YouthBuild Indy Constructing Bright Future for Participants

Employment and Education Program Begins Construction Training Phase

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard and Congressman André Carson along with community partners today kicked off the construction-rehabilitation phase of YouthBuild Indy, an education and job training program for young adults with limited employment opportunities. Participants may earn a GED, explore careers, prepare for college/post-secondary training, gain construction experience, and develop leadership skills.

“The YouthBuild Indy program gives our community’s participating young adults the opportunity to get the basic education and career skills to be successful,” said Mayor Ballard. “The on-the-job training prepares our trainees to enter the workforce with experience, and we hope to see many of the participants continue on with higher education upon completion of their GEDs.”

YouthBuild Indy is administered by the Indianapolis Private Industry Council (IPIC) and principally funded by $2.2 million in employment and training grant funds from the U.S. Department of Labor. This year, energy-efficient housing weatherization training was added to the curriculum, thanks to an additional $100,000 awarded in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. This year’s participants recently began training at the abandoned house at 840 Beville Ave. The house is owned by Indy-East Asset Development Corp. and part of a multi-million dollar redevelopment of the Near-Eastside neighborhood. When construction is completed, the house will be sold to an eligible, low-income family.

Mayor Ballard and Congressman Carson toured the property and spoke with YouthBuild Indy participants at the construction-rehabilitation site today.

“The experience and skills these young people gain are crucial to helping them overcome the obstacles they’ve been faced with,” said Congressman Carson. “The benefits for the participants and our community last much longer than the weeks they spend in the program. They leave YouthBuild having the job and life skills necessary to enter the workforce ready to contribute and move our economy forward.”

Participants must be young men and women between the ages of 18-24 who have low incomes, have dropped out of high school and are committed to being drug-free. Participants spend half of the 36-week training cycle receiving customized GED, career exploration, life skills, leadership and personal development training. The other half of the cycle
is spent performing supervised construction rehabilitation on a vacant home in Marion County, which, when completed, is sold to a qualifying low-income family.

This year’s program is the third of four program cycles that have been funded through 2011. The 2010 program has 34 enrolled participants. A total of 74 trainees have completed the first two program phases and completed construction rehabilitation of houses at 934 Beville Ave. and 1940 Lawrence St. In the fall, 34 additional young adults will be recruited to begin the fourth phase in early 2011.

Specifically, participants receive:

- Customized GED instruction designed by the Marian University School of Education. Nearly one-third of the group has tested “GED-ready” within the first two months of the 2010 program cycle
- Hands-on construction training rehabilitating a vacant house that will become a home for a low-income first-time home buyer
- The opportunity to earn an internationally recognized, entry-level construction skills credential issued by the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER)
- Program space and service support from the IPS John Hope Education Center, 1301 E. 16th St., which houses the YouthBuild Indy program
- Career exploration support through IPIC’s WorkOne One-Stop Career Centers
- Work-readiness training through the Jobs for America’s Graduates out-of-school youth training curriculum
- Leadership, life skills and community development opportunities
- Preparation for and access to college and post-high school vocational training opportunities
- Preparation and placement assistance for high-demand careers
- A bi-weekly stipend during the program cycle

IPIC cites solid accomplishments in the program. YouthBuild Indy has been praised for several national best practices, including a designation as a leading alternative education option in Indianapolis in the June 17, 2009, issue of Education Week magazine. So far, 30 participants have earned GEDs and 40 have earned NCCER certifications. There have been eight post-secondary placements, four occupational/vocational placements, and 43 job placements.

Lutheran Children & Family Services is contracted to manage daily operations and services for YouthBuild Indy.

Other key partnerships include:
- Indy-East Asset Development Corp. and the John H. Boner Community Center
- Indianapolis Public Schools
- Marian University School of Education
- Lilly Endowment, Inc.
- THA Construction
- USA Funds
- City of Indianapolis’ Department of Metropolitan Development
- Indiana Community Action Association

For more information on YouthBuild Indy’s program content, partnerships and partnership opportunities, contact Thomas Major Jr. at (317) 684-2228. To request information on applying to participate in the 2011 YouthBuild Indy program, contact (317) 693-0911.

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