ONE DC member Naomi Carthens attended the first national NeighborWorks Community Leadership Institute, a training event that aims to strengthen the voices and skills of community leaders from coast to coast. Eight people went West to represent ONE DC, one of NeighborWorks Network organizations. And here is Naomi's report.. ..

San Jose, CA

October 23 - 26, 2008

The entire conference environment was nice. There were various multifaceted aspects of learning and exchanging during the well-organized conference. There were very dynamic speakers; an array of voices providing insight and information concerning community development and change; and very well-deserved recognition for those who have put their hands to the plow in this particular anti-affordable residential housing plight. While issues, setbacks, and outcomes were overcome thanks to organizing, there's yet and still a major need to make more progress towards equal and sound living conditions for all people, including low-income populations.

I was impressed by learning what other cities have accomplished and their willingness to share their strategies and developments with others who may be interested. There were testimonies of how communities literally re-shaped and put in place new design,

infrastructures, and affordable housing mainstreaming. They were basically saying, "We did it and so can you!" That was an incentive for those of us who are in the process of pursuit.

While the tour of San Jose did not include the low-income community, it is evident that we who hold a stake in that plight will fight until we are satisfied. Further, by any means necessary, we will not hand over that which is rightfully ours--namely, a right to live, thrive, and occupy the neighborhood(s) of our choice.

Keep the fight for residency in your neighborhood alive!

Naomi is in the photo above, along with ONE DC intern/Kressley Fellow Kalfani Ture'.