



Memorandum

To: Bayou District Foundation Funders & Colleagues

From: Bayou District Foundation

Subject: Visit by President & First Lady to Columbia Parc at Bayou District

Date: September 2, 2010

On Sunday August 29th, 2010 President Barack Obama visited Columbia Parc at the Bayou District as part of his visit to New Orleans commemorating Hurricane Katrina's strike on the Gulf Coast 5 years prior.

Members of the Bayou District Foundation were first advised on Friday August 27th that the President may include Columbia Parc in his visit. NBC's Brian Williams was scheduled to interview the President and ultimately selected Columbia Parc as the backdrop for the interview.

BDF staff received word after the President arrived in New Orleans that he was indeed coming to the Bayou District. The President's interview was conducted in the interior of Block 8. Below is a link to the interview which aired Sunday evening on NBC Nightly news with Brian Williams.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3032619/vp/38906583#38906583>

Unbeknownst to our team, the President & First Lady were accompanied by US Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan and City of New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu. This was Secretary Donovan's second visit to Columbia Parc and he gave a brief tour to the Obama's.



ELIOT KAMENITZ / THE TIMES PICAYUNE President Barack Obama tours the Columbia Park Housing development with his wife Michelle along with HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, left, and New Orleans Mayor, Mitch Landrieu on the Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina on Sunday, August 29, 2010.

The President & First Lady then walked across the street to Block 5.



ELIOT KAMENITZ / THE TIMES PICAYUNE

During his visit, the President was greeted by Bayou District Foundation's Chairman of the Board Gerard W. Barousse, Jr. and some of the now 170 resident families that have moved into Columbia Parc. When Gerry identified himself, the President said "I'm so proud of what you all have done...this is terrific." The President was then hosted by Ms. Maude Smith and her grandson Donald Robichaux in her new Columbia Parc apartment. Ms. Smith was a resident of the former St. Bernard Housing Development who floated to I-610 after the storm and ended up in the Superdome before being bussed to Houston.



*AP Photo-Carolyn Kaster
President Obama and first lady Michelle Obama meet with Maude Smith and her grandson David Robichaux, 9, in Smith's home Sunday*

Ms. Smith is also the grandmother of Stanley Smith, a member of Bayou District Foundation's Junior Golf program, who BDF sent to golf camp at the World Golf Hall of Fame with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Ms. Smith and the Obama's spent about 5 minutes together before pool reporters were allowed inside her apartment.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6817338n&tag=related;photovideo>

As the President and First Lady prepared to leave Columbia Parc, the First Lady remarked that she ‘wanted to see what it looked like when she comes back.’ Gerry Barousse replied “we will have our schools in place by then’ and detailed how Bayou District Foundation is partnering with the Buffet Early Learning Fund and Educare to build an early learning center for low income children and their families in the center of the Columbia Parc community. The President and First Lady were very reaffirming saying ‘great, outstanding....can’t wait to see it’ and then they departed for their trip back to Washington DC.

This Presidential visit and site selection serves to further validate efforts to replicate the ‘East Lake Model’ as a holistic, placed based neighborhood redevelopment here in New Orleans. Well over 20,000 volunteer hours on the part of our board and key funders and friends made this moment possible. The Presidential visit also capped a week in which the overall project was highlighted on HBO & MSNBC nationally and WDSU locally.

The Bayou District has become a new model for place based community development, as evidenced by visits in the last six months from President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, Mayor Mitch Landrieu, Warren Buffett, Tom Cousins, Alex Robertson, PGA TOUR Commissioner Tim Finchem, former US Senator Sam Nunn, former Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin, HANO Chief David Gilmore, Councilmembers Cynthia Hedge Morell and Arnie Fielkow, and New Orleans Deputy Mayor Andy Kopplin.

More importantly, families are moving in. Both new and former residents are returning to safe, clean and high quality housing with schools and recreation and commercial outlets coming soon. All 466 units of phase 1 will be complete by late 2010, with a waiting list for units at all three income levels. In summary, efforts of the Bayou District have been positively received to date and it is very rewarding to our team and our partners to have the eyes of the world on us for a few moments. We continue the hard work toward changing the cycle of poverty in our community and playing a part in revitalizing our great city!



Flooding from Hurricane Katrina – September 2005



Columbia Parc at the Bayou District-September 2010