

\$300K grant aims to improve transportation, jobs

by Mike Stevens

With no car, Bronzeville-resident Guanita Haynes needed to catch two trains and two buses each way in her four-hour commute to her job in Oak Brook. She quit her job a month after a shift change meant she left work after the trains stopped running.

Haynes' plight is familiar, said Dia Cirillo of Work, Welfare & Families, a statewide advocacy organization for low-income families.

"Second to child care, transportation is the biggest barrier to employment," Cirillo said.

Haynes joined nearly 60 other area residents and representatives from community businesses and non-profits last week at the Center for Inner City Studies to pinpoint problem areas in public transportation and brainstorm solutions.

Input from the four-hour workshop, sponsored by Quad Communities Development Corporation, a non-profit community development group for Kenwood, Oakland, Grand Boulevard and Douglas, will be used

to develop a \$300,000 project geared to improving job opportunities by helping residents use existing public transportation.

Possible ideas include shuttles to child care, hiring "mobility managers" to help create daily travel plans for families or advertising campaigns to increase awareness about existing transportation options.

As the director of a child welfare agency, Kenneth Joe hopes some of the grant dollars might help offset the costs of his shuttle program which serves 30 kids in homeless and domestic violence shelters.

"If you can't get your child to daycare, you can't keep your job," Joe said.

The city's Office for Workforce Development secured the \$150,000 matching grant from the Job Access Reverse Commute program, which has distributed \$150 million nationally to extend and promote existing public transportation service or create new service in low-income communities. The Regional Transportation Authority kicked in the additional \$150,000.

Midway through the workshop, Chicago Transit Authority chairman Carol Brown made the road ahead look even more difficult for job seekers dependent on public transit.

Under a proposed "gridlock budget," the CTA will cut 20 percent of its service starting Jan. 2, 2005 unless the Illinois General Assembly approves a \$82.5 million bailout during the November veto session.

As part of a larger public relations push to pressure lawmakers, Brown asked attendees to urge their local and state representatives to retool the regional public transportation

funding formula to avoid recurring CTA deficits.

"We can't do it under our current funding structure," Brown said. "The only way to make up [the deficit] is to shrink the system."

With reduced hours and service already blocking residents from growing job market in the suburbs and other parts of the city, 4th Ward Ald. Toni Preckwinkle said further cuts would worsen matters.

"If we have more service cuts we will have even more people concerned than there are now," Preckwinkle said.

CPS to discuss Ren. 2010

by Kiratiana E. Freelon

Chicago Public Schools will hold the New Schools Expo Nov. 6 at the Bronzeville Military Academy, 3519 S. Giles Ave. from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Parents will learn about CPS charter schools, small schools and renaissance schools at the expo. Members of the transition advisory councils for schools to be

opened in fall 2005 will also be on hand to talk to the community. The event will also target new school creators who are thinking about submitting proposals for "Renaissance 2010" schools. Workshops will explain the process of submitting proposals. Organizations looking to partner with proposed schools will be present.

Gargoyle gala hits S. Shore Cultural Center

by Nykeya Woods


The Blue Gargoyle, 5655 S. University Ave., will be celebrating 30 years of community and family services on Nov. 6 at the South Shore Cultural Center, 7100 S. Shore Dr.

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, although not in attendance due to hip replacement surgery, and University of Chicago's Hank Webber will be honored at the gala. The event, which includes a silent auction of handmade quilts, a seven-day time share vacation in Florida, Native American artifacts and gift certificates to Phil Stefani's Italian Restaurant Tuscany,

begin at 6 p.m.

"We are anxious to meet people and have people come to the celebration," Paul Sakol, the Blue Gargoyle executive director said.

The organization evolved from a coffee-house in 1968 to a free comprehensive educational, counseling and employment resource for children and adults. Six different departments are offered at the Blue Gargoyle including an adult learning program, counseling, family learning program, youth tutoring, an employment center at 4251 S. Indiana Ave. and the Bronzeville Academic Center at 220 W. 45th Pl.



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