

# LAKEFRONT OUTLOOK

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Issue 31

## King Dr. now home to chicken, waffle eatery

by Kathy Chaney

Forget steak and eggs. Chicago's Rosscoe's, 3949 S. King Dr., wants to establish chicken and waffles as a breakfast staple in the Bronzeville community.

Rosscoe's will be housed on the ground level of the newly rehabbed Grand Terrace Condominiums, once the home of the legendary Ritz Hotel on the southeast corner of King Drive and Oakwood Boulevard.

Diners, please look closely. Check the spelling of "Rosscoe's" or you might think it is the famous Los Angeles restaurant of almost the same name. It is not related.

Chicago's Rosscoe's, boasting a menu concept consisting of fried chicken with a syrupy twist and waffles, will serve breakfast items all day long with southern delicacies ready to whet the appetite of soul food lovers everywhere.

Negotiations to open the restaurant in Bronzeville started about a year and a half ago. The owners opened a successful Rosscoe's East in New York almost



Chicagoans can soon enjoy chicken and waffles as well as other tasty treats at Rosscoe's, 3949 S. King Dr. Kathy Chaney

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## Blue Gargoyle opens job center in South Shore

by Erin Meyer

Former Robert Taylor Homes resident Dominique Robins is one of thousands of low-income residents new to the South Shore neighborhood. She is also one of the first to be served by an employment center at 7141 S. Jeffrey Blvd., recently opened by Hyde Park's Blue Gargoyle.

The 19-year-old mother had been unable to find work in South Shore since she moved in July 2005. But Robins' luck changed in January, when the Illinois Department of Public Aid put her in touch with the Blue Gargoyle Employment Center.

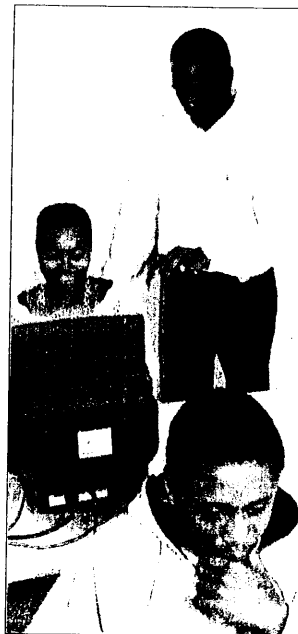
"The center has been very helpful,"

she said. "The people who work there see if there are any jobs available and tell you where to apply."

Before moving to South Shore Robins lived in public housing near the corner of 44th and State streets in Bronzeville. Her building was one of the 28 Robert Taylor high rises that stretched from Garfield Boulevard to

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Case Manager Derek Hayes with Shamica Wilson and Justin Smith at the Blue Gargoyle Employment Center on 71st Street.



## "The Grove" comes alive

### Little Black Pearl students design lamppost banners

by Nykeya Woods

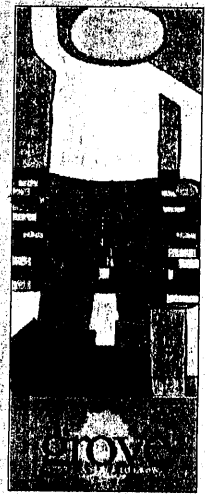
Six banners designed by Little Black Pearl students are planned to grace area lampposts beginning in late August, officials announced recently at the 43rd/Cottage Grove Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Council meeting.

Each banner will give Cottage Grove Avenue, from 39th to 51st streets, a distinctive and colorful look with a contemporary and adaptable logo.

"We wanted to share with you these designs to give you a sense of how the youth came about creating a brand for the corridor," Chinwe Onyegoro, Quad Communities Development Corporation consultant, told the TIF council.

In March, teens from area schools presented their designs that included stained-glass murals, mosaics, commemorative posts, paintings, murals, banners and obelisks.

Carla Carr of the Little Black Pearl said that the students carefully selected "rich vibrant colors" for the banners and logos. The teens created a tagline "Cottage Grove: A Place To Grow" for the banner and it shows the shadow of a tree and its roots. "The tree symbolizes life and roots for the community," Carr said. She said the tree symbol can be used as a



Little Black Pearl students designed banners like this one for Cottage Grove.

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# Bronzeville teacher wins "Who's Who" recognition

by Erin Meyer

Long time Bronzeville resident and public school teacher Charon Gibbs was honored in May as a recipient of the 2006 Who's Who among American Teachers Award.

The 25-year Chicago Public Schools veteran retired recently. But the impressions Gibbs made as a visual arts teacher in South Side schools are still evident in the minds of her students, one of whom nominated Gibbs to receive the award.

"It makes me feel so honored," she said. "To know my work as a teacher meant so much to the student who chose me."

Born in Chicago in 1953, Gibbs now lives in the 3000 block of South King Drive. She graduated from the University of Illinois in 1975.

Gibbs taught in schools across the South Side from South Shore Vocational Academy, 2100 East 87th St. to Dixon Elementary, 8306 South St. Lawrence Ave.

She served as an art teacher at Farren Fine Arts Elementary, 5055 S State St., one of three elementary schools in Chicago that will not reopen when school starts in the fall.

The Chicago Board of Education voted to close Farren for failing to make adequate yearly progress and falling too far below



Charon Gibbs

national averages on standardized tests.

Gibbs attributes the school's failures in part to a lack of resources and funding.

"It is sad how little CPS has given to arts education over the years," she said. "I have seen so many students open up through visual and performing arts, but they cannot do that if CPS cuts all the funding."

Gibbs does not have children of her own. She said her students are her "babies."

"When they are little and they have a dream and then they live their dream it is just amazing to me," she said.

For the last 10 years the Who's Who has acknowledged the hard work of public school teachers, identified as exemplary by students.

The recognition comes from former students asked to nominate the teachers who

made the most significant impact on their lives.

Gibbs wishes she knew which one of thousands of student she has taught nominated her for the award. But Who's Who would not give Gibbs a name.

"I have been thinking back, trying to guess who might have done it. But I will never know," she said.

The award groups Gibbs with 5 percent of all teachers across the country who have earned the award.

A book, featuring Gibbs profile and photograph, will be available in local libraries as well as the Illinois Superintendent of Public Schools office.

Who's Who award also recognizes doctors, lawyers, athletes, etc.

[e.meyer@hpherald.com](mailto:e.meyer@hpherald.com)

## job center

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Pershing Road along State Street. After more than 40 years of housing Chicago's poor, the last of the Taylor Homes was closed in 2005 under the CHA's 10-year, \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation.

"[The CHA] made geographic changes but did not send the supportive services," she said. The Blue Gargoyles set Robins up with a job at Help At Home, 17 N. State St., a home health care provider that offers an alternative to nursing homes.

"I will have clients, mostly elderly people, and I will go over to their house to prepare meals and help with medications," Robins said before she left for her first day of work on June 22. Since opening, the job center has served 12 Public Aid recipients, 15 community development block grant recipients and 17 young people in the out-of-school youth program.

"We are just a very small dent in that problem," Kennedy said.

South Shore has the largest concentration of Section 8 housing in the city, according to housing associate Roberto Rejujo of the Metropolitan Planning Council, and many former high rise residents decided to move there before the CHA undertook the public housing overhaul in 1999.

According to MPC's 2004 data South Shore is home to 2,880 voucher-holding families.

But the CHA counts only 274 of those people as tenants. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gives people at or below 80 percent area median income housing vouchers to assist with rental payments.

"Ever since the 1960s a steady stream of voucher holders have been flowing into South Shore because the area has a lot of rental housing," said CHA spokesperson Marilyn Katz. "Not all of those people are CHA residents or relocates."

Part of the Plan for Transformation includes measures taken by the CHA to promote self-sufficiency among residents through the Service Connector program.

The Illinois Department of Human Services — one of 13 agencies operating in 37 offices in Chicago to help residents become self-sufficient — functions as the CHA's service connector in South Shore. IDHS serves 422 people there.

While many CHA residents continue to face barriers to employment, the Service Connector program assists approximately 1,200 each year through workforce development and employment services.

The program has improved the lives of many CHA residents, Katz said. She pointed to 2005 figures that show employment rates among CHA residents have improved by 41 percent.

But the program is not reaching enough people, according to Kennedy. "[The service connector] concept is very good. It is just not happening fast enough," Kennedy said. "In the meantime [the Blue Gargoyles] will keep doing what we do."

[e.meyer@hpherald.com](mailto:e.meyer@hpherald.com)

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## Rosscoe's

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a decade ago. Taking advantage of the real estate market a few years ago, they decided to sell. They began looking in Chicago and immediately wanted Bronzeville.

"We are almost done with the interior now," Mack Forest, one of the restaurant's owners and supervisor of the construction, told the Outlook. Darnell Jones, Rosscoe's principal owner, said, "We love the area and what it stands for."

Jones remembered the neighborhood as an entertainment hub for jazz and blues music decades ago. He said the neighborhood lost its

spark when businesses began closing shop.

"The vision for the restaurant is to have a nice place for people to come and enjoy good food. They will be able to eat in the restaurant area or they can order it for take-out," Jones said.

Forest recalled a shoe-shine stand he had set up on the same corner where the restaurant will be. "I used to shine shoes right here and over by Comisky Park," Forest said. "Whenever I saw all of the Lincolns and Cadillacs parked around here, I would get my stand and set up shop."

Jones said they plan to add outdoor seating, but that will come about a year after opening.

The sit-down eatery, anticipating a September 2006 opening, is ready to tempt the tummy of calorie-unconscious diners, making sure they leave the restaurant adjusting their belts.

[k.chaney@hpherald.com](mailto:k.chaney@hpherald.com)

## Grove

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watermark for businesses along Cottage Grove.

Four new housing developments were presented at the meeting, including one that will break ground this year.

Genesis Housing Development Corporation presented its North Washington Park Homes from the 4700 to 4900 blocks between Cottage Grove and King Drive that include 12 condominium buildings in three phases.

Wade Associates plans to build four condominium buildings in the 4200 block of

Vincennes Avenue. Olunude Akindanko is proposing to build two multi-level condo buildings in the 4900 block of South Forrestville Avenue.

"These are all developments that have to undergo some type of city legislative action," said 4th Ward Project Manager James Wilson.

The 43rd/Cottage Grove Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Advisory Council meets at King Community Service Center, 4314 S. Cottage Grove Ave. The 43rd/Cottage Grove TIF freezes new housing and business development property tax increases to fund revitalization efforts within the TIF district. The district runs between Pershing Road and 47th Street along Cottage Grove Avenue and includes some other outlying areas.

[n.woods@hpherald.com](mailto:n.woods@hpherald.com)

# LAKEFRONT OUTLOOK

Phone: 773-643-8533 • Fax: 773-643-8542  
e-mail: [hpherald@aol.com](mailto:hpherald@aol.com)

[www.hpherald.com](http://www.hpherald.com)

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Publisher  
Bruce Sagan

V. P./General Manager  
Susan J. Walker

Editor  
Brian Wellner

Business Manager  
Kathy L. Pilcher

Production Director  
Anthony Zralka

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