



PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

PHFA's Housing Services Department **Best Practices**

Regency Park Apartments/Lights On 4 Less

Categories: Youth Services

Outcomes:

- The promotion of academic achievement and support.
- Increased parental involvement.
- The development of strong community partnerships.
- The distribution of 252 compact fluorescent light bulbs

Units: 126

Management Agent:
Interstate Realty
Management

Service Coordinator:
Crystal Lowery
610 383 4624
pabyby93@aol.com

Program Components:

- Education of community members by utilizing program youth
- Success of program based on the support of the community members to the After School program
- Parent volunteers were vital to the success of the project

Background:

This year the Regency Park After School Program has been working on a youth lead service project called Lights On 4 Less. The program was officially launched during the "Lights On After School" event on October 16, 2008. "Lights On" is a national event established by the After School Alliance, an advocacy group working to ensure that all children have access to affordable, quality After School programs.



During the Lights On 4 Less program, youth from Regency Park Apartments have educated members in their own community on how to save money using energy efficient light bulbs. There are thirty-five students enrolled in the After School program; they will recruit many of the 108 children ages 5-17 years old in the community to participate in the project. Regency youth have acquired 252 compact fluorescent light bulbs (2 bulbs per household) and distributed them to all 126 housing units. Students will be teaching residents how CFL bulbs use up to 75 percent less energy than standard light bulbs (the students obtained this fact from our community partner Philadelphia Electric Company - PECO). They will share the knowledge that by changing two of the most commonly used lights in each of their homes they as a community will save approximately \$3,780 per year. This is very important as the average CFL bulb has a significantly longer life expectancy than an incandescent bulb. This project has emphasized the importance of conserving energy, as well as provided a tangible way to help protect and preserve the world for the future while reducing costs in these tough economic times. The youth have

learned that something as simple as changing the type of light bulbs they use will decrease the consumption of electricity and help reduce the effects of global warming. Students have learned through this service project that simple changes can achieve positive outcomes.

The roll out of Lights on 4 Less was a huge success because of the support of the community partners to the after school program. More than sixty people attended the “Lights on After School” event held in the Regency Park Community Center including the community partners who supported the event.

- Gail Pippen, Director of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Youth Service America in association with Disney provided a Minnie Grant of \$500.00 to fund about fifty percent of the project.
- Philadelphia Electric Company (PECO ENERGY) provided information on energy conservation
- Interstate Realty Management Company provides the community center for the after school program as well as some funding for the project
- Service Lighting provided the CFL light bulbs at a discounted price
- WCJO Radio posted the event on the Community Bulletin Board with Comcast Cable TV advertising the event free of charge
- Willy’s Family Restaurant provided the food for the “Lights On” event at a discounted rate.

RESULTS
By changing two light bulbs per household, Park Apartments will collectively save approximately \$3,780 per year. Numerous resources have been leveraged to support the program. Also parent, community and corporate participation have been achieved.

Parent volunteers have been very valuable to the success of the project. There is a core group of students who have spearheaded this project. These volunteers are mostly sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, who not only volunteered for the project, but serve as mentors and homework helpers to the elementary school students.

Many community leaders and dignitaries attended the event to honor the efforts of the youth driven service project and also to support the need for safe, affordable, and quality after school programs.

Investment in Services:

The Regency Park After School program kicked off in the spring of this year. The program is primarily funded through the Coatesville Area School District’s 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant. Regency was awarded a grant of \$50,000 to fund the program for the first two years.

For more information,
contact PHFA’s Housing Services Department:
Robert Butcher
610.270.1560
rbutcher@phfa.org