

# The PHA Experience

Issue 34

A Community Newspaper For and About Residents

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## PHA Celebrates Grand Opening of Oakdale Street Apartments

The Philadelphia Housing Authority has changed the landscape at the northern edge of the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, converting a long vacant piece of land and putting it to productive use. The agency, joined by elected officials, celebrated the grand opening of the Oakdale Street Apartments on July 14.

The 12-unit development on the 2800 block of West Oakdale Street is located across the street from the Widener Library. It contains 8 two-bedroom townhouses and 4 one-bedroom duplex units ranging from just over 700 to more than 1,200 square feet. The Oakdale Street Apartments are designed with sustainability and low energy usage in mind; the site features Energy Star rated appliances and mechanical equipment, and compact fluorescent bulbs throughout. All of the buildings feature conventional construction with a combination of brick and hard board panel systems on the exterior, with grass field rear yards.

“This event marks the completion of the first of three projects planned for the Strawberry Mansion community, which represents an investment of over \$25 million by PHA. We hope that this work encourages others to invest in quality,

affordable housing here, whether through new construction or renewal,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. “Oakdale Street, and developments like it, would not have been possible without the support of Mayor Nutter, Council President Clarke, and the residents of this community.”

“Today we take an important leap forward toward the rebirth of historic Strawberry Mansion. It is wonderful to see new quality, affordable housing that will attract families and investment to this community,” Council President Darrell L. Clarke said. “Once again, PHA under the leadership of Kelvin Jeremiah is demonstrating a strong commitment to targeted reinvestment that will benefit neighborhoods and make our City stronger.”

Clarke, whose district includes Strawberry Mansion, had long sought this development and has vigorously promoted an increase in various forms of affordable housing throughout Philadelphia.

Oakdale Street Apartments is the first of three PHA developments planned for the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. When all of the developments are complete, 100 new housing units will have



The Philadelphia Housing Authority celebrated the grand opening of its newest development, the Oakdale Street Apartments, in the historic Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. Twelve sustainable units were constructed on a vacant parcel of land across the street from the Widener Library. Shown during the ribbon cutting at the event (l-r) are: Latoya Wright (new Oakdale resident), HUD Regional Administrator Jane Vincent, PHA Board Chair Lynette Brown-Sow, PHA President and CEO Kelvin Jeremiah, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, Council President Darrell Clarke, and PHA Commissioner Bonnie Camarda.

been added to the neighborhood.

The construction of Oakdale has already created job opportunities for the community. Eighty-six people in total were hired during development; 65 of them were Section 3 hires, a designation that gives economic opportunities to low

and very low-income persons who are public housing residents or who live in an area where a HUD-assisted project is located. Of those 65 hires, ten people were PHA residents.

PHA invested a total of \$4.63 million for Oakdale Street.



During the grand opening of PHA's new Oakdale Apartments visitors were given a tour of one of the two bedroom units.



PHA hosted a grand opening of the newly constructed Oakdale Apartments on Tuesday, July 14. The apartments are located on the 2800 block of West Oakdale Street.

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## Opening Doors *to Opportunity*



The weather is not the only thing that is hot this summer. As most agencies slow down during these months, the Philadelphia Housing Authority is full speed ahead. So just in case you missed it, the July Board meeting was quite eventful.

First, PHA became the largest housing authority in the United States to go smoke-free. This was the result of the hard work by resident leaders, the Board, and PHA staff who worked to develop a smoke-free policy that addressed everyone's concerns. The goal of the Smoke-Free Policy is not to be punitive, but to work in partnership with our residents to establish better and healthier living environments. This new policy bans smoking in all PHA housing and offices. I am very proud of the new Smoke-Free Policy and the thoughtfulness that went into its development and implementation. By working in partnership with residents, this smoking ban will help improve the quality of life for all residents.

Second, PHA continues to help residents find opportunities for social and economic mobility by giving residents a hand up. PhillySEEDS, Inc., a PHA subsidiary, awarded \$219,000 in scholarships to 55 PHA residents pursuing higher education. That's a \$16,000 increase in scholarships over the amount awarded last year. To date, PHA has awarded over \$500,000 dollars in scholarships to more than 150 residents.

The 55 college students received the following:

- 7 received \$1,000 with GPAs between 2.50 and 2.99
- 14 received \$3,000 with GPAs between 3.00 and 3.29
- 34 received \$5,000 with GPAs between 3.30 and 4.00

Third, PHA is working hard to bridge the digital divide by bringing high-speed internet service to our families. That is why I am excited that PHA and the City is one of 28 communities across the country selected to participate in ConnectHome, a new initiative

by HUD to help more residents get Internet access. PHA has committed \$250,000 to this initiative, which we hope to leverage and use to defray the costs for high-speed internet service and devices. The objective of these opportunities is to help our residents become self-reliant.

On the development front, PHA had its first grand opening under this administration on the 2800 block of West Oakdale Street: a 12-unit development that contains 8 two-bedroom townhouses and 4 one-bedroom duplex units. Oakdale Street Apartments is the first of three PHA developments planned for the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. When all of the developments are completed, 100 new housing units will have been added to the neighborhood. The next grand opening is scheduled for September for Gordon Street Apartments located on the 2300 block of 30th Street.

PHA's most important project, the Sharswood/Blumberg Transformation Initiative has started. In July, PHA began relocating residents out of the family buildings; and the groundbreaking for the first phase is scheduled for the end of August. Make no mistake, PHA is committed to Sharswood/Blumberg and we will not be deterred—we will continue to move forward to ensure our families can live in a neighborhood of choice.

All of these actives would not be possible without the steadfast support of the residents. So thank you for your patience as we continue to open doors to opportunity.

Sincerely,

KELVIN A. JEREMIAH

President & CEO

## PHA Welcomes New Commissioner



PHA Commissioner Amy Kurland

In early February, PHA welcomed Amy Kurland the newest member of the Board of Commissioners.

Appointed to the position by Mayor Michael Nutter, Commissioner Kurland currently serves as the Inspector General for the City of Philadelphia. As the Inspector General, Kurland is responsible for rooting out corruption, fraud, and misconduct by city employees and those doing business with the city, making her

a valued asset to the nine-member board.

Prior to her work with the City of Philadelphia, Commissioner Kurland was an Assistant United States Attorney and Senior Litigation Counsel in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Criminal Division for 24 years. She specialized in public corruption and white collar fraud.

Commissioner Kurland also served

as the Professional Responsibility Officer for the U.S. Attorney's Office, and provided advice regarding compliance with the Pennsylvania rules of professional conduct.

Commissioner Kurland received her J.D. from Rutgers University and her B.A. from Reed College. She is also an Adjunct Professor of Law at Rutgers, where she teaches trial advocacy. She has also taught at Temple University,

the U.S. Attorney General's Advocacy Institute, the National Advocacy Center and the F.B.I. Training Facility in Quantico.

Her extensive background, accomplishments, and demonstrated skillsets will prove beneficial not only to PHA's residents, but the city of Philadelphia.

# Promise Zone Key to Reinvestment and Affordable Housing in West Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Promise Zone Designation offers a great opportunity to West Philadelphia neighborhoods, including some PHA developments live. A two-square mile area that includes Mantua Square, West Park Apartments, West Park Plaza, Lucien E. Blackwell Homes, and some scattered sites are part of the ten-neighborhood zone designated by the Obama Administration just over a year ago. The neighborhoods are relatively close to Center City, making them attractive to investors.

“We are considering plans for future investments toward balanced housing development in this part of the City,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. “We’re committed for the long haul in West Philadelphia.”

The special designation provides an important advantage to many federal funding applications that PHA and other city agencies submit for improving housing and services in West Philadelphia. The Promise Zone designation gives PHA and its partners working to improve the neighborhoods points or preference as they compete for much needed funding. Millions of dollars are at stake as PHA works with other public and private partners, including the City, the School District, and several other nonprofit groups.

“If there are two applications for a particular federal funding source... and they’re otherwise equal, the idea is that the Promise Zone application wins out because of preference points,” said Owen Franklin, Director of the Promise Zone Initiative. The initiative is based in the Mayor’s Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity.

Franklin believes the effort is more about services that will support neighborhood residents than building and retail development, but balance is important, too.

“One thing that many of our partners are working on is an equitable development strategy. So, as change occurs, how do we ensure that it doesn’t displace people? How do we ensure that as change comes to the community that the people who live there benefit from that change?” he said.

There are 30 federal funding programs that provide preference to Promise Zone neighborhoods. Franklin estimates that the area has already benefited by \$30 million in federal funding grants for schools, health care, and juvenile justice, covering several years of service to the zone’s residents.



*Mantua Square is one of four PHA developments located inside Philadelphia’s Promise Zone. The special designation provides an important advantage to many federal funding applications that PHA and other city agencies submit for improving housing and services in West Philadelphia.*

## PHA Moving Toward Completion of Falls Ridge Redevelopment

PHA’s Board of Commissioners has pushed the agency closer to finishing the renewal of the old Schuylkill Falls site in northwest Philadelphia, now known as Falls Ridge. In December, the Board approved a deal with Pennrose Properties to build 96 housing units on just over two acres of vacant land at the northwest corner of the site, near the corner of Merrick Road and Ridge Avenue. The 96-unit development will consist of 60 affordable units and 36 market-rate units.

Under the agreement and upon HUD approval, Pennrose will enter into a long-term ground lease with PHA for not less than 65 years with an option not to exceed an additional 34

years. The development company will pay the housing authority \$750,000 upon financial closing. The total cost of the new development is estimated at \$23.6 million dollars. Low Income Housing Tax Credits are projected to fund just over half of that cost.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to complete this agreement, so that we can meet the demand for affordable housing with a development in a quality neighborhood,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. “The site is well situated in relation to retail, public transportation, the river drives, and the Schuylkill Expressway.”

The plan for the new development calls for a 4½ story building with 59 one-bedroom and 37 two-bedroom units. The site will contain 73 parking spaces, more than double the number required by the zoning code, and will be totally residential. Construction is expected to be completed in late 2016.

Pennrose Falls Ridge will be located right next to a private housing site, Hilltop at Falls Ridge, built by Westrum Development Company. PHA sold 16 acres of land to Westrum in early 2005 for \$3.1 million. Construction began in mid-2007 following a long review of the sale by HUD.

While much of the private

development consisted of upscale, stacked townhouses, six “workforce” units were reserved for buyers of limited means. The location of a private housing development next to public housing was viewed as precedent-setting.

“We’re happy to see our vision come to fruition at this location as we complete the last phase of redevelopment,” said Michael Johns, PHA’s Senior Executive Vice President of Capital Projects and Development. “Falls Ridge has had a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood. This newest and final addition to the locale also helps us toward our goal of increasing the supply of quality,

affordable housing, which is in great demand across the city.”

PHA completed the rest of the Falls Ridge development in August 2007, replacing the old Schuylkill Falls development that contained two high-rises and 32 low-rise buildings constructed in the mid-1950s. The new HOPE VI development reduced the density of the location by 60 percent, and almost half of the new homes are homeownership units. Falls Ridge is an award-winning site.

# PHA Gets Green Light for Demolition at Blumberg Apartments

The Philadelphia Housing Authority is closer to realizing its vision for the redevelopment and renewal of the Sharswood/Blumberg neighborhood in North Philadelphia.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has given PHA permission to demolish most of the buildings that make up the Norman Blumberg apartment complex at 2311 W. Jefferson Street. The agency will take down two of three high-rises and 18 low-rise buildings on the property as part of a comprehensive plan to revitalize the neighborhood.

“We are closer to achieving the dream shared by PHA and residents of the Sharswood/Blumberg neighborhood. This is the most significant development by PHA in a decade,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. “The agency has been working closely with residents and stakeholders on a plan to create a thriving, prosperous, self-reliant community. I’d like to thank HUD, Mayor Nutter, Council President Clarke, and residents of the Sharswood/Blumberg neighborhood for their help and input on this project.”

In December 2013, PHA was awarded a Choice Neighborhoods Initiative (CNI) Planning Grant by HUD. The \$500,000 planning grant provided the agency with the opportunity to plan for the

redevelopment of an area stretching north of Girard College, south of Cecil B. Moore Avenue, and between 19th and 27th Streets.

Until the mid-20th century, the area surrounding Blumberg was a stable, diverse, and thriving commercial district buttressed by local breweries and factories. Post-war suburbanization, changes in global manufacturing, and the concentration of dense public housing at Blumberg Apartments exacted a heavy toll on the area.

The demolition of the Blumberg site is just the first part of the plan. PHA also must acquire parcels in the neighborhood, in addition to those included in the existing Blumberg development’s footprint.

Working with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority (PRA), the agency is seeking to acquire nearly 1,300 parcels, comprised of 800 private and 500 public parcels. This assemblage is critical to the successful completion of the transformation plan and to maintain affordability. The overwhelming majority of parcels are vacant land or structures. Approximately 70 structures, or 6 percent are occupied, and the occupants include homeowners, renters, and businesses.

The PRA has conducted preliminary assessments and appraisals of all privately-owned



Construction of Blumberg Phase I is scheduled to start this summer. It includes 57 affordable rental units.

parcels. All property owners will be paid fair market value for their property and given relocation assistance. The housing authority will provide impacted homeowners first choice and right of first refusal to purchase a new, affordable home in the redeveloped Sharswood neighborhood, so displaced residents will have the opportunity to return to a revitalized neighborhood. Businesses impacted by condemnation will also have access to the targeted business services and capital provided through PHA’s partnership with Santander Bank.

Currently PHA is relocating families and plans to break ground for Phase I in August.



PHA will demolish two-family high-rises and 18 low-rise buildings at Blumberg as part of the agency’s comprehensive transformation plan for the neighborhood.



## PHA Issues Act 130 Report

On April 16, the Board of Commissioners approved the Philadelphia Housing Authority’s Act 130 Report for Fiscal Year 2015. The report was submitted to the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, as well as leadership in the General Assembly, the Mayor of Philadelphia, and the President of City Council.

The Act 130 Report complies with the reporting requirements of Act 130 of 2012. In July 2012, then-Governor Tom Corbett, signed Senate Bill 1174 into law as Act 130 of 2012 (Act 130) which amended the Pennsylvania Housing Authorities Law and restructured the Board of the Philadelphia Housing Authority.

As a requirement of the Pennsylvania Housing Authority Law, PHA’s Act 130

Report not only provides financial and summary performance-related information, but also allows readers to assess PHA’s FY 2015 performance relative to its mission, priority goals and objectives, and stewardship of public resources.

As a designated Moving to Work (MTW) agency, PHA has substantial budget flexibility and regulatory relief, which carefully considers the

immediate and long-term needs for the agency. This report also highlights the approved Strategic Directions Plan, which details measures of success and a series of strategic initiatives and/or projects to be accomplished by 2019.

The Act 130 Report is available on PHA’s website at [www.pha.phila.gov](http://www.pha.phila.gov)

# Private Partners Sought to Redevelop Liddonfield



*PHA plans to redevelop 12 acres of the Liddonfield site in Northeast Philadelphia.*

The Philadelphia Housing Authority issued a solicitation for proposals from developers to build on the site that once contained Liddonfield Homes in Northeast Philadelphia. The agency wants to have one portion of the site developed as affordable senior housing and the other for best use, which may include market-rate residential and/or commercial. The open solicitation closed in July.

“Liddonfield is an important and marketable piece of property that has tremendous potential for redevelopment,” said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. “PHA remains committed to ensuring that the redevelopment of the site will provide affordable housing for seniors and well as other mixed income/mixed uses on this site. The redevelopment of Liddonfield will benefit the surrounding neighborhood and the City, while allowing the housing authority to meet the heavy demand for affordable housing.”

Jeremiah also thanked Councilman Bobby Henon and the Upper Holmesburg community for their work and support on this important project.

“I share the community’s goal of achieving the highest and best use of

the former Liddonfield site,” said 6th District Councilman Bobby Henon, whose district includes the site. “I remain optimistic that there is a bright future for this attractive parcel of land.”

In July 2012, PHA had sought proposals for the redevelopment of Liddonfield, but, despite the agency’s best efforts, it was ultimately unsuccessful in redeveloping the site. The agency had agreed to sell the property to BSI Construction of Bensalem and its partners for \$4.2 million. They proposed a variety of uses, including university athletic facilities and housing, retail stores, and affordable housing for seniors. Holy Family University was involved in the winning bid from the outset, though it was not a formal party to the PHA contract.

BSI and its partners failed to meet a contractual deadline to purchase the land, a deadline that had been extended for more than a year. Funding the development became an issue and an attempt to get state funds for the project failed. PHA withdrew from the contract early last November.

PHA plans to redevelop approximately 12 acres at the site with 300 units of affordable senior

housing. This parcel is called the West Side Development because it covers the western one-third of the site. The housing authority will provide up to 300 project-based vouchers (subsidies linked to the units at the site) for the development of this parcel, subject to approval by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The agency may also provide up to \$2 million in funding for construction of the project to the selected developer.

The other portion of the proposed redevelopment, called the East Side Development, covers approximately 20 acres on the eastern two-thirds of the site. PHA is requesting proposals for best use, which could include the construction of market-rate residential housing and/or commercial space.

Liddonfield Homes was built in the 1940s as military housing. It was then repurposed as affordable housing by PHA in 1955. A second phase was developed in 1968 as senior public housing. The site contained a total of 464 units, as well as community, management, and maintenance facilities. The development was demolished in 2010.

# PHA Shines at the National and Local Level

PHA’s services to improve the lives of its residents have once again gained recognition from industry peers.

The National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Organizations (NAHRO) has honored PHA with a national Award of Merit for both its Pre-Apprenticeship Program and its PhillySEEDS organization. MARC-NAHRO, the regional chapter of NAHRO, has recognized both programs with Awards of Excellence.

PHA created PhillySEEDS, Incorporated, a duly-incorporated 501c3, because of the need to raise non-federal funds to expand the opportunities for PHA residents and families to achieve self-sufficiency. The agency does not receive additional funds from HUD to provide much-needed social services and opportunities for residents to achieve self-sufficiency.

In 2014, PhillySEEDS, Inc. distributed \$202,000 in scholarships, helping 53 residents. PhillySEEDS, Inc. awarded \$160,000 in scholarships in 2013 to 36 PHA residents seeking higher education.

In 2013 and 2014, in an effort to get school-aged children geared up and ready for the new school year, the organization distributed \$36,000 worth of book bags, filled with school supplies to 7,000 residents. PHA serves nearly 80,000 residents, of whom 33 percent are of school age (ages 4-17).

The formation and use of a duly incorporated 501c3 to raise and leverage funds is quite unusual for a housing authority. It also encourages a range of partnerships that might not otherwise be possible, and allows the authority to address the needs of residents in a number of ways.

PhillySEEDS, Inc. is currently working to offer residents closing cost assistance for homeownership and a rental assistance fund for families in the Housing Choice Voucher Program who do not have the money for a security deposit.

The revamped Pre-Apprenticeship Program gives residents training in one of three areas and where the demand exists for sustainable employment with the agency. Residents who successfully complete the program may become full-time employees at PHA. As of May 2015, PHA residents comprised 12 percent of the agency workforce. The agency’s goal is 25 percent.

The program provides sustainable, long-term employment to residents who would otherwise be relegated to low paying work with little chance of becoming self-sufficient, independent, and homeowners. It fills jobs that are actually in demand with the agency and in the private market. The agency is working on developing external partnerships toward that end.

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program is certified, which improves its chances of receiving grants to fund the program.

# PHA Begins Relocation of Over-Housed Residents

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is requiring the housing authority to right-size its units. By early February, 172 residents had received letters from PHA telling them that they'd have to relocate to right-size units, so that the agency can meet HUD's requirements. Informational sessions for residents were held at the John F. Street Community Center and at PHA headquarters.

The relocation effort is part of the Authority's long-term plan to reposition its scattered sites portfolio, so it can better manage the units it retains without reducing affordable housing opportunities in the city. The strategy is designed to help the housing authority better spend its money on rehabilitation or new developments. This plan should also generate some revenue through sales to current residents or the public, along with disposition of homes that are no longer viable.

Pat Ripka, Assistant Supervisory Property Manager for Scattered Sites, told those gathering at the Street Center that PHA would help them relocate to a smaller unit of their choice. She asked residents in attendance to fill out a brief assessment form, so that the agency could find the right home for them in a neighborhood desirable

to them. Ripka suggested that for some residents affected by relocation, a senior development may be of interest, while others may wish to become homeowners.

PHA will also make sure to take care of those residents with special needs. Residents or their family members who need 504 accessible accommodations need to fill out two forms in addition to the assessment form, as well as provide doctor's information. A resident's doctor can specify accommodations for a particular resident to the agency. Those who need live-in aides will get an additional bedroom, once they're deemed eligible. Caregivers who visit several times a week, however, will not receive bedrooms.

Jacqueline Sampson, Director of Housing Operations for PHA, assured those in attendance that they'd have plenty of time to move with assistance from the agency.

"We're not going to say, 'Here's your unit, you've got to move in there tomorrow,'" she said.

Sampson also told the gathering that the mandate to move had nothing to do with compliance with PHA requirements, just HUD regulations. Residents who attended the informational meeting are over-housed by 4 bedrooms or more.

"We have numerous families with children that need these units," she explained.

Marco Ferreira, Acting Director for Resident Development, also told the crowd that PHA has to sell its homes at market value. So, the agency cannot discount the price of the home they're living in. However, HUD's 5-h program and another one under development, Section 32, are designed to help residents buy a home that they can afford in a neighborhood of their choosing.

PHA will also offer closing cost assistance in the form of a soft, second mortgage that can be paid off at no cost to the resident, as long as the person lives in the house they buy for five years. If the buyer leaves the house earlier, they'll have to repay a portion of the closing cost money lent to them. Ferreira emphasized that any house sold by PHA must meet Federal Housing Administration (FHA) standards, meaning the home has to be in good condition with all necessary repairs made.

HUD gave PHA one year to accomplish the move in June of 2014. PHA will not move residents if they're in the process of becoming homeowners.



PHA Commissioner Asia Coney confers with Executive Vice President of Housing Operations Dinesh Indala at a conference for over-housed residents. HUD is requiring PHA to right-size its units.



Pat Ripka, Assistant Supervisory Property Manager for Scattered Sites, takes a question from over-housed residents attending the informational session at the John F. Street Community Center. By early February, 172 residents had received letters from PHA telling them that they'd have to move, so that the agency can meet HUD's requirements.

## PHA Takes Advantage of New HUD Financing Program

The Philadelphia Housing Authority will be able to generate nearly \$100 million under an innovative financing program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Rental Assistance Demonstration Program (RAD) will provide the agency with much-needed money for maintenance and improvement of units at a time when the federal government is cutting funding for public housing.

The move to the program will provide the housing authority with a more stable source of funding. Federal funding for both Housing Choice (Section 8) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (where vouchers are tied to units in a building) have remained fairly stable during the last decade, while capital funding for public housing has continued to go down. The RAD program will allow PHA to

use the more stable subsidies at each building to secure a mortgage and provide a comprehensive plan to fix up or replace aging sites.

"This program is a golden opportunity," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "Not only can the agency raise money from private investors to pay for much needed improvements, it can also create job opportunities for residents under Section 3, a part of federal law that fosters local economic development, neighborhood economic improvement, and individual self-sufficiency."

PHA submitted 36 applications to convert over 3,200 units under the RAD program. The authority has also submitted a Choice Neighborhoods Implementation/RAD application to redevelop and convert the units at PHA's Norris Apartments.

Jeremiah said protection for residents is written into the RAD legislation. Under the law, residents have a right to return, with no additional screening. There is also a rent cap of no more than 30 percent of income. Residents will also have the right to organize and elect resident councils.

"The agency has appointed a special RAD Resident Ombudsman to ensure that resident concerns, issues, and, most importantly, ideas are tracked and addressed," he said. "Furthermore, PHA will sign written agreements with the residents of the affected sites that outline their rights and other promises the agency is making."

PHA has committed to continue to work with residents and resident leaders by way of monthly overview meetings and site-based meetings with affected residents to ensure all residents are informed about the RAD transition.

Affected residents will also have new choice mobility options. Residents living in the converted RAD units can move out, with housing assistance, after living there for one year, if they are unsatisfied with the unit for any reason.

PHA's entry into the RAD program signals a major investment in its housing stock. By raising investment dollars through the program, the agency plans to rehabilitate seven of its conventional developments and potentially six of the Alternatively Managed Entities (AMEs), which are privately owned and operated public housing developments. PHA is also converting nearly 1,000 long-term vacant scattered site units to RAD and the Norris and Blumberg developments will be converted to RAD after being demolished and replaced with new housing construction.

In December 2013, the PHA Board of Commissioners authorized the agency to execute and submit documentation and take any steps or actions necessary to submit RAD Program grant applications to HUD. Two months earlier, the Board approved an evaluation of the practicality of converting some public housing units to Project-Based Rental Assistance, under the program. In March 2015, PHA received its approval for RAD unit conversion from HUD.

No RAD conversions can be made without approval by the Board and meetings with impacted residents. Commissioners will have multiple opportunities to review and approve subsequent required submissions, agreements, contracts, and task orders arising from any RAD conversion.

# Board Resolution Updates

## JANUARY 2015

- **Resolution 11755** – authorized PHA to amend its current contract with Sovereign Security, LLC to cover costs resulting from additional security requirements in the amount of \$175,000.
- **Resolution 11756** – authorized PHA to contract for small general contractor services for maintenance-related work with DKJ Construction, Inc.; W&W Contractors, Inc.; Vellniece Construction, LLC; Holder Inc.; T/A Donovan Electric Supply and Construction; Nesmith and Company, Inc.; Morgan Construction Management, LLC; and Townes Mechanical Contractors, Inc.
- **Resolution 11757** – authorized PHA to contribute an amount not to exceed \$99,999 to settle employment litigation on behalf of PHA and to take all other action necessary to conclude the settlement and dismissal of the case, including executing the settlement agreement.
- **Resolution 11758** – adopted a policy for leasing of commercial space that establishes requirements and criteria for PHA to apply in entering into agreements for the lease of PHA-owned commercial spaces; permits PHA to lease such

spaces pursuant to the policy; and requires PHA to report annually to the Board as to the status of such leases.

## FEBRUARY 2015

- **Resolution 11759** – authorized PHA to contract with Esperanza, Inc. and New Kensington CDC, Inc. for homeownership financial counseling services, in a total aggregate amount for both contracts, if all options are exercised, not to exceed \$210,000.
- **Resolution 11760** – authorized PHA to enter into an MOU for the establishment of an after-school program to serve youth at Norris Apartments to be administered by the Temple University College of Education in collaboration with the Norris Community Resident Council, Inc. Under the MOU, PHA will provide a total amount not to exceed \$160,000.
- **Resolution 11761** – authorized PHA to execute and submit a Rental Assistance Demonstration Program application for Norris Apartments and authorize the President & CEO or his authorized designees to implement that application, including complying with and executing all agreements required by PIH Notice 2012-32 (Revision 1).

- **Resolution 11762** – authorized PHA to submit a disposition application for two properties at 5176 and 5178 Viola Street, and to convey such properties, if approved to do so by HUD, at nominal consideration to Community Ventures or its affiliates.
- **Resolution 11763** – authorized PHA to contract with Allied Construction for construction management services for insulation at Johnson Homes, with the total contract amount not to exceed \$548,339.
- **Resolution 11764** – authorized PHA to continue to enter into contracts under state and federal cooperative purchasing agreements and other programs, for a 1-year period, with a not-to-exceed amount of \$24,020,000.
- **Resolution 11765** – authorized PHA to execute various insurance contracts based on insurance quotations procured by Conner Strong & Buckelew under its existing contract with PHA, in a total amount not to exceed \$4,180,035.
- **Resolution 11766** – authorized the adoption of PHA's FY 2015 Operating and Capital Budgets. The budgets project both revenues and expenditures at \$396,330,239 so that the budget is balanced.

## MARCH 2015

- **Resolution 11767** – appointed Commissioner Amy Kurland as a voting member of the Audit Committee.
- **Resolution 11768** – authorized PHA to contract with People's Emergency Center (Jannie's Place), People's Emergency Center (Fattah Homes II), Methodist Family Services, Intercommunity Action, Inc., and CATCH Inc. for a total award of 83 unit-based vouchers.
- **Resolution 11769** – authorized PHA to contract with Scotlandyard Security Services, Inc. and Sovereign Security, LLC for uniformed, unarmed and armed security guard services in a total aggregate amount for both contracts, if all options are exercised, not to exceed \$12.5 million.
- **Resolution 11770** – authorized PHA to contract with Philadelphia Catering Company, Foodarama Caterers, and Victoria's Kitchen & Catering for food and beverage catering services in a total aggregate amount for the three contracts, if all options are exercised, not to exceed \$750,000.

## SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

- **Resolution 11772** – authorized PHA to conclude and execute an interagency agreement with the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority for the condemnation of property as necessary to proceed with the Queen Lane redevelopment and to expend PHA funds for both PRA's and PHA's services and costs incident to the condemnation.

## APRIL 2015

- **Resolution 11773** – approved a calendar of regularly-scheduled Board meetings through May of 2016, pursuant to the requirement of the By-Laws that this be done at the Annual Meeting.
- **Resolution 11774** – authorized PHA to approve submission of PHA's Act 130 Report for Fiscal Year 2015, as required by the Pennsylvania Housing Authorities Law.
- **Resolution 11775** – authorized the President & CEO and/or his designees to extend existing unit-based voucher housing assistance payments contracts for a period not to exceed 15 years, in accordance with Chapter 23 of the PHA Administrative Plan.

*(continued on page 12)*

## Standard & Poor's Says PHA is in Tip-Top Shape

PHA residents and other stakeholders in the housing authority can have confidence in the finances of the agency. Standard and Poor's (S&P) Rating Services has once again awarded an investment grade credit rating of AA- to PHA. This shows that the agency has strong credit and a strong capacity to meet its financial obligations. S&P said the outlook for the housing authority is stable in its report to investors and the public.

"We are thrilled that the agency has maintained its high credit rating," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "The AA-rating is on par with a number of well-known companies in the private sector.

We believe that the rating reflects PHA's strong financial management actions, including the implementation of internal controls and reformed spending and management practices. These reforms have resulted in more fiscal discipline, balanced budgets, and the agency becoming a better steward of the public's money."

Jeremiah also said that strong support from Mayor Michael Nutter, Council President Darrell Clarke, City Council, and an engaged and committed Board of Commissioners has put PHA on a path for long-term success.

S&P reported that the strong rating is based on PHA's stand-alone

credit profile for government-related entities. The rating reflects S&P's view of the housing authority's strengths, including:

- A very strong risk profile, supported by low-cost rental housing, high average population growth in the region, high occupancy rates, and a high percentage of rent collected;
- A very strong financial risk profile, evidenced by extremely strong debt and liquidity profiles, along with strong financial policies;
- Very strong overall management and financial flexibility;
- Strong demand for PHA housing, evidenced by a waiting list of roughly

100,000 applicants for public housing and Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) units; and

- An experienced management team, which is implementing new policies and procedures designed to increase PHA's transparency and efficiency.

The credit report also stated that PHA's financial performance was strong in fiscal year 2013. S&P noted PHA's debt-to-earnings ratio (three-year average) reflects the authority's strong debt management policy.

"The stable outlook reflects our view of PHA's very strong enterprise and financial profiles, strong liquidity, low

debt burden, and high interest coverage ratio," S&P said in its report. "PHA also maintains financial flexibility associated with the [Moving to Work] contract, and a clear, strategic plan to maximize its role in Philadelphia."

S&P observed that PHA had successfully come out of receivership by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) two years ago after making significant policy and structural reforms.

The credit rating agency believes that the housing authority will continue to comply with and meet all HUD requirements.

## PHA Celebrates Summer Season



PHA celebrated mothers with a red carpet luncheon at Abbottsford Homes on May 8. Mothers from all developments enjoyed food, giveaways, and entertainment by the Heaven Bound singing group.



PHA hosted a cook out on July 19 in honor of Father's Day at Wilson Park. The event included a guest speaker and basketball games for fathers and sons.



The MLK and 13th Street reunion took place on July 18. Former and current residents celebrated a homecoming with a cook out, music, and lots of fun.



Philly's Hip-Hop All Star basketball game took place at Abbottsford Homes on Saturday, August 1. The community day featured music, a celebrity basketball game, and lots of homemade food.



## More Summer Fun at PHA



On August 7, children at Paschall Village competed in the “Build a Bridge” competition as part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Summer Youth Program. About 40 kids competed. Legacy School Services sponsored the program and also took children on field trips that included a visit to the University of the Sciences, a trip to the Waterworks, and a visit to the Franklin Mint.



Westpark Resident Council President Andrea Foster partnered with local volunteer organization, Living Proof, to host the development’s annual summer day camp. The camp provides young residents with daily activities such as arts and crafts, sports and educational projects.

# Emlen Arms Residents Have New Elevators



*PHA's Executive Vice President of Operations Dinesh Indala and former Emlen Arms Resident Council President Arnold Walker get ready to take a ride on one of the new elevators at the senior development. The resident council thanked PHA staff at a special meeting for their efforts on this project.*

Residents of PHA's Emlen Arms high-rise in northwest Philadelphia can get where they're going a lot quicker. Crews have finished the installation of two modern elevators that began last May. The new carriages replaced the original equipment that was installed when Emlen Arms was built in the 1930s.

In late January, the Emlen Arms Resident Council honored managers from the Maintenance and Capital Projects and Development Departments at their meeting.

Executive Vice President of Operations Dinesh Indala, Director of Maintenance Jack Keshishian, Manager of Advanced Facilities Management Cat Nguyen, and architect Nicole Ward were recognized for their work on the new elevators and other maintenance issues.

"I feel great," said Arnold Walker, former President of the Emlen Arms Resident Council. "We have so many handicapped people here in this building, and there are times I don't feel like walking to the second floor."

Emlen Arms residents had been pushing for new elevators for three years before installation began. The

new elevators had to offer easier access, yet fit within the existing elevator shafts that could not be widened. The total cost of the project was close to \$1.5 million dollars.

Melvin Scott, an Emlen Arms resident of eight years, couldn't be happier. He makes his way around the building in a motorized wheelchair because of the effects of diabetes.

"They run fast. They're quick. They don't stop on every floor like the old ones did," Scott said. "I'm up on the 8th floor and it takes me only one second, seems like, to get down to the first floor."

The old elevators at Emlen Arms had become unreliable and, at times, both of them were out of order, forcing residents to go out on the building's fire escape during emergencies.

The new elevators have more space with 50 inches of length versus 44 inches in the original equipment. They have buttons installed at accessible heights that make them compliant with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards for existing buildings. The new design features are critical for residents in wheelchairs or those with vision or hearing impairments.

## 2015

### PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

#### Board of Commissioners Meeting Calendar

The third Thursday of every month at 3:00 pm

\*SEPT 17 | OCT 15 | NOV 19 | DEC 17

\* No meeting in August

All PHA board meetings are held at  
12 S. 23rd Street, 6th Floor, Phila. Pa 19103



*Emlen Arms resident Melvin Scott is all smiles as he demonstrates the ease of using one of the new elevators at the high-rise development in Mount Airy.*

# Resident Spotlight - Bartram Village

Easter time for kids often means coloring eggs, receiving Easter baskets, and hunting for eggs. In April, the Bartram Village Resident Council hosted Easter egg hunts at Bartram Village as a fun activity as part of their after-school program. The idea was started three years ago as a way to get children involved in various activities while helping them improve their grades.

"Volunteer teachers work four days a week helping our Bartram children in our after-school program. Having fun in other activities, like this Easter egg hunt, is our second goal," Sheila Anthony, Bartram Village Resident Council Vice President said.

About 35 children from first to seventh grade participate in the program and are tutored in math, English, and reading. Third grader Sharif Mundy says learning in school is sometimes hard, but these teachers make it easier.

"I like this program because the teachers know how to make learning fun. They help me with my reading, and my grades are getting better," he said.

Dr. Caroline Frazier, a professor at the Community College of Philadelphia started teaching with the program about a year ago.



*Participants of the Bartram Village after school program enjoy a range of activities including Easter egg hunts.*

"I love the kids at Bartram. They're special. I do this because education changes lives. I think teachers should want to come out and teach in this community. It is a wonderful opportunity because education works," she said.

The Easter egg hunts also served as an opportunity to reward students

who worked hard to improve in school. Sharif Munday and Lanryah Curtis won Easter baskets for their outstanding academic achievements and Makaylah Hayward and Tracey Epps won for gathering the most Easter eggs.

#### Easter Egg Hunt Contributors:

- Bartram's Gardens
- Grover's Meat Market
- Butcher Block Meats
- Lindbergh Deli Foods
- International Masons Hiram Lodge #11



*Youth residents received prizes, eggs and candy during Bartram Village's Easter celebration.*

# PHA Celebrates Community Partners Program Graduates

The Philadelphia Housing Authority celebrated Resident Empowerment Week in mid-May with the graduation of over 100 residents from the Community Partners Program.

The honorees successfully completed work in one of seven programs: workforce ready, customer service, medical office assistant, commercial driver's license/passenger's license, human services, certified nursing assistant/phlebotomy training, new small business, and environmental training.

PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah and Executive Vice President of Community Operations and Resident Development William Myles congratulated those graduates in attendance, and reminded them that this is a beginning and not an end. Both men are from humble backgrounds and spoke to the graduates of the endless possibilities that await with hard work, education, and sacrifice.

Jeremiah told the audience about growing up poor in Grenada and not starting school until he was 9-years-old. He came to the United States when he was 12 and eventually entered college at age 17 to become the first person in his family to get a degree and have a professional career.



*PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah congratulates Victoria Jackson who completed training to become a certified nursing assistant at the Community Partners graduation ceremony.*

Young Kelvin was raised by his great-grandmother who taught him several life lessons that he still relies on today: you are not a victim, where you start out is not where you'll end up, and education is important.

"The real game changer is education," he said. "The real game changer is you acquiring the skills necessary to find social and economic mobility. The real game changer is you taking the initiative and being an active participant in your own upliftment."

He also encouraged the graduates to take advantage of every available opportunity, including the agency's scholarship programs.

"You have to want it for yourself as much and as badly as I wanted it for myself and my family, and as I want it for you," he said. "If it is possible for this kid from Grenada to come here and to have achieved the level of success that no one thought possible, I know you can do it and I am proud of you for trying," he said.

# PHA Resident Leaders Honored by State Rep. for Service

State Representative Vanessa Lowery-Brown has conferred a District Image Award on four of PHA's resident leaders for their service to the community.

Andrea Foster, Asia Coney, Jackie McDowell, and Rose Bryant were honored during a ceremony at the Christian Stronghold Church in West Philadelphia on June 27. The theme of this year's ceremony was "Women Working Together for Change." The awards "recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of women living in the 190th Legislative District located in West and parts of North Philadelphia."

Foster, Coney, McDowell, and Bryant were among more than 200 women nominated for the award this year. This year's honorees came from all walks of life. Recipients included pastors, educators, municipal workers, and community volunteers.

The certificate reads: "For your dedication and commitment to strengthening our neighborhood and enhancing the quality of life serves as a testament to the power of the human spirit."

Andrea Foster, the President of the West Park Apartments Resident Council, said she was truly honored to be nominated for the award.

"It inspires me to strive harder and to make my community better," she said.

"It was humbling in the fact that many of the women that were there I knew or had worked with. To be placed in the realm of the others present, and there were some heavy hitters there in that room, from that aspect, it was very humbling," PHA Resident Commissioner Coney said. "And it's always humbling when someone recognizes the work that you do."

"I'm very grateful and thankful," said Jackie McDowell, President of the Haddington/Overbrook Scattered Sites Resident Council. "I love Vanessa and I love the work that I have done with her."

"I was truly humbled," said Rose Bryant, who is the president of the Lucien E. Blackwell Resident Council. "It'll just make me work harder."

Bryant added that she'll continue to work toward "saving our children" by making sure they have the education they need to succeed in the world to allow them to leave public housing.



*Over 100 PHA residents graduated in mid-May from the agency's Community Partners Program. PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah told the audience his personal account of coming to the U.S. and climbing out of poverty through education and hard work.*

THE PHILADELPHIA HOUSING AUTHORITY

*salutes*

The *Class of 2015*

**CONGRATULATIONS  
GRADUATES!**

# PHA Awards \$219,000 in Scholarships



PHA along with PhillySEEDS awarded 55 residents over \$200,000 in scholarships for the upcoming academic year.

PhillySEEDS, Inc., a Philadelphia Housing Authority subsidiary, awarded \$219,000 in scholarships to 55 PHA residents seeking higher education during the agency's July board meeting. That's a \$16,000 increase in scholarship money from this same time a year ago.

"Education is a real game changer that bridges the poverty gap and provides for social and economic mobility," said PHA President & CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "I want to commend our scholars on their academic achievement and wish them continued success in the new school year."

Jeremiah also believes that the scholarship program is another great way that PHA empowers residents and helps families reach self-sufficiency through education and training resources necessary for them to succeed in a competitive economy and in life.

Of the 55 college students receiving scholarships:

- 7 received \$1,000 with GPAs between 2.50 and 2.99
- 14 received \$3,000 with GPAs between 3.00 and 3.29
- 34 received \$5,000 with GPAs between 3.30 and 4.00

Twenty-six of this year's scholarship winners are first time awardees while 29 are repeat winners.

Money for the scholarships comes from PHA's operating budget and funds donated by program supporters and vendors, as part of their Section 3 commitments.

A committee composed of PHA employees, student residents, and a resident leader reviewed the applications. The committee considered the applicants' essays, community service, extracurricular activities, internships, recommendation letters, and academic transcripts in making their selections. Scholarships were awarded in the amounts of \$1,000, \$3,000, and \$5,000.

The scholarship recipients represent PHA developments around the City, as well as the Housing Choice Voucher Program. Scholarships applications for next year will be made available in Spring 2016.

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.

# Board Resolution Updates

(continued from page 7)

- **Resolution 11776** – authorized PHA to contract with Allied Construction; Noble Strategy; JD Bravo Co., Inc.; BFW Group; Tilmar Designs; Milestone Construction; and Armand Corp. for a total aggregate amount, for all the contracts combined, not to exceed \$45 million.
- **Resolution 11781** – authorized PHA to amend and approve a Memorandum of Understanding between Youth Advocate Programs and PHA for the provision of Advisory/Social Services under the Uniform Relocation Act. The total amount to be expended pursuant to the MOU and amendment is not to exceed \$158,000.

## MAY 2015

- **Resolution 11777** – approved the charters for the standing Board Committees of Finance, Policy and Planning, and Resident Services, pursuant to the By-Laws.
- **Resolution 11778** – authorized PHA to approve the Lobbying Policy, which prohibits any lobbying on behalf of PHA other than by PHA employees, Commissioners, and duly procured lobbying firms expressly authorized in writing to do so by the President & CEO and ensures that all such activity is properly disclosed. The policy also prohibits PHA from using federal funds to lobby the federal executive or legislative branches of government, but does not preclude routine and ongoing post-award administration of federal contracts and grants and general advocacy.
- **Resolution 11779** – authorized PHA to conclude and execute an agreement with the City of Philadelphia for PHA to pay for improvements to the City's property at 5322-34 Newhall Street for the purpose of creating a new playground or other recreational use, contingent upon PHA's moving forward with its planned redevelopment at Queen Lane, for a total amount not to exceed \$500,000.
- **Resolution 11780** – identified specific properties to be acquired by PHA, pursuant to previous resolutions, in connection with PHA's revitalization plan for the Blumberg/Sharswood neighborhood and to authorize the President and CEO or his authorized designee(s) to take all necessary action to acquire the properties. No additional financial commitment was involved in this resolution.
- **Resolution 11782** – authorized PHA to modify contracts with Morgan Construction Management, LLC and Murphy's Transportation Services, Inc. for moving services to remove the per year limits on expenditures so that that the contracts may be used to support relocations related to the Normal Blumberg redevelopment.
- **Resolution 11783** – amended Resolution 11765, which incorrectly listed Travelers Insurance Company, instead of Hartford Steam Boiler Insurance Company, as the insurer of the Boiler & Machinery insurance for PHA.
- **Resolution 11784** – authorized PHA to contract with CATCH, Inc., Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia, The Dream Program, Inc., and Legacy School Services, Inc. for summer youth programs, with a total aggregate amount to be expended under the contracts not to exceed \$300,000.
- **Resolution 11785** – authorized an amendment to the charter of the Audit Committee, to change the requirement that both the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee be members of PHA's Board of Commissioners and only require that the Chair of the Audit Committee be a member of the PHA Board.

## JUNE 2015

- **Resolution 11786** – authorized PHA to approve the Annual Moving to Work Report for submission to HUD for PHA's Fiscal Year 2015.
- **Resolution 11787** – authorized PHA to approve the submission to HUD of an amendment to PHA's Fiscal Year 2016 Moving to Work

Plan to include the conversion to the Rental Assistance Demonstration program of 57 units of new construction in Phase 1 of the Blumberg redevelopment.

- **Resolution 11788** – authorized PHA to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding by and among the City of Philadelphia Department of Human Services, Philadelphia Youth Network, and PHA for the provision of 100 jobs for PHA youth as part of the Summer WorkReady Program in Philadelphia.
- **Resolution 11789** – authorized PHA to exercise all three 1-year options for non-litigation legal services contracts that were entered into pursuant to a previous resolution that required Board approval for the exercise of contract options. The contract option approvals were for the following firms: Ballard Spahr, Dilworth Paxson, Eckert Seamans, Fox Rothschild, Hawkins Delafield, Kleinbard Bell & Brecker, Kolber & Randazzo (formerly Kolber & Freiman), Pepper Hamilton, Reno & Cavanaugh, and Ahmad & Zaffarese (as successor to the Smyler Firm). The total aggregate amount is not to exceed \$6 million for all 3 years.
- **Resolution 11790** – authorized PHA to execute a task order with TN Ward Company, under an existing master contract, for construction management services for demolition as part of the Norman Blumberg revitalization, in an amount not to exceed \$7,263,575.
- **Resolution 11791** – executed task orders with VellNiece Construction, LLC; DKJ Builders and Construction Managers, Inc.; W&W Contractors, Inc.; and Townes Mechanical Contractors, Inc. for vacant unit rehabilitation in an amount not to exceed \$2. Million.

# PHA Helps Children Get a Head Start on the School Year



*The Philadelphia Housing Authority aided by the Phillie Phanatic helped its young residents get ready for the upcoming school year with the agency's annual book bag giveaway. Citizens Bank donated 550 backpacks for the back to school celebration in which more than 2,500 book bags stuffed with school supplies were handed out to residents.*

The Philadelphia Housing Authority has once again helped prepare its school age residents for the upcoming academic year with the agency's annual book bag giveaway.

PHA provided more than 2,500 book bags stuffed with school supplies to PHA residents at the agency's annual back to school celebration on August 7 at the John F. Street Community Center in North Philadelphia. School begins in the city on September 8 for most students, with kindergarten classes starting on September 16.

Citizens Bank partnered with PHA and donated 550 backpacks to the event. Additionally, the Philly Phanatic attended the back to school celebration to encourage all students to "hit one out of the park" this school year.

"I believe that education is a game changer. An educated population will become a more prosperous group of citizens and will have the ability to better their communities and families," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "This annual event is just one

of the ways that we demonstrate our commitment to educational advancement."

The book bag giveaway began three years ago under the auspices of Philly SEEDS Inc., a 501(c) (3) tax- exempt organization. The mission of Philly SEEDS Inc. is to promote the social and economic advancement of PHA

residents through philanthropic activities, community based partnerships, and special initiatives.

PhillySEEDS Inc. is an award-winning program with services that are designed to help residents become fully self-sufficient.



*The Phillie Phanatic high-fives a young Philadelphia Housing Authority resident during the agency's annual book bag giveaway at the John F. Street Community Center. Philly SEEDS Inc., a duly incorporated 501(c) (3), which helps to promote the social and economic advancement of PHA residents sponsored the event.*

# Faith Based Group Returns for Community Service at PHA Sites

World Changers, an initiative of Life Way Christian Resources, returned to Philadelphia for its third summer of community service at Philadelphia Housing Authority sites.

Close to 200 student volunteers from 10 churches across the country participated in painting, landscaping and other maintenance at 10 work sites throughout Philadelphia, five of which were PHA sites including Holmcrest Homes, Johnson Homes, Spring Garden Apartments, Fairhill, and Wilson Park. The volunteers' work was estimated to save PHA nearly \$100,000.

"We welcome productive partnerships with groups such as World Changers," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "Given the budgetary constraints that challenge the agency today, partnerships are becoming more and more important. It is both a privilege and opportunity to offer service and I heartily thank these young people."

The World Changers volunteers come from across the U.S. and pay their own way to Philadelphia while giving up some of their summer vacation in service to others over a three-day period. On average, participating students pay \$250 to take part in the week.

The partnership with World Changers was originated by PHA Commissioner Rev. Bonnie Camarda, the Director of Partnerships for the Salvation Army of Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.

"Part of community service is showing others that you care and that's

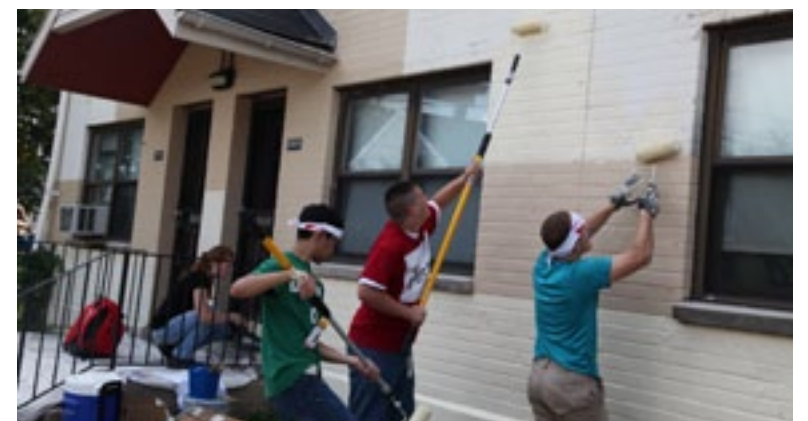
what PHA residents will see," Camarda said. "There is no better gift than when someone gives of themselves. The World Changers project provides students and adults a venue in which to live out their faith in a loving God."

This initiative is in partnership with Philadelphia, PHA, Salvation Army, and other local businesses. Salvation Army canteen trucks provided water at the work sites. Members of the building trades unions employed by PHA also worked with volunteers and supervised their activities.

This summer, World Changers projects took place in more than 75 cities in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Since 1990, there have been more than 300,000 participants in the World Changers program.



*The Philadelphia Housing Authority hosted for the third summer in a row volunteers from World Changers, to do painting and other maintenance. Close to 200 volunteers from 10 churches across the country donated their time in community service at ten work sites across Philadelphia, including five PHA sites.*



*World Changers volunteers sacrificed a portion of their summer vacation to donate their time and labor to maintenance projects across Philadelphia.*

# PHA Becomes Largest Housing Authority to Adopt Smoke-Free Policy

PHA residents are now subject to a smoke-free policy adopted by the agency's Board of Commissioners at the July board meeting. The new policy is a unique two-pronged approach to enforcement for new and existing units after years of intensive engagement with residents, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and other health partners.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has stated that federal regulations are being drafted to mandate that public housing be smoke free. By acting now and in close cooperation, PHA and its residents hope to effectively establish a smoke-free environment, through supportive measures and education, before any federal mandate.

"I want to thank the Board, the Smoke Free Task Force and all the residents that participated in the process," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "This new policy stems from a high level of engagement with our residents and City partners under the direction of Mayor Nutter. PHA is committed to improving the quality life for all our residents."

Over the last year, PHA has gathered health information, compared the policies of other housing authorities and their effectiveness, and worked collaboratively with residents for six months on resolving implementation issues, as well as creating on-site cessation programs and support structures.

For that reason, while the policy prohibits smoking as of August 5, 2015 on all PHA properties (outside of designated smoking areas), it has two enforcement sections. One that applies to residents with leases at existing units and the other applies only to units that are new construction or substantially rehabilitated, for residents entering into leases on or after August 5, 2015.

At existing units, Notices of Violation will be issued, which emphasize the availability of cessation support. Data such as the number of violations issued,

how many residents sign up for and finish cessation classes will be tracked for nine months. Site-based, smoke-free task forces will help educate residents about smoking cessation programs. Eviction will never be a consequence for violations issued under the new policy for residents in existing units.

At new units or substantially rehabilitated units (not "make ready" standard updates to units at existing sites), where PHA has made major financial investment, residents entering into leases on or after August 5, 2015 may face possible lease termination after the fourth violation of the smoking policy. In each instance, violators will receive cessation support and informational materials on cessation. The policy also allows for one violation to be erased.

"HUD believes our communities should make homes available to families that are affordable and healthy," said Jane C.W. Vincent, HUD Regional Administrator for the Mid-Atlantic region. "Encouraging management practices that enhance the health of housing residents is one way we are going about it. We're finding that smoke-free housing is a win-win for both residents and those who manage the properties. And, the collaboration that develops between the public housing authority and residents in creating and living in a smoke-free building is something that all involved can be proud of."

"Our goal is not to evict and not to impose rules," Jeremiah said. "It is to work cooperatively to end smoking outside of designated areas on PHA premises. This year alone PHA has designated \$100,000 for cessation programs."

The effectiveness of PHA's policy will be reevaluated by the Board after nine months, but it was created to balance residents' concerns with health risks, their appreciation of the difficulties of cessation, and a respect for the quality and integrity of PHA properties.

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# PHA's Chief of Police Sets New Course

In February, the Philadelphia Housing Authority named veteran Philadelphia police officer, Dr. Branville G. Bard, Jr., as its new Chief of Police.

Bard was most recently the Commanding Officer of the Forensic Science Unit at the Philadelphia Police Department, where he spent 21 years with the Philadelphia Police Department and rose to the rank of Inspector. Prior to heading the department's elite crime scene unit, he served as the Captain of the 22nd District in North Philadelphia, the largest police district in terms of personnel and the district with the highest crime rate.

"We are very lucky to have a person of Dr. Bard's caliber and experience as our Police Chief," said PHA President and CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah. "His philosophy of inclusive community policing and problem solving will be welcomed by our residents and police force. We know that just hiring more

officers, which the agency has done, will not lower the incidences of crime by itself. It takes community buy-in and support. Chief Bard's addition to the force will better enable PHAPD to align its policing authority with the Philadelphia Police Department and other law enforcement agencies."

"It is my firm belief that police have two overarching responsibilities," said Bard. "One is the duty owed to society to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and the other is the duty to protect the individual constitutional rights of the citizenry it is sworn to serve. I believe that it's a myth that to gain more of one that we must sacrifice some of the other."

As the new Chief of Police, Bard is promoting a number of initiatives starting with the elimination of the departments' antiquated strategies and procedures.

"We must fix our infrastructure. We're in the process of updating all of our policies so we can use the industry's best practices," he said.

Another change will split the officers'

patrols into two divisions, north and south. The advantage to this change will be that officers will constantly patrol the same area and residents will begin to know and depend on the officers they see every day.

Officers will also transition to a 12-hour shift. A 12-hour shift standard is currently used by all of the surrounding county police departments and will eliminate barriers when recruiting new officers for the Philadelphia Housing Authority Police Department.

Chief Bard also wants to start an Office of Rights and Liberties. This office would monitor police vehicle and pedestrian stops to be sure officers are practicing fundamental fairness during encounters with all citizens.

To adapt to the industry's best practices, bring in more professionals and to make sure policies and practices are followed, is a huge undertaking. But the new Chief is more than ready for the challenge and says changes are already taking place to make this a stronger and more effective police force.



*PHA President & CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah swears in Dr. Branville G. Bard, Jr. as PHA's new Chief of Police on February 20. Bard, a Philadelphia Police Department veteran of over 20 years, will direct the agency's public safety efforts and all operations of the Philadelphia Housing Authority Police Department.*

## PHA Residents Join PHAPD as New Officers



*Newly minted PHAPD officers Asia Patterson (l) and Rokeisha Gallashaw (r) took the oath of office with other Philadelphia Police Academy graduates at Temple University's Mitten Hall on June 5. PHAPD Chief Branville Bard (center) said the new officers joined the force immediately.*

Two Philadelphia Housing Authority residents who graduated from the Philadelphia Police Academy have been sworn in as licensed police officers and have joined the agency's police department.

Rokeisha Gallashaw and Asia Patterson took the oath of office with other academy graduates at Temple University's Mitten Hall on June 5. Both said this is an opportunity that they have been waiting for and a chance to help their neighbors.

"Residents will see a familiar face. I can go into many of developments where I went to parties or social gatherings and they will see me and say she changed, we can probably do the same thing too," said Gallashaw.

"I feel that me being a resident, and a PHA police officer, I have an advantage

because I can look at it from both perspectives," Patterson said. "At one point, I was that person who needed to be safe guarded from a lot of things that were going on."

The induction of Gallashaw and Patterson shows that PHA is following up on a commitment to resident leadership. PHA's President & CEO Kelvin A. Jeremiah has committed to sending ten qualified residents to the Philadelphia Police Academy.

"We intend to build a strong relationship between PHA residents and the police department that serves them," Jeremiah said. "Part of building that relationship is choosing and training officer candidates from the residents themselves. We have had no shortage of interest in these positions from the community."

PHAPD's chief heartily agreed.

"It's reflective of the community we serve," said Chief Branville Bard. "What better way to do that than by searching for candidates who reside in PHA developments."

Bard noted that any resident who wants to become a PHA police officer has to meet a high standard to be chosen, trained, and graduate from the academy. Candidates must have at least a high school diploma or GED to first be considered. Three more residents are still in training at the academy and should graduate sometime between now and December.

If you are interested in joining PHAPD, please call Community Operations and Resident Development (CORD) at 215-684-5300.

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