



Community Connection



Volume 9, Issue 2

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

PLEASANT RIDGE GRAND OPENING



(left to right) Dawn Price, Member - ACHA Board of Directors and Pleasant Ridge Resident; Richard Ranii, Manager of Housing and Human Services, ACDOED; Valencia Richardson and Tamela Lynn Wardell, Pleasant Ridge Residents ; Dan Onorato, Chief Executive, Allegheny County; Sherry Campbell, Field Office Director HUD Pittsburgh Office; Brian A. Hudson Sr., Executive Director, PHFA; Frank Aggazio, Executive Director, ACHA; Congressman Mike Doyle, Representative 14th District, PA; Ralph Falbo, Falbo/Pennrose Development; Michelle Pagano Heck, Chairperson, ACHA Board of Directors

The Allegheny County Housing Authority in cooperation with Falbo/Pennrose, the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, and Related Capital hosted the Grand Opening of Pleasant Ridge on Monday, April 24, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. Joining in the celebration was: Congressman Mike Doyle, Chief Executive Dan Onorato, Brian Hudson, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, and Ralph Falbo, Falbo/Pennrose, Also participating were officials and representatives from: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, The First Tee of Pittsburgh, as well as Allegheny County Housing Authority's Board of Directors, staff and residents.

Previously known as Ohioview Acres, this public housing community, renamed Pleasant Ridge underwent a multi-million dollar revitalization project initiated by the ACHA to improve and update affordable housing opportunities for the residents in this area of Allegheny County. (continued on page 2)

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Pleasant Ridge (continued from cover)

PERSPECTIVES

by the ACHA
Executive Director
Frank Aggazio



Federal funding cuts are making it more and more difficult to serve the people who depend on us.

The Bush administration is looking to cut our funding even more in the year 2007. If these cuts are approved, it's likely there will be an adverse impact to both staffing and services and we'll struggle to serve over 3,500 elderly and families that depend on affordable housing in Allegheny County.

Up to now, we've been struggling through what the federal government has been doing to affordable housing. Next year, our ability to cope will be in serious doubt.

The people that will get hurt the most are the most vulnerable - Low Income Americans, many of whom are elderly and disabled.

These cuts have not been equal. The Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) has been a high performer agency. Audits of the ACHA have shown we are one of the most efficiently run housing authorities in the country. Yet we are being singled out to be cut drastically, while housing authorities in Texas and Florida have been spared. Their budgets are being substantially increased.

At this point, it is difficult to avert the cuts in funding for public housing. The Iraq war, the budget deficit, the administration's tax cuts - all are squeezing what's left for domestic spending. However, Congress must do whatever it takes to make these cuts equal across the nation. It is a matter of survival for many of our housing clients. This Authority has always been about taking care of the elderly and most vulnerable populations, we need to be empowered to continue to do so.

In addition to the \$20 Million of HOPE VI funding provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the ACHA partnered with Falbo-Pennrose to leverage an additional \$30 Million to be applied towards the completion of the project. Through a combination of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (acquired by Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and purchased by Related Capital), private investment, and HOME and Community Development Block Grant Funding committed from the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development this project was able to be funded in its entirety.

This new community, Pleasant Ridge, is a family site consisting of 181 Town Home rental units and 15 Single-Family Homes for private ownership.

Pleasant Ridge community houses a Community Center that will provide programming for youth of all ages including after-school and weekend activities for local youth. The Center will serve youth that reside in the western suburbs. Additionally, The First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge program will be offered.

ACHA and The First Tee of Pittsburgh are embarking on a major fundraising campaign to aid in the development and operation of the on-site program. This will be the first public housing community to house The First Tee Program in Pennsylvania. 



It is vitally important that your voice be heard, speak out, and speak out loudly, about the impact of these budget cuts. Call and/or e-mail your representative in Congress NOW, tell them full funding is not only the smart thing to do, it's the right thing to do!

The Honorable Rick Santorum
Phone: 202-224-6324
Internet: <http://santorum.senate.gov/>

Congresswoman Melissa Hart
Phone: 1.866.399.HART
eMail: rep.hart@mail.house.gov

Congressman John Murtha
Phone 1.800.289.2642
eMail: rep.murtha@mail.house.gov

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Phone: 202-224-4254
Internet: <http://specter.senate.gov/>

Congressman Tim Murphy
Phone: 412.344.5883
eMail: rep.murphy@mail.house.gov

Congressman Mike Doyle
Phone: 412.261.5091
eMail: rep.doyle@mail.house.gov



GROVETON VILLAGE OPENS ITS NEW TECHNOLOGY CENTER

The Allegheny County Housing Authority in cooperation with Falbo/Pennrose, the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development hosted a Grand Opening for the Groveton Village Technology Center on Wednesday, August 9th, 2006. Joining in the celebration was: Allegheny County Chief Executive Dan Onorato, Paul D'Alesandro, Congressman Mike Doyle's office and Mike Polite, Falbo/Pennrose Development. Also participating were officials and representatives from: U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Allegheny County Department of Economic Development, as well as Allegheny County Housing Authority's Board of Directors, staff and residents. This eagerly anticipated opening would provide the greater Robinson Township and Coraopolis communities with a community center that residents will be proud to call their own.

The Allegheny County Housing Authority together with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, Related Capital Company, the Allegheny County Department of Economic Development and the Federal Home Loan Bank provided the necessary funding for a total modernization of Groveton Village. Today, the newly reconstructed housing community consists of 69 total units with a one, two, three, or four bedroom mix. The developer for this project was Ralph A. Falbo, Inc./Pennrose Properties. The new Technology Center was the final touch to complete the overall revitalization.

The Groveton Village Technology Center will provide access to and training with computer and information technology, job training and placement.

Frank Aggazio, Executive Director of the Allegheny County Housing Authority, stated "Groveton Village Technology Center will provide a positive economic impact to the greater Robinson Township and Coraopolis communities by providing opportunities for its residents to achieve self-sufficiency through the development of their individual skills and abilities." 



THE JOSH GIBSON FOUNDATION VISITS PLEASANT RIDGE



The Josh Gibson Foundation celebrated the Negro League "Remembering the History" during the 2006 All Star Week. Frank Aggazio, who serves on the Board of the Foundation, asked them to include a visit to the newly renovated ACHA community, Pleasant Ridge, as part of their schedule.

Youngsters and parents from three ACHA Communities (Pleasant Ridge, Meyers Ridge and Hays Manor) attended the conference. Speakers included Sean Gibson (great grandson of Josh Gibson), former Negro league baseball players and relatives of the Homestead Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords. The players provided brief histories of themselves, answered a variety of questions and signed autographs for the children.



"Special Thanks" to the staff of the Beverly Jewels Walls Lovelace (BJWL) Knowledge Connections/Neighborhood Networks Programs at Pleasant Ridge for conducting an educational program about the Negro League in the morning and working with children to make welcoming banners. The players were most impressed with the banners and the variety of questions from the children. 

PRESERVING AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE AND RALLY



“What Do We Want? – MORE FUNDING! – When do we need it? – NOW!” echoed through the streets of Pittsburgh at a rally held on September 22nd, 2006 after a conference for Preserving Affordable Housing was held at Pleasant Ridge that same day.

Housing Authorities and supportive residents across the state of Pennsylvania gathered at the ACHA's Pleasant Ridge Community Center in Stowe Township to share viewpoints about recent housing budget cuts. An audience in excess of six hundred persons, mostly public housing residents from across the state, attended the event.

Panels of local government officials, housing authority executive directors, resident leaders, and community agencies discussed the impact funding cuts will have on public housing communities and strategies to prevent these cuts, while public housing residents voiced their opinions and concerns.

Featured speakers included U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, Paul D'Alesandro, District Director, of Congressman Mike Doyle's Office, Philadelphia Housing Authority Executive Director, Carl Green, City of Pittsburgh Housing Authority Executive Director, A. Fulton Meachem Jr., Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) President, Carl DeChellis and Allegheny County Housing Authority Executive Director, Frank Aggazio, who hosted the event. Mr. Aggazio stated, “Through the fellowship of both housing authorities and residents we will fight for changes in these anticipated cuts in funding”.

Housing Authorities and residents will take this fight for affordable housing, next to Harrisburg, and then on to Washington, D.C., where our collective voices will be heard.



WHY SHOULD I VOTE?

Why should I vote? "My vote does not count and what good does it do anyway". These are statements uttered by many of us when election time rolls around. To make a long story short voting is a privilege that defines this country. The right to vote is part of our constitution. To secure the right to vote for all Americans, many people black and white gave up their lives. One should not take the right to vote lightly as it affects our lives in many ways.



Voting is our way of telling the politicians what is important to us. If you are concerned about education, taxes, jobs, the justice system, health care, social security, housing and the community in which you live, you will vote on Election Day. Those that you elect by voting and by not voting have influence over all aspects of our lives

Let's say you are concerned about getting a job. Did you know that Congress influences which job training programs are available, as well as health insurance coverage, work place safety, and fairness in hiring?

As housing is a concern to all of us, Congress approves the allocation of money (budget) that determines housing. This controls property maintenance, management, rent, rehabilitation and the number of housing units there are.

As a voter you have the opportunity to affect our future. You can make a difference by casting your vote on Election Day and influence elected officials as to how they set policy.

Remember, "your Vote is your voice" let it be heard on Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

GOVERNOR RENDELL SPEAKS WITH JEFFERSON MANOR SENIORS



Governor Rendell stops and talks with residents at Jefferson Manor regarding funding for senior citizens.

Asking questions were: Dolly Linhart, Fred Siena, Jim Carnahan, Linda Smark, Leona Long as Senator Jay Costa and Joe Asturi listen in.

ACHA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER - DEREK UBER

Our Board of Directors, employees and residents would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Derek Uber our newest Board Member. Mr. Uber was appointed to ACHA's Board of Directors on July 12, 2006 as Treasurer. Mr. Uber is Assistant County Manager of Allegheny County. Frank Aggazio welcomes Mr. Uber, and states "He will be a valuable addition to the ACHA Board. He possesses a strong financial background that will serve the ACHA well during these difficult fiscal times."

ACHA FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHTS OF ALL RESIDENTS

If you have a neighbor who repeatedly plays loud music at night, bangs on your door, or allows his guests to engage in fighting and arguing at all times of the day, Pennsylvania courts have just made it a little easier to evict them. Fighting for the safety of our residents, the Allegheny County Housing Authority appealed a Court of Common Pleas decision that did not uphold the termination of a resident who engaged in this type of conduct. The Superior Court recently ruled that the Allegheny County Housing Authority could evict a resident who violated his lease when he engaged in a pattern of behavior that disrupted other residents' peaceful enjoyment of their accommodation.

In this case, the behavior consisted of playing loud music at all hours of the night; banging on the doors of other residents; causing damage to other residents' doors; engaging in disruptions requiring police intervention; leaving the stove jets and oven pilot running; and leaving a lit cigarette on the couch which caused a fire and required residents of the building to be evacuated. Although the fire was deemed accidental by the Fire Marshall, the Superior Court ruled that the resident violated the lease terms because he was negligent.

In addition to disturbing the rights of other residents to the peaceful enjoyment of their property, the court also made it clear that if a fire is a result of the resident's negligence, it will also be considered a lease violation even if the Fire Marshall deems the fire accidental. So watch your lit cigarettes and unattended cooking! Not only can this result in potential harm to yourself and your neighbors, but could also result in the termination of your lease. Your safety is our concern.

The 5th ANNUAL ACHA GOLF CLASSIC

Benefiting The First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge



On behalf of the Allegheny County Housing Authority, we would like to thank anyone who joined us at The Falbo/Pennrose 5th Annual ACHA Golf Classic presented by: TREK/PNC. The Golf Classic was held on Monday, June 12, 2006, at the beautiful Montour Heights Country Club. This dynamic event featured golf, brunch, dinner, gifts, skill contests, a hole-in one contest and a live and silent auction of donated items. The event hosted 144 golfers.

The proceeds from the Golf Classic benefited The First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge. The First Tee curriculum is special in that it uses golf as a platform for teaching kids key core values that they can use in their everyday lives and into adulthood.

Our 5th Annual Golf Classic was successful due to the generous contributions of many organizations and individuals. On behalf of all the youth who will benefit from this program, we thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Plans are underway for our 6th Annual Golf Classic to be held at Edgewood Country Club in August 2007. Please contact Patty Caslin at 412-402-2542 for information and reservations.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

ACHA GOLF CLASSIC VI
AUGUST 17, 2007

EDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB
CHURCHILL, PA

For more information
contact Patty Caslin
at 412.402.2542

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Resident Service and Satisfaction Survey

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If you are selected for the survey, please complete and return the "Resident Service and Satisfaction Survey" to HUD.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY CAMP CADET

The Allegheny County Housing Authority, Public Safety Department, along with various other law enforcement agencies partnered with the Pennsylvania State Police in hosting the second annual Allegheny County Camp Cadet at Camp Guyasuta in Sharpsburg from July 23rd through July 29th, 2006, with a graduation on July 30th, 2006.

Camp Cadet is a tuition free one-week event, staffed by local Pennsylvania State Police, Allegheny County Police, Allegheny County Sheriffs, Municipal Police Officers and the ACHA's Public Safety Department who serve as counselors and instructors. The program is designed to give boys and girls, ages 12 through 14, a better understanding of law enforcement activities while living in an atmosphere similar to a police-training academy. Emphasis is placed on improving self-discipline, building self-esteem and confidence through teamwork, and making new friends.

This was the second successful year for Allegheny County Camp Cadet and we are looking forward to providing the youth of Allegheny County an opportunity to challenge themselves in a positive environment and developing new friendships in the years to come. 



DISTRICT ATTORNEY STEPHEN ZAPPALA HONORED BY ACHA



Mike Vogel, Stephen Zappala, and Frank Aggazio

The Allegheny County Housing Authority presented Stephen Zappala with an "Award of Appreciation" at the September 20, 2006 Board Meeting. The award was presented by Frank Aggazio to District Attorney Zappala for his tireless commitment to making ACHA's communities a safer place for our residents. "Mr. Zappala has been a source of support both operationally and financially, through grants, to the ACHA. We applaud Mr. Zappala's constant efforts to ensure the safety of our communities" stated Frank Aggazio.

MEMORIAM - GOODBYE TO A VALUED EMPLOYEE

The Allegheny County Housing Authority recently lost a valued employee, a true friend and family member. Elva Paganucci died on August 28, 2006. Elva was a dedicated and loyal employee for 63 years.

Elva enjoyed every position she served at the Authority. She was especially proud to run her mailroom. Who could forget the look on her face when Frank Aggazio dedicated the mailroom to Elva in April of 2003 and presented her with a postage stamp with her picture on it. This was a real challenge as we all remember how much she hated her picture taken!

Elva occupies a special place in the hearts of ACHA employees and will be missed by all. Anyone walking by the "Elva Paganucci Mail Room," remembers her with love.

A Memorial Service was held at ACHA's Central Office for Elva on August 31, 2006.



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