

DC Residents Honored at Neighborhood Networks Graduation Ceremony

By Bill Weger

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Sixty-four residents of the Edgewood Terrace Apartments and the local community were recognized for their achievement at a Neighborhood Networks graduation ceremony at Catholic University of America on June 9. Edgewood Terrace is an 884-unit HUD-assisted and/or -insured property owned by the Community Preservation and Development Corporation (CPDC).

In their caps and gowns, residents received certificates for completing one or more job training programs with a technical focus offered at The Gateway@Edgewood Terrace. Graduates were awarded certificates for completing the following programs:

- The Computer and Office Skills Employment Program (COSEP)
- The Bell Atlantic Telecommunications Customer Service Program
- The Gateway Software Certification Program (Microsoft Office, Proficiency level certification)
- The Youth Entrepreneurship Skills (YES) Program (in partnership with the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship {NFTE})
- The Internet Communications/Web Design Program (in partnership with DOL & ConServe Inc.)
- The Fastbreak Program (an individual tutoring and computer based GED prep course)
- The Electronic Village Elders Program



Marie C. Johns, President and Chief Executive Officer of Bell Atlantic, gave the commencement address and reminded graduates through examples of her own life as a 20-year-old mother: *you can achieve anything you truly set your heart on.* In addition to Johns, several corporate and government leaders spoke at the event to congratulate graduates and inspire them to continue their hard work in the workplace, including:

Martin Colburn, Vice President for Technology Management Centers, Fannie Mae Corporation, who reminded graduates that a lot of excuses and bull may get you to the top but it won't keep you there.

Chris Roberts, Channel Program Manager for Microsoft, Inc., who reminded residents that the theme for graduation: "*Tomorrow will be a better you better me*" is only valid if they put their minds to it because "Today" is over.

Greg Irish, Director of the D.C. Department of Employment Services, gave the charge to graduates.

Among the student speakers was Keonie Carter, a COSEP graduate. Since completing the intensive computer course at the Gateway@Edgewood, Carter has landed a full-time salaried job with Catholic University of America's Department of Biomedical Engineering, where she will be eligible for the university's tuition benefits to continue her education and has doubled her income to approximately \$30,000.

Many of the graduates have already landed jobs with corporations or government agencies, such as NASA and Merck, and are using their new technical skills learned at the CPDC's Gateway@Edgewood Terrace Neighborhood Networks center.

"Each day our program not only facilitates the learning of technical skills, but it also creates a culture that empowers participants," said CPDC Vice President Albert J. Browne. "We strive to empower residents to take control of their lives and design their future."

The property's revitalization has been led by CPDC and the Residents' Association of Edgewood Terrace. Through partnerships with local corporations, including Bell Atlantic and Microsoft, CPDC is providing vital services such as transportation, child care, health care services and career development services that Edgewood residents need to reach economic stability.

Other important partners with CPDC include:

- The Residents' Association of Edgewood Terrace
- Catholic University of America
- Microsoft
- George Washington University
- ConServe
- Fannie Mae
- Legg Mason Walker, Inc.,
- The College Board Education and Opportunity Center,
- The Montgomery County Workforce Board
- The D.C. Department of Employment Services.
- Morino Institute

With an estimated 50,000 computer-related jobs available in the D.C. area, the Neighborhood Networks center can help prepare residents of Edgewood Terrace and the surrounding community to fill those jobs and have a positive impact on the Washington community.

"At The Gateway@Edgewood Terrace and at the more than 500 Neighborhood Networks centers across the country, residents are taking great pride in achieving their goals," said Charles C. Famuliner, National Field Director, Neighborhood Networks. "Whether it's a graduation ceremony, a resident getting a good job, or a youth who is improving at school, it's rewarding to share in the success."

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