



# Community Connection



April 2016

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

## ORCHARD PARK REPLACES BURNS HEIGHTS IN DUQUESNE

In 2009, the old and blighted Burns Heights housing complex in Duquesne was leveled. On September 9, 2015, officials unveiled the \$17.4 million Orchard Park neighborhood that has risen in its place. The 44-unit affordable housing development has been in the works since 2006 and was the product of a long-term commitment on the part of federal, state and local governments and private development companies and lenders, according to officials who spoke at the grand opening ceremony.

Jane Miller, Director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Pittsburgh field office, said it took “a lot of different sources of money to get us to this point.”

More than \$2.7 million of the total project cost went to infrastructure improvements that connected the street pattern within the neighborhood with other city streets. The development includes an \$850,000 community center.

Allegheny County Housing Authority provided \$3.4 million in Replacement Housing Factor Funds. The project received \$500,000 in Pennsylvania Department of Economic Development Funds, \$750,000 in Allegheny County Economic Development HOME funds and \$12.7 million in low-income tax equity.

Allegheny County Housing Authority Executive Director Frank Aggazio noted that project contractor Mistick Construction Company provided jobs to some local residents. Leroy Wallace, 65, of Duquesne was one such beneficiary. Wallace, who lives close to Orchard Park, said he got a part-time job doing drywall work on the job site. “I lost 43 pounds in the process,” Wallace said.

*(continued on page 2)*



*(left to right) Jane Miller - HUD Field Office Director, Michael Polite - President & CEO, Ralph A. Falbo, Inc., Austin Davis - ACHA Board of Directors Vice Chairperson, Brian Hudson, PHFA Executive Director & CEO, Frank Aggazio - ACHA Executive Director, Rich Fitzgerald - Allegheny County Chief Executive, Phil Krivacek - Mayor of Duquesne, Patricia Hawkins - Public Housing Resident, Howard Slaughter - Director of Fannie Mae Pittsburgh Community Business Center & PHFA Chairman, Senator James Brewster, PA State Legislator*

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# PERSPECTIVES

by the ACHA  
Executive Director  
Frank Aggazio



Dear friends, colleagues, & partners,

Every year brings significant challenges to the operations of the Housing Authority and this year is no different. Unfortunately, we have a very limited amount of resources to keep our properties up to safe, decent, and sanitary standards. An influx of cash will not be coming from the Federal Government.

Staff needs to work more efficiently. It is extremely important that the Authority comes up with a sizeable surplus. Making a habit of that will ensure the future of the agency for years to come.

I wish to thank all employees for their dedication and hard work. Kudos to our HCVP Department supervised by Kim Longwell, Bob Gabbianelli, and Ellen Parker, on another "High-Performer" designation. Congratulations to Paul Reiber, Paul Yates, Jim Bulls & their staff for the 37-out-of-40 on the Physical Condition Score.

I was very proud of the way Orchard Park turned out. There are so many to thank on that effort it would take up a few pages. Special thanks to Jack McGraw and Ed Primm for the planning and construction supervision. Best wishes for a successful year!

*Frank Aggazio*



Duquesne Mayor Phil Krivacek said coal from an old mine was discovered when the site was being prepared for construction. He said the coal was sold and the proceeds helped pay for brick ornamental work on some of the houses. "They've built a beautiful site here," said Krivacek, adding he hopes the momentum from the new housing helps spur additional governmental funding for improvements in the city's business district.

Patricia Hawkins, 71, who soon will be one of Orchard Park's new residents, said her house is beautiful and functional. Patricia, who was president of tenant council in the old Burns Heights housing complex, said her home is built to Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Hawkins said the house has a shower she can use with her wheelchair and a kitchen sink that is low enough that "I can use it without water running all over the place."

Neighbor Rosia Reid, who lives around the corner from the development, said she likes what it brings to her city. "I watched it being built from the very beginning," Reid said. "I rode up here every day and would always stop and talk with the construction director. I'm so proud of Duquesne. There's a lot of good things in this city." Austin Davis, Vice Chairman of the Allegheny County Housing Authority, said Orchard Park will provide hope and stability for its residents.

The housing plan includes sizeable recreation fields that planners say will be used for soccer or football games. The 5,800-square-foot community center will produce electric with roof-mounted solar cells and will be home to the community's Head Start program. The housing includes eight one-bedroom units, sixteen two-and three-bedroom units and four four-bedroom units. The residences have on-site parking, community laundry facilities and an on-site computer lab.

~ Eric Slagle

Total Trib Media - 9/10/2015



## 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 5800 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

## HOUSING AUTHORITY RESIDENTS HONOR ACHA, LOCAL DIGNITARIES & PROFESSIONALS

It was a show of appreciation for public housing professionals in Homestead on November 5, 2015. Residents of the Homestead Apartments and other Allegheny County Housing Authority facilities honored authority staff and directors as well as other professionals and elected officials who help provide safe and sanitary housing for low-income families and senior citizens.

Gloria Weatherspoon of Clairton, who helped to organize the event, explained its intent. "Our needs are met with affordable, safe housing," said Weatherspoon, one of about 25,000 people served by public housing in the county. "I for one don't take it for granted." The county housing authority director, Frank Aggazio, told Weatherspoon the gesture was appreciated. "It tells us we're doing a good job," said Aggazio, noting the authority is only successful because of the support it receives from its partners in all levels of government.

Representatives of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and local government officials were among those recognized. Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald said it's important for agencies to work together "in a time of limited resources to maximize quality of life."

Two months ago, the county housing authority unveiled the \$17.4 million Orchard Park neighborhood in Duquesne. The 44-unit affordable housing development had been in the works since 2006 and was the product of a long-term commitment on the part of federal, state and local governments and private development companies and lenders. The Orchard Park plan includes sizeable recreation fields and a 5,800-square-foot community center that will produce electricity with roof-mounted solar cells and be home to the community's Head Start program. Many existing housing neighborhoods have on-site programs such as daycare, year-round children's programs, playgrounds and ball fields, health clinics, resident leadership opportunities and community gardens. Allegheny County Housing Authority vice chairman Austin Davis told those at the luncheon that time and resources spent on public housing are well-spent.

Homestead Mayor Betty Esper said it takes constant effort by all involved parties to keep public housing in good shape. She said the Homestead Apartments was showing signs of disrepair a few years ago until it received an infusion of federal funding. She said the investment in the building revitalized it. "I think we have a great high-rise here," said Esper.

~ Eric Slagle  
Total Trib Media  
11/6/2015



ACHA Executive Director, Frank Aggazio and  
HUD Field Office Director, Jane Miller



Gloria Weatherspoon presents an Award of Appreciation to  
Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald



Gloria Weatherspoon presents an Award of Appreciation to  
Laura Lieberman of the UPMC McKeesport Outreach program



ACHA Board of Directors Vice Chairperson, Austin Davis,  
receives an Award of Appreciation

## 2015 BELLAMY AWARD

The Bellamy Award is PAHRA's highest level recognition of achievement. The 2015 Bellamy Award for a Housing Related Project was presented to the Allegheny County Housing Authority, Frank Aggazio, Executive Director and Bobby Gabbianelli, Associate Director HCVP for the Homeless Veterans Landlord Recruitment Program. In a concentrated effort to eliminate veteran homelessness, the Housing Authority partnered with a variety of other area agencies to establish a Housing Boot Camp, designed to house homeless veterans, as well as assist them in becoming self-sufficient. The original Boot Camp goal was to house 135 homeless veterans in 100 days, which was not only achieved but exceeded. Through extensive signage placed on Allegheny County Port Authority buses, in bus shelters throughout the City of Pittsburgh and at all the Bruegger's Bagels in downtown Pittsburgh interested landlords were recruited. Housing 95% of the known homeless veterans in Allegheny County, the program is a true success story! 🏠

~ Bob Gabbianelli



Frank Aggazio and Robert Gabbianelli accept the 2015 PAHRA Bellamy Award

## LINDA ALIBERTI RETIRES

During the January 2016 ACHA Board Meeting, Linda Aliberti, Executive Secretary, was awarded Employee of the Month and personally thanked by Executive Director, Frank Aggazio for being such a wonderful ambassador for the Housing Authority for 27 years. Linda handled thousands of calls, always with a professional and calm demeanor and assisted him in many things for all those years as well. Congratulations and best wishes for a pleasant retirement! 🏠



Frank Aggazio presents Linda Aliberti with the Employee of the Month Award



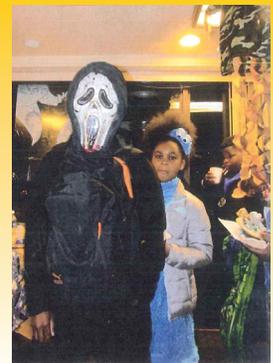
Linda's last day at the office

## WILMERDING APARTMENTS HALLOWEEN PARTY



Ghouls, Goblins, Witches, and Devils of all ages came out to the Wilmerding Halloween Party! This party was hosted by the Wilmerding Resident council and open to the community. All of the decorations and treats were provided by the resident of Wilmerding Apartments. The North Versailles police donated their time and officers to have a bag check for the kids. In addition to the bag check, party goers enjoyed food, drinks, music, and of course a treat for all who attended.

~ Kara Williams



## WEST VIEW TOWER TALENT SHOW

On May 1, 2015, the residents of West View Tower put on a talent show. The show was coordinated by Michelle "Mitzi" Anderson in conjunction with the West View Resident Council. Talent acts included:

1. The Joker - Michelle "Mitzi" Anderson
2. The Golden Girls - pictured (L to R) Pat Erbe, Dee Ross, Pat Schepes, Tom LaJune, Rachel Graham, Colette Weiland, (front) Ginny Augustine
3. Magician - Tom La June assisted by Bill Wigley
4. Musicians - Pat Turkovick (flute) & Kathy Lang (vocals)
5. Boogy Woogy Dancer - Norma Aceves
6. June McGuire, Carolyn Wolf, John "Corky" Hill



## REAC REPORT

**REAC** "Real Estate Assessment Center" is an inspection required by HUD based on the physical condition of the space and common area. Inspections are scheduled based on your prior scores. At 79% or less you will be inspected every year, at 80% to 89% you will be inspected every two years, at 90% or above you will be inspected in three years.

Everyone hears the phrase REAC and knows that we need to do physical inspections of units and common areas in which we manage. The scores are very important and determine whether a site is inspected every year, two years or three years. ACHA has taken great pride with the help of managers, trades and maintenance aides over the past four years to raise our score 14 points. In 2012 we had a combined score of 80.38 % to a 94.88 % in 2015. This means that the majority of our properties that were inspected in 2015 will not need to be inspected for 3 years. This year we have 22 sites being REAC inspected our goal is always 90% or higher to get a three year break!



~ Paul "REAC" Reiber  
& Ron Yates

## THE FIRST TEE OF PITTSBURGH AT PLEASANT RIDGE GOLF CLASSIC 2015

The First Tee of Pittsburgh hosted an annual golf outing to benefit the First Tee of Pittsburgh facility located in Pleasant Ridge. This state of the art clubhouse and three hole course with practice areas serves children ages 5-18 from the Pleasant Ridge Housing community as well as area youth from Sto-Ken Rox. Enrollment has grown over the years and some sessions are now completely full. Participants get to learn putting, chipping and full swing lessons while also learning how to set goals, manage their emotions and meet and greet others.

Last year's event with 88 golfers was held at Diamond Run Golf Club. The group enjoyed a beautiful day of golf, friendly competition and fun. Young First Tee golfers were there to meet and thank the attendees and even hit a few mulligans.(Not saying who was closest to the pin!).

In addition to golf the group enjoyed continental breakfast, lunch, cocktails and dinner along with an auction and skill prizes. During dinner First Tee youth from Pleasant Ridge thanked the golfers and shared how core values, life skills and healthy habits help them on and off the golf course. ACHA Director Frank Aggazio was also there to thank everyone and let the golfers know how much their support is appreciated by the kids and the Pleasant Ridge/McKees Rocks community.

This year's golf outing will be held Monday, October 10, 2016 at the Edgewood Country Club.

To learn more about the First Tee of Pittsburgh visit  
[www.thefirstteepittsburgh.org](http://www.thefirstteepittsburgh.org)

~ Marc Field  
The First Tee of Pittsburgh



# TRUMAN APARTMENTS - INTERIOR & EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS

As of February 2016, the ACHA has begun re-occupying the newly renovated Harry S. Truman Tower in Duquesne. Initial improvement work involved interior unit and common area modifications relating to waste stack replacement, a revised building entrance, new bathroom and kitchen cabinetry, paint and floor finishes. The scope of work was upgraded during design development to include replacement of lighting; Unit entry doors and hardware replacement; New Roof and lightning arrestor system replacement; Replacement of the Common area HVAC system; a badly needed electrical service and main panel replacement as well as Elevator renovations. Some efficiency units were converted to one bedroom apartments into which new windows were installed, and dwelling units were reclaimed on the first floor.



On the building's exterior, the deteriorating parking lot has been re-paved. A new entrance canopy and revised entryway with benches, picnic tables, new landscaping and lighting have all been completed.

McLean Architects designed the project. The Contractors were Moret Construction - G.C., Merante Plumbing Contractor - P.C., Merit Electrical Group - E.C., and Eastern Elevator renovated the elevator system. The project was funded entirely through The Capital Fund. 

~ Andrew Jamrom

# HONORING VETERANS AT PINE RIDGE HEIGHTS & DALTON'S EDGE

In October 2015, Pine Ridge Hts and Daltons Edge invited Kim Pfeiffer from Amedisys Hospice Care for a presentation to include a question and answers session with the residents and discussion about Hospice care. Just before Veterans Day, she returned with local VFW Chaplain to celebrate our veterans, their spouses and those who passed on. The celebration included a dedication video and residents who shared personal stories, photos, newspaper clippings, poems, letters, awards, etc. of their loved ones with the assembly. One resident wore her husband's POW vest to honor his ultimate sacrifice - a day that also happened to be his birthday. The celebration concluded with a prayer and a personal "thank you" to every veteran with a salute, certificate and pinning tribute for surviving widows. Then ACHA staff, Cheryl Thompson, Nicole Knapp, Perry New & Jeff Marietti served everyone cake and drinks. It was a very emotional and happy occasion. 

~ Cherie Thompson



## SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY - CLAIRTON FIRE DRILL



~ Patrick Cloonan, Trib Live - 10/23/2015

## ACHA EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH for 2015

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

JAN Tanya Hunter

FEB Mark Mullen

MAR HCVP Department

APR Kate Vitek

MAY Bob Gabbianelli

JUN Lee Meister

JUL Roy Banner

AUG Tim Ballou

SEP Tanya Hunter

OCT Kim Evans

NOV Pleasant Ridge Staff

DEC Ed Primm

**THANK YOU!**

## ACHA SMOKE FREE INITIATIVE



~ Alexa Miller

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