



EXECUTIVE OFFICE

**Board of
Commissioners**

Kandis Brewer Nunn
Chair

Jeff Bachrach
Vice Chair

Richard Fernández
Vice Chair

Harriet Cormack
Treasurer

Shar Giard

Chris Lassen

Lee Moore

Catherine Such

Antoinette Teixeira

Executive Director
Steven D. Rudman

HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF PORTLAND

135 S.W. Ash Street
Portland, OR 97204

Tel 503.802.8300
Fax 503.802.8312

www.hapdx.org



For More Information:
Shelley Marchesi
Policy and Public Affairs
(503) 802-8427
shelleym@hapdx.org

For Immediate Release

**FORMER COLUMBIA VILLA RESIDENTS HONORED FOR
EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE**

*-- Part of the federal HOPE VI grant helping to underwrite New Columbia
is dedicated to assisting self-sufficiency --*

PORTLAND, Ore., July 27, 2005 -- A woman who walked more than 10 miles to an employment training class when her car broke down, an impoverished immigrant who achieved her dream of homeownership after her husband left her and their children, and a couple that has started a blossoming residential cleaning business while they raise two children and one of them holds down a full-time job are among those who were honored at a event hosted by the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) to recognize former Columbia Villa residents working to improve their lives.

Their efforts have been supported by the federal HOPE VI grant supplied to HAP for the New Columbia redevelopment. An underlying goal of HOPE VI projects nationwide is to help low-income residents achieve greater self-sufficiency.

“Many people know New Columbia for the bricks and mortar side of the project – the mixed income housing, the community master plan, the new city park – all of which is very different than what was there before. What they may not know is that the efforts on the human side of the equation have been equally as dramatic,” said Steve Rudman, HAP’s executive director.

-- more --

Rudman said the agency has worked with former Columbia Villa residents to help them set and pursue goals on a variety of fronts, all of which take them toward greater self-sufficiency, and in many cases, independence from public assistance. The agency has a staff that is dedicated to supporting former Columbia Villa residents who wish to use the opportunities the HOPE VI grant provides. They work under the umbrella of the HOPE VI grant's Community and Supportive Services program, which is dedicated to providing self-sufficiency activities that assist residents to achieve their goals.

"This is a chance to recognize tremendous achievements, both for what they represent in the lives of these men and women, and for what they say to other residents about the value of courage, strength and perseverance in working through the life challenges many of them face," he said.

HAP's 2005 HOPE VI Achievement Awards Banquet was held on Tuesday, July 26, 2005. Awards were given in the following categories:

ESL: for a resident who has shown exemplary progress in the English as a Second Language class, both in attendance and knowledge – Reyna Fuentes.

Post-Secondary Education: for a resident who has continued their post-high school education and graduated with a degree – Leila Gavros.

GOALS: for a resident who has excelled in HAP's GOALS (Greater Opportunities to Advance, Learn and Succeed) family self-sufficiency program – Rossalyn Floyd.

Homeownership: for a family that has realized the dream of homeownership and works hard to maintain the dream – Tsega Mebrahtu.

Entrepreneurship: for an individual who has shown initiative in launching and sustaining a new business enterprise – Phuong Thao Nguyen.

Employment and Training: for outstanding accomplishment in a training program and the successful pursuit of employment – Bessie Ford.

Distinguished Service to the Community: to an individual who has made a tireless commitment to serving the former Columbia Villa resident community – Terry McLain.

- - more - -

Phenomenal Woman, Phenomenal Man, and Phenomenal Couple: these three special awards go to the woman, man, and couple who have shown extraordinary perseverance in the pursuit of self-sufficiency and overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers with a positive attitude – Nicole Crain, Ibrahim Yansaneh, and Gladis Turcios and Luis Tzab.

Please contact Shelley Marchesi at HAP, 503-802-8427, for more information on the award winners.

About New Columbia

New Columbia is an innovative mixed-income housing development anchored by a federal HOPE VI revitalization grant for public housing. Located in North Portland's Portsmouth neighborhood, it offers a mix of housing types, including public housing, affordable rentals, and homes for sale. The architecture, street patterns, services, and recreational and educational opportunities are all planned to integrate New Columbia with the surrounding neighborhood and enrich the lives of residents and neighbors. The first housing units became available in May of 2005.

About the Housing Authority of Portland

The Housing Authority of Portland is a public corporation serving all Multnomah County. HAP provides housing and housing-related services to those who face barriers due to income, disability or special need. HAP's housing and rent assistance programs serve 33,000 residents throughout the county. A citizen commission with volunteer members recommended by the City of Portland, the City of Gresham and Multnomah County and appointed by the Mayor of Portland governs HAP.

###