

SPRING 2010

## Mayor-Elect Mitch Landrieu's Sustainable Energy and Environmental Task Force Making Strides for a Sustainable and Equitable New Orleans

On March 17th Mayor-elect Mitch Landrieu announced the creation of 14 citizen-led panels ranging from Criminal Justice, Health Care and Housing, to Sustainable Energy and Environment. Our very own, Dr. Beverly Wright was named co-chair of the Sustainable Energy & Environmental Task Force. Elizabeth Galante, director of Global Green, will serve as co-chair with Dr. Wright. The mission of the taskforce is to assess and evaluate the city's current energy and environmental policies, assess the city's waste management program, explore the redevelopment of a citywide recycling program, develop recommendations for a city government energy conservation program, assess green resources of city government, and identify opportunities for leveraging local green initiatives with strategic green job creation and economic development.

The Sustainable Energy & Environmental Task Force held its first meeting on Wednesday, March 31st at Grace Episcopal church in Mid-city. Community residents were invited to discuss issues of sustainability and equity in their community. Some of the recommendations that came from community input included:

- developing a comprehensive waste-management program which includes recycling,
- ensuring environmental justice policies are enforced concerning illegal landfills, dump-sites, and the garbage incinerator proposed in New Orleans East,
- adopting public policy approaches that emphasize healthy homes and mandates lead safe renovation, rehabilitation, and demolition practices.

The Task Force will make recommendations to Mayor-Elect Landrieu to be implemented within his first 100 days in office, they will recommend mid-to-long term policy priorities that should be considered within the first 6 to 24 months, and assess environmental justice aspects of each recommendation.

By Mary I. Williams

## DSCEJ Assistant Director Declared HGTV 2010 Dream Home Winner

Mar 16 (THAINDIAN NEWS) The winner of the HGTV Dream Home 2010 was finally announced on Monday night and the lucky winner turned out to be Louisiana resident Myra Lewis. The win must have indeed been extremely special for Dr. Myra Lewis as she was one of the victims of Hurricane Katrina, which completely destroyed her New Orleans home, when it struck in 2005.



All the viewers were glued to the television screens on Monday night when HGTV was scheduled to air its 'Dream Home Giveaway 2010' special. Even Myra Lewis was among the millions of viewers who were eagerly waiting to know the results and was watching TV with her son Chris, when HGTV's Jamie Durie landed at her door steps to give her the good news that she had just won herself a lavish Pueblo-style home situated in New Mexico. All the viewers were able to witness her emotional outbreak as it was aired during the show on Monday night. While reacting to her win, Myra Lewis exclaimed that she was totally blown away by the pleasant surprise and acknowledged that it was indeed hard for her to believe that she was now the proud owner of a luxurious home.

Myra Lewis, who is the assistant director of Dillard University's Deep South Center for Environmental Justice, entered the Dream Home Sweepstakes for multiple years. It has been revealed that this time Myra Lewis and her sister entered the giveaway every single day while repeatedly reminding each other to do so. Their dedication surely turned out to be fruitful as apart from the home, the winner would also receive \$500,000 in cash and a 2010 GMC Terrain.

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## Worker Training

### 2010 Class Marks End of Five Year Cycle of Training



This year's worker training programs in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Savannah, Detroit, Hattiesburg and Atlanta are the last in the five-year cycle of training funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The New Orleans program began shortly after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. As a result, the program was implemented from Baton Rouge for two years, Dillard's main campus in the third year, and the Young House in the past two years.

This year, twenty-one young men from metro New Orleans began their training experience in early February and completed technical training in a few weeks' time. They are certified in construction, hazardous waste removal, asbestos abatement and mold remediation. Hazardous Waste Worker training was conducted by the United Steel Workers, construction training by Richard Bowles of PTC, Inc. and Asbestos

Abatement and Mold Remediation by DSCEJ's own technical training staff. Training in all segments included classroom activities and hands on exercises or projects.

Graduation will take place Tuesday, April 13 at 6:00pm. It will be held on Dillard University's campus in Kearney-West Wing. Graduates will be rewarded for excellence, effort and survival skills through trophies and gifts for academic achievement, technical training success and overall conduct throughout the training program. Following graduation, job placement efforts will be headed by Tran Paul, Job Developer. DSCEJ makes a commitment to place each program graduate in their first job in the environmental remediation arena.

*By Dr. Myra Lewis*

### Pine Belt Worker Training Has First Year Start in Hattiesburg, MS

In January 2010, The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice added a new training site to the consortium. As a result of supplemental funds from The National Institute of Health and Environmental Sciences (NIEHS), The Pine Belt Minority Worker Training Program was established in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

The program began with an orientation attended by twenty-five participants. Twenty-two participants were selected into the program. Basic-Skills training entailed six weeks of structured classroom studies. Courses included: Applied Mathematics, Study Skills, Life Skills, Hazmat, Physical Fitness, and Group and Individual Counseling. Upon the successful completion of basic-skills training, students moved on to the Technical-Skills component. In this phase, the students engaged in an additional six weeks training to obtain certifications in General Construction, Weatherization, Hazardous Waste Worker, and Asbestos Worker. Throughout the 12 weeks of the program, the students were provided the books and supplies needed to participate, and were provided other incentives to help them complete the program.

The Pine Belt Minority Worker Training program graduated twenty-two students on Monday, March 29, 2010. The ceremony was held at the C.E. Roy Community Center in Hattiesburg, Mississippi at 6:00pm. All students are fully prepared to look for work with the assistance of our full time job developer, Stephen Stanley. Mr. Stanley was the job developer for the New Orleans program for several years. The DSCEJ is happy to have him on board again and working with the Hattiesburg students. He has made inroads with some of the local businesses and city government on behalf of the graduates. It is anticipated that all program graduates will be placed in their first jobs over the next few months.



*By Deborah Bates*



*Community Connection*

**Hip Hop Caucus Launches Clean Energy Bus Tour at Dillard University**



The Hip Hop Caucus launched a 3 day bus tour in New Orleans on Dillard University’s campus to promote clean energy. Rev. Yearwood, joined by D. Woods, Gloria Reuben, Dr. Beverly Wright, DJ Biz Markie, as community and student leaders rallied with hundreds of students on Dillard University’s campus in a call for clean energy. The tour bus arrived at Dillard University at noon. On February 18th. As the sound systems were brought online and the music began to play, students gathered in anticipation of the events to come. As the crowd tipped over 300 people, Rev. Lennox Yearwood took the stage in front of the bus. He started the event by thanking everyone for coming to the kick off of the Hip Hop Caucus Clean Energy Now! Tour, and for joining the

movement to ensure all communities are engaged, and understand the importance of transitioning to a clean energy economy that will “fight poverty and pollution at the same time.”

Rev. Yearwood implored the crowd to recognize the significance of this moment and to respond with the same tenacity that the previous generation had when faced with Jim Crowe. He said, “This is our lunch counter moment...In the 20th Century they had to fight for equality, and in the 21st century we gotta fight for existence.” By tying climate protection and clean energy jobs to social justice and economic empowerment, Rev. Yearwood and the other speakers effectively engaged a crowd of close to 300 people for nearly two hours. Rev. Yearwood then introduced world renowned DJ and entertainer Biz Markie. As the energy continued to build, Maime Butler, a student leader, came on stage to welcome the tour to campus and introduce Dr. Beverly Wright, director of the Deep South Center for Environmental Justice at Dillard University and Dr. Lana Chambliss, coordinator of Environmental Sustainability on Dillard’s campus. The speakers talked about the importance of the clean energy economy, green jobs training, and climate protection.



Actress and activist Gloria Reuben discussed the importance of transitioning to a clean energy economy, “We need to stop burning fossil fuels, we need to stop polluting our communities and we need to put America back to work with clean energy jobs.” Dillard University was honored to partner with the Hip Hop Caucus to bring awareness to students about a clean energy economy.

*By Mary I. Williams*

**Healthy Rebuilding Toolkits Distributed at the Urban League of Greater New Orleans Parent Information Center Schools’ Expo**



The School Expo, was held on Saturday, March 27, 2010 at the University of New Orleans, Lindy Boggs Conference Center from 10am -2pm. The School Expo seeks to increase parents’ awareness about school choice and familiarize them with the common application process. The event provides parents and students the opportunity to speak with school leaders as they explore exciting and innovative K-12 programs. Most importantly, the School Expo provides parents an opportunity to submit their Common application timely and obtain information on over 80 elementary, middle and senior high schools in one location.

DSCEJ distributed seventy-five “Healthy Rebuilding Toolkits” to parents attending the expo. The toolkits will serve as a resource to help parents rebuild safely and sustainably, and allow parents to stay informed about available healthcare centers currently open in New Orleans. The information included in the toolkit will also help residents be better prepared for future hurricane evacuations. Parents were encouraged to share the resources they received with family and friends.

*By Tammara Brown*



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