

BUILDING INTEGRITY

CMHA Police Academy Program promotes awareness in the community

On Tuesday, September 30, 2008 the CMHA Police Department held a reception for their Resident Police Academy (RPA) graduation. The program is a six week course designed to teach residents how the CMHA Police Department operates. Participants viewed demonstrations and experienced first-hand how police officers patrol the community.

The afternoon began with remarks from George A. Phillips, Chief Executive Officer and Safety Director, Jeffery K. Patterson, Chief of Staff, and Andres Gonzalez, Chief of Police. The presentation award ceremony followed where 30 individuals received their certificates of participation.

"This educational community program has been an overwhelmingly positive experience for both our residents and the police force," said George A. Phillips, Chief Executive Officer and Safety Director. "The success of the innovative curriculum is continuing to build a better place to live and work in our neighborhoods."

Residents had an opportunity to speak from the heart and thank CMHA for the program that so many felt greatly benefited them.

"It used to be that you were friends with the police officers in your community years ago, and you all have brought that back for us again," said CMHA resident Malfert Shaw in his compelling speech at the event.

"My favorite was the tour and ride-a-long because I got to go in the police car with the officer and go everywhere with him. He promised he would take care of me, and I believed him," said CMHA resident Christine Watkins. "This program is absolutely needed. And should be done over and over again."

The response has been incredible. The chief's vision has exploded into a reality far surpassing expectations for the program. The concept was such a success that it has been recommended that CMHA offer the program to the school system for our youth. Sixty residents have already requested to continue on by volunteering to participate in police/resident safety programs in the future.

"The basis was that I wanted to create a partnership with the residents and invite them into our house to show them exactly what we go through day to day. Hopefully then they can see they're in a better place," said Chief Andres Gonzalez.