


Date: January 10, 2008 - January 16, 2008

Mr. Dhiren Shah



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BREAKING NEWS

(Photo By Bro Ellis)



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Barack Obama

Bobby Jackson, Jersey City's first black City Council president and a campaign consultant for both Glenn D. Cunningham and Sandra Bolden Cunningham, has died. Jackson collapsed outside St. Peter's College after attending the Barack Obama rally this afternoon, Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy said. Jackson was rushed to the Jersey City Medical Center. Healy did not know what caused Jackson's collapse.

Mr. Dhiren Shah
Editor in chief



FREE Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Kick Off



By Dhiren Shah

On January 9th, 2008, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and NEWARK NOW in partnership with the City of Newark and Essex County, opened their program now in its fifth year, at the City Hall Rotunda in Newark, New Jersey. Modia Butler, the president of Newark Now said that four years ago Anthony Santiago came up with a new program, which draws my attention and this is the fifth year of the program.

Anthony Santiago, VP of Asset Development of Newark Now and Master of Ceremonies said that in 2004 there were 200 returns filed, in 2005, 400 and

in 2006, VITA filed 1100 returns. They had four sites last year and they have nine sites this year.

Newark Mayor Cory Booker said that this program will empower the city economically, which reduces crime. A founder of Newark Now, Mayor Booker was excited about the success of this program. He further said, "I want Newark to be the #1 city for reclaiming dollars." He also mentioned one Newark resident who received \$3110.00 last year as a refund. The Mayor also said that another recipient, received 30% of her salary back thru this free tax filing program (as she didn't want to disclose her finance).

Assemblywoman Sheila Oliver represented Essex County and said that the IRS says it has reduced paperwork, but it gets more complicated everyday. She further said that she is pleased with the program and the volunteers who are participating.

Reggie Dorsey, Newark Asset Building Coalition said that the under 18 youth poverty level is down 40% from 2002 to 2006. In 2002 the poverty level was 44% and now it is 29%.

The Essex County under 18 poverty level is 18% from 24%, while the state average was 11% in 2002 and 11% in 2006. Child population under 18 was 76,908 in 2002 and 70,528 in 2006.

Councilman Anibal Ramos said that we have a great partnership between the City, County and Newark Now for this program.

Debra Chapman from IRS, Jim Gordon, Supervisor of Outreach Team from the NJ Department of the Treasury also spoke some encouraging words.

This is really a great program. The state is matching the Earned Income Tax Credit with the Federal Tax Credit. If someone is making under \$40,000 they should visit one of these centers and take advantage of this free program.

The VITA program has a budget of \$250,000, \$200,000 is funded through the

Nicholson Foundation. The City of Newark and Essex County is providing spaces including the North Ward Center.

The centers are: Newark City Hall 920 Broad St., Room B-29; One-Stop 990 Broad St., 1st Floor; Essex County Services at 18 Rector St., Essex County Citizen Services at 50 So. Clinton St., 1st Floor in East Orange; Baxter Terrace at 166 James Street, Bradley Court at 48 Munn St.; Seth Boyden Terrace at 755 Frelinghuysen Ave., Focus Hispanic Center at 441-443 Broad St., Newark Business Training Center at 341 Roseville Ave. All centers are in Newark except one in East Orange.

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Three Kings Celebration at Aspen River Park Apartments

By Bro Ellis

On Sunday January 6, 2008, a Celebration for Three Kings Day was held at the Aspen River Park Apartments. The event was held in the senior Center that is located at 25 Oxford Street in the East Ward of Newark. There was food, music, and gifts for the many young people who attended.

Three Kings Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. Committee members who put this cele-

bration together are Ms Gilda Naves, Judith Figueroa, Emily Maldonado, Evelyn Figueroa, Ethel Stinson, Licia Manso, Josephine Blanding, and Carmen Collins.

Ms Judith Figueroa stated that the kids are very happy on this day, and they receive gifts under their beds with grass in the shoe box, then the children go under the bed the grass is gone and they see their gift, she also said that this was a Puerto Rican Tradition.

I also asked one of the

organizers what Three Kings day means to her. She stated that it means smiles, joy and happiness to the many young people and to the adults as well. "It's good to see so many happy faces," she said.

Three Kings Day is when the Three Wise men came to see the Baby Jesus in the manger bringing gifts and all kinds of things to celebrate the birth of the Messiah.

While talking to the many people who came out from Aspen River Park Complex to celebrate I noticed that their

community is a very diverse one. People from Dominica, Peru, Columbia, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Cuba even African Americans all live together in their community, and they all came out to be apart of the Three Kings Day Celebration.

Here are the Three Kings name in Spanish Merchor, Gaspair, Baltasar - Los Tres Reyes Magos.

Three Kings Day is symbolic to Christmas and brings happiness to all.

What does Three Kings Day mean to you? That was the

question of the day, and Ethel Stinson the District leader of that community said "It's good to see the smiles on the faces of the children and it gives them something else Positive to focus on"

It was a wonderful time down in the 'Neck' with many helping to make this event a success. The senior citizens, the adults, and the children were doing whatever they could do to keep the celebration and the spirit of the Three Kings Alive and to bring joy to the community.

