

August 27, 2012

Mr. Steve Longo
Albany Housing Authority
200 South Pearl Street
Albany, New York 12202

Dear Mr. Longo:

Please accept our most heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for your contribution to making this year's "By Us, For Us": Uptown/Downtown Community Cookout a phenomenal success! Despite the rain in the early part of the day, the community came out and supported this event in large numbers and with great enthusiasm! It was so wonderful to witness such fellowship and neighborly love, and we want to thank you and Albany Housing Authority for your role in making that happen!

In addition to enjoying good music, good food and beverage, and even better conversation, the cookout included a host of other activities, which included the following:

- Presentation of plaques honoring three (3) community activists: Ernestine "Teeny" White, Ruby Hughes and the late Abbie Lee Brace, in recognition of a lifetime of outstanding community service and unselfish devotion to the principles of good citizenship.
- A representative from the Albany County Mental Health Department who spoke on the deadly silence of depression in the Black community, which included identifying symptoms, treatment, and support groups. This presentation also included a very powerful and moving poem by members of one of Albany's largest and well-known families, who recently lost a loved one to suicide as a result of depression that went unrecognized, undiagnosed and untreated. It provoked such great dialog and moved several attendees to acknowledge their own bouts with depression, and come forward to speak about it for the first time.
- Voter Registration with local politicians who spoke to the power of the vote and making sure our voice is heard by speaking to the issues that directly and indirectly affect our community.
- Poets/Spoken Word Artists from Urban Guerilla Theatre, whose poetry spoke to anti-bullying, anti-violence, youth empowerment, and rocking the vote.
- The Over-40 Men's Basketball Tournament, including some of the cast of the recently released documentary film entitled "Ballin' in the Graveyard", which is currently playing at the Spectrum Theater and, featuring "By Us, For Us" co-founders and committee members Derek Johnson and Brian Hines! YES, they still got game!!
- A dance contest and bouncy bounce for the children.

Enclosed please find a disk that includes highlights from this year's event. We hope the images will give you some idea about the role this event plays in rebuilding and revitalizing stronger communities.

Again, thank you and Albany Housing Authority for helping to make this year's community cookout a great success. Your continued support and your contribution to community is how we help put the neighbor back in our neighborhoods!!

Sincerely,



Derek Johnson
Co-Founder and Committee Member



Brian Hines
Co-Founder and Committee Member



Gay Townsend-Jones
Committee Member and Treasurer

"By Us, For Us"

P.O. BOX 338, RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144

REBUILDING AND REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES