

# The PHA Experience

Issue 44

A Community Newspaper For and About Residents

December 2019

## First Units at Blumberg 83 Now Open

Construction crews have completed the first units at PHA's Blumberg 83 development near 23rd & Jefferson Streets. The development represents the latest phase of the Sharswood Transformation Plan that contains energy efficient modular units. Seven units are located on Jefferson Street while another 13 are around the block on 23rd Street.

"These new homes are attractive, energy efficient, and cost effective. They are built in a quality controlled environment before shipment here, ensuring that precise specifications are met," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. "PHA wants the very finest product possible as we work to transform Sharswood into a neighborhood of choice."

Blumberg 83 features sustainable design elements guided by two green rating programs; Enterprise Green Communities and Energy Star Certified Homes. The modular manufacturing process significantly reduces the amount of construction waste and energy use.

The development consists of 83 new rental units spread across a mix of townhomes and multi-unit

walk-up buildings. They are part of PHA's Blumberg/Sharswood Transformation Plan and a key component of the Choice Neighborhood Initiative planning grant awarded by HUD in 2013.

Units range in size from 616 square feet to 1,641 square feet, with the average unit size 1,167 square feet. Residents of the development will have access to a community center, landscaped green space, and PHA management office.

Blumberg 83 exceeds federal, state, and local accessibility requirements. There will be 10 accessible units and 3 units for the hearing/visually impaired. All townhomes and ground floor units in the walkup buildings will meet 'VisitAbility' requirements.

The long term financial support of these new units is assured under the U-S Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD). As part of RAD, each unit in the development will have a secure 20-year Project Based Voucher (PBV) Housing Assistance Payment contract.



*PHA celebrated the grand opening of the Blumberg 83, reflecting the number of factory-built homes on the site near 23rd & Jefferson Streets. The modular manufacturing process significantly reduces the amount of construction waste and energy use. The new rental units consist of a mix of townhomes and multi-unit walk-up buildings and represent the latest phase of the Sharswood Transformation Plan.*

## Board Votes for Total Rehab of Harrison Plaza High Rise

Harrison Plaza's high rise, located at one of PHA's oldest developments in North Philadelphia, will have a new look in two years. The housing authority's board of commissioners approved the renovation of the building, inside and out, at a cost of approximately \$39 million. The high rise will become a senior residence upon the completion of the project.

The development dates back to the mid-1950's and the high rise has mechanical and structural issues. Scaffolding surrounds the building at present to protect residents and visitors from falling objects. PHA determined that a rehab of the entire building is more cost effective than a patchwork job. Experience has shown that high rise buildings work well as housing for seniors, but not for families.

The remodeled high rise will have central air conditioning and heating, new floors, new appliances, with the rehabilitation to LEED standards though the building will not be LEED certified. The new senior

residence will become more energy efficient with window replacement, new roofing, new mechanical equipment, new plumbing, and new electrical systems.

Planning for the makeover has been two years in the making. The rehab will completely change the look of the high rise and add value to the neighborhood. The neighborhood is attracting private investment. A recent Pew Charitable Trusts study on the State of the City showed that Harrison Plaza's zip code is one of several where median home sale prices rose more than 75 percent, the highest in the city.

PHA plans on converting the subsidy for the high rise to project based vouchers through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. This will insure stable, long term funding for the building. The construction contracts and the conversion to RAD are subject to approval by the U-S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). So is the relocation of residents who now live in the high rise.



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## PHA Is Leading the Way

At PHA, we are dedicated to opening doors to opportunities. The Vaux Community Building, a HUD designated EnVision Center with services for the entire Sharswood

community, is now operating at full scale.

The rehab and re-occupancy of the building shows that PHA is keeping promises made to the community in the Sharswood Transformation Plan by offering high quality services, including dental and health care, job training, and financial self-sufficiency counseling that will transform peoples' lives.

HUD Ben Secretary Carson believes that a housing program should include services that help families become self-sufficient and prosperous. So, PHA seized the opportunity offered by the EnVision Center designation and now offers a wide range of

those types of services. We are showing other agencies across the country what's possible when you dare to dream and follow up on that vision energetically.

PHA's Workforce Development Center is now located in the Vaux Community Building and serves PHA and community residents looking for job training, job placement, educational advancement, and/or homeownership opportunities. The Center also hosts a Section 3 Resource Office and PHA's Section 3 Job Bank for job placement opportunities to low and very low income residents.

In addition to the Workforce Development Center, current partners at the building include the Temple University School of Nursing and its School of Dentistry, and Clarifi-COMPASS for PHA's Family Self-Sufficiency program, housing counseling, and financial literacy.

Adding to the menu, the Electrical Association of Philadelphia offers their Electrical training program at the site.

PowerCORSPHL, an AmeriCorps Governor & Mayor Initiative, in partnership with EducationWorks and the Philadelphia Youth Network, has opened their second location at this site.

PHA's investment in this location is significant, but it's worth it because we're dedicated to helping you and your families get ahead.

KELVIN A. JEREMIAH  
President & CEO

## PowerCorpsPHL Begins Operations at Vaux Community Building

PowerCorpsPHL, one of PHA's workforce development partners, has begun training its first class of young people at the Vaux Community Building and at work sites across the city for green, sustainable jobs.

The nonprofit group, a City of Philadelphia AmeriCorps initiative, powered by EducationWorks, engages young adults and returning citizens to advance their lives through service. The program has three goals: support the City's workforce development, sustainability, and youth violence prevention priorities.

Julia Hillengas, Executive Director of PowerCorpsPHL, says acceptance into the program is competitive.

"Over 650 people applied to PowerCorpsPHL's Fall 2019 cohort," she said. "150 completed the interview process and 100 were invited to the final selection phase for 50 slots. We were able to find some additional resources and enrolled 58 people total. 30% are women, 70% are men. 95% African American, 4% Latino, 1% white."

Candidates who make the cut take the AmeriCorps pledge, and begin their Foundations service term with their crew. Each crew chooses a name for itself and a chant that speaks to the crew's hopes for the cohort and their aspirations beyond it. At the end of the Foundations phase, corps members choose

specific tracks that align with their career interests.

"At PowerCorpsPHL, we believe that what makes a successful employee is tied to the health and success of the person as a whole," said Hillengas. "When we convene employers and ask for feedback, their most pressing talent needs are people with the essential skills, often called "soft" skills, of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability used together to get a job done."

She adds that essential skills are transferable to other career fields, often have been learned and practiced in many different and informal settings, and can also be used in one's personal life to enrich one's role as a parent, partner, neighbor, and citizen.

Most corps members stay between 12 and 18 months. In the Career Training phase, corps members can pursue training in Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Urban Forestry, Solar & Electrical, or Youth Work. They also have the option to pursue an individually tailored fellowship in an area beyond those careers like urban farming, community outreach, or culinary.

PowerCorpsPHL develops training programs to meet industry needs and open up employment opportunities to graduates.



Two PowerCorpsPHL members plant a tree as part of a reforestation project at the Philadelphia Horticultural Center in Fairmount Park. PowerCorpsPHL has begun training its first class of young people at the Vaux Community Building and at work sites across the city for green, sustainable jobs.

## PHA To Sell Part of, Redevelop Rest of West Park Apartments Site

PHA is selling a portion of one of the agency's older sites with plans to use the sales proceeds toward rebuilding the remaining part of the site. The West Park Apartments, built in 1964, sit on a nearly 12-acre, increasingly valuable parcel on the perimeter of University City.

"Because we have open space on the site we will be able to replace every one of the outdated and deteriorating high-rise apartments with modern homes that we believe our residents will be proud of and that will enhance the entire neighborhood," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "We think taking advantage of the property's rising value to help meet our need for affordable housing is an ideal solution."

There are currently three buildings on site with a total of 327 apartments. Making the necessary electrical, plumbing, HVAC, elevator, masonry and other repairs would cost upwards of \$50 million. Those repairs would make the buildings serviceable but would not bring them up to modern standards. In addition, in keeping with older style public housing, the site is separated from the surrounding

neighborhood, with only one vehicle entrance onto the property.

Under PHA's redevelopment plan one high-rise will remain standing and be completely rehabilitated as senior housing. The other two towers will be sold and replaced on another section of the property by an equal number of townhomes and stacked apartments (flats). The land being sold – covering an area between 44th and 45th Streets just north of Market Street - covers the eastern third of the property.

Andrea Foster, who has been the site's resident council president since 1987, said she and most residents support the plan. "The buildings are deteriorating and the money they would have to sink into these buildings could be used to build new homes," she said. "There will be some inconvenience for families having to move and then return but it will be worth the trouble to come back to new homes."

As PHA has done at other rebuilt sites, the agency would reconnect the site to the city's street grid so that it would no longer be isolated.

PHA has hired CBRE, a commercial



real estate services and investment firm and CVA Commercial Group, to market the property. The company's sales materials note that the site's neighbors include the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University, suggesting potential uses such as student housing, athletic dormitories, multi-family apartments and senior housing.

"It is excellent that PHA is tapping into the energy of the

very hot University City and West Philadelphia real estate market for the benefit of West Park residents," said City Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell, in whose district the property falls. "Congratulations to Kelvin Jeremiah and the PHA staff for devising an innovative plan to transform the property."

The property is located in a Qualified Opportunity Zone, a designation that includes tax

incentives to encourage long-term investments in low-income communities.

"You don't often get a chance to design a deal that works so well for all concerned," the PHA's Jeremiah said. "We have found a way in this proposal to serve the needs of residents of public housing and the broader community at the same time."

## PHA Takes Major Step In Sharswood Renewal

The PHA board has okayed an application to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for an additional \$30 million in funding for the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) in the Sharswood community. If the application is successful, PHA would receive what is known as an "implementation grant."

"PHA has already invested in excess of \$190 million in a variety of initiatives in Sharswood which are planned or under way," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. "We believe that we have demonstrated substantial progress and great creativity in carrying out the Sharswood Transformation Plan. So, we hope that HUD will smile on our efforts and give us substantial leverage as we move toward our long term goals."

PHA has already completed 151 units in the neighborhood with tax credit funding, its own money, and other sources. Construction of 83 modular units is currently under way as part the Sharswood Transformation Plan which calls for a total of 1,200 units, plus the redevelopment of the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor. The housing authority received a CNI planning grant in late 2013 for neighborhood renewal, but that \$500,000 only covers "soft costs" and not construction.

If HUD awards PHA with an implementation grant, it would improve the authority's ability to compete for tax credit (private investment) money, a key ingredient in the funding mix for affordable housing across the city. An award would also make more funding available

for the "neighborhood" and "people" components of the Transformation Plan.

Of the \$30 million, 21 million would go toward development of affordable housing units. \$4 million would go toward neighborhood improvements such as place making and public art along Ridge Avenue, the shopping center just north of PHA headquarters, and rehabilitation of housing for non-PHA residents to help them stay in the community for years to come. Another \$4 million would fund services and programs for community residents, such as case management for returning residents and new or expanded programs to help them.

HUD is expected to make a decision on PHA's application in spring of 2020.



# Women Against Abuse Honor PHA President/CEO

Women Against Abuse has recognized PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah with its Patricia Fox Trailblazer Award. The award honors champions and advocates who exemplify leadership and commitment in the struggle to end domestic violence.

Mr. Jeremiah was cited for his commitment to ensuring that all survivors can access safe housing during their escape from abuse. Women Against Abuse called this “truly life-changing work.”

“I am humbled and honored to receive this prestigious award,” he said. “At PHA, we truly believe that everyone has the right to feel safe in their homes. We have an ongoing, collaborative relationship with Women Against Abuse.”

PHA works with the group to coordinate supportive services

for residents in need. The agency requires all property managers and staff to take domestic violence training, working with the group to make a resident’s transition to a safe unit quickly. The training prepares staff to address residents’ needs, with sensitivity and understanding, while maintaining their confidential/sensitive personal information, especially in cases where the perpetrator is in the household.

Women Against Abuse has an ongoing iPledge Campaign to inform city residents about ways they can impact attitudes on domestic abuse and preventing it. Their 2019 Campaign – “Safety for ALL Survivors” – emphasizes the importance of creating safe housing for survivors of all gender identities and sexual orientations.

“Women Against Abuse is pleased to be a resource for any person experiencing intimate partner violence, regardless of how they identify,” said Jeannine L. Lisitski, Ph.D., Executive Director & President of Women Against Abuse. “Our 2019 iPledge Campaign will let the community know that we serve women, men and members of the LGBTQ+ community, because everyone has a right to live in safety.”

PHA and Women Against Abuse meet regularly to discuss concerns about domestic violence issues in housing. Women Against Abuse, Inc., serves nearly 12,500 individuals in Philadelphia each year through emergency housing, legal services, hotline counseling, education and advocacy.



PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah addresses the crowd at the annual iPledge Campaign led by Women Against Abuse.

# Norris Phase II Honored with Three Awards

The new Norris Apartments Phase II in the city’s North-Central neighborhood has been recognized for excellence several times over this fall.

“PHA’s work in this neighborhood is critical to the preservation of affordable housing as the community becomes attractive to private investors,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. “Getting recognition from your peers demonstrates the excellence of this development. Competition for these awards is stiff.”

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, the leading statewide and regional voice for creating great places to live and work, honored PHA’s Norris Phase II development as one that enhances livability and community resiliency.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) presented the development with an Award of Merit. An award for Outstanding Achievement was conferred by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council of NAHRO (MARC-NAHRO).

The Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA)

recognized PHA’s work in the community with an award for Housing Operations.

The Norris Apartments Phase II represent the second of five phases of the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation grant awarded to the City of Philadelphia and PHA by HUD in 2014.

The neighborhood is currently experiencing a major transformation as a result of the private rehabilitation of many units, the development of several new rental and homeownership projects, coupled with many others improvements across the community, as well as its close proximity to Temple University.

This modern, attractive development consists of 89 units scattered on 8 city blocks. This phase partially replaces an existing 147-unit low-rise development that dates back to late 1959 and early 1960 which has become obsolete.

Norris Apartments Phase II features a variety of building types and lot configurations. Infilling the “missing teeth” of the once continuous street façades of the early 20th century, these new homes have revitalized vacant land and repopulated a once thriving working class community.



The homes at Norris Apartments Phase II revitalized vacant land and repopulated a once thriving working class community. The development complements ongoing private housing and commercial development in the neighborhood.

# Partnership Adds More Affordable Units in NW Philadelphia

A partnership between PHA and NewCourtland Senior Services has resulted in 75 affordable housing units for seniors in the East Falls neighborhood.

The housing authority joined NewCourtland Senior Services and city and state leaders for the grand opening of InnovAge's Pennsylvania LIFE - Henry Avenue Center and NewCourtland's Apartments at Henry Avenue in early October.

"PHA is grateful for partners such as NewCourtland as we work together to answer the growing demand for affordable housing," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. "We'll be investing \$294,000 on an annual basis to these first 49 units and another \$216,000 for 36 units in the second phase of this

wonderful development."

NewCourtland's Apartments at Henry Avenue is a multi-phase project. The Terrace Building, which is now open, includes 49 newly-built, affordable one-bedroom and efficiency apartments designed for seniors age 62 and older. The Pavilion Building, slated to open by the end of 2019, will add another 36 units.

The development at 3232 Henry Avenue is sustainable, following Enterprise Green Communities standards. It is located at the former site of the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute (EPI). InnovAge's Henry Avenue LIFE center is the first of two new centers that were agreed to as part of InnovAge's acquisition of the LIFE

program in 2018.

Known nationally as the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, LIFE is an alternative to nursing facilities designed to keep older adults independent and living at home for as long as safely possible. LIFE provides comprehensive, coordinated care led by clinicians and includes primary care, dental and vision care, in-home care, specialty care coordination, transportation, and social engagement.

The new InnovAge LIFE center has the capacity to serve 350 participants annually. The center has multiple day rooms, a large physical therapy area, a primary care clinic with five exam rooms, a dental suite, and a warm, inviting dining room.

# Remake of Reynolds School to Begin Shortly



Rehabilitation of the Reynolds school, part of the Sharswood Transformation Plan, will begin next February with a boost from the Environmental Protection Agency to pay for the removal of hazardous substances in the building. PHA's Senior Executive VP and Chief Development and Operating Officer Lopa Kolluri (2nd from left) attended the grant ceremony.

The newest phase of the Sharswood Transformation Plan will begin next February as the rehabilitation of the historic General John Reynolds school gets under way. The school, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, will eventually contain 55 affordable housing units for veterans and seniors. The rehab of the site received a boost from the Environmental Protection Agency in late October with grant to the City of Philadelphia to pay for the removal of asbestos, lead paint, and an oil tank located in the building.

"Just look around you. This is a community on the rise!" said Lopa Kolluri, PHA's Senior Executive VP and Chief Development and Operating Officer, in remarks at the grant ceremony for the school. "We are thankful for HELP USA and all of our partners for being here today. Much can be accomplished if we continue to work together?"

The Reynolds school at 24th and Jefferson closed in 2013 and PHA acquired it from the School District of Philadelphia the following year. The housing authority will subsidize 49 of the 55 apartment units in the remodeled building for a 20 year period worth an estimated \$12 million. PHA is leasing the building for 99 years to HELP USA, a Brooklyn based organization recognized as a national leader in the fight against homelessness, and providing \$1.5 million in capital funding. The actual cost of the rehab itself is estimated at \$20 million with building expected to open in June 2021.

HELP USA has previously partnered with PHA to transform the old Spring Garden school into veterans housing, now known as the Lural Lee Blevins Veterans Center at HELP Philadelphia V, last leg of development at Richard Allen Homes.



NewCourtland's Apartments at Henry Avenue will have 75 affordable senior housing units, as well as InnovAge's Pennsylvania LIFE - Henry Avenue Center. PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah spoke at the grand opening ceremony in early October.

## Two PHA Developments Are Golden

Nellie Reynolds Gardens and Queen Lane Apartments have won Gold awards from the Pennsylvania Apartment Association in its “Best in Apartment Living Awards.”

The competition, which includes many private management companies, is stiff.

PHA entries in this contest averaged scores of between 94 and 95 percent, but the bar for winning is higher.

Nellie Reynolds scored 105 percent while Queen Lane scored 97 percent. Entries contest were judged by team members from Market

Viewpoint, a market research firm based in Chester County.

The firm serves varied and diverse industries concerned with customer satisfaction, including real estate, apartments, new homes and senior housing.



## Bartram Choice Neighborhoods Plan Taking Shape

Following 18 months of work and 30+ meetings and special events, the Bartram Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) plan is at last taking shape.

The plan calls for 544 new units of healthy, affordable housing to be blended on-site at Bartram Village with gardens and green spaces that extend the beauty of Bartram’s Gardens next door. The site design emphasizes pedestrian movement, connections to open space, Bartram’s Garden and the riverside trail, and opportunities for social interaction and enrichment.

The proposed redesign of Bartram Village aims to lessen stress and anxiety through the healing power of nature and encouraging physical activity and social interaction. The plan’s stated aim is to create an environment that fosters the health and wellness of all residents, through healthy and affordable housing, access to medical services and nutritious food, and to spaces that heal the mind and body.

The draft also calls for creating an inviting community that is clean, green, and safe with beautiful, active public spaces. Current street conditions, limited

rail crossings, and safety concerns isolate Bartram Village residents and those who live in the surrounding Kingsessing neighborhood. Just how these improvements are made remains to be seen.

Another focus is the establishment of a local “employment eco-system” to increase the job skills of neighborhood residents. More skills and higher paying jobs will stabilize conditions in Kingsessing and help residents remain in homes.

The plan acknowledges that not everyone follows the same path in life. It is important to for there to be multiple avenues to self-sufficiency—from meaningful job opportunities, to college, to entrepreneurship, and homeownership to build wealth. It also calls for strengthening the neighborhood’s commercial corridors and identity through construction, green infrastructure, small businesses and childcare.

The timeline for a finalized Bartram CNI plan calls for it to be ready this winter.



*The Bartram CNI plan calls for over 600 new units of affordable housing to be blended on-site at Bartram Village with gardens and green spaces that extend the beauty of Bartram’s Gardens next door.*

## BOARD RESOLUTION UPDATES

### May 2019

**Resolution 12043** – established the schedule for the regularly-scheduled public meetings of the PHA Board of Commissioners through May of 2020, as required under the amended By-Laws of the Board.

**Resolution 12044** – authorized PHA to contract with Wyatt Elevator Company and Brandywine Elevator Company for elevator maintenance and repair services in an aggregate amount not to exceed five million seventy-three thousand dollars (\$5,073,000.00).

**Resolution 12045** – authorized PHA to contract with Townes Mechanical Contractors, Inc.; Vellniece Construction LLC; DKJ Construction, Inc.; W & W Contractors, Inc.; Torrado Construction Co., Inc.; Milestone Construction Mgmt, Inc.; and CPR Plumbing, Inc. for maintenance-related services for small general contractors in an aggregate amount not to ten million dollars (\$10,000,000.00).

**Resolution 1204** – authorized PHA to contract to contract with Dilworth Paxson, LLP; Clark Hill, PLC; and Ahmad Zaffarese, LLC for non-litigation legal services in an aggregate amount not to exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000.00).

**Resolution 12047** – authorized PHA's closing on a Rental Assistance Demonstration ("RAD") Transfer of Assistance for thirty-seven (37) public housing units, a loan of two million four hundred thousand dollars (\$2,400,000.00) and

authorization to convey five (5) vacant lots to the limited partnership entity that will own the Susquehanna Square development.

**Resolution 12048** – approved submission of a RAD Program Application for Fairhill Apartments, a development of two hundred sixty-four (264) units located in two (2) towers and a series of low-rise buildings.

**Resolution 12049** – authorized PHA to contract with Independence Blue Cross and its subsidiaries for employee health and prescription insurance policies in a total aggregate amount not to exceed thirty-nine million dollars (\$39,000,000.00).

**Resolution 12050** – authorize PHA to contract with Symetra Life Insurance Company and its subsidiaries for employee group life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance, as well as executive long-term disability insurance, in an aggregate amount not to exceed six hundred twenty-seven thousand dollars (\$627,000.00).

### June 2019

**Resolution 12051** – to approved PHA's submission of the Moving to Work Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019 to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD")

**Resolution 12052** - authorized PHA modify the task order contract with Dale Corp. for scaffolding and fence protec-

tion at West Park and increase the contract amount by three hundred seventy-one thousand three hundred ninety-eight dollars (\$ 371,398.00).

**Resolution 12053** – authorized PHA to purchase an EVV-80KW Thermal Remediation Trailer Package from Sunbelt Rentals, Inc. for the treatment of bed bugs at various sites, for a purchase price of one hundred five thousand six hundred fifty-six dollars (\$105,656.00).

**Resolution 12054** – authorized PHA to execute a renewal collective Bargaining Agreement between PHA and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Philadelphia and Vicinity.

### July 2019

**Resolution 12055** - authorized PHA to modify a task order contract with Shoemaker/Synterra, A Joint Venture, for construction management services for Emergency Protection at Harrison Plaza by increasing the task order amount by ninety-one thousand one hundred eighty-two dollars (\$91,182.00)

**Resolution 12056** - allowed PHA to negotiate and finalize any and all documents necessary for PHA or its wholly-owned affiliate to acquire the 99.99% limited partnership and special limited partnership interests in the Tax Credit Partnership of Richard Allen Homes, with the other .01% already being held by a wholly-owned affiliate of PHA.

**Resolution 12057** - approved a Rental Assistance Demonstration ("RAD") application to convert the Norris L.P., Queen Lane L.P., Queen Lane Low-Rise Apartments, and/or Queens Row developments from public housing to Section 8 project based vouchers.

**Resolution 12058** - authorized submission of a disposition application or amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD") for the disposition of up to forty-two (42) properties.

### September 2019

**Resolution 12059** - authorized PHA to contract with Liberty Mutual Insurance Company for a maximum amount not to exceed twelve million fifty-four thousand seven hundred fifty-five dollars (\$12,054,755.00) for the policy period from October 15, 2019 to October 15, 2020, for a renewal of Workers' Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance coverage.

**Resolution 12060** - authorized PHA to contract with Creativescape, Inc.; ELT Ventures, Inc.; and Four Seasons Total Landscaping, Inc. for PHA Landscaping Services, in a total amount not to exceed eight hundred three thousand nine hundred eight-five dollars (\$803,985.00).

**Resolution 12061** - authorized PHA to contract with TN Ward Company, Dale Corporation, Perryman/Shoemaker J.V., and AP Construction/Synterra J.V. for

construction management services, in a total amount not to exceed four hundred fifty million dollars (\$450,000,000.00).

**Resolution 12062** - authorized certain actions by PHA to create thirty (30) new townhouse homeownership units as part of the North Central CNI Homeownership development ("Development"), pursuant to the CNI grant. The townhouse units will be built on a portion of the existing Norris Apartments site bound by Diamond, Marvne and North 11th Street along with fourteen (14) properties in the 1900 & 2000 blocks of North 81 Street.

**Resolution 12063** - authorized PHA to contract with Kom Ferry to provide actuarial consulting services for the pension fund, in an amount not to exceed four hundred thirty-seven thousand six hundred twenty-nine dollars (\$437,629.00).

**Resolution 12064** - authorized PHA to submit an application for funding to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, pursuant to the Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grant Program FY2019 Notice of Funding Availability that was published on August 5, 2019.

**Resolution 12065** – authorized PHA to contract with Duvernay + Brooks LLC, Baker Tilly Virchow Krause LLP, and AthanianRazak LLC for Development Initiative Consultant Services, in a total amount not to exceed five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000.00).



## 2019

### PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

#### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING CALENDAR

The third Thursday of every month at 3:00 pm

DEC 19 | JAN 16 | FEB 20 | MAR 19

All PHA board meetings are held at  
2013 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19121

## RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT



Raquel Rodriguez, a resident of Fairhill Apartments, was honored by the PHA Board as "Resident of the Month" in September for making her way towards economic mobility. She became employed as a Lab Monitor at the site in June 2019 and now works full time in the PHA Admissions Department. Ms. Rodriguez ultimate goal is to enter the Homeownership program and eventually purchase a home.

## CLARIFI HOMEOWNERSHIP WORKSHOP



PHA's Envision Center at the Vaux Community Building conducted a Homeownership Workshop in mid-September, familiarizing residents with the Workforce Development Center and other services available to them. Over 300 residents attended. Shown here: a representative of Clarifi, which helps residents toward self-sufficiency, talks with a resident about their services.

## SPELLING BEE



WINNER	SCHOOL	PLACE	GRADE
Savion Williams	Spring Garden	1st	7th and Up
Khaliah Murray	Bartram Village	1st	4-6
Kassidi Coleman	Abbottsford	1st	1-3
Leanard Johnson Jr.	Fairhill	2nd	7th and Up)
Brandon Walker	Bartarm Villiage	2nd	4-6
Heavenly Thomas	Fairhill	2nd	1-3
Nina Williams	Spring Garden	3rd	7th and Up
Imanie Tisdale	Richard Allen/Cambridge	3rd	4-6
Shawn Stinson Jr.	Fairhill	3rd	1-3

70 youth took part in the 5th Annual Spelling Bee for residents attending summer camps at PHA sites. The camps promote increased vocabulary and literacy skills during the "summer melt." Students competed in three categories: K-3, 4th to 6th grade, and 7th to 8th grade.

## BOOKBAG GIVEAWAY



PHA renewed its commitment to school age residents, thanks to the agency's 8th annual book bag giveaway. This celebration took place in two stages: at the John F. Street Community Center and at the Blackwell Community Center. PHA has provided a total of 1,500 book bags stuffed with school supplies to PHA residents.

## WILSON PARK SENIOR DAY



Radio personality Lady B (left) took part Wilson Park's Senior Day on August 1st. The Classix 107.9 FM star is show with PHA Deputy Police Chief Antoinette Eberhart and PHA Commissioner Ethel Wise.

## WORKFORCE TRAINING TOUR



During State Senator Sheriff Street's Resident Resource Fair, hosted by PHA's Vaux Community Center, PHA residents and their leaders heard about the advancing self-sufficiency programs that PHA and community residents can par-take in at the Vaux Community Center. Shown here: PHA President & CEO Kelvin Jeremiah addresses the attendees as Sen. Street (l) looks on.

## NORRIS SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD FESTIVAL



PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah joined the Norris Square Community Alliance (NSCA) for its annual neighborhood festival in October. The ribbon cutting celebrated the creation of 29 affordable units subsidized by PHA in a neighborhood where rents are rising. Also shown (l-r) NSCA property manager Yelitza Quinones, association founder Nayda Cintron, Dan Labrador of Lion Contracting, State Rep. Danilo Burgos, and NSCA property manager Jason Ortalaza.

## SENIOR MASQUERADE BALL



Ms. Deb Martin from Katie B Jackson won the best costume contest during the Senior Masquerade Ball at the John F. Street Community Center attended by 128 seniors.

# Grocery Access Program Under Way at 11 PHA Sites

Residents who live at or near eleven PHA sites are benefiting from a test program that removes transportation barriers to healthy food choices. The Grocery Access Program began in early September through a partnership between PHA, Lyft, and Uplift Solutions. The goal of the program is to assist North Philadelphia residents living in food deserts access fresh, healthy grocery options.

The Grocery Access Program, a part of Lyft City Works, provides transportation with a \$2.50 flat-rate fare on eight rides per month - or one round trip per week - to and from nearby grocery stores: ShopRite at 2800 Fox Street and Fresh Grocer at 1501 North Broad Street. The test program will run until February 29, 2020. Plans for extending the program are currently underway with a goal of reaching even more residents in the future.

“This initiative will connect families to healthy food options that they would otherwise not be able to access,” said Kelvin A. Jeremiah, President & CEO of the Philadelphia Housing Authority. “PHA is proud to collaborate with Lyft and Uplift to create healthier Philadelphia

communities one ride at a time.”

The test program will operate at 8 Diamonds, Bentley Hall, Blumberg Phase I / Sharswood Tower, Cecil B. Moore, College View, Herbert Arlene Homes, Johnson Homes, Nellie Reynolds Gardens, Parkview Apartments, Plymouth Hall, and Raymond Rosen.

“We are committed to empowering local organizations doing incredible work to make communities stronger, healthier, and more equitable,” said Andrew Woolf, Lyft Regional Director of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware.

“The Lyft Grocery Access Program directly aligns with our mission to provide sustainable access to fresh and healthy food, nutrition education, and healthcare to underserved communities in Philadelphia,” said Atif Bostic, Executive Director of Uplift Solutions.

For families facing food insecurity, transportation can be a major hurdle, with many lacking access to personal vehicles or accessible bus routes. According to Lyft’s Economic Impact Report, 68 percent of rides in Philadelphia start or end in low income communities.



*A resident of Nellie Reynolds Gardens speaks with staffers from Lyft at the kickoff for the Grocery Access Program. Lyft has launched the program in partnership with PHA and Uplift Solutions to assist North Philadelphia residents living in food deserts.*

## Keep Safe This Winter

Winter time can bring with it unique risks of fire that PHA residents need to keep in mind.

Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries. The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking. Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

Remember, PHA is smoke free. No smoking is allowed inside PHA developments.

Remember these important points:

- **Watch What You’re Cooking**  
Stay in the kitchen when cooking and turn off the heat if you do leave, even for a moment or two.
- **Be In A Condition to Cook**  
Avoid using the stove if you’re very sleepy. Don’t cook if you’ve consumed alcohol or if you are taking prescription drugs or mind altering medications.
- **Clean Your Cooking Surfaces**  
Clean stovetops regularly, removing oil, grease and food debris. Keep flammable items such as wooden spoons, pot holders, towels and paper towels clear of the stovetop.
- **Maintain Personal Safety**  
Don’t wear loose-fitting clothing around cooking surfaces, especially loose sleeves.

Winter can be a fun and festive time. The holidays are coming and it’s a time for family get-togethers and fun festivities. But the candles which smell so good can also cause serious fires. Candles should not be left lit if you leave the room.

Space heaters are used more in the cold weather. Sometimes people leave the space heaters on overnight or too close to flammable items.

Also, do not overload power strips or extension cords.

PHA wants everyone to enjoy the holidays and to be safe this winter.



*Cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries. The old Plymouth Hall was destroyed in 2004 by a three alarm fire, caused by unattended cooking.*

# Need Help Paying Your Energy Bills This Winter?

Enrollment in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) application process for the 2019-20 season is under way.

LIHEAP provides assistance for home heating bills so low-income Pennsylvanians can stay warm and safe during the winter months. Assistance is available for renters and homeowners. Applications for LIHEAP cash and crisis benefits begin November 1, 2019 and end April 10, 2020.

Applications for LIHEAP can be completed online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us) or through the MyCOMPASS PA mobile app. Paper applications are available through local county assistance offices. Philadelphia has 14 such offices with the primary location at 801 Market Street (phone 215-560-1583). Interested applicants can download and

print an application from the department's website (<http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/heatingassistanceliheap/>).

"As winter approaches and nights get colder, Pennsylvanians should know that LIHEAP is here for them if they need it. A warm, comfortable home is a safe and healthy home, and LIHEAP makes this possible for more than 328,000 Pennsylvanians," said PA Department of Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller.

During the 2018-19 LIHEAP season, 328,700 households statewide received \$90,879,764 million in LIHEAP cash benefits with an average benefit of \$276, which is paid directly to utility companies. In addition, 134,826 households statewide received \$53,353,453 million in LIHEAP crisis benefits with an average benefit of \$389.



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

"LIHEAP provides vital assistance to consumers across Pennsylvania and is an integral part of helping at-risk families," said Public Utility Commission Chairman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille. "Additionally, we encourage consumers to explore assistance services offered by our utilities."

The minimum cash benefit that can be received is \$200 and the maximum is \$1,000, and the minimum crisis benefit is \$25 and maximum is \$600. The income limit for the program is 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit.

# 70 PHA Residents Awarded College Scholarships

PhillySEEDS, Inc. honored 70 PHA residents seeking higher education with \$258,000 in scholarships at the authority's July board meeting.

PHA resident Amani Ball is going into her fourth year at the University of the Arts as a Dance major. She has won a \$5,000 scholarship for the fourth straight year.

"I just stayed focused and determined on my goals, making sure to keep my GPA high," she said. "The scholarships have helped tremendously. I don't have to take out as many loans as other students and I can look forward to starting my career as a performer without having that debt burden."

Another scholarship winner, Rasheeda Little-Herring, is entering her second and final year at Community College of Philadelphia with plans to work in behavioral health and human services.

"These funds are coming right on time to help me finish my education. I want to work with troubled youth and help them the same way someone helped me," she said.

The scholarships, given to both graduating high school seniors and students already in college, were handed out during the PHA Board of Commissioners meeting at PHA Headquarters in on Ridge Avenue.

Of the 70 college students receiving scholarships:

- 35 with GPAs between 3.30 and 4.00 received \$5,000.
- 24 with GPAs between 3.00 and 3.29 received \$3,000.
- 11 with GPAs between 2.50 and 2.99 received \$1,000.

"This event is so significant for us because we get to recognize the incredible work being done by PHA residents to uplift themselves and put themselves on a path to social and economic mobility. PHA is standing by them on their journeys," said PHA President & CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah.

A total of almost \$1.6 million has now been awarded to 413 residents since this program began in 2013. Money for the scholarships comes from PHA's operating budget and funds donated by program supporters and vendors.

A scholarship committee composed of PHA employees, student residents, and a resident leader reviewed the applications. The applicants' essays, community service, extracurricular activities, internships, recommendation letters, and academic transcripts were considered by the committee.

The scholarship recipients represent PHA developments around the City, as well as the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Scholarship applications for next year will be made available in spring 2020.

PhillySEEDS, Inc. is an award-winning, 501(c) (3), charitable, non-profit corporation founded by PHA to promote the social and economic advancement of PHA-assisted residents through philanthropic activities, community-based partnerships, and special initiatives.



PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah congratulates Philly SEEDS scholarship winner, Yuzza Henderson, who is enrolled at paralegal studies at Pierce College. The Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA) subsidiary honored 70 PHA residents seeking higher education with \$258,000 in scholarships.

# Mighty Writers' Honored by PHA Board

People attending PHA's October board meeting were treated to poetry and music, courtesy of two students from Mighty Writers (MW) Mantua Square location. Mighty Writers is a 10-year old, Philadelphia-based, year-round, free literacy program. The board recognized the accomplishments of young people enrolled in summer programming at Mighty Writers West and highlighted their final product.

London Winston presented the tune "We Are Mighty Writers" that led the crowd to burst into smiles while bopping with the group's new theme song.

Eriyannah East-Davis presented a poem based on her family's recent move to Mantua Square this past summer. She didn't know anyone and was nervous to start at a new school. Thanks to joining Mighty Writers this summer, she was able to meet other children in the complex and nearby neighborhood! Her poem reflects that experience.

The Mantua Square location has become one of the group's most successful sites. In addition, MW's North Philadelphia program has moved PHA's Vaux Community Building, serving Big Picture High School students now, with the rest of their programming serving people between ages 7 and 20 next year.

Germantown is Uptown  
Where I went to the playground,  
My head is spinning round and round  
Remembering the good times.  
I lived with Pop Pop when I was a baby  
He passed away and I miss him lately,  
The complex life was very nice  
Was there til I was 10  
Moved to Magnolia Street ----  
Lost my Grandmom, made a friend.  
Tears came down my eyes  
We have to move again?  
With so much moving around  
I felt like I was floating,  
But with the experience I've gained,  
I've learned to go with the motion.  
West Philly is my home now  
Got my feet back on the ground.



The PHA board recognized the accomplishments of young people enrolled in summer programming at Mighty Writers West, located at Mantua Square. Shown here are Makeeda Holley, VP of Resident Programs and Partnerships, Mighty Writers West Program Director Christina Rissell, and students London Winston and Eriyannah East-Davis, and PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah. The students presented a theme song and poetry at the October board meeting.

## SOAR Program Ends for Now

Project SOAR, the program that helped PHA residents to fill out financial aid forms for college and other educational opportunities, has ended after having modest success. September 30th was the last day of the program's operation and 200 students received help from two SOAR navigators over a two year period.

HUD awarded over \$300,000 to PHA to hire "education navigators" to help low-income youth and their families fill out the forms. Project SOAR (Students + Opportunities + Achievements = Results) program, was an experimental program that reflected the federal government's commitment to expand educational services to youth living in public housing. The program will included one-on-one academic advising, completing the student aid form, and help with completing college and scholarship applications.

The original goal of the program was pegged at 500 students, however, the location of some sites proved to be problematic. The U-S Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD) chose the site locations. If the program resumes, the housing authority's project navigators hope that they will have the option of choosing the service sites which they believe will produce more applicants.

PHA employed two full-time education navigators to work with public housing youth, ages 15-20 years old. The navigators devised strategies to address and prevent participants from dropping out of school while encouraging the goal of continuing their educations after high school. They promoted awareness and benefits of a college education and provided readiness and services to youth selected to take part in the program.

Based on data collected by PHA, the authority believes that at least 90% of its youth ages 15-20 are eligible for federal student aid based. The ultimate goal of the program is to break the generational dependency on the public welfare system through academic improvement and college access.



Robert Graves, one of the SOAR program navigators, speaks with a resident at Wilson Park. The test program officially ended on September 30th after a two year trial period.

# PHA Board Honors Spring Garden Principal

After the completion of another impressive academic year, the PHA Board of Commissioners presented the principal of Spring Garden School with Certificate of Recognition during their mid-summer meeting.

Laureal Robinson, who believes that it takes a village to run a school, told commissioners that she felt fortunate to be at the school and watch it grow. One-fourth of the students at Spring Garden reside at the Richard Allen Homes. She reported that reading, math, and science scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) test have once again increased.

For the 2018-19 school year, students at Spring Garden recorded a 23% increase in Tier One reading levels. Put another way, almost 78% of students at the school showed at least one year's growth in their reading level. Also, 50% of young students in grades K-2 are reading at grade level, and the number of kids who fell below their basic subject proficiency levels decreased by just over seven percent.

Robinson told commissioners that

she wants to add to the partnership that the school has had with PHA since 2015. PHA has supported the school with annual book bag and school supply drives, refreshments at parent meetings, and information sharing of community resources.

"We want to make sure that we have the rest of the community involved so that we're working cohesively," she said.

Susan Burt-Collins, the president of the school's "friends of" group, talked about the quality environment at Spring Garden that they intend to improve upon.

"Whatever we can do to support those parents, who are working so hard to do the best for their kids...this one's a really, it's a rich school. What we need to do is support them and give them more," she said.

Collins said the friends group's first big project is to build a playground and they're currently raising funds toward that goal. Robinson quipped that the playground is just one of a lot of exciting things taking place at Spring Garden School.



*PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah presented a Certificate of Recognition to Spring Garden School principal Laureal Robinson. The school educates many children from Richard Allen Homes and has recorded improved academic achievement for several years.*



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# STEM Event Encourages Kids to Dream, Then Act

Cadets and instructors from West Point visited the Blackwell Community Center on the morning before the Army-Navy game to encourage youngsters toward STEM careers by playing with some high tech toys. 20 kids from the Mill Creek neighborhood took part in the special event.

The kids were given tablets with drag and drop programming that allowed them to control ball-shaped robots on the center's basketball court. They had to think about angles and the related math to direct the robots movements. Cadets and instructors coached the kids as they worked on their laptops to maneuver the robots.

STEM stands for the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. Already, the U-S Department of Labor has reported that there are not enough qualified graduates to fill STEM related jobs now, much less in the future. The U-S needs to fill these positions in order to compete with the rest of the world.

The U-S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) partnered with 360 Cradle to Careers, a nonprofit based in Richmond, Virginia, to put on the event.

Faith Linton, a board member for the group, said they provide STEM engagements to public housing communities to make sure kids have awareness of what's out there and inspire them toward careers, jobs, and futures in those fields.

Former Army Captain Jerryl Bennett, the HUD Liaison for Federal Interagency STEM Initiatives, led the event. The former public housing resident from Texas, played quarterback for the military academy and, after service, went on to a successful career in real estate before joining HUD.

"This is an idea to expose them to what sort of skill sets they'll need, the soft skills and the hard skills," Bennett said. "I want kids to see that earlier, so that their conditions should not dictate their outcome."

West Point math professor Colonel Paul Goethals said the STEM initiative is also about making the field more diverse. West Point plans to hold STEM workshops for middle and high school students in late May and early June next year.

[http://bit.ly/WP\\_STEM\\_HighSchool](http://bit.ly/WP_STEM_HighSchool)  
[http://bit.ly/WP\\_STEM\\_MiddleSchool](http://bit.ly/WP_STEM_MiddleSchool)



Cadet Jordan Johnson, a junior at West Point, coaches two of the children who took part in a STEM event at the Blackwell Community Center sponsored by HUD and 360 Cradle to Careers. The event took place in the morning before the Army-Navy game.



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# “Fix IT” Program Brings Generations Together

Residents at three PHA senior developments became better acquainted with digital technology this summer, thanks to a pilot program run by the Urban Affairs Coalition (UAC) of Philadelphia.

The “Fix IT” program, shorthand for “Fix Information Technology,” shows seniors how to go online for services and access programs such as Facebook. A \$1,000 mini-grant from the “On the Table Philly” forum run by the Knight Foundation and the Philadelphia Foundation made the training sessions possible. The forum is designed to elevate civic conversation, foster new relationships, and create a unifying experience.

An “On the Table Philly” discussion at the Urban Affairs Coalition (UAC) office last October focused on how technology has disrupted and benefited social services. The “Fix IT” events connected local tech-savvy youth with older adults and senior citizens who are experiencing the digital divide at Gladys B. Jacobs, Wilson Park, and Lucien E. Blackwell. Participating youth learn STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and entrepreneurial skills.

“Beyond connecting seniors to the internet, which on its own is very important, by having kids provide the tech support, we are creating opportunities for inter-generational learning and impact,” said Tivoni Devor, Director of Growth and Engagement for UAC. “We hope this empowers the youth to realize that they

have opportunities to be leaders and help their community.”

Former PHA employee Marcus Kellam was really the key connector to make the “Fix IT” days a success. He is currently an assistant project manager at UAC and is a Boy Scout Troop Master. Kellam was able to connect UAC, PHA, and the Boy Scouts to really take “Fix IT” to the next level.

Devor notes that program is designed to teach youngsters about the value of community service. Using technology comes naturally to the younger generations.

“They might not realize how valuable that skill is, and to be able to share it with an older generation is very important to connect seniors to services and their families and friends who may be scattered across the world,” he said.

“Our UAC team met and decided that we could bring young people and seniors together, using technology to connect generations around commonalities; and it was so exciting to see it happen!” said Sharmain Matlock-Turner, the President and CEO of the group. She points out that the founding of UAC was based the same ideas as “On the Table Philly”; meeting, talking, and sharing ideas and solutions.

Devor credits PHA for donating tablets to the “Fix IT” program that helped make it a success. With more funding, the program can definitely expand service in the future.



Tech savvy youngsters from the “Fix IT” program help a senior resident at Wilson Park learn how to use a tablet. A \$1,000 mini-grant from the “On the Table Philly” forum run by the Knight Foundation and the Philadelphia Foundation made the program possible.

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