

Get involved.
Stay informed.
Shape the future!

Your
Choice

www.newportnewschoice.com

OCTOBER 2017

We hope to see
you there!

- **Career Fair**, sponsored by NNRHA on Wednesday, October 11th at Noon. Location: Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, 2410 Wickham Avenue
- **People Task Force Meeting** on Wednesday, October 18th at 10 a.m. Location: Family Investment Center (FIC), 600 C Ridley Circle
- **Ridley Tenant Council Meeting** on Wednesday, October 18th at 4 p.m. Come find out about the Ridley Place transformation. Location: FIC
- **Forever Young Day Party** for residents 50 and up on Tuesday, October 31st at 2 p.m. Location: Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center, 2410 Wickham Avenue

Introducing eleVAte, an Employment and Training Program

Are you looking for training opportunities to gain the skills needed for some of the hot jobs in Newport News and surrounding areas? Well, if you are a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient (or eligible recipient) and are 18 years and older, look no further. Instead, reach out to the Newport News Department of Human Services and find out how you might qualify for Elevate Virginia (eleVAte), a workforce development program.

Virginia is one of 10 states that received a federal grant to develop new ways to deliver education, training, and business services throughout the Commonwealth. Newport News is participating in this research study, and is looking to enroll eligible residents in one of six training tracks at Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC). The training options are: welding; apartment maintenance; certified medical administrative assistant; information technology; heating and air conditioning; and truck driving/commercial driver's license. Training is provided in jobs that have been identified by TNCC as providing

employees living wages.

Training is free and generally completed in eight months or less. Participants work with a Career Coach for job placement once they complete their training, with no limit for placement assistance. Transportation assistance is available. And, participation in the program does not affect SNAP benefits. The program also provides an opportunity for residents who did not graduate from high school to work toward their General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Newport News has a target enrollment of 713 residents over three years. Now into the final year of the grant, Human Services needs to enroll a minimum of 38 participants each month through the end of June 2018 to meet the target. Interested in being one of those participants and starting a new career? Call Human Services at 757.926.6206 or visit 6060 Jefferson Avenue to volunteer for the program.



NEWPORT NEWS CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

Get involved.

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



www.newportnewschoice.com



Y-START: A Youth Start-Up Club

Are you or is someone you know a student at Heritage High School and interested in starting a business? Well, START Peninsula and the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce are bringing a year-round Youth Start-Up Competition to high schools across the Peninsula, with Heritage High School being one of the approved sites.

Y-START will give students the opportunity to start real businesses in an onsite after school program. Students engaged in the competition will be supported by local business mentors and investors. Y-START students will gain knowledge about what it takes to start a business, including how to find funding sources.

The selected finalist from each school will have the opportunity to pitch their best idea in a regional competition and a chance to earn funding for their business and their school club! The Y-START finalist from the regional competition will then have the opportunity to pitch their business idea at the Annual START Peninsula Competition for a chance to earn \$10,000 to invest in their business.

START Peninsula, which began in 2012, helps start-up businesses and entrepreneurs refine their pitches and compete for funding. Funded by the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, Williamsburg, and the coun-

ties of James City and York, START Peninsula received a state grant to extend entrepreneurial education and training in their communities; Y-START is one of the programs funded by the grant. START Peninsula and the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce are working on sponsorships to continue the program beyond the current school year.

Y-START at Heritage High School will be attached to the DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) program. For more information on Y-START, please contact Jemal Harris at 757.325.8157 or jharris@vpcc.org.

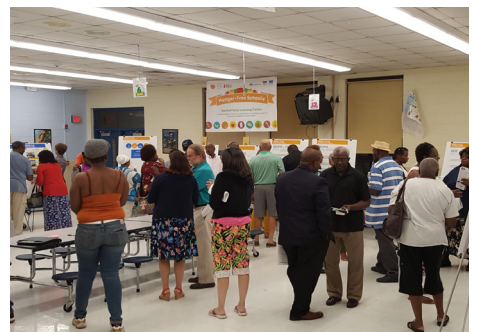
**Community Workshop:
Imagining the Future**

Over a hundred residents and community partners came together on Thursday, September 28th to get the first look at the preliminary design concepts for neighborhood transformation. Over the past year, residents, local leaders and various community partners have been working together to develop a community-driven transformation plan for the Marshall-Ridley Choice Neighborhood. Residents had the opportunity to discuss the concepts at the workshop and provide feedback on the proposed visions and goals of the Housing, People and Neighborhood plans. After presentation of the design concepts and recommended strategies for implementation, residents got to vote on priority actions and preferred design styles for housing, parks, and streetscapes. Feedback from the workshop is being used to update the concepts, which will be presented back to the neighborhood in the draft trans-

formation plan in December. The draft plan will be submitted to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in late December.

If you did not have the opportunity to participate in the workshop, but are interested in seeing the design concepts and recommended actions, please go to www.newportnewschoice.com and check out the presentation under the community meetings link.

If you have any questions, please call Garrett Morgan, Senior Planner or Britta Ayers, Manager of Comprehensive Planning at 757.926.8761.



Residents and community partners reviewed the early design concepts for neighborhood transformation, and voted on various topics.



Ms. Sample-Jones was interviewed for the Mayor's State of the City Address. Missed it? Check out the video on Newport News TV.

Meet Yugonda Sample-Jones, Resident and Youth Mentor

This month, the Choice Neighborhood planning team had the opportunity to interview Yugonda Sample-Jones. Ms. Jones is a Choice Neighborhood resident, working mother, and business woman with a lot of passion for making positive change in her neighborhood. She has been actively engaged in the planning process since it kicked off last fall, is a graduate of the Neighborhood Leadership Series, and is committed to the implementation process as we move forward. Ms. Jones is also a mentor for neighborhood girls through her Queens of Royals program, described below. If you are interested in supporting the program, please contact Ms. Jones at myempowerment4you@gmail.com.

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

My family and I have lived in the Southeast Community for 11 years.

What are some of the things that you like best about the neighborhood?

The waterfront is of course absolutely beautiful. But, I love watching my people when the weather breaks and starts to get warm. I drive around my commu-

nity and see families cooking outside, children playing and people enjoying life.

What are three challenges that you think need to be addressed in the neighborhood to improve overall quality of life?

The three challenges I think need to be addressed are education, communication, and economic development.

Education: *To rebuild a community, you need neighborhood schools. Also, it's important to have an alternative structured environment for children who are suspended.*

Communication: *There is a communication gap within the Southeast Community. The City, Police and Sheriff's Departments, Newport News Public Schools and other organizations have great programs. But, the information does not get to the residents who truly would benefit from the resources.*

Economic Development: *The Southeast Community needs jobs. It is a historical fact that jobs and resources fled from the community in the past. So, I feel it would only make sense to restore what has been taken. If not jobs, then we should at least explore job training, community hot spots, and entrepreneur opportunities. A city is only as great as its most marginalized community. It's past time for Newport News to pour back into the community which was the foundation of the entire city.*

What have you learned from the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative planning process? What do you hope to carry forward as you continue to grow as a neighborhood leader? What would you like other residents to know about the process?

I did not have any idea of what the Plan-

ning Department did or who they were before CNI. This process has helped me become more knowledgeable about City operations and how to maneuver through agencies to create partnerships. I have learned that in order to make an effective change, all parties have to be truly represented in the planning process. From City Hall to the residents, I have learned that our voice has power. The more voices and stories we mobilize and organize, the more power we have to hold elected officials accountable for doing what is right for all human beings.

Tell us about your mentoring program with young girls. How did this program get started? What is your long-term vision for the program?

I started mentoring young ladies in the Southeast Community in 2015, after being fed up with the hopelessness and oppressed mindset of many of our children. I originally taught etiquette, manners and self-respect. After realizing there was a greater need for advocacy, especially in education and knowledge of our local government, I broadened our focus to civic responsibilities.

We work to encourage our young ladies in positive decision making. To expose them to diverse careers and opportunities and to engage our youth in humanitarian efforts, like our homeless initiative and civic awareness while stressing the importance of self-reliance, self-esteem and confidence. I see the young Queens of Royals being successful whether they decide to enter college, go into career readiness courses, or into the workforce. My hope is that these young ladies will move on to inspire and lead their fami-

lies, peers, neighbors and community in work to rebuild our village and strengthen relationships throughout the world.

Forever Young

Are you 50 or older and interested in finding out about AARP, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping mature adults improve their quality of life as they age? Then join your friends and neighbors on Tuesday, October 31st at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center. The “Forever Young” Day Party will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. and feature games and activities, line dancing, raffle prizes, and refreshments. You will also receive information about the benefits of AARP membership, including how to save money on everyday purchases.

The Forever Young Initiative (F.Y.I.) is a new partnership between the Hampton Roads Community Action Program (HRCAP), the C. Waldo Scott Center for H.O.P.E, and AARP. The initiative is designed to provide entertaining, educational and active events for seniors and individuals 50 years and up. The primary goal of the initiative is to highlight ways of disrupting aging while promoting healthy lifestyles in the process. Currently, all events are



free and open to the public. The F.Y.I. project will begin its kickoff event in Newport News this month with the hope of reaching the most vulnerable senior households. According to the U.S. Census, 11% of the population of Newport News is seniors and 31% of those seniors are living alone. Further, 7% of Newport News’ senior households have an annual income of less than \$10,000 and 21% less than \$20,000. HRCAP and its partners hope to create inviting atmospheres for networking and socializing at no cost for the target population.

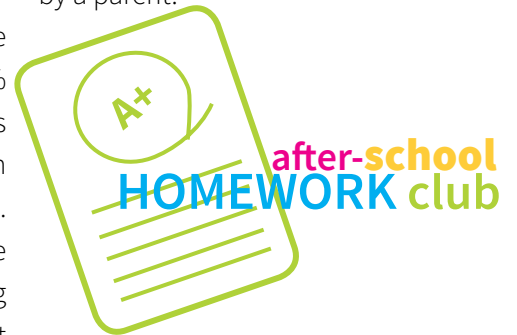
For more information, please call Ms. Rainey at the Scott Center (757.244.9223) or the HRCAP Housing Office at 757.643.4086.

Homework Club: A Safe Place for Students

Starting the week of October 9th, the Family Investment Center (FIC) is opening its doors to students seeking a safe and quiet place to get their homework done. The FIC, located at 600 C Ridley Circle, will have extended hours for its computer lab every Tuesday and

Thursday. Students will be able to access the computer lab – with internet connection – between 4:30 and 6 p.m.

To register your student(s), please call Chanelle Price, Office Assistant at 928.3680. Please note that students under 12 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or an adult authorized by a parent.



Career Fair

If you are unemployed, underemployed, a student, Veteran, disabled, or seeking higher education, then this Career Fair is for YOU! Bring your resume and come dressed to interview on **Wednesday, October 11th at Downing-Gross Cultural Arts Center from 12 to 3 p.m.** This event is sponsored by the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority and is free and open to the public. Many industries will be represented.

What we are working on this month...

Draft Transformation Plan: The planning team is working to include all the great feedback provided by residents and community partners during the workshop on September 28th. Revised concepts and recommended actions will be included in the draft plan and presented back to the community during our next workshop in early December.

The draft plan is due to HUD at the end of December.

Early Action Activities: The subcommittee met on September 11th to create purpose statements and identify key elements of the priority activities. Early Action Activities are projects that celebrate the community and accelerate neighborhood transformation.

The subcommittee’s initial focus is celebrating the history and culture of the community through art.

Based on subcommittee direction, the planning team is working to complete the project scopes, get cost estimates, and complete environmental review. Final projects will be presented to the Steering Committee in November.