



WEED & SEED **IN** *sites*  
M O R N I N G N E W S

2001 National  
Conference  
Special Edition

Tuesday,  
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## Ashcroft Praises Weed and Seed Efforts

The Keynote Luncheon celebration gave conference attendees food for thought in the packed Grand Ballroom of the Marriott.

Louise Lucas, DEFY Coordinator and Reentry Programs Coordinator at EOWS, warmly welcomed attendees, and EOWS Director Stephen Rickman praised the dedication and activism of U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft—who, according to Rickman, this year recommended an unprecedented 25 percent increase in funding for the EOWS budget. “This Attorney General stood up for the distressed communities we represent; he stood up for Weed and Seed; he stood up for you, for me; he stood up for us—I ask you to stand up for him now,” Rickman announced, and the room came to its feet to welcome the keynote speaker.

In his address, Ashcroft praised the great vision and pioneering efforts of Weeders and Seeders, which he said demonstrate that “you don’t have to move to live in a safe neighborhood.”

“Weed and Seed has dedicated people, people who care,” Ashcroft said, noting that since its 1991 inception Weed and Seed has awarded more than

\$232 million to more than 300 communities. “We must go beyond that; we must ensure that no neighborhood is left behind,” he added, to much applause from the audience.

Ashcroft discussed his intention for the U.S. Department of Justice to focus on protecting citizen safety by emphasizing efforts to reduce gun violence and get illegal drugs and drug traffickers off our streets. He asked EOWS to strengthen coordination with other Federal agencies and programs, expand efforts to keep illegal firearms out of Weed and Seed areas, and encourage partnerships with law enforcement and the military—all elements of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a Bush Administration initiative that will be discussed in the conference edition of *In-Sites Magazine*.

Also during the luncheon, the second and third EOWS Director’s Awards were presented. Tracy Henke, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Justice Programs, presented the awards to Capt. Melvin Douglas of East Point, Georgia, and Mayor Shirley Villegas, City of South Tucson, Arizona.

### **Today at the Conference, Don’t Miss. . .**

- < The Lunch Mixer in the Neighborhood Exhibit Hall (12 noon to 1:15 p.m.)
- < Philadelphia Site Tours (3:30 to 5 p.m.)
- < The Sounds of Philadelphia Celebration in the Neighborhood Exhibit Hall (7 to 9 p.m.)

# Opening Plenary Energizes Attendees

Monday's opening plenary session celebrated 10 years of Weed and Seed accomplishments and set the bar high for the rest of the Weed and Seed 2001 National Conference. EOWS Director Stephen Rickman welcomed attendees and announced, "As I look around the room, I see the real power and strength of Weed and Seed, and that is bringing people together." Rickman was presented with the Liberty Bell award, a Philadelphia honor, to commemorate the Weed and Seed 10th anniversary.

Congressman Chaka Fattah (PA) of the U.S. House of Representatives told the audience that he hopes the next 10 years will bring an increase in the number of Weed and Seed sites to more than 1,000. "This program really is at the cutting edge of the notion of 'collaboration,'" he said. "Because of your efforts, . . . we've seen a major decline in criminal activity, but moreover, we've seen an emphasis on working together, . . . prevention, and community development." He praised attendees' dedication, and called for communities to focus their energies and resources on "training young people away from a life of crime" rather than "punishment" or incarceration—a strategy he called "being smart on crime" (versus the standard of "being tough on crime").

A brief video was shown to chronicle the history of Weed and Seed. It outlined the community crises (high crime rates, drug epidemics, economic decline) that launched the strategies that are today embraced by Weed and Seed—community policing



EOWS Director Stephen Rickman takes the stage on Monday morning to kick off **Leave No Neighborhood Behind**. Close to 1,700 Weeders and Seeders packed the room.

and involvement, prevention and training programs, collaborative decisionmaking by community stakeholders, and revitalization efforts.

Douglas H. Palmer, Mayor of Trenton, New Jersey, accepted the EOWS Director's Award on behalf of his city for developing Weed and Seed in Trenton, one of the three original 1991 Weed and Seed pilot sites (Rickman called Palmer the "first Weed and Seed mayor" as he congratulated him). The award was presented by Michael Chertoff, Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice, who was the U.S. Attorney in Trenton when the city first received its Weed and Seed designation. The audience enjoyed Palmer's spirited address, which reminded Weeders and Seeders that a sense of humor is as valuable as diligence and dedication in one's work.

## Host Committee Members Meet U.S. Attorney General Ashcroft



*Left:* Sister Carol Keck, Executive Director of the Norris Square Neighborhood Project/UNAD, speaks with U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft before his Monday luncheon address. Sister Carol is also a recipient of this year's EOWS Director's Award. *Right:* Site Coordinator Michael Cruz from the Philadelphia Weed and Seed Project describes to Ashcroft how his site transformed a drug property into a thriving Safe Haven.



# Weed and Seed Prevention Through the Arts

Youth groups from various Weed and Seed communities that are dedicated to Prevention Through the Arts Special Emphasis programs are here this week to share their talents and accomplishments. Each day, *In-Sites Morning News* will highlight the day's showcased performers to inspire all Prevention Through the Arts programs.

These youth have demonstrated a strong commitment to practice and take pride in their performances. Please welcome and encourage them when you see them throughout the conference.

## West Philadelphia Weed and Seed's Unspoken Praise

Unspoken Praise comprises a group of young ladies from the local West Philadelphia Weed and Seed site. They are sure to wake up the Tuesday morning assembly with their songs of praise and interpretive dance! Unspoken Praise was established nearly 5 years ago and ministers its talents regularly at the Calvary Gospel Chapel. The group has also performed at the Mann Music Center, Philadelphia Zoo, and local Nubian Festival at the Philadelphia Community College.

## Mark Barksdale and Ruby Brown

Performances by local musicians Mark Barksdale and Ruby Brown will kick off Tuesday afternoon's Plenary Session III.

Barksdale sings in his school choir and may be interested in pursuing a career in music. He is a member of Peacemakers—a group of teens who teach conflict resolution to youth (and adults) in their community. Peacemakers meets weekly, holds workshops, organizes service projects, and is one of the most positive influences in the Norris Square community in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Barksdale also serves as a teen tutor for youth in the United Neighbors Against Drugs, Inc., Safe Haven afterschool program.

Brown would like to pursue a career in music. He's a student at the Girard Music Academy, where he

studies piano along with regular academic subjects. Brown has been part of the Norris Square Neighborhood Project since he was a month old—he and his mother participated in a program called Educating for Parenthood, in which new mothers bring their children to Norris Square and youth in the afterschool program learn about the growth and development of a child from birth. As he grew older, Brown was a member of Norris Square's Park Patrol and, most recently, one of the Summer Youth Work Program's Green Gardeners, who care for the many gardens in the Norris Square area.



*In-Sites* staff snapped this photo of the Kingsessing Drill Team and Drum Corps from the window of their staff office Sunday evening during the Taste of Philadelphia block party.



Detroit, Michigan, Weed and Seed's Site Coordinator Tamela Akins (left) takes a moment to pose with longtime Weeder and Seeder Marisol Lopez from the Mayor's Office in Rochester, New York.

## Let's Play "Who Wants To Be A Weeder and Seeder"!

How well do you know Weed and Seed history, your fellow attendees, and the fine city of Philadelphia? Give it your best shot!

• O • Q • O • Q • O • Q •

1. What site coordinator competed in the World Police and Fire Games and National Law Enforcement Olympics, setting four world records in power lifting?
2. The Philadelphia Police Department ranks what in size of metropolitan police agencies in the United States?
3. Which Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney was featured last year on television's *Rosie O'Donnell* show?
4. Who founded the colony named Pennsylvania (meaning "city of brotherly love") in 1682?

• O • Q • O • Q • O • Q •



Showing continuously until midnight tonight on Marriott inhouse channel 18—the EOWS Community Training Series broadcast of *Community Policing Experts Speak Out*. The 1-hour broadcast originally aired April 20, 2000, on the Law Enforcement Television Network (LETN). Visit LETN in the Neighborhood Exhibit Hall for more information.

### Answers

1. Tom Flynn, Site Coordinator, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
2. Fourth largest.
3. Mary O'Donoghue, Executive Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, was featured on *Rosie's* show for her success as a full-time working mother.
4. William Penn.

Early risers—Be sure to stop by the **Neighborhood Exhibit Hall** for coffee and a continental breakfast, starting at 7 a.m.!

## EOWS Poster Contest Winners

In conjunction with the National Conference, EOWS sponsored a National Poster Contest that tasked youth with drawing a piece of art that embodies the theme "How Weed and Seed Has Changed My Community." Entries depict different views of Weed and Seed, but the winners were selected based on colorful artistry, artistic talent, and originality.

**Juan Ranero**, a 7-year-old from Laruel Hill Annex/Elementary School in Providence, Rhode Island, won for his crayon drawing of a house under renovation with the words "Thank you Weed and Seed" across the top.

**Charles Wilson**, a 10-year-old from Cascade Elementary School in Atlanta, Georgia, won for his crayon drawing of a revitalized neighborhood, including the local playground, pool, community centers, school, and athletic fields.

**Pete Anthony Lee Bell**, a 13-year-old from Stonewall Jackson Davis Middle School in San Antonio, Texas, won for his pencil drawing that depicts weeding and seeding in a community ("out with drugs house . . . up with safe house").

**LaTonya Robinson**, a 16-year-old from Southside Comprehensive High School in Atlanta, Georgia, won for a color pencil drawing that shows a community of people in one embrace and lists components of successful community collaboration ("drug-free zone," "court watch program," "neighborhood watch program," and "neighborhood cleanups").

Copies of the winning posters are available in the Neighborhood Exhibit Hall—stop by and pick up a set for yourself . . . or friends at home.