



THE NORTH LAWNDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

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PROVIDING INFORMATION ON RESOURCES AND EVENTS THAT IMPROVE THE LIFESTYLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

Garfield Park Conservatory Hosts World AIDS Day Press Conference

TRAVLES R. LANE



Congressman Danny K. Davis speaking to promote the battle against the spread of HIV/AIDS in recognition of World AIDS DAY at the Garfield Park Conservatory.

As President Barack Obama prepared to deliver an address to the nation later that evening outlining his plan to enhance the war in Afghanistan, a diverse array of public and private entities in Chicago congregated in the warm, humid environment of the Garfield Park Conservatory Tuesday, Dec. 1, to nurture the seeds of cooperation among them in their war against the global AIDS epidemic.

In recognition of World AIDS Day, U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-7th) joined with representatives of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Fathers Who Care, (RED), the Illinois Lottery and Walgreens in a press conference to promote their combined efforts to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS here and worldwide. And according to the press release announcing the

conference those efforts are sorely needed in Illinois, which ranks seventh in the nation among states with the highest number of AIDS cases since the disease was identified in 1981. Sixteen thousand, five hundred people have died from the malady since then, more than half of the 30,000 cases reported statewide during that period.

African American communities in the West Garfield Park area where the event was held have been hit especially hard among cases in Chicago.

"We're working hard to spread the word that everyone has a responsibility to help in dealing with this problem," said Davis as he addressed the more than 70 people, including several media outlets, who attended at the 10 a.m. gathering in the Conservatory's Horticulture Hall.

Davis, a longtime advocate on behalf of AIDS sufferers and other healthcare issues during his 13 years on Capitol Hill, was followed by speakers from each of the participating organizations during the hour long conference. All agreed more education and awareness is needed despite a nearly threefold decrease in the

yearly number of AIDS cases worldwide since height of the epidemic in the early 90s.

Minister Walter A. Jones Jr., the founder and president of Fathers Who Care, served as emcee.

Fathers Who Care, founded in 1998 and headquartered at the 3333 W. Arthington location housing Davis' 7th District office, is a local nonprofit social service initiative focused on providing "a nurturing and educational environment for non-custodial and custodial fathers" who are homeless but seeking to enhance their skills and ability to maintain "a positive and successful relationship with their children," said the press release.

The event was also an occasion to tout the success of (RED) branded products of corporate partnerships with Converse, Gap Armani, Apple, Starbucks, Microsoft and others in a global effort that has contributed \$140 million to the Global Fund to invest in African AIDS programs.

Additionally, the Illinois Lottery promoted its Quality of Life scratch-off ticket "Red Ribbon Bonus Bucks" game in which all proceeds

See AIDS page 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

LETTER TO THE
EDITOR: DE-
MAGNETIZING
CHICAGO PUBLIC
SCHOOLS
PAGE - 3

LANE CHANGE:
ATTITUDES OF
KIDS, COPS THE
KEY TO
CRACKING BLACK
CODE SILENCE
PAGE - 4

THE LIFE AND
TIMES OF
MICHAEL SCOTT
PAGE - 5

Neighborhood Housing Services Executive Director to Retire on December 15

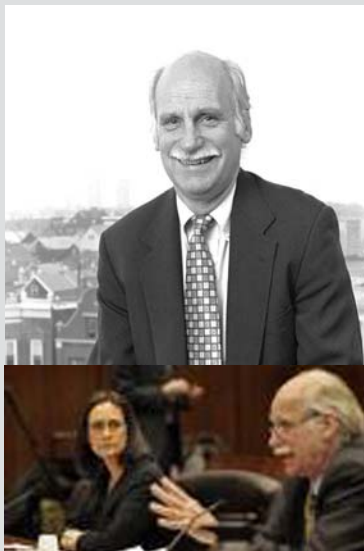
On December 15, 2009, Bruce Gottschall, the Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago (NHS), will retire after 35 years of dedicated service. Gottschall helped to found the organization in 1975 and has been a driving force ever since. His tireless commitment to the mission of the organization has resulted in positive change in many of Chicago's neighborhoods. From revitalizing neighborhoods "block by block," to helping homeowners avoid foreclosure, Gottschall has had a tremendous impact protecting and preserving many of Chicago's great communities. Under Bruce's leadership, NHS has helped strengthen Chicago's low to middle-income neighborhoods by encouraging community reinvestment and fostering partnerships between residents, business and government.

"Bruce is a great leader who has built many collaborative partnerships over the past 35 years. I don't know anyone who has so successfully persisted in working for our

neighborhoods," said Paul J. Lopez, President of the Board of Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago. "While we will miss his steady and innovative leadership, the Board and staff are ready to successfully move through this important transition," added Lopez.

"Bruce Gottschall and Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago have been critical partners in our affordable housing and community development programs, particularly with foreclosure prevention and abandoned properties," said Mayor Richard M. Daley. "I'd like to thank him for his leadership, his dedication to our residents and to keeping our neighborhoods strong during these difficult times."

Over the past several months TransitionGuides, a national leader in executive search, transition and succession in the nonprofit sector, has been working with the Board on the search. The transition team has reviewed over 300 applicants and has narrowed them down to seven finalists.



Bruce Gottschall

"We have reviewed many qualified candidates, both from Chicago and from across the country. Because of the many qualified individuals, it has been a challenge to narrow it down to seven," said Lopez. "Bruce has big shoes to fill and we want somebody who can quickly have their finger on the pulse of the complexity of the Chicago



The Harris family poses in their North Lawndale home. In 2007, the NHS Redevelopment Corporation helped them rehab their home as part of the Historic Greystone Initiative. © NHS

neighborhoods," he added.

"I have had an amazing and wonderful career," said Gottschall. "I've enjoyed unprecedented opportunities to work with neighborhoods, business and government leaders to ensure that



Redwell family home in North Lawndale after rehabbed by NHS Redevelopment Corporation in June 2007. © NHS

everyone has a decent home and a safe neighborhood for themselves and their family. While there is no perfect time for change, NHS is prepared and strong. I look forward to working with the Board, our partners and staff to carry out a smooth transition and to hand off leadership to my successor later this year."

Gottschall's notable accomplishments include:

• **Home Ownership Preservation Initiative "HOPI"** – HOPI was the first organized response to the foreclosure crisis in Chicago's neighborhoods – a

See NHS page 5

Visit us on our website at www.nlcn.org for more articles, photos, information and more.

North Lawndale Community News
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# NLCN

## 2009 FOCUS

### HEALTH & THE ECONOMY

One of the major issues of the recent presidential campaign was health care. Health care costs have become an escalating burden for employers and consumers alike. Research has shown that total health spending is reduced when consumers bear more responsibility for their health and the expenses related to it. One of the best ways to increase life expectancy while reducing disability is to encourage a culture of self-care practices.

Self care is personal health maintenance. It is the care taken by individuals towards their own health and well being. Self care includes the actions individuals take in their role as care givers for their children, their families, and others to stay fit and to maintain good physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Extreme self care means making choices and decisions that honor our soul in everyday living. It means feeding ourselves whole foods, moving our bodies every day, balancing silence with activity, and surrounding ourselves with supportive, like-minded people who are committed to improving or restoring health and uplifting the quality of their lives as well.

More than 75% of people surveyed in the United Kingdom said if they had guidance or support from a professional or peer they would feel far more confident about taking care of their own health. Research shows that supporting self care can improve health outcomes and increase patient satisfaction. Our intention is to support individuals, families, institutions, and communities in their efforts to practice extreme self care. During 2009, the North Lawndale Community News focuses on cost-effective ways you can improve your health by practicing self care.

The Economy has made itself the number one issue with gas prices reaching almost \$5.00 per gallon and having a domino effect on everything else sold, except housing stock which experienced a terrible decline with the high rate of foreclosures. The Chicago metropolitan area reported 5,821 new foreclosure filings in December, a foreclosure rate of one new foreclosure filing for every 499 households — more than twice the national average. That brought the area's fourth quarter foreclosure total to 16,949 and its 2006 foreclosure total to 57,706, according to Realty Trac.

Even transportation on the CTA went on the rise with one day passes increasing by seventy-five cents and monthly passes increased by \$10.00 from \$75.00 to \$85.00. Those are just a few of the increases.

The North Lawndale Community News this year is expanding on last years financial focus to give attention to its broader parent the economy. Saving and making smarter shopping decisions will help stop us losing through wasteful choices. Finding new ways to increase our income is a necessity for many in an area where gentrification is not going to stop.

One of the hardest things to change is behavior. Modifying behavior seems to be easy when it comes to pain. Social pain lack of money has to be extreme for many to change. 2009 should be different for many and of course many will continue toward economic mistakes and financial ruin.

But in today's information society there is no excuse for not making smart choices. Financial literacy alone is not enough. Look what happened to Lehman Brothers and what's happening to many other financial institutions let alone individuals, families, and small businesses.

Solutions come to the internet, books, economic experts, financial counselors and experts, the media and your economical neighbors.

The North Lawndale Community News will tap into resources and share them with you, our reader. So to help you improve your health and your economy keep reading The North Lawndale News. We say yours because some may not modify their behavior, except when the pain comes and still some won't change.. Your input is also welcome If you have some information that is beneficial please submit it. Let's make smarter health and economic moves for life in 2009.

# THE NORTH LAWDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

The North Lawndale Community News is now published weekly by Strategic Human Services. Our purpose is to help inform our community on resources, events, and issues relevant to them and our neighboring communities. Our community includes those who live, work, worship in, and/or care about North Lawndale. Our focus is on positive, productive solutions, that will improve the lifestyle of our community members.

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**Circulation:** 15,000 copies

**Drop Site Distribution:** Reginald Lewis and Johnny Ray Lewis, Dominique Mack, distributed weekly over 280 dropsites, and over 340,685 potential readers throughout North and South Lawndale, East and West Garfield, Humboldt Park, Austin, Pilsen and the Near West Communities.

**Weekly Mail Subscription Rates:** \$20.00 for 3 months. \$35.00 for 6 months \$60.00 for 1 year \$110 for 2 years

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**North Lawndale Community News**  
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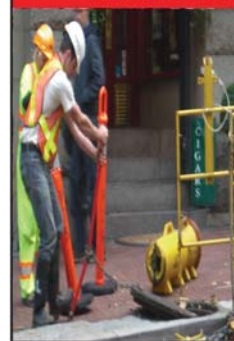
District Office Hours: March 1, 2009

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## MARTIN'S CONSTRUCTION



- |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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## Writers' Meetings!!

### THE NORTH LAWDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

**Where: 1211 S. Western, Suite 203**

**Time: 6:00 p.m.**

**Date: Thursday December 17, 2009**

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# NEW SKILLS FOR A NEW YEAR: Increase Your Digital Literacy

Marlone Finley

Every year the Digital Divide (the literacy-distance between those who have access to, and competency with, life-enhancing technology and those who don't) grows larger, both in the African American population as a whole and in North Lawndale specifically. Increasingly, employment and quality of lifestyle hinge upon a person's access to technology. Those who are not adequately trained and functional in basic computer and related technologies may find themselves unable to thrive in today's digital world, or even take care of everyday necessities. A premier advocate in the effort to bridge the Digital Divide in communities of lack, especially communities of color like North Lawndale, is the Lawndale Legacies Community Technology Center (LLCTC).

Marlone Finley, Technology Manager for Lawndale Christian Development Corporation says, "The more access and training with technology that a person has, the more viable and marketable that person is to thrive in today's economy. We find ourselves in a digital world—cross the street and computer controlled traffic lights greet you. Turn on the TV and a satellite in space is beaming you digital data. People must possess at least a basic understanding of computer technology in order to live the lives they wish to".

Named after "Lawndale Legacies", (men and women who have lived and worked in North Lawndale for many years and serve as fine role models), the LLCTC opened in 2000 as a direct result of collaborative efforts between Freddie Mac, IT Resource Center (now known as Lumity), the Elizabeth Morse Genius Charitable Trust, and Lawndale Christian Development Corporation (LCDC). The purpose of the LLCTC is to decrease the Digital Divide in North Lawndale by providing

access to and competency with cutting-edge technologies in local facilities, to empower individuals to overcome the cycle of poverty, discrimination and isolation.

Currently, the LLCTC is the largest computer training center of its kind in North Lawndale. With convenient open hours on weekdays, residents and guests come to do everything from checking emails, to getting in touch with friends and family, to finding jobs.

Throughout the year, the LLCTC offers an ever-increasing range of classes including:

**Senior Surfers Education (50+):** This 6-week basic skills course is designed for the very beginner who has little or no experience using, paced slower for greater understanding of the basics, and focused on how to use the computer and the Internet safely.

**Introduction to Personal Computing (Basic Computer Workshop):** This mid-skill 8-week course is designed for the student who has some experience using computers of the internet. Classes focus on how to use the computer, Microsoft Office basics, and how to use the Internet safely.

**Introduction to Microsoft Office Series:** These twelve-week certification-prep courses give students a focused study in career-relevant Microsoft Office programs. Word and Excel are currently offered. These courses prepare students to take the prestigious Microsoft Office Specialist Exam (MOS).

**Internet and Computing Core Certification (IC3):** This advanced 8-week certification course consists of three exams and is for intermediate users who have more

than a basic understanding of computers, Office applications, and the Internet. It certifies students in advanced digital literacy topics such as Computer hardware and software, Using the Internet as a lifestyle, and Microsoft Office Applications.

**Prerequisites: Mid-Skills A+ Certification:** This Expert-skills 8-week course is the most advanced class, for those who either graduated from the IC3 course, or have sufficient knowledge in computers and related technologies. It is the industry standard for Computer Technicians. It certifies students in troubleshooting and diagnosing, hardware and software, and professionalism.

**Prerequisites: Advanced-Skills Primer to Electricity:** This ongoing vocational course teaches students the beginning principles of electricians work. Taking the "go until they get it" approach, the course is paced and in-depth.

**Prerequisites: None Resume and Career Builder:** After students have increased their digital literacy and become career ready, this course helps individuals create or enhance existing resumes, effectively search and get jobs online, and master hiring interviews.

**Prerequisites: None** Additionally, the

LLCTC frequently hosts and facilitates innovative and relevant classes and workshops for the community, including ICStars Webshops, Weatherization workshops, and the annual Small Business Technology Workshop.

Classes begin again in January, 2010. For more information or to register, please contact Marlone Finley, Technology Manager at Lawndale Christian Development Corporation—773-762-8889 or by email—mfinley@lcdc.net.

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## Letter to the Editor: DE-MAGNETIZING CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS: THE SLIPPERY SLOPE TO "SEPARATE BUT (UN)EQUAL"?

Valerie F. Leonard

The Chicago Public Schools Desegregation Consent Decree of 1980 was vacated in September, 2009 after CPS successfully demonstrated that they have been in compliance over the past 29 years. During a recent press conference, Chicago Public Schools CEO Ron Huberman stated that a 2007 Supreme Court ruling makes it unlawful to use race as a determining factor in school admissions.

The ACLU has indicated that CPS' interpretation is incorrect. The court ruled that while race cannot be the "sole" factor, it can be included as one of many factors in the admissions process. The Louisville school district — one of the two school districts involved in the critical 2007 Supreme Court decision — actually is using race as part of its admission plan after the court's decision. (Chicago Tribune). It is against this backdrop that CPS must revamp its admissions policies for magnet and selective enrollment schools in time for the 2010-2011 school year.

I can appreciate the quandary in which CPS finds itself, trying to develop a policy that is equitable to all who are concerned, yet, passes muster to withstand a legal challenge. CPS must contend with concerns of affluent white homeowners who move near a magnet or selective enrollment school, and their children are denied access, only to find out there are minority students in the school who scored lower on the admissions tests, and don't live in the neighborhood.

CPS must also deal with the fact that, African American children, for a number of reasons, do not have sufficient access to educational opportunities that prepare them

to be competitive in "the real world". That includes fewer opportunities to live near high quality schools; inadequate preparation to pass a test for the selective enrollment schools; and difficulty surviving the rigors of select enrollment school curricula. Just as King Solomon had to deal with the two women claiming to be the mother of the same child, CPS has to decide which students have the greatest claim to the most coveted spots in the school system.

Magnet schools pre-date the Consent Decree, and were intended to draw from all over Chicago, reflecting the racial diversity of the City. They were never intended to be predominantly neighborhood schools, supermajority one race, or publicly-funded family institutions.

Under the Consent Decree, these schools were intended to be up to 35% white and 65% minority. It has only been within the past 10 years that the City added 30% set asides for local residents. At the time the Consent Decree was entered, Chicago's public school population was approximately 18% white, 60% black, 14% Hispanic, and 8% "other". In spite of recent returns of the white middle class, the current CPS population is now 8% white, 47% black, 39% Hispanic and 6% "other".

Now that the Consent Decree has been vacated, there are no limits to the number of slots in magnet schools allocated for students by race. It is conceivable that affluent whites could eventually gain a supermajority of the slots given current population trends. It should be noted that upwardly mobile blacks would have similar opportunities.

See Letter page 6

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# GIVING FOR THANKSGIVING



Volunteers for State Sen. Rickey Hendon man the serving line recently during Hendon's annual Thanksgiving dinner at his West Side District 5 office on Madison Street. Nearly 200 visitors enjoyed turkey with all the trimmings during the gathering. **Photo by Travles R. Lane**

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## LANE CHANGE: Attitudes of Kids, Cops the Keys To Cracking Black Code of Silence

A Commentary BY TRAVLES R. LANE - [the1tlane@yahoo.com](mailto:the1tlane@yahoo.com)

While I applaud the reported "Chain of Change" effort to penetrate the culture of silence regarding violent crimes in Chicago's West Side and South Side communities, a couple of recent incidents in my experience in these very neighborhoods indicate an approach even more "radical" than erecting billboards offering \$5,000 reward for information is needed.

The first experience occurred when I was approached by the mother of a first grader at the local South Side elementary school where I volunteer as a dining room supervisor during breakfast each morning. The lady (who appeared to be in her mid 30s) spoke to me about her son telling her that I had "snatched" him from his seat the previous morning to make him move to another seat.

And after I assured her I had only gently picked up the little boy and placed him in the designated seating area of his class only after he had steadfastly refused to move after I'd asked him to several times, she called the child into the conversation.

After listening to the little fellow lie to her repeatedly that he did nothing at all before he was moved, she assured him that "mommy is on his side" and "nothing's going to happen" to him if he told her the "truth." Prompted by this assurance of no consequences the child fessed up.

Then the lady went on to tell me never to touch her child again for any reason, and if he doesn't obey in the future she would rather I call her, and she has taught him that no one is to touch him, etc.

She never told the child he should obey adults supervising him. She never asked him to apologize for his bad behavior or change it. She simply demonstrated to him her willingness to back him up—right or wrong—even when he fails to follow rules. She was primed for a confrontation on his behalf regardless of the facts.

Unfortunately, so many parents today are just like that woman. They send their children to school to be educated and properly socialized, but they want those critical jobs accomplished by adults who they routinely teach their children to disrespect and disobey.

Now, that may do wonders for a child's self-esteem, but it does little to help prepare them for a future of mature, responsible citizenship.

At the other end of the spectrum, I encountered an elderly fellow a few days later as I was conducting some business at a West Side auto parts shop.

The old western movie "The Alamo" was playing on the television there and this senior brother was watching it when he turned to me and said, "You know, we started losing this country when we lost men like Davy Crockett and Sam Houston. That's when America started going down.

"Ain't that right?"

I tried to avoid that question for obvious reason, but after he insisted on an answer I simply replied, "We started losing this country well before the ink was dry on the constitution, since the document itself wasn't written for everybody in the country."

Man, I shouldn't have said that.

After trying to explain that the rich, white men who founded the nation, "did the best they could," that old, black brother began to cuss me out, told me I wasn't an American and was just an "African" who should leave the country. He got so bellicose and loud the store's owner had to intervene, later explaining to me the man was a retired policeman known for this type of behavior toward those who disagreed with him.

Anyway, I mention these two incidents to highlight the real obstacles facing those seeking to change the environment of law-breaking and violence in our black communities. Offering rewards only address symptoms of the problem.

Because if parents do not teach their children to respect and obey authority, while policemen—those in authority—enter black neighborhoods believing in some pie-in-the-sky notion of America as the promised land that black people should "love or leave," no foundation for the trust that is needed to reverse the "Snitches get Stitches" creed of the streets can be laid.

It's easy to display prominent public offers of reward money. The real radical idea is to build a community where the laws and law enforcement are worthy of the respect they deserve and where children are taught early on that actions have consequences.

Then reporting crime could become regarded as a learned and inherent duty of citizenship instead of simply becoming a risky means to cop some snaps.



**Strategic Human Services**  
The North Lawndale Community News  
1211 S. Western Avenue, Suite 203  
Chicago, Illinois 60608

### 2009 Microsoft Office Training Schedule

| Date  | Class                               |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 11/21 | Word 2007 Basic To Advance          |
| 12/5  | Excel 2007 Basic To Advance         |
| 12/12 | PowerPoint 2007 Basic To Advance    |
| 12/19 | Access 2007 Basic to Advance        |
| 1/9   | Computer Fundamentals Windows Vista |
| 1/16  | Word 2007 Basic To Advance          |
| 1/23  | Excel 2007 Basic To Advance         |
| 1/30  | PowerPoint 2007 Basic To Advance    |
| 2/6   | Access 2007 Basic to Advance        |
| 2/13  | Computer Fundamentals Windows Vista |
| 2/20  | Word 2003 Basic To Advance          |
| 2/27  | Excel 2003 Basic To Advance         |
| 3/6   | PowerPoint 2003 Basic To Advance    |
| 3/13  | Access 2003 Basic To Advance        |

Class Hours 10AM - 2:30PM

All Saturday classes have a material fee of \$50 if employed; if unemployed or receiving any type of public assistance (TANF, SSI, etc.) the material fee is waived.\*

### 2009 Mayor of Workforce Development WIA Approved Classes\*\*

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\* Applicant must provide proof of public assistance

\*\*All WIA approved classes are tuition based and payment arrangements must be made before starting classes.

**Please Call Strategic Human Services for more information at 312-492-9090**

**NHS** from front page

partnership that brought together community-based information and advocacy with the mortgage industry, municipal government, and regulators to craft a response to a problem that now impacts every neighborhood in the country. Combining counseling and intervention on behalf of customers with responsible lending and comprehensive research, NHS of Chicago showed the way for other organizations and for government to respond to the crisis.

• **Partnership** – From its beginning, the watchword at NHS has been ‘Partnership’ – including the business and financial communities, municipal government, neighborhood residents, the insurance industry, state government, and other non-profit organizations. The strong partnership that Gottschall formed and nurtured was the foundation for NHS in 1974 and it has continued, grown, and become more sophisticated. The NHS partnership has always paid attention to what was happening in neighborhoods and fashioned programs and responses that have allowed NHS to continue to be a ‘lender of choice’ for low/moderate income borrowers in Chicago and, since 2007, in Elgin.

• **Alumni** – Those who have worked at NHS under Gottschall’s leadership learned community development and the value of partnerships in getting results. Dozens of community development professionals learned and honed their skills at NHS and then moved on to serve in other capacities in government, business, and other non-profits around Chicago and across the country. Gottschall’s commitment to neighborhood development and empowerment has been an inspiration for these community development and housing professionals.

• **Innovation:** A trademark of NHS of Chicago has been creativity and innovation in fashioning new strategies and responses to the needs of Chicago’s neighborhoods. Gottschall has fostered collaboration and provided leadership that led to the development of loan programs and products that were unique in the market and provided financial resources to home buyers and homeowners who had been under-served by the more conventional resources. These include innovative programs to finance energy-conservation improvements and general home improvements, loans for purchase/rehab for new home buyers, innovative collaborations with the financial sector to direct hundreds of millions of dollars of conventional financing into Chicago’s neighborhoods, and HOPI – NHS’ response to the scourge of inappropriate lending and the foreclosures that resulted from it. These programs and loan products were emulated and replicated in communities across the country and served as models of public-private partnerships.

**TWO NOTABLE MILESTONES IN BRUCE GOTTSCHALL’S 35-YEAR TENURE**

Throughout Bruce Gottschall’s tenure, there have been many great accomplishments. Two achievements that stand out as key milestones in the history of the NHS are listed below. Both are examples of Gottschall’s great vision and represent his ability to make things happen.

**The First Super Block (1997) 800 N. Harding** While NHS had always taken a “block by block” approach to revitalizing neighborhoods, the 800 N. Harding project included a new strategy that would make it a case study for success in future projects. This West Humboldt Park block had some serious problems with crime. A vacant lot had become a store for drugs, and there were several abandoned buildings on the block. And the adjacent 700 N. Harding block was one of Chicago’s most dangerous. Gottschall saw the problems that were plaguing the area, but he also had a vision for what the neighborhood could become.

**The First \$100 Million Loan Pool (2002)** One of the keys to the success of NHS is the ability to provide homeowners and home buyers with financing to buy a home, fix a home, or keep a home. The way NHS does this is by raising loan capital through loan pools. Since the early 1990s, NHS had helped create funding pools that could be used to provide mortgage financing to borrowers in under-served communities to buy, fix or keep their homes. In the early years, NHS created 17 different loan pools that were used to fund more than 1,500 transactions. Bruce Gottschall and the NHS financing team came up with a new strategy that would help more people and create enough capital to fund all the types of loans that NHS offered. Instead of having many smaller loan pools, they decided to work towards developing one large pool to cover all of NHS’ borrowers and the entire City of Chicago. In 2002, in partnership with the City of Chicago then-Department of Housing (now the Dept. of Community Development) and area lenders, NHS was successful at creating its first \$100 million loan pool. This new ‘Neighborhood Lending Program’ was made up of funds from 26 different banks, plus funds from the City of Chicago. The \$100 million loan pool commitments from the lenders and the City extended for the following three years.

**THE LIFE & TIMES OF MICHAEL SCOTT**

By Nicholas Short



Michael Scott, Sr.

November 17, that he committed suicide on a Chicago River embankment.

Scott was described by his online biography as “a product of the Lawndale community and the Chicago Public Schools system.” The biography also presented a list his accomplishments, including his assistance in the rehabilitation of 1,500 Lawndale housing units and the construction of a senior citizen center, a nursing home, and the Community Bank of Lawndale. It also mentioned his service under Harold Washington and Eugene Sawyer. But what it does not address are the details of his passing.

Several news outlets, however, revealed as much information about his suicide as possible. The Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office said on November 16, according to a November 17 Associated Press article, that Scott shot himself in the head near a riverside loading dock with a .380-caliber handgun, which was found near his car at about 3:15 a.m. on that same day.

His death deeply affected many people, including the distinguished figures who attended his memorial 6 days later. The Chicago Tribune reported that more than a thousand attended Scott’s Sunday farewell at the UIC Forum, 725 W. Roosevelt Rd. Among them were Gov. Pat Quinn, U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. and Chicago Public Schools chief Ron Huberman, who all celebrated his valiant efforts and achievements. One of the speakers at the memorial, West Side Ald. Sharon Dixon, 24th, said, “He was one of us. He was the best of us.” The memorial followed a private funeral that was held Saturday, where Mayor Richard Daley served as a speaker.

Expressing their sadness and admiration for Scott, several other important figures in Illinois released statements about his passing.

Senator Ronald Burris said, “A proud graduate of the Chicago Public Schools himself, [Michael Scott] dedicated his life to public service, and to Chicago’s young people. From his service with the Lawndale People’s Planning and Action Council, to his work with the late Mayor Harold Washington to his time on the Board of Education, Michael proved his commitment to fairness, openness, and honesty.”

U.S. Representative Luis V. Gutierrez, who admired Scott’s dedication toward providing Chicago’s children with a good education, stated, “By fighting every day for our youth, Michael Scott fought



The funeral procession for Michael Scott, Sr. headed west on Roosevelt Rd after the family and friends private ceremony.

for our city’s future. He made Chicago a better place for all of our kids to learn and to grow. I had the honor of working with him in various capacities for 30 years and saw firsthand his dedication to our city.”

State Board of Education Chairman Jesse H. Ruiz also articulated his sorrow by saying, “I speak for all the members of the Illinois State Board of Education and agency staff as I extend my deepest sympathy to Michael Scott’s family, friends and the entire Chicago Public Schools community. I was fortunate enough to travel with Michael and his wife, Diana, several years ago. Like many, I came to hold Michael in highest regard and I had looked forward to continued work between the state and Chicago schools under Michael’s leadership.”

Just as family and friends continue to mourn Scott’s death, both the Chicago Board of Education and the Chicago police continue their investigation, determined to discover why Scott would end his own life. The media pointed out possible motives for his suicide, including allegations of the Board’s illegal use of funds, the fatal beating Fenger High School honor student Derrion Albert, and a federal grand jury investigation relating to accusations of politically influenced admissions to Chicago’s 9 selective-enrollment high schools.

Chicago Board of Education recently revealed to the Tribune that it will hire Walter Jones, a former federal prosecutor who is now in private practice, to investigate how members use their “taxpayer-financed” expense accounts. Clare Munana, the board’s interim president, said the investigation will be separate from a current investigation carried out by the schools’ inspector general.

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# AT THE FLICKS

David H. Schultz, film critic



superior, agent Ryan Maslow (Ben Miles); uncovers proof of the modern day existence of one of the nine secret Ninja societies.

Known as the Clan of the Black Sand led by their masochistic master, Lord Ozunu (Sho Kosugi, a former 1970's kung fu star) who brutally trains stolen and orphan children turning them into "killing machines" that are sold for a price to third world governments.

Among the orphan kids whose now an adult is this lanky, yet muscular string bean, Raizo (played by Asian pop star, Rain) whose on a deadly mission while recalling in flashbacks, the vicious and abusive training methods from Lord Ozunu and the blossoming love affair that literally is cut short by Lord Ozunu who gives new meaning to the phrase "women weakens knees" during Raizo's brutal training.

Her execution harbors Raizo's intense yet empty expression until he escapes the training camp traveling West. Where somehow Raizo seeks to redeem himself in saving Mika Coretti, unlike what he was unable to do earlier for his sweetheart. While the Ninja clan slice and dice their way through dimly lit action scenes filled with graphic decapitations from swift swords and flung five point star weapons slicing off heads and arms to other blood soak forms of carnage.

Eventually, the action works its way to the showdown between Raizo facing his older brother/ assassin, Takeshi (Rick Yune). Before Raizo has his final confrontation with his cruel master who has one last fighting method trick n their battle that Raizo manages to duplicate in time to avenge his lost love.

Director James McTeigue who last did "V for Vendetta" apparently wanted to make

"Ninja Assassin" into sort of a live action comic book put on screen. Instead, we get violence for the sake of violence; an implausible plot and a ridiculous treatment to the heritage and tradition of martial arts and Asian folklore.

There even isn't much authenticity in the martial arts fight scenes that is enhanced by CGI f/x that kept most of the action in the dark. One would have to be shamelessly desperate to sit through this bloody mess. R; 99min. A Warner Bros, Pictures Release – Presented at selected theaters

**BROTHERS (\*\*\*)** Strong performances enhance this viewpoint of the war from the stateside and elevate this story about a ne'er-do-well petty crook/drifter, Tommy Cahill (Jake Gyllenhaal) whose just been released from prison, His return leads to an awkward homecoming with the Cahill family welcoming one brother home as the other, his older brother, Sam Cahill (Tobey McGuire) a staunch family man and a captain in the Marines who prepares to join his troop on a fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan, circa October 2007.

It is an unfortunate departure at the outset for this fractured family where the emotional lines are clearly drawn from the brothers' gruff father. Hank (Sam Sheppard) who prefers the war hero over the irresponsible loser to Sam's devoted wife Grace (Natalie Portman) and their two daughters who have more than contempt for Tommy.

Clearly, Tommy is up against the wall that he made that others refuse to let him forget. Hardly supportive as he tries to show others his intent to make amends for the past. When tragedy occurs when news that Sam is presumed dead in a helicopter crash. Tommy steps in and tries to care for Sam's wife and two daughters.

It's from these circumstances that help Tommy get his act together by caring for his brother's family. He becomes an unlikely source of strength and emotional counterbalance to Grace as the family mourns.

While Tommy remodels her kitchen and shows compassion towards the two daughters, young Isabelle (Bailee Madison) and Maggie (Taylor Geare). And eventually, a closer bond emerges between grace and Tommy.

When suddenly Sam is alive but in danger in Afghanistan, being held captive with another soldier (Patrick Flueger) by the Taliban fighters Ultimately, Sam is rescued and sent home, but the experience has not left him unscarred, returning to a home life left unchanged.

Yet, Sam's return leaves him emotionally cold toward his daughters and irrationally suspicious of Tommy and Grace. Clearly, Sam is a man in pain inward and outward that is also a bubbling volcano that becomes downright scary in his moments of rage that almost mirrors the transformation of Pvt. Pike in director Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" During a critical dinner party sequence brings out a small storm of repressed tensions and domestic anxieties to the surface.

A remake to the 2005 Danish original that is almost a clone scene for scene motivated by the torn two siblings in the midst of jealousy, misunderstanding and unshakable trauma

"Brothers" is a familiar film on the human effect war has on an individual and its family that even feels cliché in what occurs within this dysfunctional family. But director Jim Sheridan rises above the material to deliver a powerhouse of a movie led by the impressions and strength of its riveting performances that makes for an interesting and provocative film that falls short in its realization. R' 104min. A Lionsgate Film Release – Presented at selected theaters

**NINJA ASSASSIN(\*1/2)** More virtual style than story substance; Clearly "Ninja Assassin" is counter-programming that is a video game styled, slick and flashy gore fest meant for the action movie freaks who like their violence thicker than their story and characters,

Therefore, if you are looking for something of redeeming quality in this film; You won't find it in this movie. The thinly drawn story line is a bit mangled as it's played out on the screen. And there is barely any rhyme or reason compared to the nonsense of the film's ultra violence nature here that feeds off itself.

Essentially what little, comprehensible story line there is, is designed to have two key players meet up and join forces, Naomi Harris plays Europol researcher Mika Corretti living in Berlin who against the orders of her

## Letter from page 3

The new admissions policies are not without negative effects. The new rules could "de-magnetize" the schools, as their applicant pools will increasingly draw from the surrounding community, and rely less upon a citywide applicant pool. Effectively, the magnet schools will become neighborhood schools.

As a result, children from other communities with limited education options will see their school choices reduced even further. Giving preference to siblings of current students could also provide certain families with an "inside track", and leave the door open for nepotism at taxpayers' expense. A 2007 study conducted by Catalyst Chicago indicates that the African American enrollment in Chicago's magnet and selective enrollment schools decreased from 37% in 1995 to 29% in 2007.

The new rules could lead to further reduction in the numbers of African Americans attending magnet schools, as a number of African Americans have been displaced from communities with magnet schools. If we're not careful, we could return to "Separate But Equal" based on race, class and family ties.

If CPS wants to take into account factors other than race to yield diversity within magnet schools, they should consider lotteries from each of Chicago's 77 community areas, as opposed to 874 census tracts broken down into 4 clusters based on certain socio-economic factors. This process is much simpler and the results could probably be more easily verified by lay people.

Increasing the chances of African Americans being admitted to, and retained by selective enrollment schools would require massive changes, and go beyond CPS:

1) Parents and guardians need to be more involved in their kids' education. Students whose parents or guardians are engaged in their education are more likely to perform well in school.

2) Community leaders must engage CPS and local citizens in public discussions around education policy. This would include the pros and cons of school policies, how they impact our children, and the formulation of community based alternatives. Communities that exhibit higher levels of civic engagement tend to have higher quality schools that serve their needs.

3) CPS should design the curriculum in local elementary schools to prepare students to test well and matriculate through selective enrollment schools. This would include greater access to gifted programs in each neighborhood school.

4) There should be increased quality in the local community high schools, with strong support from the feeder schools. A good community-based model would be Morgan Park, a predominantly African American community on Chicago's South Side. Morgan Park High School, which reportedly has one of the highest percentages of students performing well on advanced placement (AP) tests in the City, maintains strong relationships with its neighborhood feeder schools.

# ON VIDEO

Compiled and Reviewed by David Schultz

## CHICAGO AREA INVENTOR WINS AWARD TO INNOVATE IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN!

The ideas to ProLife Conference (April Mathis by email at [virgilmathis1@yahoo.com](mailto:virgilmathis1@yahoo.com) to learn where to order promotional materials. Entrepreneur, [www.entrepreneur.com](http://www.entrepreneur.com) Magazine, on October 7 and 21 of 2009 Virgil Mathis is the Wisconsin Affiliate Representative at Strategic Human Resources Inc. 23 members from [www.prolifecanada.com](http://www.prolifecanada.com) and the North LaWNdale Community News where they have a conference room. 23 members from [www.prolifecanada.com](http://www.prolifecanada.com) and in creating opportunities for Veterans in the military and their families. The office is located at 1211 S. Western Avenue, Suite 203, Chicago, IL 60606.



Virgil Mathis, Chicago Area Inventor, wins award to innovate in the state of Wisconsin!

## JULIE AND JULIA

(\*\*\*) Meryl Streep could be on track for another Oscar nomination for her delightful yet human portrayal of Julia Child in this fact based comedy drama paralleling two stories about two women who never met from different generations and lifestyles who discover a common passion for French cooking that ultimately helps each find their place in life.

Amy Adams plays Julie Powell, recently married living in a noisy N.Y neighborhood above a pizzeria that goes on a personal quest to prepare 524 recipes for Julia Child's French cookbooks in 365 days. Stanley Tucci gives a wonderful understated performance as Julia's father who comes under questioning during the McCarthy era.

PG-13; 110min. Sony Pictures Home Video; Available: Dec. 8

**Coming Soon:** Michael Jackson's "This Is It" arrives Jan. 26... Walt Disney's platinum edition of "Dumbo", due out Feb. 2.

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### AIDS from front page

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