



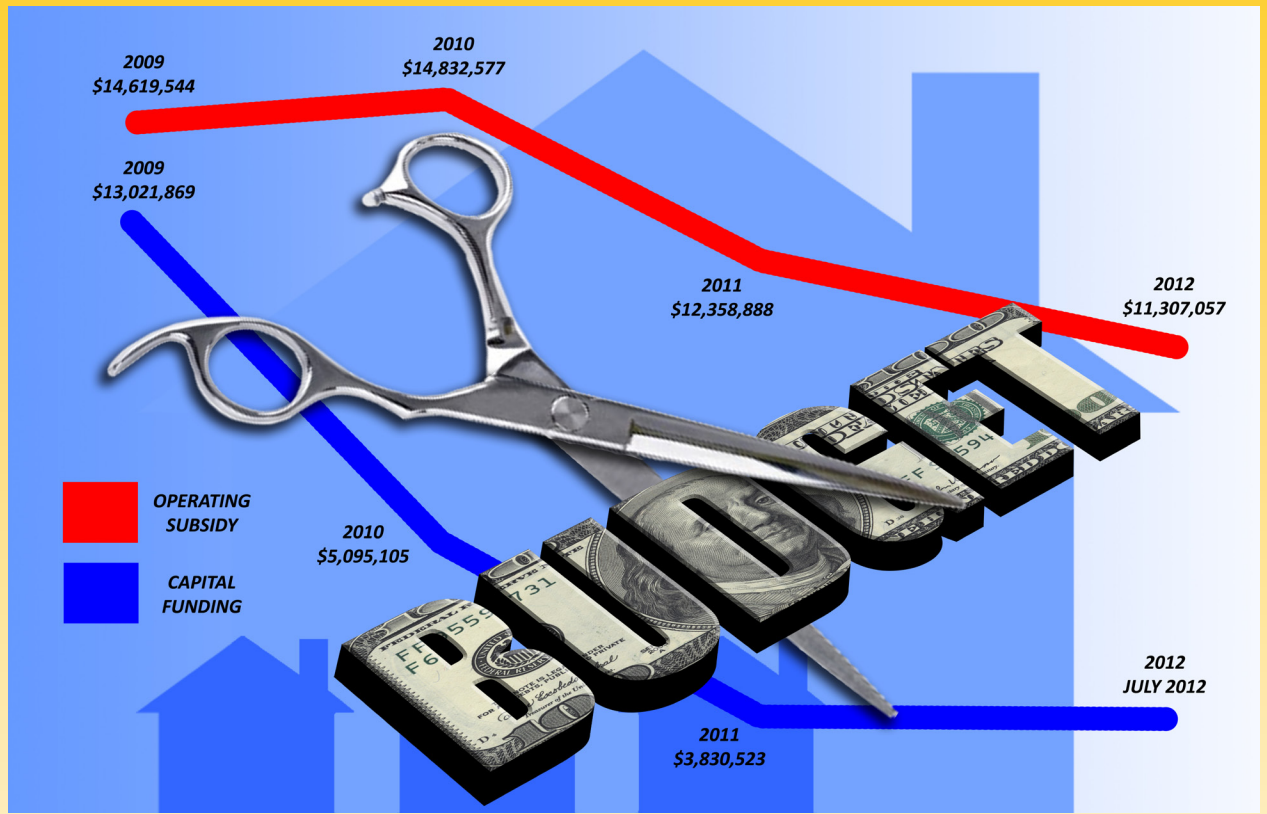
Community Connection



Winter 2012

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY

ACHA MAINTAINS QUALITY HOUSING OPTIONS & SERVICES, DESPITE BUDGET CUTS



Facing cuts in federal funds, the Allegheny County Housing Authority lays out a less ambitious plan for improvements in its communities. Public housing authorities, nationwide, are preparing to absorb steep cuts by drawing down their savings accounts and putting off major repairs.

The Authority asked Allegheny County Economic Development for \$2.72 million in federal Community Development Block Grants for five improvement projects. The top priority, if the ACHA can find financing, is funding the first phase of rebuilding the Burns Heights community in Duquesne. ACHA is seeking \$1 million in county CDBG money, and has asked the state for low-income housing tax credits to begin the project.

Also on the funding wish list is \$800,000 for revitalization of Truman Towers in Duquesne, \$500,000 for construction of a new community center at Prospect Terrace in East Pittsburgh, \$120,000 for additional parking at Blawnox Apartments, and \$300,000 for a variety of improvements to common areas in five other senior communities.

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2011 was a productive year for the ACHA. We completed millions of dollars of renovations that represent our continued commitment to providing seniors and disabled residents with safe, high-quality housing and an improved quality of life. The following list summarizes some of these improvements:

- Rachel Carson Hall, Golden Tower, and Brackenridge Hall: Complete kitchen and bathroom renovations and common area improvements.
- John Fraser Hall: Complete renovation including installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system. This building promotes a healthy lifestyle with a smoke-free environment designation.
- Ohiovview Tower: Complete kitchen and bathroom renovations, new interior doors, site & common area improvements.
- General Braddock Tower: site & exterior improvements, accessible units and common areas improvements.
- West View Tower: Common area and UFAS Accessibility improvements.
- G.W. Carver Hall: Common area and UFAS Accessibility improvements.

The ACHA also completed the new construction of the \$1.6 million dollar Leed's compliant Deborah Booker Community Center at Park Sheldon in Natrona Heights.

I look forward to the completion of the revitalization of Prospect Terrace in 2012.

Congratulations to the Housing Choice Voucher Program Department for achieving a "High Performer" score once again.


Hopefully, the ACHA Team can maintain our high standards of service to meet the challenges we will face in 2012.

Frank Aggazio

(community center continued) Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced in July 2011 that Allegheny County Economic Development will get \$14.9 million in CDBG money this year, down from \$17.9 million last year.


The capital budget operating subsidy will be trimmed by around \$1.4 million, because HUD cut improvement grants from \$5.2 million to \$3.8 million. ACHA's operating budget for 2012 is \$11.3 million where HUD recaptures \$748,124 from ACHA reserves. This amounts to approximately \$3.5 million less than 2010 funding.

In the big picture, it costs \$4.9 billion to operate the nation's public housing communities, including administration and routine maintenance. The HUD budget will only cover \$3.9 billion and housing authorities will be forced to cover the shortfall from their savings. Authorities with more savings would see bigger cuts in their allocation from Washington. Agencies akin to the Allegheny County Housing Authority who managed their funding responsibly will see their funding cut to a greater extent than will those with little or no money in the bank. Taking dollars from housing authorities who have been good stewards of federal funds puts housing authorities in a very difficult situation to choose between important long-term maintenance issues.

In difficult financial times we have to tighten our belts and seek innovative and creative solutions. 

ACHA RECEIVES PAHRA AWARDS AT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On September 15, 2011, the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA) held its annual awards dinner and banquet at the Omni Bedford Springs Resort located in Bedford, Pennsylvania. Through a concentrated team effort with the construction and design process, Fraser Hall Apartments received the highest PAHRA award, the Bellamy Award for Housing Authorities within the Commonwealth. Since the inception of the PAHRA awards, this is the fourth Bellamy award the ACHA has received from the Awards Committee.

In the Awards Presentation, the ACHA received 2 Awards of Merit for the Deborah Booker Community Center and Marketing on a Budget, which shows Housing Authorities how to market their agencies/developments through the use of television, radio, and websites on limited funds. The ACHA presented these techniques at the PHARA showcase. The Awards of Merit for innovative programming recognize some of the best ACHA work among housing industry peers. The Deborah Booker Community Center is the site where the At-Risk Youth programs are being held to provide children an opportunity to develop into better students and, potentially, community leaders. The Resident Services Department has been a leader in the housing industry through the use of various marketing tools, which help publicize ACHA developments. ACHA continues to receive the most PAHRA awards of any Housing Authority in the Commonwealth. 



10th ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

On June 25, 2011, the ACHA hosted the 10th Annual ACHA Golf Classic at Fox Chapel Golf Course in Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania. One hundred-twenty golfers enjoyed a beautiful day on the links to help raise construction funds for The First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge. Despite a change in venue and a slight decrease in the number of participants, the event raised nearly \$16,000.

The First Tee curriculum focuses on using golf as a learning vehicle to teach children Nine Core Life Skill Values. The event dinner featured youths of The First Tee Program and stories of how the program has impacted their lives. Marc Field, The First Tee of Pittsburgh's Executive Director, was also in attendance and spoke about the accomplishments of the program.


By securing additional funding from Allegheny County Economic Development and The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, construction on the much anticipated First Tee Clubhouse is expected to begin in 2012. This building will bring the entire program to one central location that will benefit all of the participants.

The ACHA would like to thank everyone involved in the event from sponsors to the volunteers. We look forward to seeing you on June 4, 2012 for the First Tee of Pittsburgh at Pleasant Ridge Golf Classic at Sewickley Heights Golf Club.



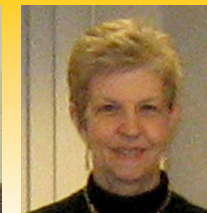
Marc Fields with youths of the First Tee of Pittsburgh

HONORING ACHA RETIREES

Hats off in honor of recently retired ACHA employees: Alice Mioduski, property Manager of Homestead Apartments and Bridget Wyzkiewicz, HCVP Housing Counselor. Your many years of service and making a difference are truly appreciated. You will be missed! 



Alice M. - Dec. 2011



Bridget W. - Jan. 2012

ACHA EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH 2011

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

- JAN TJ Klisavage
- FEB Eli McCary
- MAR HCVP Department
- APR Alice Mioduski
- MAY Tanya Brown/Hope Vasy
- JUN Christopher Paiano & John Kearney
- JUL Vincent DiCenzo
- SEP Ken Heinecke
- OCT Maureen Cassley
- NOV Tim Prael
- DEC Ed Coyne

ACHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012



ACHA Board of Directors (left tot right) Vera Kelly - Asst. Secretary/Treasurer; Evelyn Benzo - Secretary; Deborah Booker - Vice Chairperson; Derek Uber - Chairperson; Paul D'Alessandro - Treasurer

THANK YOU!

A CHRISTMAS SEASON TO REMEMBER

Regardless of titles, roles or responsibilities, when the Marine's Toys for Tots called to say that the toys were ready for pickup, Allegheny County Housing Authority's Pleasant Ridge Staff went into action. This day was about getting toys, food, and other gifts for the children not only in Pleasant Ridge; but also other ACHA family communities as well.

Pleasant Ridge, a mixed-finance community of Allegheny County Housing Authority, celebrated its third Annual Christmas Event by sponsoring "Lunch with Santa" on December 17, 2011. Over 100 children had an early celebration with their parents and Santa.

Parents were not permitted in Santa's toy room. Children were escorted by Santa's Elves into the toy room to select age appropriate toys for themselves. The rule of "... let children chose for themselves" has been honored by parents since the toy initiative was developed over ten years ago by Mr. Brown. There is an exception for children 2 years and younger. Parents are allowed to escort them around Santa's toy room and assist with the toy selection; but, not the final decision.

This year's celebration was co-coordinated with Ms. Chris Waugh. Ms. Waugh had a vision to see children having lunch while visiting with Santa in his shop. Ms. Waugh brought the idea to Mr. Brown who embraced it as an excellent opportunity to provide wider services to children in the community. Ms. Terri Hinkofer was also very excited about the coming event.



Thus, on Saturday, December 17, 2011, not only did the children's and parents' dream come true; but, Ms. Waugh's vision of a Christmas Miracle also happened. The team output benefited the Pleasant Ridge Community and the other ACHA family sites.

We would like to thank the following people for making Christmas a success: Mary Ayres and Rick Jones, TJ and his helpers, Diana Kennington, Terri Hinkofer, Barbra Baulding, Jim Bulls, Sean Gibson, Toys for Tots for all the toys, J&S Handyman for the donation to the party, Olive Garden for the pasta and sauce. And, a special thanks to Mr. Charles Brown for his hard work in paving the way for the event. 🏠



MILLVUE ACRES HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Millvue Acres Residents were invited to come to a Holiday Celebration that was held in the Community Room at Millvue Acres on December 23, 2011. The celebration was hosted by the staff at Millvue Acres. Both adults and children attended the celebration. Our own ACHA plasterer, Art Potts (better known as Santa), was there to take pictures with the children. The children also received a toy. The adults received a raffle ticket as they entered, and had a chance to win gift cards from several restaurants and stores. Pizza and refreshments were provided. We received some great feedback from residents who participated, and a merry time was had by all who attended! 🏠



FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM HELPS MOTHER AND CHILDREN MOVE OUT OF PUBLIC HOUSING

McKees Rocks, Pa – Juanita Collins enrolled in The Family Self-Sufficiency Program October 6, 2006. Now she and her two (2) children are homeowners with a thriving entrepreneurship.

"It was hard and challenging," she admits. "There were some sacrifices she made for the sake of her family", she admits. However, Ms. Collins gained so much more.

Working as a Patient Representative at Allegheny General Hospital, Juanita Collins went to Kaplan University and earned an associate degree in business administration. At the same time, she worked on and completed all goals under the Family Self-Sufficiency Program with the direct guidance of Terri Hinkofer, Family Self-Sufficiency Case Manager at Pleasant Ridge in McKees Rocks, PA. With her newly acquired degree and knowledge, Ms. Collins opened a daycare center – Juanita's Collins Creative Kids Daycare at 917 Dohrman Street in McKees Rocks, Pa. 15136. The Center's office number is (412) 458-3952. She currently has six (6) children enrolled in the daycare program. The daycare's e-mail is: juanitacollinsdaycare.com.



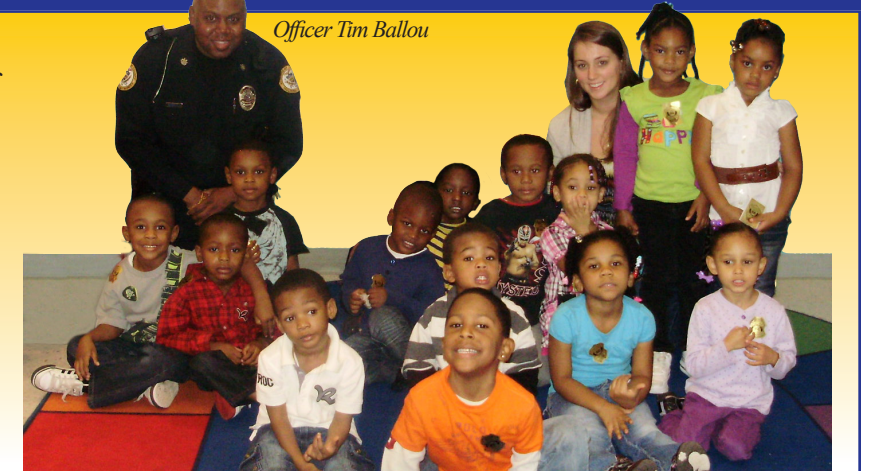
In conjunction with the above, Juanita participated in, and graduated from, Allegheny County Housing Authority's Homeownership Program. During this time she wisely saved money in her Escrow Account, associated with the FSS Program, and qualified to receive saved earnings of \$7,737.83. The money was used for a down payment on a home purchased in the Wingap Section of Pittsburgh.

Juanita Collins, stayed on course, held on to her pride and self-esteem, kept the dream alive, maintained the faith, and took advantage of resources leading to a better future. This is an example of what can happen for many who believe and are committed. 🏠

SERVING AND PROTECTING HAWKINS VILLAGE YOUTHS

ACHA police officer Tim Ballou Jr. spent an enjoyable afternoon with the children of Hawkins Village.

During Officer Ballou's visit, he spoke to the youth about the *Stranger Danger* program and a host of other safety and crime prevention topics. Officer Ballou also helped the children realize that he and all police are their friends and that they can always approach a police officer to help them with any concern that they may have. 🏠




ESSAY CONTEST - DEBORAH D. BOOKER COMMUNITY CENTER

“How Would You Change the World and Who Would You Choose to Help You?” was the theme of the Deborah D. Booker Community Center/Sheldon Park Teen Essay Contest. This contest was sponsored by a private individual who was grateful for a kind act by Pittsburgh Steeler, Ryan Clark. The Contest was made possible by the Allegheny Valley YMCA of Natrona Heights, who is contracted to provide programming at the Center. The 1000 word essay was judged on the writer’s creativity, imagination, and subject matter. The grand prize was four tickets to the Pittsburgh Steeler/Arizona Cardinals Game in Phoenix, Arizona for four, plus roundtrip airfare, hotel accommodations, a Wal-mart gift card, and a \$500.00 Green Dot Card.

There were six entrants into the contest. Each contestant was awarded a prize at the ceremonies held at the Community Center on October 12th. The winning contestant, a 15 year old sophomore at Highlands High School with plans to attend college, was thrilled to hear her name announced. In her winning essay, she wrote that she would teach young people and adults about the importance of education. To help her, she would solicit the assistance of her father and First Lady Michelle Obama. Our winner chose her dad, as in her words, “he has a way with words” and has educated her and her siblings on the dangers of drugs. Mrs. Obama was chosen because people respect her, and would want to get involved in this effort.

Upon her return from the trip, the Community Center staff arranged a gathering for our essay winner to share stories of the trip and game. At the football game that was won by the Steelers, she and her family sat in seats reserved for player’s families. They waved their Terrible Towels and cheered in seats next to the families of Steelers’ Brett Keisel and Troy Polamalu.

The essay contest benefactor has announced their intentions to run the contest again next year. 




Contestants of the Essay Contest

ACHA BOARD MEMBER DONATES SOUND SYSTEM


ACHA’s Board of Directors, Vice-Chairperson, Deborah Booker, recently donated \$2,600.00 to the Deborah Booker Community Center for the purchase of a new sound system.

The Center was named after Deborah Booker at the Grand Opening ceremony held on December 21, 2010.

The new sound system will be used to service events and functions held within the gymnasium of the Community Center. Many thanks and much appreciation to Deborah Booker for her generous donation! 

“TREEVITALIZING” ACHA COMMUNITIES

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy donated trees to the Allegheny County Housing Authority under the joint “TreeVitalize” project to improve quality of life and the environment. ACHA employees, residents, and neighbors volunteered for the planting effort guided by The Western PA Conservancy. All trees and necessary planting tools and materials were provided by the Conservancy.

Forty (40) new trees were planted at the Groveton Village community (Coraopolis) on April 14, 2011 and thirty (30) new trees were planted at the Park Sheldon community (Natrona Heights) on October 27, 2011. Many thanks to the Conservancy and all who participated in the undertaking! To learn more about the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the TreeVitalize project, please visit paconserve.org. 




ACHA Executive Director, Frank Aggazio, is geared up and ready for tree planting action.

ACHA ACQUIRES NEW PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS

The winter of 2011 has seen the ACHA purchase units in two communities to help grow the inventory of public housing units within Allegheny County. As waiting lists continue to grow in a stagnant economy, the ACHA, through its Capital Fund - Replacement Housing Factor Fund program, acquired 47 units to assist more low-income families and seniors throughout Allegheny County.

In seeking to assist the senior residents of Allegheny County, the ACHA purchased 40 units in Harrison Township, Pennsylvania. Pine Ridge Heights Apartments, an existing low-income housing tax credit development that opened in 2001, is a 40 unit senior development that will serve the northern area community seniors of Allegheny County. As public housing units, the residents will see a direct benefit of rental assistance that will help them with their rent and utility expenses. The ACHA has assumed all management and maintenance operations of the building. Since the building was occupied, the residents that live at Pine Ridge had the option of completing the public housing resident application to qualify for the building.

The other development that ACHA acquired 7 units is known as Twin Oaks. Twin Oaks is located in Moon Township, Pennsylvania and is a condominium development that Three Rivers Communities, Inc, had acquired and Glenshaw Gardens, Inc. managed until the recent transaction. The development is very near the heart of the Moon Township Central Business District and presents excellent employment opportunities to any new residents that would be living in the community. As an existing community, all residents living at Twin Oaks were given the option of qualifying for the public housing program allowing for them to continue residing in the community. If any resident did not qualify for the public housing program, the ACHA assisted them with the relocation process in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act. 



Pine Ridge Heights



The Meadows at Forest Glen

RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD 2012



RAB (left to right) Bev Moore (ACHA), Bonita Hayden, Jim Bulls (ACHA), Gloria Ford, William Weinell, Connie Vercillo, Elizabeth Roberts, Jim Carnahan, Lillie Lewis, Hanna Ross, Tanya Bennett, Frank Aggazio (ACHA)



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GOLF CLASSIC XI

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Cocktails, Dinner, Prizes,
Auctions, and Raffle



THE FIRST TEE GOLF CLASSIC XI
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