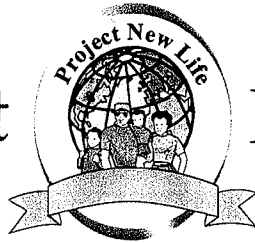


# Project New Life



*"Empowering Children and Families to Excel in Life"*

## **Board Members**

*Elliott K. Cohen*

*Executive Director*

*Stephen Ogungbe*

*President/CEO*

*Donna Swift*

*Vice President*

*Eddie Lockridge*

*Treasurer*

*Sejuana Palmer*

*Secretary*

*Richard Grundewald*

*Board Member*

*Lee C. Williams*

*Board Member*

March 6, 2009

Honorable Thomas Friedel  
Mayor  
City of Racine  
730 Washington Avenue  
Racine, Wisconsin 53403

### **Re: Local Option Fund Request for Six Flags Transportation**

Dear Mayor Friedel:

Project New Life Community Development Corporation recently learned that Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Illinois will not be providing transportation for Racine area employees this year. This news adversely impacts many of the youth and young adults that depend entirely on the bus transportation for employment. The City of Racine cannot afford to lose more jobs given our current economic condition.

Mayor Friedel, we are requesting funding from the CDBG Local Option Fund to (1) Secure a bus for Racine employees (2) Secure the necessary liability insurance and (3) provide a small stipend for the bus driver to transport the employees round trip from Racine to the Theme Park and back to Racine each day for approximately 6 months beginning late April 2009 and concluding late October 2009.

The total dollar amount request for funding is \$17,500.00. The amount which Six Flags paid for the Racine Bus Service in 2008 was \$175.00 per day round trip. For a 6 month period the total dollar amount would be \$29,400.00. Our proposal would save approximately \$11,900.00.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 262-898-3268.

Sincerely,

Elliott K. Cohen  
Executive Director-Project New Life, CDC

cc: Mr. Brian O'Connell-Director, Department of City Development

# Six Flags bus service mixed

## Local workers wondering what to do

BY MIKE MOORE  
*Journal Times*

**RACINE** — It has been a roller coaster ride for Ariel Swenson's job prospects.

Despite being told she's in line to become a supervisor at Six Flags Great America, the 21-year-old Racine woman isn't sure she'll be able to work there anymore. Officials at the amusement park in



Cohen

Guarnee, Ill., informed the Rev. Elliott Cohen last month that the company won't provide a bus to transport workers like her from Racine this year.

That's a major wrench in the plans of Project New Life,

a local nonprofit that Cohen directs. About 125 Racine teens and young adults have been hired to work as ride operators, lifeguards and other capacities in the four years the organization has been involved with the park. Cohen estimated 90 percent of them rode that bus.

"It's not just a fun thing to do," said Cohen, pastor at Abundant Life Christian Center. "They work, and they gain a skill set that will help to prepare them for the labor force."

Considering unemployment for teenagers in the labor force has crept above 20 percent, Cohen said it's critical to find a way to transport the workers who can't afford cars. Project New Life staff members have the commercial licenses to drive them, but the organization is still looking for either a bus or a couple of vans to use.

Other local organizations have helped transport Racine residents to the park for interviews in the past. Cohen said that trip is on hold this year until it's clear the workers have a way to get there if they're hired.

Swenson starting working at the park last summer, earning \$7 an hour by picking up garbage and cleaning bathrooms. Within a few months, she was promoted and led one of the crews. At first she found it difficult to police the less-dedicated employees.

"After that, I got used to it," she said. "It was either me or them."

She was told she could receive another promotion to supervisor this year, along with a corresponding raise. The problem is a car is still a "work in progress" for Swenson, a 2006 Case

More on BUS, Page 9A