

September 2006

## Making the Headlines

If Hartford High School sophomore Kayla Johnson wrote the headlines, her city's news would have a different angle. A front-page article might read, "Despite the reports, Hartford students are not all about violence." Her story would reveal how barriers crumble when students from different high schools work together towards a common goal.

Kayla knows this first hand from her experience at SINA's Scholar of the Month leadership training day. On June 15, more than a dozen students, from four different Hartford high schools, gathered for a day of teamwork, learning and laughter.



"We usually don't get a chance to work with kids from other schools," said Bulkeley High School Junior Begaeta Nukic.

Led by staff from the Institute of Living and Riverfront Recapture, the day's schedule of trust-building activities and creative challenges required that the students put their heads together.

Since 1981, SINA's Scholar of the Month program honors the student who achieves the highest grade point average at each of Hartford's public high schools. The students receive a Barnes and Noble gift certificate and recognition at an annual dinner event.

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*Here at SINA, we have made this group of youth our headline, because we believe that students who choose achievement over apathy, and choose teamwork and understanding over turf wars and violence, deserve to be front page news.*

### New Security Vans Hit the Streets

There's a new pair of eyes and ears on Hartford streets this summer.

Since April, a brand new security van can be seen patrolling the major corridors in South Hartford between 5 pm and 1 am. Staffed by the Hartford Guides, the mobile patrol unit's mission is to enhance public safety. A second van will soon hit the streets as well.

The security van initiative was organized and funded by the South Hartford Community Alliance, a group of businesses, residents and organizations in South Hartford working together to address issues relating to public safety and quality of life.

In development for the last few years, the South Hartford Community Alliance recently acquired its not-for-profit status. With the help of Senator John Fonfara and the City of Hartford, the Alliance received an organizational grant,

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*SINA's Scholar of the Month students participated in a Leadership Training Day full of fun, new friends and team-building activities.*

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Plus More...

Success is defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. At SINA, our goal is success for the Southside neighborhoods - to help the community, its businesses and residents achieve their aims and purposes. To do this in a comprehensive manner, SINA's efforts include affordable housing, public safety, leadership, and education initiatives.

We have seen both new and continued progress in all of these areas. In the housing arena, the launch of the HOMEConnecticut campaign gives hope for increased production of affordable housing. I am proud to serve as Co - Chairperson for this important statewide effort. SINA's own housing development has also advanced. The last three houses of Cityscape Homes third phase have been completed and are in the process of being sold to first time homeowners. With the help of historic tax credits these three-family homes were renovated into gorgeous two-family houses. The new homeowners will enjoy spacious rooms, hard wood floors and the charm that only historic architecture offers. As well, the homeowners will have rental income from the second unit.

With public safety, Hartford's Police Department has introduced a new chief, Chief Daryl Roberts, who was born and raised in Hartford. SINA would like to extend its welcome to Chief Roberts. We look forward to continued collaboration with the police department as it moves forward under Robert's leadership.

In South Hartford, public safety is literally rolling forward with the introduction of new security vans purchased by the South Hartford Community Alliance and staffed by the Hartford Guides. We anticipate continued collaboration with these mobile patrols in our security meetings and other efforts.

As summer winds to its end our minds turn once again to school and education. Knowing that education is part of the foundation for success in life, SINA focuses on education initiatives for children of all ages. For younger kids, the Cops-N-Kids program promotes early reading by equipping police officers to distribute children's books that employees from SINA's institutions have donated.

For high school students, SINA promotes academic achievement through our Scholar of the Month program. This year we honored a great group of scholars from Hartford's public schools and celebrated with a dinner and awards ceremony at beautiful Riverside Park.

When it comes to education and success, college or university is key but it can be costly. SINA helps young adults obtain higher education through our scholarships - such as the new textbook scholarship that helps SINA neighborhood community college students purchase the course books they need. Every year, SINA also honors three Bulkeley graduates with a SINA/Ivan A. Backer scholarship to assist with the cost of college tuition. In June, we sponsored a breakfast meeting that gave these students a chance to meet and talk with the scholarship's namesake, and former SINA Executive Director, Ivan A. Backer. The meeting also gave me an opportunity to see first hand the high caliber of students that receive the scholarships.

SINA would like to thank its Education, Community and Volunteer Committee for its dedication and hard work with all of these education initiatives. Under the leadership and guidance of chairwoman Debra M. Borrero, the committee has been recently involved in a strategic planning process. As a part of this process, the committee has adopted a new name - Community and Youth Development Committee - a fitting name that speaks for itself. We look forward to other new developments and direction from the committee as the planning progresses. There are few things more fulfilling then witnessing our success through the accomplishments of others in our community.




*From floors to doors, this remodeled Cityscape home on Lincoln Street reflects high quality and historic charm.*

## INTRODUCING JOHN ROSENTHAL



Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance would like to welcome and introduce its new Director of Development, John Rosenthal. On April 17, 2006, John joined the SINA team, bringing with him 7 years of experience in the development of affordable housing, including his most recent position at the Corporation for Independent Living.

At SINA, John administers the affordable housing program and is responsible for the acquisition, financing, rehabilitation and marketing of selected projects. He enjoys having a role in neighborhood revitalization and strongly believes that families of all income levels should have the opportunity to acquire appreciable assets.

"In addition to John's technical expertise, he also has the social consciousness that fits in very well with the work that we do," SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán expressed.

## Ivan A. Backer Scholars Honored



The 2006 SINA / Ivan A. Backer scholars had the chance to get to know the scholarship's namesake. **Top Row:** Ivette Quiros, Zulynette Morales, Bayron Rodriguez, Alison Giuliano, Luis Caban **Bottom Row:** Debra M. Borrero, Shaneca Napier, Ivan A. Backer

Following the success of last year's new venue for the Ivan A. Backer Scholarship event, SINA honored the three 2006 scholarship winners by sponsoring a breakfast at Il Panino restaurant. The breakfast provided the students an opportunity to sit down and talk with the scholarship's namesake Ivan A. Backer, as well as Luis Cabán, SINA's Executive Director; Alison Giuliano, Head Counselor at Bulkeley High School; and Debra M. Borrero, Chairwoman of SINA's Community and Youth Development Committee.

"This venue gave the students an opportunity to see that the scholarship's namesake is a real person, not just part of history, and to hear about his life and contributions to the neighborhood," said Cabán. "Personally, this would be an incredible experience for me if I were a recipient."

The following day, Cabán attended Bulkeley High School's End of the Year Awards Ceremony, where SINA, along with other public and private organizations honored seniors with awards.

### Meet the Scholars:

#### Bayron Rodriguez

"My father has always told me, 'For great success, there must be great dedication.' He has always pushed me and told me how important education is. Being able to see the gift of education in the palm of my hand, and always having my parents push me to strive, I have become determined to accomplish my goals..."

#### Shaneca C Napier

"If I have learned anything from being active in these programs, it's responsibility, discipline, respect and readiness. I must always take responsibility for my actions, respect authority figures at all times, always be ready to work and discipline myself as much as possible."

#### Zulynette Morales

"If I successfully open up this business I want to use my success to allow those who will be the future to have the opportunity to shine. I know from my experience that there are many youth that have so much to offer and at times it goes to waste because they cannot find an outlet to express themselves."

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Last year, SINA added the leadership training day to the dinner event, an addition aimed at encouraging the students towards further achievement.

The youth who participated expressed their appreciation of the opportunity. "We didn't know each other when we arrived, but we got together and helped each other out in different situations," said Thao Nguyen. "We combined our knowledge and, as the day went by, we got closer."

"She proved to me that there is a life outside of Hartford High," said Kayla Johnson about one of her new friends from Weaver High School.

After a day full of activity and newfound friendships, the scholars adjourned to a different celebration. Their families and fellow Scholar of the Month recipients joined them for dinner and an awards presentation at the beautiful Riverside Park Community Boathouse.

By the time the sun set over the Connecticut River, 34 Scholars had been honored for their academic success - each receiving plaques, applause and their gift certificate. As for the dozen who participated in the leadership day, they departed with an extra dose of accomplishment and camaraderie.



By the end of the Leadership Training Day, a dozen students from four different Hartford high schools shared the bonds of teamwork and achievement.

## HOMEConnecticut

A new hope has emerged for Connecticut's affordable housing crisis: HOMEConnecticut. Launched on May 24, HOMEConnecticut is a statewide campaign aimed at bringing the skyrocketing cost of housing back within reach of all state residents. Connecticut State University Chancellor Emeritus and former OPM secretary William Cibes serves as Chairman of the campaign.

SINA has been integrally involved in HOMEConnecticut from the beginning. SINA's Executive Director Luis Cabán served on the steering committee that helped launch the campaign. Now, as a Co-Chair of the campaign, Cabán brings the experience and perspective from SINA's history of developing affordable housing.

Serving as Co-Chairs with Cabán are John Rathgeber, president of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association; and Andrea Pereira, program director of the Local Initiatives Support Corp.

"It has always been a moral imperative that every resident of Connecticut deserves a safe, secure, affordable place to live," Cabán said. "But now, it has become an economic imperative, too. We will spend the summer and fall listening to the residents of Connecticut and molding their ideas into a coherent whole."



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## New Security Vans Hit the Streets *continued from page 1*



*Hartford Guide Jose Allende speaks at SINA's security chiefs meeting.*

which it dedicated to launching the security van initiative.

"We're just trying to get the ball rolling," said Vincent Carbone, South Hartford Community Alliance President. "We hope to see the security vans become a cutting edge program in the city - with more vehicles on the road to assist the police and make people feel safe."

To welcome and aid this new mobile patrol, SINA invited the Alliance and Guides to its summer security chiefs meeting; quarterly meetings that facilitates commu-

nication and cooperation between the Hartford Police Department and the security teams of the Southside institutions.

"SINA rolled out the red carpet for us," said Fran Reale, a lead organizer for the Alliance. "To be included in that meeting was very good for us. Doors usually don't get opened that easily. What SINA did in networking us with those security forces would have been difficult for us to accomplish as quickly and readily."

Joining the Hartford Police Department and Southside Institutions at SINA's meeting were Fran Reale and Paul Mozzicato from the South Hartford Community Alliance, as well as Hartford Guide Executive Director Austin Jordan and Hartford Guide Jose Allende, who has been driving the first van.



*Staffed by the Hartford Guides, South Hartford Community Alliance's new security vans will keep vigil on South Hartford streets. Left to right: Luis Caban, Jose Allende, Paul Mozzicato, Austin Jordan.*

"Communication is power. That's the bottom line," said Fran. Indeed, the meeting enhanced the power of South Hartford security by facilitating essential communication and collaboration. Discussion at the meeting focused on areas of responsibility and ways of integrating the Alliance's mobile units with existing security teams, from coordinating efforts and sharing cell phone numbers to brainstorming about new communications networks.

*"SINA helped us push it to the next level," Fran expressed. "Money can't buy that kind of support and bridge building."*

The meeting concluded with anticipation for the mobile units' impact and future.

"SINA helped us push it to the next level," Fran expressed. "Money can't buy that kind of support and bridge building."

"That's what SINA does," said SINA's Director of Government and Community Relations John Bailey. "We act as a catalyst."

**SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with the community to develop leadership and improve the economic, physical and social characteristics of Hartford's Frog Hollow, Barry Square and South Green Neighborhoods.**

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