

Russell Mural

Braylyn Stewart has brightened one corner of the Russell neighborhood with 3 new murals enveloping the multi-use building at the corner of 18th Street and Muhammad Ali Boulevard. “There’s Love in Louisville” fills the once-blank wall to the left of the Sweet Peaches restaurant with pinks, purples and blues, while the second story corner bears an abstract image of Muhammad Ali next to the building’s address in large black and white lettering.

Images in Stewart’s murals include a “fresh fish” sign (far left of the ground-level mural) that pays tribute to the former fish market that once operated in the building, a musician and “18th and Walnut” sign that serves as a reminder of the thriving business and entertainment district that once stood on Walnut Street (now Muhammad Ali Boulevard), and symbols representing each current building tenant (far right side). Stewart was chosen to do this work through a competitive application process that is being funded through the Fran Huettig Public Art Project, with support from Fund for the Arts, 1619 Flux: Art+ Activism, the Commission on Public Art and Louisville Metro Government. These murals were the first of five public art projects to be commissioned in west Louisville over the next five years.



Braylyn Stewart adding the finishing touches to the mural



Abstracted image of Muhammad Ali and building address



Panoramic image of ground-level mural

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Russell Choice Neighborhood Planning Initiative NEWSLETTER



LOUISVILLE AWARDED FY2016 CHOICE NEIGHBORHOODS IMPLEMENTATION GRANT!

On Monday, December 12th the Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) was awarded a \$29,575,000 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is the third Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Grant awarded LMHA to benefit the Russell neighborhood, making Louisville the only city in the nation to receive all three grants offered under the Choice program.

Implementation Grant funds will allow Louisville Metro Government (LMG) and LMHA to move forward with implementing specific aspects of the Vision Russell Transformation Plan, including:

- Razing and redeveloping the Beecher Terrace site into sustainable, mixed-income housing
- Developing replacement housing for Beecher Terrace units in other neighborhoods of choice
- Increasing safety and security
- Re-creating strong retail and service centers within the neighborhood
- Improving educational and health outcomes for Beecher Terrace and Russell households
- Improving community connectivity

CNI Implementation Grant funds will also be used to provide case management services and relocation counseling and benefits to Beecher Terrace households.

If you are a current Beecher Terrace resident, please do NOT move, as moving will jeopardize your relocation benefits. You will soon be receiving a letter from LMHA with more details about the upcoming relocation process, your relocation options and the timeframe for relocation, which is not expected to begin for another year (early 2018).

There will also be a resident meeting in January or February with more details about your relocation options and benefits. In the meantime, you can contact Kathy Head at 569-3479 for more information.

SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE CNI GRANT UPDATES !



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Beecher Terrace resident Laisha Allen understands that for things to grow, they must be fed - sometimes literally but also figuratively. Whether it's preparing a meal for once strangers to foster her passion for cooking and dream of becoming a caterer, or helping her kids reach their academic goals in schools by engaging in extracurricular programs, Allen understands how impactful her support, encouragement and a home cooked meal can be to others.

"Unfortunately, I live in a community where there is a lot of poverty and a lack of role models and opportunities for families who want to help their children improve academically," said Allen who has three step-children and four children between the ages of 4-11. "Poverty breeds crime and in order to improve a community, education has to be at the forefront." That is why Allen was thrilled to

Resident Spotlight: Laisha Allen

discover "The Beech" - a tutoring program located in two former Beecher Terrace apartments. It wasn't long after her middle school daughter began the program that Allen began volunteering at The Beech. Now her other children, including her 4-year old, are participating as well.

"The facilitators do an excellent job of establishing relationships with the parents and students and focusing on those academic areas that are key to succeeding in school," said Allen. "My kids are at the point that they are eager to learn and can't get enough of the homework and extra assignments they provide. It has made a huge difference and has accelerated their learning."

As Allen considers the changes planned during the revitalization of Beecher Terrace, she hopes that educational programs and other family-oriented activities will become more prevalent at the Baxter Community Center. "Right now, it's not safe for kids to play outside and there isn't a lot of activities in this

neighborhood that families can enjoy or afford," said Allen who keeps her kids busy in a variety of extracurricular activities including cheerleading, gymnastics, softball and t-ball.

And while she's eager to see more amenities brought to the Russell community, she believes that addressing crime is a necessary first step. "People need to feel like it's safe for their kids to go outside and play. Right now, I don't let my kids play outside because I'm fearful of what could happen." Despite these concerns, Allen says she is cautiously optimistic. "I'm excited about the changes being discussed and the opportunities it may bring. But when it is done, I hope that the Russell neighborhood will still have that community feel and is a place that we still want to be."

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about programs offered at The Beech, please contact Rose Livingston at 502-314-4173.

Action Grant Update

In June 2016, HUD awarded LMHA a \$1 million Action grant to kick-start physical improvements that will enhance other redevelopment efforts within Russell and accelerate the neighborhood's transformation. This grant money will be invested in a focused area spanning from 13th to 18th and Cedar to Broadway, and used to repurpose vacant lots, improve Sheppard Park, create new "art" bus stops, and beautify some of the railroad overpasses, turning them into neighborhood gateways.

The Vision Russell Action Activity Selection Team is currently reviewing proposals for the re-use of vacant lots and the construction of "art" bus stops. Additional requests for proposals and other opportunities for community involvement are coming in early 2017.

Final Vision Russell Transformation Plan

The final Vision Russell Transformation Plan will be submitted to HUD by January 17th, 2017, wrapping up a two-year community planning process funded through a \$425,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant awarded to the LMHA in January 2015. Once the Transformation Plan has been finalized, it will be presented to the Planning Commission and then to Metro Council for adoption as Russell's official neighborhood plan.

Stay tuned for details on an upcoming community meeting where the Vision Russell team will be providing an overview of the Transformation Plan, as well as updates on the CNI Action grant and the activities that will be taking place in conjunction with the recently awarded CNI Implementation grant.

Please visit our website over the next couple of weeks (www.visionrussell.org) for more information on this meeting. If you do not have access to the internet, you may call 502-569-3473 for more details.

Weatherizing Your Home

Make your home warmer and more comfortable this winter.

You may be eligible for financial assistance to make energy conservation improvements to your home with the **Weatherization Assistance Program** and **Project Warm**. Eligible projects can include, but are not limited to, insulating attics and walls, repairing and/or replacing windows and exterior doors, and filling in hidden air leaks (only as needed). Residents must have lived in their home (rented or owned) for a minimum of one year in order to receive assistance. Household must have a gross income no greater than 200% of poverty, adjusted for family size.

For more information on the Weatherization Assistance Program, please call (502) 574-5850. For more information about Project Warm, please call (502) 636-9276



Urban League Apprenticeships

In partnership with KentuckianaWorks, Jesus and a Job and the New Legacy Re-Entry Program, the Louisville Urban League (LUL) is working to attract and train minorities and women who want to pursue a career in the construction and skilled trade industries. Called Kentuckiana Builds, this 10-week comprehensive training and job placement program will train participants in 13 building trades including plumbing, pipefitting and carpentry. Once students have successfully completed the training, LUL will also provide job placement assistance as well as financial empowerment services, housing assistance and other supports that are key to long term success.

To be eligible, participants must be 18 years or older and U.S. Citizens, have a valid driver's license, and a high school diploma or GED, and have registered with the Selective Service.

Orientations and information sessions for those who are interested in learning more about Kentuckiana Builds will be held on December 20th, 21st and 29th at 5:30 p.m. in the Louisville Urban League's conference room. The next two 10-week training programs will begin on January 23rd and February 6th. *If you are interested in learning more about Kentuckiana Builds or other job opportunities, please contact the Louisville Urban League at (502) 566-3371 or visit www.kentuckianabuilds.org.*



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