heritage High School on Saturday, April 22nd for the 9th Annual Community Empowerment Fair! The fair is sponsored by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Lambda Omega Chapter (Newport News), Riverside Health System, Heritage High School, and Newport News Public Schools Engagement Specialists.

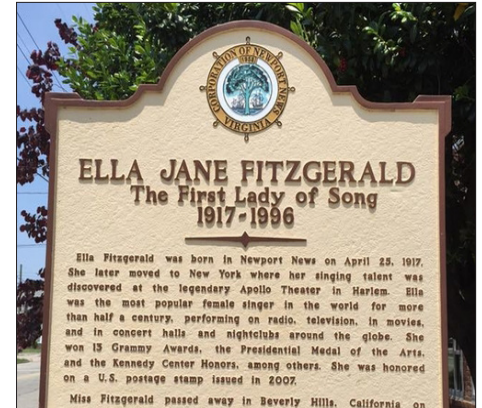
The event is free and open to all from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 5800 Marshall Avenue. There will be more than 70 organizations present to share information with you and answer your questions. In addition, there will be door prizes, giveaways, games, and a moon bounce house for the kids. Participants will also have the opportunity to explore the many different community, health, and safety vehicles that serve the community. If you have any questions, please call (757) 869-1219 or email [AKASister1908@gmail.com](mailto:AKASister1908@gmail.com).

## Improving Community Health and Safety

Bon Secours and Jim's Local Market are pleased to announce the Southeast Community Health and Safety Fair on Saturday, April 29th. This free community event offers health and safety information for the whole family.

Need a free health screening, vision screening, blood pressure check, or cholesterol or glucose test? Want more information on healthy eating, need a chair massage, or interested in the many community programs offered through Newport News Parks and Recreation? Then come on by Brooks Crossing (in front of Jim's Local Market) at 3301 Jefferson Avenue from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for health and safety information, entertainment, and door prizes. Free health screenings will continue until 3 p.m. There will also be a reading circle and free books for children.

**For more information**, please call Rose Mary Jones, RN, MEd, the Bon Secours Nurse and Community Education Coordinator located at Jim's Local Market at (757) 262-6850. Bon Secours awarded a grant to Jim's in 2016 to build the community room, which is used to provide cooking lessons, nutritional education, and fitness classes to the Southeast Community.



## Newport News Loves Ella

Ella Jane Fitzgerald, the First Lady of Song, was born in Newport News on April 25, 1917. In honor of her 100th birthday, the City of Newport News and other organizations across the city are celebrating with various events through August 2017. Upcoming events include:

- **Ella's Birthday Party: Children's Celebration** on April 19th at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center. Admission is free.
- **Ella is My Major: College Night Featuring CC Sunchild** on April 20th at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center. Admission is free.
- **Rhonda Ross**, singer-songwriter, will perform on April 21st at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center. Tickets required. For more information go to: [www.downinggross.org/tickets](http://www.downinggross.org/tickets)

## What we are working on this month...

**Needs Assessment and Community Survey:** Our main focus in April is getting as many residents, business owners, and other stakeholders as possible to participate in the Choice Neighborhood surveys. Long surveys are being given to Ridley Place residents, and short surveys to all other residents and stakeholders. A separate youth survey is under way; it is being conducted by several com-

munity youth who participate in the Hampton Roads Community Action Program's Project Discovery.

The planning team will be at various community meetings and events to get your input. Check the event calendar at [www.newportnewschoice.com](http://www.newportnewschoice.com). Or, if you would like to take the survey electronically, call the Planning Department at 757.926.8761.

**Community Day:** We continue to plan for Community Day on May 20th. This event will include the Habitat for Humanity Home Repair Blitz, a Community Clean-Up, and a Block Party. More information on this day of community building and celebration will be available within the next few weeks. Check out [www.newportnewschoice.com](http://www.newportnewschoice.com) for updates.