

National Tenants Gives Clarion Call to HUD-Assisted Families, “No One’s Coming to Save Us!”

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- This Thursday, February 23, 2023, the National Tenant group will host a press conference at Jordan Downs with a call-to-action to residents: “No One is Coming to Save Us–We Will Have to Save Ourselves!” The official address is: 99th Place and Kalmia Street, Los Angeles, CA 90333

“Jordan Downs” is the largest Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) Redevelopment Site in the history of The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Jordan Downs was originally built in the 1940s, as housing for workers during World War II, and was converted to public housing in the 1950s. Its once 700 disparate units will soon comprise of more than 1,500 mixed-use housing.



“

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Racquel W. Jones, CEO and President of Can I Live

REDEVELOPMENT AND MISSED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

In 2018, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) was awarded a \$35 million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) grant from HUD. The grant is to focus on the following areas:

- Housing: replacing distressed housing with well-managed, quality, mixed-income housing.
- People: providing residents with quality-of-life support related to areas such as health, education, and

employment.

- Neighborhood: reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to bring in good schools, commercial activity, and other amenities important to Houstonians.

While the grant's People Pillar Focus appear to place residents at the center of the initiative, Can I Live—a national public housing tenants association—is convinced that its intent and aspirational plans will be missed by a majority of low-income residents who once called Jordan Downs / Watts their home.

The past has shown us that development will move forward as planned without addressing the patterns of practice that lead to poorly planned training, education, and empowerment program goals. The day-to-day operations and procedures of large agencies excludes the residents' ability to process and comprehend complicated development jargon, (and all that is at stake) thus forfeiting their ability to access and grow wealth for generations to come.

REAL ECONOMIC INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY

Initially, development deals and planning grants often show families as a focal point of all engagement.

"The truth is that resident needs are rarely addressed. In most cases, families are ignorant, illiterate and unlearned regarding the development process and its terminology, timelines, and overall value to the local community. While the perception may look ill-will, it may be a simple case of staff and consultants being ill-informed." – Racquel W. Jones, CEO and President of Can I Live.



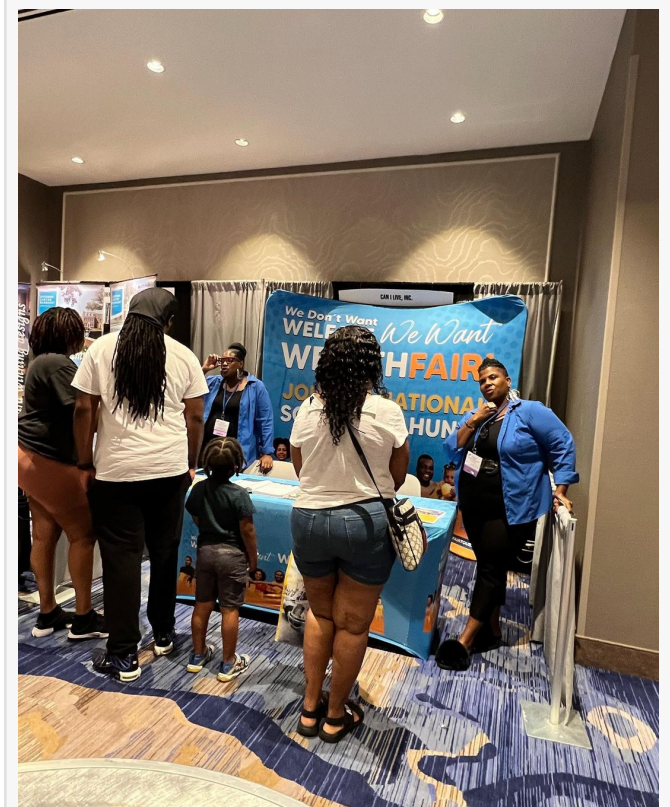
According to the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 970.9, residents are due the first right to purchase the property should Public Housing decide to dispose or demolish its structures. However, residents are not at all aware of these rights, nor are they in any capacity adequately prepared to sit at the table and articulate the value they bring to the development partnership. The Watts / Jordan Downs Resident Council can partner with any development firm to construct a mutually beneficial transaction where they become an equity partner in the development deal.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows Public Housing Authorities to waive the rights of residents in the event that the new proposed development will remain affordable. However, a one-for-one replacement is not adding to the affordable housing stock, necessarily – it is just replacing what was there initially.

“With new buzz words like Diversity, Equity and Inclusion now found on most major corporations’ websites, the notion that those closest to the bottom will ever see real access is a joke. It isn’t enough to say that we stand for Equity, if the poorest people who endured the greatest social disinvestment, acts of violence, trauma, and economic injustice are not first to be offered a nice, thick, and fair slice of the American Pie!” – Jones

These conversations are being ignored, along with the training and capacity needed to ensure that residents are equipped and informed to sit at the redevelopment table to make sound economic decisions for the communities they call home. But when residents are forced to live nightmare lives, along with uninvited stray bullets, rats, and rodents, a shiny new place to call home becomes their definition of the American Dream.

While the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles (HACLA) team works diligently on



engaging residents using a series of focus groups, residents are often asked what they want or what they would like to see in their new community. Residents typically respond with beautification and aesthetics needs versus the opportunity to gain access to the same opportunities afforded to those at the top of these major deals. Failing to communicate wealth-building opportunities that derives from business ownership, resident management corporations and/or equity partnerships for residents and communities is a huge disservice.

"These conversations are paramount and should be mandated in all redevelopment conversations, but it is not. The value of a community is not in the houses we build, but in the people who live in the houses." – Jones

SOLUTION

Can I Live is on a national RV road trip called [the Wealthfair Tour](#). After vending and exhibiting at public housing association events and engaging housing authority staff, the group is ready to sound the alarm – "NO IS COMING TO HELP OR SAVE US – WE MUST HELP AND SAVE OURSELVES!"

After reaching out to more than 2,000 housing leadership staff who operate billions in federally funded programs, less than a half of a half of percent of agencies included the tenant's organization in any of its outcome producing programs.

"We know families because we once were the families that they served,"- says Jones. "As we stay poor, they stay comfortable, and as long as we have our hands out, they have jobs! The moment we become empowered to become our own solutions is the moment we become a threat to the status quo."

Can I Live will host these press conferences across the state of California and then across the country to warn HUD-assisted families (welfare moms) that "NO ONE IS COMING TO SAVE YOU! IF YOU WANT MORE, THEN YOU'LL HAVE TO DO MORE!"

The powerful message comes from a place of reference. A once struggling welfare mom, housing authority commissioner and housing staff, Jones not only has a message, she is the messenger chosen to help set families free from the dependency on government subsidies- hence the organization's One Million Moms OFF Welfare (1MMOW) Initiative.

With their mantra of "We Don't Want Welfare-We Want Wealthfair," the Tour promises to spur economic growth by educating, empowering, and entertaining residents on the pitfalls of poverty and its guaranteed ways to avoid them.

Residents don't need resume-writing skills and interview workshops alone, but a clear path to avoid the "Welfare Cliff," a term used that references the loss or reduction of benefits when low-income individuals obtain employment.

Immediately, the system penalizes them for working and oftentimes removes them all together without adequate time to adjust their lives in totality.

Can I Live and their team bring over 100 years of firsthand expertise as former public housing commissioners, and housing authority residents under both Public Housing and Section 8 programs. Can I Live is uniquely designed to help stakeholders address the barriers often faced by Public Housing & Section 8 Residents and adequately motivate, inspire and empower residents to embrace a full vision for themselves and their families.

JOIN THE WEALTHFAIR BENEFIT CONCERT!

The Wealthfair Tour presents–The Housing Is Health Benefit Concert & Expo that will take place on September 22-24, 2023 at the Beehive, located at 1000 E 60th St, Los Angeles, CA 90001.

Affordable housing is an equalizer to combatting and reducing poverty. Building Affordable Housing is a game of haves and have nots. Housing is a human right and serves as the foundation for great health and financial stability.

Housing is Health Benefit Concert uses the power of live music to create social change. Can I Live's Wealthfair Tour will host its annual Housing is Health benefit concert/expo to raise funds for viable affordable housing, health, and wealth solutions. In partnership with local non-profits, proceeds will go towards (up to 5) non-profits whose revenues do not exceed \$3 million annually. Non-profits must demonstrate and present their proven solution for housing, health, and/or accessing wealth for LA residents.

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As the cost of housing and health continues to rise for everyone, we know we must act so that our neighbors most in need now have the greatest chance of thriving in the future.

In solidarity with Mayor Karen Bass's current State of Emergency, Can I Live is rolling up their sleeves along with its partners and influencers to impact the communities we call home.

WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA

- About [RW Jones "The Brillionaire"](https://thebrillionaire.com/): <https://thebrillionaire.com/>
- About Can I Live: <https://canilive.org/>
- About The WEALTHFair Tour: <https://thewealthfairtour.com/>
- About RW Jones Books: <https://thebrillionaire.com/books/>
- Video Testimonial: <https://vimeo.com/677918085>
- Affordable Housing Video: <https://youtu.be/c9jWq2FKylk>

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