

# Olneyville Neighborhood News

A Publication of the



January 2012 Volume 8, Issue 1

## YouthBuild Students Learn Through Service at St. Teresa's Food Pantry

For the past few months, a group of YouthBuild Providence students have volunteered at St. Teresa's Food Pantry, in Olneyville. They have worked under the leadership of food pantry director, Lorraine Burns, a passionate advocate for ending hunger and homelessness in Rhode Island. After first meeting Lorraine, YouthBuild student Raisa shared, "I am proud that I can join someone like her in making a difference." You can see Raisa's impact every Friday in YouthBuild's weekly Service Learning program, led by program coordinator Elijah Stephenson. In addition to his volunteer leadership as an AmeriCorps member, he is a first generation college student at Community College of R.I. and a graduate of YouthBuild himself.

Elijah explains service learning as "an extension of our extensive academic curriculum. Service Learning takes theory and puts it into practice." YouthBuild Director Anthony Hubbard comments, "Service Learning is a key component of our American History program, which explores the role of the individual in society." Anthony notes, "Our students' volunteerism at St. Teresa's is particularly inspiring because many have experienced hunger and

homelessness, living in shelters, on the streets, or with extended family members and friends.

Much of our development efforts here at YouthBuild consist of meeting the very basic needs that Lorraine works tirelessly to address." Anthony continues, "St. Teresa's has given YouthBuild students an opportunity to build character and address the very issues that pushed them out of traditional school settings."



*YouthBuild students at the food pantry*

YouthBuild students have contributed a great deal through their service to St. Teresa's. Current student Raynard states, "My jobs every week are a little bit different. I've organized food donations and served clients food." Raisa pipes up, "I think it is important that we learn how a non-profit operates and teenagers give voice to the issues." YouthBuild has also begun to make small renovations to St. Teresa's interior space, securing windows and doing some cleaning. This spring, Anthony announces, "YouthBuild students will paint St. Teresa's exterior walls." This is a new development for the partnering non-profits. Elijah Stephenson concludes, "This partnership is very meaningful to our program and students. It is a personal issue not only for me but my students. We are proud to work with Lorraine and extend our reach as long as we can."

*-by Elijah Stephenson*

## City Launches Green & Healthy Homes Initiative in Olneyville and Valley

The City's new Green & Healthy Homes Program is coming to areas of Olneyville and Valley! The new initiative will retrofit 125 housing units with free comprehensive weatherization assistance programs designed to provide high-quality whole home health, safety, and energy assessments and upgrades. In addition to providing assistance for home weatherization and other energy efficiency upgrades, the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative will provide funding to deal with health and safety issues, such as lead-paint hazards, mold and pests.

One of the major objectives of the City's Green and Healthy Homes Initiative is to increase the participation of minority contractors to perform the work in helping residents lower energy bills, remediate lead, mold and other health risks and safety hazards. The City has already qualified two minority contractors to perform the home retrofits and will be seeking to add to this in early 2012.

*Continued on page 3....*