

# LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Dependent to independent: Program empowers

By Parker Philpot  
Sentinel-Voice

Amid grateful tears and cheers from about 50 guests, the Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas held its annual ceremony honoring graduates from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program on Friday in the Howard Cannon Center Chambers at 340 North 11th Street.

The program is a national initiative administered by public housing agencies, like the local HACLV, under the direction of HUD. Participation is open to adult women and men of all ages who are either on public assistance or Section 8 rent subsidy and elect to enroll in the FSS program which helps them successfully get off financial aid to become self-sufficient, according to Denise Moorman, an FSS program coordinator.

The "Reaching for the Stars" theme is exemplified in the lives of participants who were graduated by meeting their own declared goals, supported by their families,



Denise Moorman, left, a coordinator for the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, Las Vegas Housing Authority Executive Director Parviz Ghadiri and Commissioner Haywood Carter on the housing authority board congratulate Charlotte Ross for graduating from the program, which is designed to move participants off of public assistance and into self sufficiency.

a team of four FSS coordinators and business community partners — banks, finance companies, homebuilders and job development agencies and others.

"The FSS program works

by having the head of household enter into a five-year voluntary program. This contains an action plan developed by the family and [their assigned] self-sufficiency coordinator. Personal goals

range from obtaining a GED, credit repair, gainful employment, to purchasing a home," Moorman explained.

The expressed goals met by this year's 46 graduates included getting higher edu-

cation, accumulating savings, achieving clean credit and attaining higher paying jobs or businesses, and 12 of them have reached their homeownership goals.

HACLV Deputy Execu-

tive Director Richard Martinez was keynote speaker. He had poignant words of praise, acknowledgement and encouragement for the women and the guests in the audience.

"You are living proof that obstacles can be overcome. It took a lot of hard work and sacrifice," Martinez said. He added, "This is a life-changing decision that you've made. ...It's okay to feel good about yourselves."

Moorman said the program has been successful since it started here in 1999. She said the program is ongoing and currently has a waiting list for enrollment. The local capacity per year is 220 clients.

Nationally, FSS was established in 1990 by section 554 of the National Affordable Housing Act. Program services may include child care, transportation, job training and employment counseling, substance/alco-

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## CBC puts poverty in its crosshairs

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Washington (NNPA) — A town hall meeting at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference started off discussing blame for the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina, but ended up focused on who's to blame for America's poverty that was exposed by the tragedy.

"If you are Black in this country and you're poor in this country, it's not an inconvenience, it's a death sentence," says Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.).

"George Bush is our Bull Connor. And if that doesn't get to you, nothing will be able to get to you. And it's time for us to be able to say that we're sick and tired, and we're fired up, and we're not going to take it anymore."

By comparing Bush to Eugene "Bull" Connor, Birmingham's infamous commissioner of public safety who ordered police dogs and fire hoses to attack civil rights demonstrators in 1963, Rangel was the strongest critic of Bush during the CBC's annual town hall meeting.

Countering criticism toward just one political party, actor Harry Belafonte jabbed both Democrats and Republicans.

"The most important wreckage to look at is the wreck-

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## Jakes 'sick' over muddled relief aid

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Bishop T. D. Jakes, who emerged to the forefront alongside President Bush in the tragic aftermath of hurricane Katrina, says his time with the president was not just a photo op, but moments to speak up for Black people and apply pressure for fairness in the reconstruction.

"We're all let down because we as Americans, not just African-Americans, but we as Americans, were raised to believe that our country would come through for us. And they didn't. And not only does that make me angry, it makes me sick," Jakes said in an interview with the NNPA News Service.

"It makes me sick because I have five children and I pay taxes — and a lot of taxes. I want to know that in a crisis, when my back's up against the wall, that we can get help to New Orleans as quick as

we got help to Kosovo or Afghanistan. And I'm disappointed that that didn't happen."

Jakes was shown on na-

tional television, touring hurricane relief sites with Bush. He also was the keynote speaker at Bush's National Day of Prayer Sept. 16.

Jakes, a best-selling author and televangelist who pastors more than 30,000 people at the Potter's House

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Bishop T. D. Jakes, shown with President Bush greeting hurricane victims, says he was aware that he stirred an already boiling pot of anger directed at Bush over relief efforts.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Potters House Website