



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Columbia Housing Authority to Recognize 18 Summer Youth Employment Program Participants *Teens Live in CHA Public Housing or Section 8 Rentals in Richland County*

Columbia, S.C. – Columbia Housing Authority will host the 2008 Summer Youth Employment Program Recognition Breakfast on **Friday, August 8, 2008 at 8:30 a.m.** at the **Clarion Townhouse Hotel**, 1615 Gervais Street. CHA will honor 18 teenagers who live in CHA public housing or Section 8 rentals and have spent their summer working in various full-time positions at the agency to gain work experience and explore career options.

At the breakfast, Rhonda Williams will speak about how the skills she learned as a 1993 SYEP participant help her today in her position at the S.C. State Treasurer's Office. Several youth also will share personal stories about what they have learned while in the 2008 program.

"Many of our young people come to us with no work experience and no employed adult in the home to serve as a role model," said Gilbert Walker, CHA executive director. "This program is important because our staff not only serve as working role models, but they also teach the youth basic job skills while providing guidance on how to behave in a professional environment."

The SYEP, which runs from June 9 - August 8, 2008, is designed to assist CHA residents between the ages of 16 and 18 with overcoming obstacles such as lack of education and job training that often cause families to need housing assistance. During the nine-week program, participants are assigned to supervisors in administration, maintenance, Section 8 and other CHA departments where they work 40 hours each week performing a variety of clerical and supportive duties.

In addition to the work experience, participants are required to attend weekly training sessions on topics such as etiquette, life skills and building healthy relationships. Other sessions feature a tour of area colleges and a visit from military recruiters and members of the USC TRIO Program.

CHA manages over 2,000 conventional public housing units and administers more than 3,100 rental assistance contracts throughout Richland County. CHA is the third oldest housing authority in the nation and has continuously been recognized by HUD for its successful housing and education programs.

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