

## City of Newburgh

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### Press Release

(845) 569-7354 phone– (845) 569-7370 fax

For immediate release

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### City of Newburgh Hosts Successful Strong Neighborhoods/Strong Families Initiative Kickoff

More than 100 community leaders including clergy gathered for breakfast and the kickoff of the City of Newburgh Department of Human Services' Strong Neighborhoods/Strong Families Initiative at the Ritz Theater on Saturday Dec 13.

For the last several years, the City of Newburgh has been actively working to engage the community in various forums to identify the challenges facing the City, to develop strategies to address them and to create a shared vision for the future. The Comprehensive Master Plan, recently adopted by the City Council, is a result of this kind of collaborative and city-wide effort.



Pictured (l-r): Deacon Frances Dixon, Randy Burley, Department of Human Services Director Yanyah Pearson, Rev. Edwin Reed, Dr. Eddie Jumper, and Arlette Murrain.

Strong Neighborhoods/Strong Families is spearheaded by the City of Newburgh's Department of Human Services under the direction of Yanyah Pearson. The new initiative hopes to unite local faith and community leaders and organizations toward the common goals of neighborhood improvement and family strengthening, especially focusing on the needs of youth.

"Our many diverse faith-based organizations are among our greatest assets," said City Manager Jean-Ann McGrane. "They are a vital link between our residents and City government, and have helped build mutual trust and encourage dialogue. We look forward to working with them on this important neighborhood revitalization initiative."

Dr. Benilda Armstead-Jones was Mistress of Ceremonies for the breakfast. Local clergy participating included Rev. Dr. Coleman Briggs, New Hope Baptist Church, and Pastor Byron Williams, Baptist Temple, head of the Newburgh Christian Ministerial Fellowship.

The guest speakers were Rev. Joe A. Carter and Deacon Francis J. Dixon, Executive Director Vision of Hope Community Development Corporation, and Randy Burley, New Hope Baptist Church, Newark, New Jersey, Eddie L. Jumper, M.D., and Rev. Edwin C. Reed, CEO of The Greater Allen Development Corporation of Jamaica, New York.

Rev. Edwin Reed provided several resources that could assist faith-based institutions in undertaking economic development including senior housing and mixed use buildings. Greater Allen Development Corporation, a faith-based establishment owns 600 units of housing worth more \$125 million. "We want to show you how to do in three years what we did in 15," he said. Vision for Hope was established in the heart of Newark, NJ provides social services to the Newark community. Dr. Eddie Jumper, an OBGYN specialist, was successful in screening 749 people in a three-day Hepatitis C Education & Screening Program. Randy Burley, the youth coordinator riveted the audience as he talked about being a former gang member, warning, "People like me are coming after your kids. If you don't talk to your children, don't take the time to guide them, if you don't deal with the gangs, before you know it, Newburgh will look like Beirut."

One of the primary sponsors of the breakfast was the Newburgh-based law firm Finkelstein & Partners. Managing Partner Andrew G. Finkelstein said, "We are proud to join with other community leaders in an effort to improve the lives and future prospects of our young people. We look forward to working with the City of Newburgh in this important effort." The breakfast was also co-sponsored by HSBC, Affinity Health Plan, TD Bank North, T.G.I. Fridays, Price Chopper, and Safe Harbors of the Hudson.

Yanilah Pearson said, "I am inspired that so many participants commented they were glad they attended and were looking forward to the next steps. I believe the community is ready for action, and there is an overwhelming commitment to making a difference."

The Initiative has three phases: the first is to build commitment to engage in comprehensive neighborhoods revitalization; the second to provide extensive training and technical assistance to neighborhood teams with a focus on financial prosperity, health and wellness for every family, restoring positive neighborhood interconnectedness. The third phase will focus on the implementation of social and economic innovations that transform the quality of life in neighborhoods.

The public will be able to view the Strong Neighborhood Strong Families Initiative power point presentation at [www.cityofnewburgh-ny.gov](http://www.cityofnewburgh-ny.gov). For more information, contact Yanilah Pearson at (845) 565-1213, x1.