

A Tribute to Lucille Leggett

This edition of the Vision Russell Newsletter is dedicated to longtime Russell resident, Lucille Leggett. Leggett moved to Russell in 1974 after retiring as a schoolteacher in Memphis, Tennessee. Over the years, she was an active volunteer in the Russell neighborhood and lent her talents to a number of organizations focused on serving youth and senior citizens, as well as efforts to beautify the Russell area.

In recognition of her 100th birthday, a celebration was held at Mayor Greg Fischer’s office and Zion Baptist Church this past January.

Ms. Leggett passed away on October 12, 2019.

Longtime Russell resident and volunteer, Ms. Lucille Leggett, at a Neighborhood Institute class in 2017.



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Russell Choice Neighborhood Initiative Newsletter

LOUISVILLE CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS AWARDED ADDITIONAL \$4 MILLION FROM HUD

On December 27, Mayor Greg Fischer and U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth announced that Louisville’s Choice Neighborhoods program in Russell is receiving a \$4 million federal grant to further its work on the Beecher Terrace revitalization. This is Louisville’s fourth Choice Neighborhoods grant for the Russell neighborhood.



Beecher Terrace construction site showing Phase I and II progress, as of December 19, 2019.

Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) is among five Choice Neighborhood Implementation (CNI) grantees awarded the supplemental grants, which will help to cover increased costs of housing construction. LMHA will continue to use its 2016 CNI grant award to providing residents with support services including case management, job training, and health assistance.

Mayor Fischer noted during the announcement that, “It’s critical that

the changes in Russell benefit the people who call this community home today. We’ve taken steps to help ensure that, giving former Beecher Terrace residents a lifetime preference on the new replacement units so they’ll have the option to stay in their neighborhood.”

Manfred Reid, Sr., Chair of the Louisville Metro Housing Authority Board, said that as a longtime Russell resident, he has seen the decline in property values and abandonment of property for years and stated that “This is the beginning of an initiative toward restoring our values.”



From left to right: Councilwoman Barbara Sexton Smith, Mayor Greg Fischer, LMHA Board Chair, Manfred Reid, Sr. and U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth. Photo courtesy of Louisville Metro Government.

In addition to providing new, affordable housing to original Beecher Terrace residents and the larger community, the CNI program is creating opportunities for businesses and individuals. Forty percent of construction dollars are going to Minority-, Women- and Disabled-Owned businesses. Laura Kinsell-Baer, Vice President, McCormack Baron Salazar, shared that, “Though we are exceeding the project’s goals, we would like to see more participation; in particular from start-ups looking to learn and grow a business.” The project is also exceeding Section 3 hiring goals. Nearly half of the 52 new, full-time, livable wage jobs that have been created on-site have gone to Section 3 individuals, several of whom are Beecher or Russell residents. (Learn more about Section 3 on page 6).

The Choice Supplemental grant funds can only be used for Beecher Terrace replacement housing units, and the terms of the grant give LMHA an additional two years to complete all 758 housing units, the last of which will be complete by 2025.

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Choice Neighborhood Action Activities Nearing Completion

As 2019 came to a close, the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) and Louisville Metro Government (LMG) worked with local artists, architects and contractors to wrap up Choice Neighborhood “Action Activities.” Several of these activities pay tribute to community leaders who have been catalysts for change in our city and the Russell neighborhood.

SmART Stops

At the corner of 15th Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard, next to Joshua Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, a new “SmART Stop” bus shelter features an image of the late Reverend Louis Coleman, Jr., along with information about his work as a social justice advocate.

Fondly known to many as “Buster,” Coleman was a crusader in the fight for civil rights for more than three decades. Often with bullhorn in hand, he picketed and led protests against institutions and organizations to counter discriminatory practices and advance equal rights.

Reverend Coleman’s efforts brought about many widespread changes, including an increase in the number of minority-owned businesses awarded contracts for several multi-million dollar construction projects, and a change in state law that prevents members of private country clubs from receiving tax breaks if their club does not accept minority members.

On December 3, members of the Coleman family gathered with Reverend David Snardon, Pastor

of Joshua Tabernacle, Mayor Greg Fischer, and other civic, business and community members to celebrate Reverend Coleman’s work and the new SmART Stop.

Coleman’s widow, Etta Coleman, and members of the family were honored by this memorial tribute to Reverend Coleman, who died in 2008.

“Louis was a husband, father, son and brother who dedicated his life to making our community a better place for the disenfranchised. We are beyond pleased and proud that his commitment to improving the lives of others will continue to inspire future generations who will use and visit this stop.”



The Russell neighborhood’s latest SmART Stop honors the life and work of Reverend Louis H. Coleman, Jr. (1943-2008)

Construction to begin in 2020 on The Village

Now that organizers have secured the remaining financing needed to move the project forward, construction will soon begin on *The Village @ West Jefferson*. Once complete, this new two-story building at the corner of West Jefferson and South 12th streets will feature 30,000-square-feet of retail and office space directly across from the new Beecher Terrace housing development.

The project is being led by the MOLO Village Community Development Corporation - a nonprofit arm of St. Peter’s United Church of Christ. MOLO has already signed on several neighborhood-serving tenants for the new building, which will be located on the vacant lot at 1225 W. Jefferson St., immediately east of the church building.

Once completed, residents of Beecher Terrace and the Russell neighborhood will have convenient

access to a variety of new neighborhood amenities and services, including:

All Around Healthcare (AAHC), a locally owned and operated provider of urgent and primary healthcare;

Beecher Coffee, will feature co-working space, in addition to coffee;

Louisville Independent Business Alliance (LIBA), will provide training and support to local entrepreneurs seeking to grow their businesses in Russell;

And Sponsor 4 Success (S4S), will provide a variety of services to income-eligible seniors and youth.

Other tenants coming to *The Village* include Urban Strategies, the Choice Neighborhood Team from the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA), The Minority Mental Health Project, G. Starks Realty and Leverage Property Management, and New Legacy Reentry Corporation.

“One of our primary goals when recruiting tenants was to find businesses and organizations that would meet the needs identified by neighborhood residents and stakeholders during the Vision Russell planning process,” said Reverend Dr. Jamesetta Ferguson, President and CEO of MOLO.

Financing for *The Village @ West Jefferson* includes funding from the Louisville Metro Government, LMHA, HUD’s Choice Neighborhood Initiative, the James Graham Brown and the Gheens Foundations, McCormack Baron Salazar’s Urban Initiatives, CDE, U.S. Bank CDE, the Cornerstone Fund and Church Building and Loan Fund.

Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2020 and to be completed in 12 months. For leasing information, contact Johnetta Roberts at (502) 653-1145.



RETURNING TO BEECHER TERRACE

If you've been thinking about moving to the revitalized Beecher Terrace, we've got great news - the first two phases of housing development will be ready for occupancy in Fall 2020.

The newly developed site will be an amenity-rich, mixed-income community. A variety of floorplans and types of units will be available, all of which will feature energy-efficient, modern design elements.

Original Beecher Terrace residents (anyone living at Beecher on or after June 28, 2016), will be the first

to be offered new units. Beecher residents who were lease-compliant at the time of their move and remain lease-compliant during their relocation period will have a **Lifetime Preference** to return to all Beecher Terrace replacement units, including those being developed on-site and off-site.

Pre-applications will be sent to all eligible original Beecher Terrace residents in early Spring 2020. (If you are a Beecher resident and have had a change to your address or phone, please be sure to share your updated contact information with your Urban Strategies or LMHA case manager so you will receive these pre-application materials). Instructions on how Beecher residents can get on the official wait list will be included with the pre-applications.

Until the official waitlist is established, LMHA is also maintaining an "interest list" for anyone who would like to receive information on new Beecher Terrace units. To be placed on this list, please call the Beecher Hotline (502) 569-4972 and wait until the end of the message to leave your name and phone number.

Your Guide to Section 3 Opportunities

During the redevelopment of Beecher Terrace, all contractors and sub-contractors must give qualifying Section 3 residents the first chance to fill any job openings. New positions are being offered in the following priority order: 1) Former Beecher Terrace residents, 2) Other Russell residents, 3) Public Housing or Housing Choice Voucher program participants, 4) YouthBuild and Kentuckiana Builds graduates, and 5) Other Louisvillians who fall below the federal poverty guidelines.

You can be notified about Job Openings at the Beecher Terrace construction site by either:

- *Visiting the Construction Trailer* at Beecher Terrace to complete an intake form.
- *Calling, Texting, or Emailing* (502) 276-5008, Section3@lmha1.org and leaving your contact information with the Section 3 Hotline.
- *If you are a former Beecher resident, contacting your Urban Strategies Case Manager* at (502) 384-0786 and let them know you are interested in Section 3 job opportunities.

Training opportunities are also available, including:

- **Kentuckiana Builds'** six-week training program. For more information or to attend an orientation call (502) 566-3371.
- **YouthBuild Louisville's** full-time program for persons age 18-24. For more information, visit www.yblky.org, email info@yblky.org, or call (502) 290-6121

The Choice Team is also developing training programs that focus specifically on the skills and trades needed for Beecher's redevelopment. This includes an asbestos abatement contractor/supervisor class that will run from February 10 -14, 2020. For more information or to register, call Steve Swift at (502) 640-2951.

Certified Section 3 Business Concerns can receive preferences when bidding on projects where federal funding is involved. To find out more about Section 3 Business Concern benefits and how to certify your business as Section 3, MBE, FBE, or DBE, contact the Louisville Metro Government, Human Relations Commission at (502) 574-3631 or www.louisvilleky.gov/government/human-relations-commission.

Gateway Murals

In early December 2019, Russell residents and visitors watched artists put the finishing touches on four murals along 14th Street. Designed to be welcoming gateways into the neighborhood, the murals were created by local artists, with input from community members:

Victor Sweatt's mural design on Magazine Street challenges us to "Make History" and features portraits of Russell trailblazers who continue to inspire others to follow in their footsteps, including Alberta Jones, William Warley, I. Willis Cole, Dr. Grace James, Thomas Blue, Albert Meyzeek and Samuel Plato.

Often Seen but Rarely Spoken's (OSRS) mural on Chestnut Street harkens back to Russell's past as "Louisville's Harlem" and features A.D. Porter and Mae Street Kidd. Russell's future is represented by youth imagining their dream careers.



OSRS's mural on Chestnut highlights Russell's days as "Louisville's Harlem" when African American theaters, restaurants, and night clubs lined area streets.

Kacy Jackson is brightening the overpass on Muhammad Ali Boulevard with bold colors and a reminder to "Dream Big". Harvey Clarence Russell, Sr. the neighborhood's namesake, as well as the familiar faces of Lucille Leggett and Sam Watkins are prominently featured on the mural.



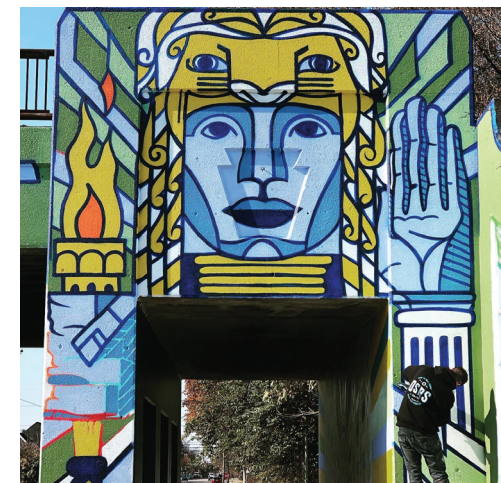
Above: Mural by artist Kacy Jackson on Muhammad Ali Boulevard featuring Harvey Clarence Russell, Sr. (1883-1949), the namesake of the neighborhood. Right: Close-up of images symbolizing hope and peace by VIA Studios and OSRS on the Madison Street mural.



Victor Sweatt adding detail to his portrait of architect Samuel Plato (1882-1957) on his mural on Magazine Street.

Via Studios and OSRS's mural on Madison Street features iconic imagery representing dignity, community, wisdom and strength.

Funding for the gateway murals and SmART Stops, as well as the other Action Activities was secured through a \$1 million Choice Neighborhoods grant awarded to the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Louisville Metro Government contributed \$378,000, and LMHA contributed \$43,000 in additional funding to support these projects. Additional information on the SmART Stops and murals can be found at www.VisionRussell.org.



RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT: Whitney Major



“How can I make a difference in the lives of others?” That’s the question that often races through Whitney Major’s mind as she goes about her day. Whether it is caring for her three children – ages 6, 8 or 14 – or sitting in one of her college courses at Simmons College of Kentucky where she is studying sociology, Major is often focused on making the lives of those around her better.

“My goal in life is to help women who have been through trauma fulfill their purpose in life,” said Major. “If you can help people understand, not just women, that they can overcome trauma and move forward, we can make our communities better.”

The road to accomplishing Major’s long-term goal began four years ago as a resident in Beecher Terrace. It was there that she enrolled in the Louisville Metro Housing Authority’s Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program – a program designed to provide public housing and Housing Choice Voucher residents with the programs, support, and services needed to improve financial skills, achieve long-term employment, and build up a special escrow account.

FSS participants work closely with case managers to set and achieve their financial goals. As the family’s earned income and rent goes up, the size of the escrow account increases. Funds deposited into this account can be used for any FSS purpose, including as a down payment on a home, once a participant has successfully completed the program. It was through LMHA’s FSS program that Major and her husband recently accomplished one of their biggest goals to date — purchasing a new home.

“One of the things FSS really emphasized is knowing your credit score and working to improve it,” said Major. “Most of the issues on my credit report were a result of me previously renting places that I couldn’t really afford. While living at Beecher Terrace, I focused on improving my credit score and making sure we were in a good position when the opportunity to purchase a home presented itself.”

Major said that moving into the Shawnee neighborhood has allowed her to return to the area where she was raised, while being minutes from Youth for Christ’s City Life Shawnee -- an organization that she helps lead in her position as building facilitator and program director. In this role, Major works with youth between ages 11 and 19, providing academic tutoring, mentoring, and other supports for students in the Shawnee neighborhood.

“I love working with kids and helping them to embrace life and overcome some of the struggles they face,” said Major. “I didn’t have the easiest time growing up, but I’m still here. I want to tell my story and be completely transparent about some of the challenges I’ve faced in hopes that it can help inspire others and help them understand they can accomplish their goals too.”

As Major reflects on the changes taking place in Russell through the Choice Neighborhood Initiative, she is hopeful, but she does have concerns on whether or not relocated Beecher Terrace residents will have the opportunity to return to the site once the improvements have been completed. (Learn more about returning to Beecher on page 6.)

“One of the things I’ve learned through my studies is there is a reason why Blacks have not achieved at the same levels as other groups. Whether it was redlining or other discriminatory policies that are in place, that has impacted where we are today,” said Major. “Now that changes are being made, we need to make sure that our people are benefitting from these improvements.”

And until those changes and improvements come, Major said she’s committed to doing her part to make a difference in as many lives as possible. “I’m committed to West Louisville and bringing as many resources as possible to the community. I’m in it for the long haul, and there’s no other place I’d rather be.”

Calling all Beecher Terrace residents age 55 and over! You are invited to attend our upcoming BINGO and Health Information Sessions. We recently held sessions at Urban Strategies’ new offices in the Liberty Green Community Building, Lourdes Hall and Jacob School Apartments. Attendees played multiple games of BINGO and won a variety of useful household items as prizes.

Residents also enjoyed refreshments and listened to a presentation on “*Ways To Stay Healthy In The Upcoming Winter Months*” from JenCare Senior Medical Center staff. Everyone had a wonderful time catching up with their Beecher Terrace friends and meeting new friends. “It’s nice to get out of the house for some fresh air and laughter,” said Mary B. Gully, a former Beecher resident who now lives at Jacob School Apartments.

BINGO & HEALTH INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR BEECHER TERRACE RESIDENTS

The next Health and Wellness BINGO will be held Jan. 16, 2020 from 2-4 p.m. at the Liberty Green Community Room, 500 W. Jefferson St. The health topic will be “How to Manage Stress.” Watch for One Call notices about upcoming sessions in 2020 or call Urban Strategies’ office at (502) 384-0786 to get on the list for future sessions. Please be sure to share any updates to your contact information with your case manager.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS		
JANUARY 2020	FEBRUARY 2020	MARCH 2020
<p>Jan. 14 ♦ 2- 4 p.m. USI Workshop: Identifying your job skills</p> <p>January 16 ♦ 2-4 p.m. BINGO/Jen Care: Managing Stress</p> <p>January 30 ♦ 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Accessing and Using the Parent Portal / Education: Truancy</p>	<p>February 10 ♦ 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Job Fair at Hilton Garden Inn, 350 W. Chestnut St.</p> <p>February 13 ♦ Time TBA Health Screening: Norton/Heart Health/Hypertension</p> <p>February 20 ♦ 2-4 p.m. BINGO/JenCare: Heart Health</p> <p>February 27 ♦ 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Early Childhood Education Registration</p>	<p>March 11 ♦ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. JobNews Job Fair at Cardinal Stadium, 2800 S. Floyd St.</p> <p>March 12 ♦ Time TBA Health Screening: Care Mobile/ Oral Health</p> <p>March 19 ♦ 2-4 p.m. BINGO/JenCare: Oral Health</p> <p>March 26 ♦ 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. Education: Testing Preparation</p>
All events will be held at the Liberty Green Community Room, 500 W. Jefferson St. unless otherwise noted.		