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Attachment: Photo

Local housing authority resident awarded college scholarship

Largo, FL – Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) resident and college student, Regine Fabien, was recently awarded the Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (FAHRO) Deborah L. Vincent Education Scholarship Award.

Fabien submitted an essay titled “The Impact of Public Housing on my Life” where she journeyed through her difficult times as a homeless, young mother in high school, bouncing around from friend’s homes to stranger’s couches. The environments she found herself in were unsafe and unstable for her two year old child.

For fear of losing custody of her daughter, she applied for public housing with the PCHA and now has a stable, secure place to call home. As part of her essay, she said, “I can’t even put into words my gratitude to the housing authority for taking my daughter and me off the streets. We now have a place to call our own and thanks and only thanks to the Pinellas County Housing Authority.”

Fabien’s life turned around shortly after receiving housing assistance through the agency’s Housing Choice Voucher Program. Her grades improved and she excelled in high school. After graduation, she enrolled in the nursing program at the St. Petersburg College, where she is currently maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

After she completes her education, she says she will no longer need the Authority’s assistance, but she would like to give back to the PCHA for helping her in her time of need. “After I deem myself successful, I want to come back to the community and be a speaker for young ladies.” She wants to let other troubled girls know that while she had her daughter at a young age, she was able to turn her life around in order to provide a better life for herself and her child.

FAHRO awarded Fabien \$1500 towards her higher continued education. Fabien was invited to receive her award at FAHRO’s 2009 National Annual Convention held in Destin earlier this month. The PCHA

sponsored Fabien's trip to the convention and she was able to bring her mother and daughter to the ceremony, along with her PCHA Housing Advisor, Miriam Alicea.

The PCHA Board also invited Fabien to attend this month's board meeting to honor her and present her with the certificate of scholarship. Chairman Thomas Minkoff said, "We are proud of Regine and her accomplishments, impressed with her tenacity and wish her continued success in her endeavors. We hope this scholarship allows her the opportunity for continued education she might not have otherwise had."

About the Deborah L. Vincent/FAHRO Education Scholarship Award:

Eligibility Requirements: Must be a resident of federally assisted public housing or recipient of assistance through the Community Development Block Grant program; Must be a senior in high school and expected to graduate in 2009 or currently enrolled in a postsecondary education institution; ALL applicants must meet income requirements as defined by HUD for public/assisted housing and Community Development Block Grant targeted area recipients; and, the sponsor of the applicant must be an active member of FAHRO as a housing authority /agency or community development agency.

About the Florida Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (FAHRO):

FAHRO was established nearly 70 years ago as a means of exchanging information for the purpose of improving low income and affordable housing and community services. Since then, FAHRO has grown to represent more than 200 housing agencies, community development agencies, and associate members who work together to ensure that all of Florida's citizens have clean, safe, and sanitary housing. For more information about FAHRO, please visit their Web site at www.fahro.org.

About Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA):

Formed in 1965 and governed by a five member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Governor of the State of Florida, the Pinellas County Housing Authority (PCHA) provides housing and rental assistance to a total of more than 4,200 families in Pinellas County. PCHA has won several national agency awards of merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO), including the recognition of the Economies of Scale program, the expansion of local housing opportunities without U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding, the FSS-based home ownership program and the mobility counseling program. The authority is proud to be rated by HUD as a "High Performing" agency. More information about the Authority's programs and services can be found at www.pin-cha.org.

******Photo attached******

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Pictured from Left to Right: Vice Chair Joseph Triolo, Commissioner Cynthia Wilson, Scholarship Recipient Regine Fabien, Chairman Thomas Minkoff, Commissioner Angela Rouson, and Commissioner Charles Samaha

August 19, 2009 PCHA Board Meeting