**Handling the High-Rise: City Looks to Get Families Out**  
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THE BALTIMORE SUN  
  
The image is riveting and clear: police officers with guns cocked walking through the streets shouting angrily at an unruly crowd. It could be Bosnia, Soweto or Belfast, where civil wars have shredded the fabric of civilization.  
But this chilling scene hits closer to home.  
  
It occurred last weekend in West Baltimore at the public housing project known as George B. Murphy Homes during bloody September on the streets of Baltimore.  
In a three-day span, the local high-rise projects once again played host to violent crime.  
  
On Sept. 18, city police Officer James E. Young Jr. was ambushed on the third floor of the Flag House project near Little Italy and shot in the back of the head, a horror followed by the fatal shooting of officer Ira Weiner at a residence on West Mulberry Street. With tension at a fevered pitch, police officers last Sunday responded en masse to a call at Murphy Homes, where they were greeted by jeers from the public housing residents and bystanders. Guns drawn, a shootout started after police said a fleeing suspect pointed a gun at the officers.  
While these incidents were highly publicized, a multitude of crimes take place daily -- even hourly -- in the city's 18 high-rise public housing towers and often go unreported by the media.

The buildings are pockmarked by trash, urine-stained hallways and dark elevators that rarely work. They have become a breeding ground for murder, violence and drug peddling that have destroyed any spirit of community intended in the master plan when Lafayette Courts opened in 1955 as the first local project.

Many of the local public high-rise housing units are occupied by single mothers who have at least two children and live on an average of $6,000 each year. Others, mostly vacant and vandalized units, are inhabited by drug dealers who are armed with semi-automatic pistols, Uzis and rifles.

Murphy Homes resident Victoria Bogier, a 23-year-old single mother of three, recently described how she and her 7-year-old daughter had to step over a bullet-riddled body one morning in the stairwell of the high-rise while walking to school. Another resident complained that the street near the 1058 building at Murphy Homes becomes a bustling open-air drug market each month after welfare checks are cashed.

"Would you live in a high-rise?" asks Vincent Quayle, director of the non-profit St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center. "I would do anything to get out. The high-rises should not have been built in the first place. They were built to put the poor in so we can control them. Here, I think we should clear them out and rent them to the yuppies from Owings Mills who want to live near the Inner Harbor."

The high-rise crime problem has become so serious that Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke endorsed a proposal to tear down the high-rise towers and replace them with low-rise dwelling units. The recommendation first came from a 1990 task force report, which concluded that the dangerous living conditions in the projects make them unsafe for children, who occupy many of the 18,000 " public housing units in the city. A second task force studied how to do it and released its study this past January. In all, about 2,000 families live in the 18 high-rises in four city housing projects.

Federal funds intended for renovation of the blighted buildings -- city officials say they could get as much as $100 million over 10 years -- would be diverted to build new units that are designed to create a community atmosphere.  
  
  
Some high-rises would be retained and converted into housing for the elderly and disabled. Overall, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City would create a "social infrastructure to give people the tools" for tenant ownership and educational opportunities, according to authority Executive Director Robert W. Hearn.  
"What this is about is really creating a community," Mr. Hearn said. "It would be a partnership with the residents and it is important to do that. They are potentially tremendous payoffs."

The high-rise elimination plan would start at Lafayette Courts, an 18-acre site that holds six towers overlooking the main Post Office on Fayette Street. Five of the six buildings would be demolished, and one would be converted to elderly residences. The high-rises would be replaced by 262 row house units, and the project's existing 162 low rise units would be modernized.

Despite the new construction, housing authority officials would have to build or purchase 252 additional dwelling units in the city to house the Lafayette Courts tenants whose units would be wiped out under the plan. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations require that none of the project's 2,272 residents be displaced.

The total cost for Lafayette Courts alone is estimated to be $58.5 million, including $6 million to demolish the high-rises. The ambitious plan for Lafayette Courts would take seven years to complete, and residents would have to be relocated at taxpayers' expense during the construction.

Plans have not yet been developed for the other three city projects with high-rises: Flag House, Murphy Homes and Lexington Terrace, near Murphy Homes west of downtown.

Does all this sound like a pipe dream?

Mr. Hearn portrays the plan as a unique idea that could become a national model if HUD approves the blueprint. Currently, the plan is being considered at the regional HUD office in Philadelphia and is expected to be moved along to headquarters in Washington sometime this year.

In its favor, the plan comes at a time when public housing's ills are being highlighted on the presidential campaign trail. HUD Secretary Jack Kemp has asked the local authorities to draw up "creative and innovative" plans for turning around and regaining control over housing projects, particularly the high-rise buildings.

In Chicago, authority officials have instituted an "income mix" plan that attempts to mix low and middle-income tenants in a project located on Lake Michigan. In Washington, D.C., a tenant ownership plan is under way at a housing project that has been heavily subsidized with federal funds to boost its chances of success. St. Louis has already demolished some of its high-rise projects after they were called "inhumane reservations."

The Baltimore plan would have architects drawing a new concept for the housing development of the 21st Century -- a community of individual row houses with fenced-in backyards that all face one another so residents can look out for their neighbors. Such a design would make the difference between the 1950s high-rise housing objectives that have been obliterated by 1990s crime and violence, Mr. Hearn believes.  
"Our plan is certainly innovative in terms of the components of it," Mr. Hearn said. "Now, the residents have a place. It's a territory. How do you make a transition between a territory and a community? That's what we want to do."

Melody Simmons covers housing for The Baltimore Sun.

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| **Evidence that reveals the environment / characterization of the Murphy Homes** | | |
| 1. “ | 2. “ | 3. “ |

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| **20 word summary:** |
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| **Quick Write: To what extent does our environment impact our identity?** |
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| Tony, Wes’ brother, lived in the Murphy homes.  **Choose 3 pieces of evidence that would characterize Tony, gather evidence from Chapter 2.** | | |
| **Evidence** | **Says/ Does** | **Explain what this reveals** |
| “ | What character says  What character does  What others say about character |  |
| “ | What character says  What character does  What others say about character |  |
| “ | What character says  What character does  What others say about character |  |
| **Using your evidence from the both the article and Chapter 2, choose three examples of how the environment of the Murphy Homes could have influenced Tony:** | | |
| Characteristic from Murphy Homes: |  |  |
| Impact on Tony: |  |  |

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| **Exit Ticket: Why would the author reveal that Tony lives in the Murphy Homes and how might this influence Tony and Wes?** | |
| **A:**  **Assert your claim** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **C: Cite evidence** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **C: Cite evidence (transition from article to book)** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **E: Explain how these two pieces of evidence support your answer** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| **S: Summarize** | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| **You got it, and communicated like a scholar (100)**  You wrote an impressive ACES paragraph that communicates an insightful understanding. You then supported it with a relevant piece of evidence; your writing appropriately communicates the central idea. | **You got it (90)**  You wrote an ACES paragraph that communicates an accurate understanding. You then supported it with a relevant piece of evidence; your writing appropriately communicates the central idea. | **You sort of get it (80)**  You wrote an ACES paragraph that attempts to communicate an accurate understanding. You then supported it with a piece of evidence; your writing attempts to communicate the central idea. | **You didn’t get it YET (70)**  You wrote an ACES paragraph that attempts to communicate an accurate understanding. You supported it inaccurate piece of evidence. | **You didn’t show effort (60)**  You did not write an ACES. |