



Carolyn Lewis, far left,
and Liza Kahn.

Courtesy Harvard University

► 2005 Emerging Leaders' Papers

Affordable Rentals, Resident Participation Attract Harvard Fellows

Rental properties and their residents were the focus of recently published papers by the Emerging Leaders in Community and Economic Development Fellows for 2005. The fellows were sponsored through a partnership between NeighborWorks® America and Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies and conduct research during their summer sessions.

The 2005 fellows were Liza Kahn, a graduate student at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and Carolyn Leung, who holds a master's degree in urban planning and is a doctoral student in the Harvard School of Education.

Kahn analyzed the factors non-profit organizations consider when deciding whether to develop and manage rental housing. She surveyed NeighborWorks® organizations and talked to a number of experts on rental housing both inside and outside the network.

In her paper, *The Case for Rental Housing: A Nonprofit Perspective*,

Kahn describes the factors nonprofits consider in deciding to enter and remain in the affordable, rental housing business. They include market conditions, organizational mission, and the contribution a project may make to the nonprofit's bottom line.

The paper also lists the internal and external factors that play into an organization's decision to adopt rental housing as a business line, emphasizing that these factors are not static, but can be affected by the organization. Kahn's research found that most NeighborWorks® organizations believe the need for rental properties is increasing in areas they serve, primarily because of increasing housing costs.

Leung examined community organizing. Her interest in resident participation arose from her study of education methods and outcomes, and her paper – *Resident Participation: A Community-Building Strategy in Low-Income Neighborhoods* – describes the importance of community education to resident participation.

Leung's paper uses examples of resident participation in decision-making around development, particularly the "Demonstration Disposition" project in Boston, to illustrate the challenges and bene-

fits of having residents participate and the conditions necessary for success.

In particular, the paper describes how community education and planning can bring together the internal and external resources necessary for resident participation to succeed.

The Emerging Leaders Fellows program seeks to attract Harvard graduate students and introduce them to the NeighborWorks® network and the community development field. Since 1999, Emerging Leaders Fellows have produced papers on a range of topics that reflect the diversity of concerns in the field, including predatory lending, public schools, and housing for the elderly.

Fellows' papers have received media coverage and gained the attention of policymakers at the national level. A key part of the program, the Washington policy briefing, allows the fellows to present their ideas to researchers, policymakers and practitioners, including senior staff from the Senate Banking Committee, Freddie Mac, the Fannie Mae Foundation, and the National Association of Home Builders.

Both papers are available electronically at NeighborWorks® America's Web site, www.nw.org.

► New & Noteworthy

The 'Geography of Opportunity'

How can the United States, given its history of segregated communities, ensure that all its residents live in places that serve as “stepping stones to opportunity”? This is one of the key issues tackled by a new anthology, *The Geography of Opportunity: Race and Housing Choice in Metropolitan America*, edited by Xavier de Souza Briggs (Brookings Institution Press 2005). The 353-page book resulted from collaboration among the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University, Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, and the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program. Calling housing “the most important *invisible* social policy issue in America,” the book outlines an agenda to expand opportunity while assessing movement for regional solutions.

Articles include “How Racial Discrimination Affects the Search for Housing,” “The Persistence of Segregation in Government Housing Programs,” “Connecting Smart Growth, Housing Affordability, and Racial Equity,” and “Fair Housing and Affordable Housing Advocacy: Reconciling the Dual Agenda.”

“The Dual Mortgage Market: The Persistence of Discrimination in Mortgage Lending,” by William C. Apgar and Allegra Calder, uncovers hidden discrimination by the mortgage industry. The authors conclude that “although legitimate risk factors play a significant role in the allocation of mortgage credit, borrower race and neighborhood racial composition still appear to be significantly linked to access to prime loans.” The article is available on the Harvard University Joint Center

for Housing Studies Web site, www.jchs.harvard.edu.

Thinking Locally

Local governments, according to a new paper by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, “provide the vision, financing tools, expertise, coordination, and the legal framework” needed to encourage environmentally and socially healthy growth. That's a lot of power, so it's no surprise that many community development practitioners seek partnerships with local governments. The Funders' Network offers a good primer, *Public Sector Leadership: The Role of Local Government in Smart Growth*, for those seeking to start such partnerships.

A section on community and economic development provides an overview of the advantages of infill, brownfield, and vacant property development as opposed to building on undeveloped “greenfields.” The paper also defines community planning terms, such as “eyes on the street” (Jane Jacobs' observation that density and design play a role in deterring criminal activity) and “active living leadership” (a movement among elected officials to consider the health impacts of community design decisions).

The paper is available at the Funders' Network Web site, www.fundersnetwork.org, in addition to other resources for community development practitioners interested in promoting smart growth.

Home Security

Some homebuyers and homeowners, particularly those living in depressed real estate markets, worry about the possibility that home prices could fall where they live, causing them to lose money on the resale of the home. Home

Value Protection (HVP) allows homeowners to buy or stay in a home with an assurance of protection from a decrease in home prices. *Home Value Protection: Final Report*, published by NeighborWorks® America in December 2005, provides an HVP overview to help anyone considering such a plan to evaluate its feasibility and the related regulatory issues.

HVP, introduced in Syracuse, New York, in July 2002, was developed by NeighborWorks® America in cooperation with Yale University's School of Management and Freddie Mac, and is administered through a subsidiary of Home Headquarters Inc., a Syracuse-based affiliate of the NeighborWorks® network.

To access the report, visit www.nw.org, click on “publications,” then “reports.”

Preventing Foreclosures

Creating homeownership is a central strategy of community developers, but a recent rise in the rate of mortgage foreclosures threatens the success they have realized. *Effective Community-Based Strategies for Preventing Foreclosures*, a report from the NeighborWorks® Campaign for Home Ownership, describes the foreclosure process; reviews research on factors that lead to default and foreclosure; examines the rise of the subprime market in relation to foreclosures; describes community-based responses; and presents case studies of foreclosures and foreclosure-prevention programs in Chicago and New York City. The report can be viewed at nw.org/foreclosuresolutions.

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