



Community Connection



Winter 2011

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

COMMUNITY CENTER NAMED AFTER ACHA BOARD MEMBER DEBORAH BOOKER



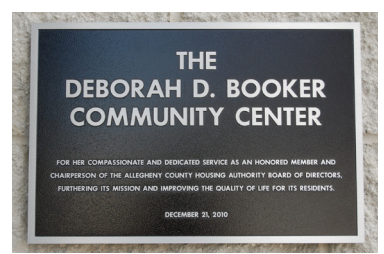
The Grand Opening of the Deborah Booker Community Center took place on December 21, 2010 with an audience of 80-100 people in attendance. In addition to the honoree, Deborah Booker, those present included the ACHA Board of Directors; representatives from United States Congressman Jason Altmire and State Representative Frank Dermody; Allegheny County Council President, Rich Fitzgerald; District Judge Carolyn Bengel; U.S Department of Housing and Development Pittsburgh Field Office Director, Cheryle Campbell; Allegheny County Economic Development Representatives, and Harrison Township Community Dignitaries.



A speechless Deborah Booker looks upon the building dedication.

The 8,800 square foot building is a Silver LEED 2.2 certified building that will use less energy and water resulting in lower utility consumption and costs to taxpayers. Construction was funded by Grants from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County Economic Development. In partnering with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the ACHA provided funding for the building with use of the ACHA Capital Fund Program.

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PERSPECTIVES

by the ACHA
Executive Director
Frank Aggazio



Congratulations to the ACHA staff for another successful year. Below is a list of notable achievements:

- The Housing Choice Voucher Program received a score of 99 (out of 100) for 2010.
- The ACHA recently received a score of 89 from the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS), just one point shy of high performer status. Though, we believe there is a basis for appeal that would allow the ACHA to achieve enough points to qualify.
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) construction work is ahead of schedule. The ACHA is looking forward to a revitalized Prospect Terrace and all other ARRA work completed ahead of schedule in fall 2011.
- The Deborah Booker Community Center at Park/Sheldon, Natrona Heights, was completed in late 2010 and now open.
- Revitalization work at John Fraser Hall, Turtle Creek, was completed in late 2010 and is now open and leasing apartments for seniors.
- The Public Safety Department has incorporated a number of new programs in an effort to reduce crime in and around ACHA communities.

Great challenges lie ahead for 2012 and beyond as the federal government continues to change and adapt.

Thank you for your daily efforts and contributions in making the ACHA a high-performing agency.

(community center continued) Programming for the center will be focused on providing recreational and educational programs to benefit the at-risk youth population in Harrison Township and the Sheldon Park Housing Development. Partnerships have been formed with the Highlands School District to provide tutoring programs to the children of the community.

After Mrs. Booker had time to let reality sink in, she shared these words of thanks: "It is tremendous to have my name on an ACHA building and spectacular to have it on one so grand as the Sheldon Park Community Center. Even the size of the letters was stunning.

To those of you who successfully conspired to keep this honor a surprise, thank you. To those of you who designed and built this wonderful building, thank you. And for the very kind words from Frank, Michelle and Derek, thank you.

More generally, my deepest gratitude goes to all of you who work so hard to make the Housing Authority the great agency it has become. I am humbled and proud to be part of it with you."



Derek Uber presents Mrs. Booker with a Proclamation from Dan Onorato



Michelle Pagano Heck



Cheryle Campbell of HUD

ACHA RECEIVES PAHRA AWARDS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On September 16, 2010, the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) held its annual awards dinner and banquet at the Holiday Inn Conference Center located in Grantville, Pennsylvania. The ACHA received 3 PAHRA Awards of Merit for innovative programming which helps the ACHA to be recognized among its peers in the housing industry.

The ACHA received an award for partnering with the Allegheny County Office of Behavioral Health by acting as a consultant for them. The ACHA assists them with a housing development fund which will secure housing units for a population that is being "placed" back into society. By working with the Office of Behavioral Health, the ACHA receives a consultant fee on a monthly basis.

The ACHA received an Award of Merit for implementing and monitoring the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programs. Both are three-year programs funded through Allegheny County and The City of Pittsburgh. ACHA works with various agencies and landlords to help the homeless population find adequate housing within Allegheny County. These contracts provide additional revenue sources to the ACHA.


Finally, the ACHA received an award for the criminal records analyst position that was established in summer 2009. This position is responsible for investigating any potential fraud cases in the public housing or housing choice voucher programs. This position has enabled the ACHA to recapture funds that would otherwise slip through the system. The 3 awards were the most any other housing authority or redevelopment agency received at the 2010 awards presentation.



FROM HOMELESS TO HOUSING

On July 20, 2010, Shanee Chambers & Randi Beattie coordinated the First Recognition Ceremony for VASH (Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing) Graduates. The twelve deserving Veterans were recognized for their Dedication, Consistency and Perseverance of maintaining Sobriety, Health, Employment and Housing for two years. Due to their outstanding achievement, these Individuals no longer require the Case Management Component of the VASH Program and will receive Regular HCVP Vouchers. As a result, their VASH Vouchers will now become available to assist more Homeless Veterans.

The Certificates were presented to the Veterans at the ACHA July Board Meeting by Frank Aggazio, Executive Director; Kimberly Longwell, Director HCVP; Shanee Chambers, Housing Counselor/VASH and Randi Beattie, Housing Counselor/VASH. The Graduates included; James Archer, Warren Buzzell, John Felsing, Michael Frisby, Franklin Gardner, Earnest Goodwine, Phillip Gray, Herve Keptner, Robert Lauth Jr., John McCandless, Norman Sampson and Terrance Sanders. Also attending the Ceremony were the Veteran Affairs (VA) Collaboration Staff, Mary Frances Pilarski; Program Manager, Rebecca Sheetz; Case Manager, Linda Crawford; Case Manager & Thomas Matusky, Case Manager. Jacqueline Molinaro-Thompson, HUD Division Director was also in attendance.

An Inspiring Ceremony recognizing a group of Extraordinary Veterans! 




FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY SUCCESS!

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) is designed to help Housing Choice Voucher families gain and maintain independence from all social welfare. FSS uses housing as the stabilizing base so that families are able to invest energies in efforts necessary to achieve self sufficiency. The FSS goal is to have families become independent within a five to seven year period through educational development, trade and vocational skill training. FSS families have access to supportive services that promote independence and choice.



Michelle McTurner-Helms (right) proudly receives a FSS Program check; Sandra Behe (left), ACHA Asst. Special Programs Coordinator

The FSS Program offers families a financial incentive to participate in the form of an escrow account, which becomes available to them upon program completion.

Michelle McTurner-Helms is one of twenty-three (23) graduates from the HCVP Family Self-Sufficiency Program in 2010. When Ms. McTurner-Helms signed up for the FSS Program, she was working part-time as a custodian. Through hard work, determination and many life challenges, she never gave up. She worked hard at her job and was promoted to supervisor while continuing to raise her family as a single mother. Ms. McTurner-Helms would say it was well worth it because she received a check for over \$10,000! 

ACHA EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH 2010

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

- JAN Tom Malanic
- FEB Vivian Bey
- MAR Tony Bennett
- APR Renee Mielnicki
- MAY Matthew Lawhorn
- JUN Ed Primm
- JUL Rich Stephenson
- SEP Marlene Sanders
- OCT Jennifer Steffee
- NOV Barbara Baulding
- DEC Rebecca Stokes

THANK YOU!

9th ANNUAL ACHA GOLF CLASSIC




On June 14, 2010, the ACHA hosted the 9th Annual ACHA Golf Classic at Treesdale Golf and Country Club in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania. This year's turnout (132 golfers compared to 152 golfers in 2009) was slightly less than last year's, but the event was still able to raise approximately \$20,000 for The First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge.

The First Tee Program is an international youth development effort to use golf instruction as a platform to teach kids about problem solving, conflict resolution, interpersonal skills, setting goals, and how to transfer values such as responsibility, honesty, integrity, respect, confidence, and sportsmanship from the golf course to everyday life.

Seven years ago, The ACHA Golf Classic dedicated funds raised from the event to support The First Tee Program and Facility at Pleasant Ridge. To date, this event has been able to raise funds in the amount of \$300,000 to assist in the construction of the 3-Hole Golf Course and Golf Simulators - very important tools in the program curriculum to help the children learn golf and life skills.

The dinner program featured the First Tee of Pittsburgh's Executive Director, Marc Field, accompanied by youth participants speaking about improvements in their lives as a result of the program.

The winning team, with an impressive score of 13 under par, was the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Congratulations on your win!


The ACHA gratefully thanks everyone involved in the event from sponsors to volunteers. We look forward to seeing you at the 10th Annual ACHA Golf Classic held at Fox Chapel Golf Club on June 27, 2011. 



PROSPECT TERRACE - ARRA FUNDS SPUR REDEVELOPMENT

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds (ARRA) have been the key financing streams to help make Energy Efficient and GREEN Community Improvements to Prospect Terrace, a 94-unit family development located in East Pittsburgh, PA. The ACHA was awarded formula-based and competitive ARRA funds to help make improvements to the community originally built in 1942. The community had undergone some rehabilitation but nothing to this magnitude. The rehabilitation project began in early spring/late winter 2010 and is approximately 75% near completion. The work has been highlighted by making physical improvements to units that will help the units operate more efficiently:




- Existing trees in the development will be pruned and rejuvenated. New shade trees will be added to the site.
- The site development plan will implement low water use landscaping for erosion and sedimentation control. Low maintenance and drought tolerant plantings will be added to the site, including shrubs, ground covers, and perennials in order to beautify the site.
- Small retaining walls will be constructed to control erosion on sloped lawn areas. Bright site lighting will be removed and replaced with more energy efficient lighting. Low level pedestrian site lighting will be installed.
- Building exteriors will be addressed by removing all dark asphalt roofing shingles. The shingles will be replaced with light colored ENERGY STAR long-life, high emissive roofing. The roofs will also be vented. Roof sheathing will be replaced where necessary and gutters and downspouts will be repaired. All attic roofs will be insulated.
- New exterior doors will be installed. New Low-E argon gas windows will be installed in each development unit. ENERGY STAR porch lighting will be installed on all porches.
- A new geo-thermal water source heat pump will be installed in each unit of the development. The ACHA will be installing a central air conditioning system in each development unit.
- Other improvements to all development units will include installation of new circuit breaker boxes and new bathroom exhaust fans. Old appliances will be replaced with new ENERGY STAR appliances, bathroom fixtures will be replaced with water conserving fixtures, water heaters will be replaced, units will be painted with low VOC paint and flooring will be replaced with non-carpeted hard surface material. 

JOHN FRASER HALL RENOVATION COMPLETE



The ACHA is pleased to announce the completion of the renovation of John Fraser Hall located in Turtle Creek, PA. Beginning in June 2009, the building underwent a complete “gut/rehab” renovation that reconfigured the building from 98 units to 72 one-bedroom units. All apartments now feature individually controlled heat pumps that allow for residents to control their heating and cooling systems. Striving to create an energy efficient building, the ACHA is utilizing a closed loop geo-thermal system to operate the heat pumps and control utility consumption and costs. The building also features Energy Star windows, flooring, and appliances which help with overall operating costs of the building. Landscape improvements have been made to the development site and this has made the site very attractive for residents to enjoy the outside areas.

Despite a major water leak created by a broken line, the contractor was able to “turn” the building over to ACHA by the end of November 2010. Leasing began in December 2010 and is continuing through the New Year. A Grand Opening is scheduled for later in the spring with a date to be announced shortly. 

HOMEOWNERSHIP SUCCESS STORIES

Juanita Collins began the Family Self-Sufficiency program on September 1, 2006. At that time, she was working part time at Allegheny General Hospital through a temp. agency, attending ICM Business and Health school, majoring in Business Management; and receiving some assistance from the Department of Welfare.



Her goals were to:


- Obtain or increase computer skills, which was completed on May 17, 2006
- Maintain full-time employment. She was hired full time on September 9, 2006
- Begin additional education. Her graduation date was September/2008 from Kaplan
- Become independent of housing assistance. Juanita purchased her home on September 30, 2009!!!!

On top of successfully completing all of her goals, Juanita, thanks to the Move 2 Own Homeownership program and the Family Self-Sufficiency program, graduated and received a check in the amount of \$7,737.83 dollars from her escrow account!! She is definitely an inspiration to other young women, and encourages them to strive for their dream!

* * * * *


Iesha Griffin began the Family Self-Sufficiency program on August 1, 2006, not anticipating on reaching her goals so soon. She began the program receiving full assistance from the Department of Welfare, and had no job. Through her determination and faith, Iesha decided to motivate herself and accomplish her goals which were to:

- Begin additional education. She graduated from Bidwell in April/2009
- To find employment. Bidwell hired her full time w/benefits after graduation
- Credit Counseling. With the help of the Urban League, Iesha completed her credit counseling
- Purchase a Home. Iesha purchased a home in September 2009

Iesha was also a participant of the Move 2 Own Homeownership program and graduated with an escrow in the amount of \$7,863.93 dollars. She used her escrow for assistance with her closing costs. Iesha's determination and strength to not give up is why she is a success. She continues to climb to the top, and has inspired others to do the same. 

PAHRA TO APPOINT NEW PRESIDENT

The Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment (PAHRA) officials are appointing ACHA's executive director, Frank Aggazio, to President of the PAHRA state-wide association at the February 2011 Harrisburg Conference.

In mid-January 2011, former PAHRA president, Lawrence DeWitt Boosel, executive director of the Mercer County Housing Authority since 1994, fell ill while at a work-related conference and was taken to the emergency room where he unexpectedly passed away the following night. ACHA extends heartfelt sympathy to family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Boosel. 



Another satisfied ACHA Resident. Rosemary Reed greets Frank Aggazio upon his visit to Pleasant Ridge.

ACHA's "TOP GUN" OFFICER



Officer Vincent DiCenzo, III

Congratulations to ACHA police officer Vincent DiCenzo III for completing the prestigious PA TOP GUN XVI Training sponsored by the Office of Attorney General.

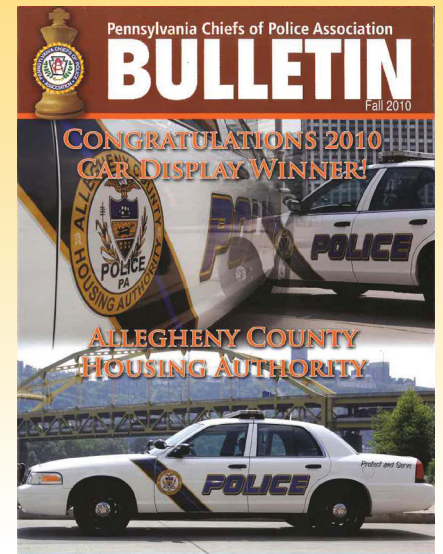
Officer DiCenzo studied many areas of law with the main focus on narcotics investigations/prosecution.

"As a team leader, I was able to partake in extensive planning and execution of search warrants. This training was the most realistic training I have ever attended and I strongly recommend it to other officers". "I look forward to utilizing the experience and education I received in the performance of my duties as a police officer with the ACHA".

PA CHIEFS MAG

The ACHA received 1st prize for its patrol car display at the Annual PA Chiefs of Police conference held in Lancaster, PA, in July 2010.

All patrol vehicles throughout the commonwealth were voted on by participants for appearance and equipment. As the recipient of first prize, the ACHA patrol car was featured on the cover of the Fall PA Chiefs of Police Association Bulletin.



CADETS WANTED!

The Allegheny County Housing Authority Police is seeking interested residents willing to participate in a twelve week Civilian Police Academy program. All participants will receive instruction on multiple police procedures and techniques, discuss police work as it has evolved and study topics such as PA crimes code, vehicle code, use of force, traffic stops, landlord tenant laws, and more.



There is no fee to participate in the civilian police academy, and we encourage those interested to take advantage of this innovative program. Class size is limited to 25 participants and we will honor a first-come first-serve

basis registration. Further details and eligibility requirements will be distributed to prospective applicants. For more information, contact ACHA Police Chief, Mike Vogel at 412-471-1608.

CAMP CADET 2011

The Allegheny County Housing Authority Police is recruiting boys and girls ages 12 through 14 for the Camp Cadet program scheduled for July 2011. Camp Cadet is a tuition free event, staffed by local PA State Police, Allegheny County Police, Allegheny County Sheriffs, Municipal Police and the ACHA's Public Safety Department. It is designed to give 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. For more information, contact ACHA Police Chief, Mike Vogel at 412-471-1608.

MEMORIAL FOR JOHN KOTCHEY

On November 9, 2010, the ACHA suddenly lost a long-time employee, friend, colleague, and family member to a job-related accident.

John worked for the Housing Authority for over twenty-nine years and was a member of Plumbers Local #27. John was a wonderful, loving and caring man who is missed by many.

John followed in his father's footsteps, also a plumber for the ACHA for many years.

Services were held at Bock Funeral Home, Ltd. in Glenshaw.



ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

GOLF CLASSIC X

MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2011

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

You're invited!

Event includes:
18 Holes of Golf (Scramble)
Breakfast, Lunch (at turn)
Cocktails, Dinner, Prizes,
Auctions, and Raffle

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