



# resident life

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## Residents Travel to CA for Leadership Training

Two CHP residents recently had the opportunity to travel to San Jose, California for a multi-day NeighborWorks® training workshop designed to strengthen the voices and skills of community, resident, and volunteer leaders from coast to coast. The event, NeighborWorks® first annual national Community Leadership Institute (CLI), provided a framework for learning and a forum for discussing community issues and sharing best practices and solutions to the problems faced by low-income communities around the country.

Geraldine Smith, a Lafayette Village Elderly apartments resident, and Sirena Coley-Sharpe, a Woods at Yorktown resident, were selected by Tiffany Little, Assistant Director of Resident Services, to join her for the training experience based on their history of neighborhood activism. Other CHP attendees were Juanita Hatcher, AmeriCorps member, and Tonya Speller, Resident Services Coordinator.

Smith, a sixty-two-year old grandmother, has lived at Williamsburg's Lafayette Village for 5 years and was "surprised but honored" to be invited to attend the training conference. But Little explained it was an easy decision. "Ms. Geraldine loves her neighborhood and is like everybody's grandmother there. She looks after her neighbors and the staff, and is very involved in making her neighborhood a better place."

Smith described CLI as very motivational. "It was an experience of a lifetime!" said Smith. "I learned about interacting with all types of people and how to get neighbors more involved in their communities. I couldn't wait to get home and try out new ideas."

Coley-Sharpe said she also learned a great deal at the conference, and was especially impressed with the class she took on how to involve youths in their community. "The trip was an incredible experience, and I'm so thankful to CHP for the opportunity to participate," said Coley-Sharpe.

Added Smith, "CHP is not just about renting homes to people...it is creating communities that we can all be a part of."