



Community Connection



April 2015

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

ORCHARD PARK CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY IN DUQUESNE

With All PHFA, State, County and tax credit funding in place and the Ground-breaking Ceremony having been held in July, construction is officially underway on the new community of Orchard Park in Duquesne, PA.

As planned by the ACHA and Falbo-Pennrose, in association with WRT Architects, Fahringer, McCarty, & Grey, Inc., Mistick Construction, and the City of Duquesne, 44 Units housed in 22 new duplex buildings are being built on the former Burns Heights site. The new development also includes a free standing community building.

The removal of 45,000 tons of coal - an initial part of the process - has been completed and the excavation company has de-mobilized. Actual construction began in November of 2014. As of January 2014, all of the concrete pads for the buildings were completed. Most of the buildings are already framed and some are under roof. Bob Pacacha – ACHA Construction Manager on this project stated, “Finishes are coming out beautifully. Another job the ACHA can be proud of.”

Meanwhile, the Youth Places Recreation Building, located on adjacent Walnut Avenue, is being prepped to provide (*continued on page 2*)



Rich Fitzgerald speaks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony July 24, 2014



(left to right) Howard Slaughter - Director of Fannie Mae Pittsburgh Community Business Center & PHFA Chairman, Board of Directors, Frank Aggazio - ACHA Executive Director, Rich Fitzgerald - Allegheny County Chief Executive, Jacqueline Molinaro-Thompson - Director, Field Office of Public Housing, HUD Pittsburgh, Austin Davis - ACHA Board of Directors Vice Chairperson, Brian Hudson, PHFA Executive Director & CEO, Michael Polite - President & CEO, Ralph A. Falbo, Inc.

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PERSPECTIVES

by the ACHA
Executive Director
Frank Aggazio



As we are well into 2015, there are a number of construction projects that we look forward to completing: First and foremost is new construction of the Orchard Park development in Duquesne where the first families should be moving in by June 2015. The development has a unique working preference feature.


The other projects include the completion of the Truman Tower modernization and completion of the remaining apartments at General Braddock Tower. The final phase of Sheldon Park Exterior Improvements will soon be underway.

Occupancy of public housing units and leasing of HCVP units is a top priority of the ACHA. We need to serve as many eligible families as possible. When units are vacant and not leased the Housing Authority does not receive funding. This is extremely critical in these very tough federal funding times.

Special congratulations to the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Department for another outstanding high-performer score! And "Hats-Off!" to the Facilities Management and the Housing Management & Operations (HMO) departments for scoring a 36 out of 40 in the physical condition of our housing stock.

In these difficult budget times it is critical to get a good effort from everyone. THANK YOU for all of your hard work and dedication to residents of the ACHA.

Frank Aggazio

temporary office space for unit leasing services, Construction Management, and the Mon Valley Initiative Workforce Development staff. Given that Orchard Park will house those with a working preference, it is important to provide counseling through a supportive service program to former or prospective residents that will enhance educational and employment opportunities. In addition to this building, the new on-site Community Building will permanently house the Management Office and maintenance facilities as well as supportive service programs to further assist residents with education and employment opportunities. 

~ Andrew Jamrom

October 2014 - Coal Removal



February 2015 - Single Family Duplex Construction



February 2015 - Community Building Construction



PAHRA'S 2014 BELLAMY AWARDS & BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

At the PAHRA Annual Conference on Tuesday, September 9th, the 2014 Best Practices Award for Redevelopment, Community Development or Other Related Programs was presented to Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA), Executive Director Frank Aggazio, for the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Inspection Services. (pictured Frank Aggazio and Bobby Gabbianelli, Associate Director HCVP) Through ESG the ACHA joined forces with Allegheny County Economic Development, the City of Pittsburgh, the Commonwealth of PA, Three Rivers Communities, Inc. and a number of local service agencies to provide prompt HUD Housing Quality Standard (HQS) Inspections for participants in need. The ACHA has performed over 965 HQS inspections for homeless families or families that are at risk of becoming homeless which has provided some stability in their lives and a decent, safe and sanitary place to live.



Robert Gabbianelli and Frank Aggazio accept PAHRA Best Practice Award

The ACHA was also awarded Certificates of Merit at the Best Practices Showcase for the following achievements:


- Electronic Debit Payment Card – Automatic loading of Housing Choice Voucher utility payments onto a debit card.
- Carnegie Apartments – Redevelopment and revitalization of an existing building.
- Truman Towers Renovation Project – Upgrading community spaces, renovating dwelling units, building systems and improving energy efficiency.
- Smoke-Free Initiative – Adoption of smoke-free public housing policies and programs to assist residents with tobacco prevention and cessation.
- Deborah D. Booker Community Center Teen Program – Providing education services and recreational activities for community teens.
- Real Time Crime Center – Increased safety and security leading to decreased crime rates.



Castor Binion and Yasmin Shaheed of HACP accept Certificate of Merit Awards from PAHRA President, Frank Aggazio

Mr. Aggazio would like to extend a special thanks to all ACHA staff members for their efforts involved in the ACHA receiving the awards!

Mr. Aggazio would also like to congratulate the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, Executive Director Castor Binion and Chief Administrative Officer Yasmin Shaheed (pictured) for their following Certificates of Merit:

- Comprehensive Pest Control Program – Aggressive approach to eradication of pests, including the common cockroach.
- Moving-to-Work Home Ownership Program – Helping renters to become homeowners. 


~ Robert Gabbianelli

ACHA HCVP DEPT. - HIGH PERFORMER

The Allegheny County Housing Authority (ACHA) was designated a “High Performer” by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP).

This designation exemplifies the commitment to quality and service by ACHA’s Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher team. The staff prides itself in excelling at the collective mission to serve the residents and landlords of Allegheny County by expanding affordable housing opportunities for all.

ACHA Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program administers over 5900 vouchers including Veteran’s Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, Mod Rehab units and Mainstream vouchers.


The Section 8 team thanks Executive Director, Frank Aggazio for his support in achieving this designation. 

~ Kim Longwell


ACHA JOINS "BOOT CAMP" CHALLENGE



In July of 2014 County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Mayor Bill Peduto committed to President Obama's goal to end veteran homelessness by December 2015. The first step was to engage in a housing Boot Camp on August 8, 2014 that partnered agencies such as the VA, Allegheny County Continuum of Care, HUD, local Housing Authorities and an array of others. On this day it was determined the Boot Camp would house 135 homeless veterans in 100 days and through a tireless intense joint effort, the Boot Camp goal was not only obtained but exceeded. Pictured is the press conference acknowledging the success of the Boot Camp.

The Boot Camp has committed to another 100 days of housing 135 homeless veterans and will do so until President Obama's goal is achieved. Mr. Aggazio and the Allegheny County Housing Authority respectfully extends heartfelt thanks to the collaboration of Boot Camp members for their cooperation and partnership in this honorable cause.  ~ Robert Gabbianelli

VETERAN GIVE BACK DAYS

On December 17th & 18th, 2014, in conjunction with the Kennedy Township Police Department, the Allegheny County Housing Authority's HCVP Department hosted "Give Back Days" to Veterans. They collected and gave away new and gently used mens and womens clothing, coats, shoes and personal items to veterans in need. Light refreshments were served. 



HCVP Counselor, Randi Beatty with Veterans during "Veteran Give Back Days"



BRINGING CHRISTMAS CHEER TO SENIOR COMMUNITIES

On December 22, 2014, Allegheny County Housing Authority executives and staff visited several senior citizen communities to deliver kindness and cheer in the form of Christmas carols. The tour included Harrison Hi-Rise, Dalton's Edge, Springdale Manor, Blawnox Manor, R.J. Corbett Apts., G.W. Carver Hall, West Mifflin Manor, John Fraser Hall, Homestead Apts., and Jefferson Manor.



THE FIRST TEE OF PITTSBURGH GOLF CLASSIC 2014



The 13th Annual First Tee of Pittsburgh Golf Classic hosted by the ACHA was held on May 12, 2014 at Sewickley Heights Golf Club. 90 golfers took on the challenging Sewickley Heights Golf course to benefit the First Tee of Pittsburgh @ Pleasant Ridge Club House and programs at the development. This annual event has become the main fundraiser to help with the clubhouse operations for the First Tee program at Pleasant Ridge. Guests enjoyed a fun day of the golf, a short program about the First Tee and dinner. The event has been consistently raising approximately \$ 25,000/year to help with the operations of the First Tee program. For the 2014 Outing, the event raised nearly \$ 24,000. The funds are strictly dedicated for The First Tee of Pittsburgh @ Pleasant Ridge Program.

The First Tee Program focuses using golf as the learning vehicle to teach the participants the Nine Core Life Skills Values. The First Tee of Pittsburgh would like to thank everyone who attended the event and for their continued support of the program. The First Tee of Pittsburgh would also like to thank all of the volunteers that helped with the event because without them the event would not be the success that it is year in and year out.

To learn more about the First Tee of Pittsburgh visit www.thefirstteepittsburgh.org ~ Ed Primm

MWDBE CERTIFICATION & YOUR BUSINESS SEMINAR

The MWDBE Governmental Committee sponsored a seminar on Tuesday, September 16, 2014 at the IBEW Conference Hall. 160 attended the seminar entitled "Certification and Your Business". The seminar focus covered several topics including "What is certification?", "How can my business become certified?", and "What are the benefits of certification?".

A six (6) member panel discussed the following:

1. Disadvantaged Enterprises (DBE PAUCP) Certifications
2. 8a certification (US Small Business Administration) Certifications
3. Small Business Self Certifications & Small Diverse Business Verification (PA Dept. of General Services) Certifications
4. Section 3 Business Concern (RHLS) Certifications
5. Minority Business Enterprise (Eastern Minority Supplier Development Council) Certifications.
6. Women Business Enterprise (Women Business Enterprise National Council) Certifications

The program also highlighted a business to discuss their success through certification. The MWDBE Government Committee consists of 20 members from various government agencies in Allegheny County and surrounding areas.


As Vice Chair of the MWDBE Government Board, I represent The Allegheny County Housing Authority. We review policies, recommend and implement policies and procedures, plan and host networking events and workshops bringing together various government and private agencies with MBE's, WBE's, and DBE's. Our goal is to connect these businesses with contracting opportunities. ~ Kim Evans



Chandler Wolf, MWDBE Certification Manager

GENERAL BRADDOCK TOWER - STANDING TALL AGAIN

General Braddock Tower has gone through three phases of construction and is now to begin a fourth. The first phase dealt with reclaiming the 10th, 11th and 12th floor units as well as introducing a new HVAC system, exterior improvements including a crowning new cornice and landscaping. The second deals with new windows and exterior lighting, while the third introduces a new chiller to the HVAC system providing the residents with unit controlled air-conditioning. The fourth phase will take the unit improvements through the remaining floors of the building.

Chuck Stohlberg, the ACHA Construction Manager stated that the initial work schedule might have presented a difficult time for the residents, but they were found to be quite helpful. Also, the new mechanical system and windows have made an immense improvement to the building's environment and the new overall look of the building is pleasing to the residents. 

~ Andrew Jamrom




General Braddock Tower new windows roof & roof cornice

TRUMAN MODERNIZATION



The news at Harry S. Truman Apartments regarding construction progress is encouraging as the contractors (Moret Construction, Merante Plumbing, Merit Electrical Group and Controlled Climate Systems) work their way down through the building.

Initially the building received asbestos abatement of floors and ceilings, necessitating the relocation of all residents within the building. This however provided a much easier circumstance to perform the work which includes the replacement of existing waste stacks which then ties into improving the apartments as well as the common areas with new kitchens and baths, flooring and paint. Additionally, HVAC and electrical upgrades as well as a new cornice, entrance and landscaping are included.


At this time, the seventh and sixth floors are being painted while drywall installation is being completed on the fifth, fourth and third floors. Of note are the new cornice and entrance canopy, which have been designed by McLean Architects to give the building an attractive entryway as well as a distinctive identity within the community. 

~ Andrew Jamrom

RESIDENT RECOGNITION

Hats off to Ruth Seidel, Robert J. Corbett Apts. Resident Council President, and to the officers and residents of Corbett Apartments.

Over the past two years the Council has conducted many fundraisers to purchase an electric fireplace and furniture for the main lobby. They also purchased a TV, popcorn machine, candy machine and tables for the coffee room at R.J. Corbett Apartments. Ruth has volunteered many hours of her personal time to refinishing cushions, as well as making pillows and curtains for the coffee room.

Big shout out to the R.J. Corbett Apartments Resident Council and Residents! You have proven what teamwork can accomplish! 

~ Becky Sowers



Ruth Seidel,
Resident Council President
Robert J. Corbett Apts.



SHELDON PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The ACHA is about to enter the third phase of exterior improvements to the 45 buildings at Sheldon Park. The first phase began in 2012. These improvements comprise brick repair, new insulation in crawlspaces, totally sealed LED lighting on porches, new roofing, windows and entrance canopies as well as new 100 square foot concrete patios.

Upstreet Architects worked with ACHA to develop unique roof overhang and bracketing details as well as colorful siding and picture framed windows to solve the initial problem of water infiltrating the dwelling units giving the buildings a cottage-like scale more appropriate to their park-like setting.

Additionally, the Lloyd Hayden Community Center has recently received upgrades of a new roof and HVAC rooftop unit.  ~ Andrew Jamrom



ACHA EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH for 2014

For consistently showing enthusiasm and working with an unwavering positive attitude. You've clearly made a difference. We acknowledge our appreciation.

JAN Ken Heinecke

FEB Russell Nix

MAR Geno DiSilvio

APR Lou Sanchez

MAY Flo Davis

JUN Ed Mogus

JUL Roy Banner

AUG Charles Rozzo &
Vincent DiCenzo

SEP Paul Petrocelli

OCT Hope Vasy

NOV Mike Peton

DEC Willie Prince

THANK YOU!

ORCHARD PARK SECTION 3 JOB RECRUITMENT

The Allegheny County Housing Authority and Mistick Construction sponsored a job recruitment session on August 19, 2014 at the Boys and Girls Club in Duquesne. Notices were posted in the Duquesne Post Office, local supermarket, Boys and Girls Clubs and mass mailings to all former residents of the Burns Heights Community.

There were 48 applicants in attendance at the recruitment session. The first portion of the session consisted of ACHA and Mistick staff going over site drawings and the construction process taking place at the Orchard Park Development. For the next portion of the recruitment session, Section 3 applicants completed applications. ACHA's Kim Evans, Section 3 /MWDBE Coordinator and Mistick's Roxanne Thomas, Section 3 Coordinator conducted one on one interviews with Section 3 applicants to determine skills and also discuss training opportunities. A total of 64 Section 3 Resident job applications were received from Duquesne and surrounding areas.

ACHA's Section 3 Coordinator and Mistick's Section 3 Coordinator had various meetings conference calls with contractors and subcontractors to schedule interviews and drug testing for section 3 Applicants. We scheduled 41 interviews over the four month period. To date we have 17 Section 3 workers hired on this construction site. Our hope is that once completed the contractors/sub-contractors will retain the new hires to work on other contracts with them.

The applicants were tiered as follows; former Burns Heights Residents, Duquesne Residents and then the residents from the surrounding areas.

ACHA's goals are to increase Section 3 participation on all of our job sites promoting self- sufficiency, advancement and training opportunities to the communities and Section 3 contract compliance.  ~ Kim Evans





EFFECTIVE MARCH 1, 2014

**RENT PAYMENTS ARE NO
LONGER ACCEPTED AT THE
ACHA CENTRAL OFFICE**

**PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE IN
ANY OF THESE CONVENIENT WAYS:**



DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT
automated withdrawal from bank
sign up with ACHA Property Manager



LOCKBOX (by mail)
pay by ACHA monthly statement
ACHA-Rental Payments
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