

HOUSING HEADLINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE BETHLEHEM HOUSING AUTHORITY

IN THE
FALL 2015
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645 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018
610-865-8300
Fax: 610-865-8318
TDD 610-865-8333

www.bha645.homestead.com

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Roy Isaac Ortiz III , Ce-Cearia Gee, Anais Vega Rosario and Jacqueline Rimmel received Bethlehem Housing Authority Senior Scholarship Awards

2015 Scholarship Winners

ONE COULD CUT WITH A KNIFE THE PRIDE FELT in the BHA board room as summer began with the presentation of the Bethlehem Housing Authority Senior Scholarship Awards.

As family and friends looked on, with cameras in hand, four young residents were honored for scholastic achievement during the preceding academic years. Winners of the 2015 scholarships are Ce-Cearia Gee of Pembroke and Liberty High School (\$3,000) who is preparing to study education at West Chester University; Jacqueline Rimmel of Parkridge and Parkland High School(\$1,000) who intends to pursue a degree in business administration at Widener University; Anais Vega Rosario of Pembroke and Liberty High School will be studying radiology in training at St. Luke's Hospital; and Roy Isaac Ortiz III of Lynfield, a Freedom High (\$500) School graduate who plans to study Mass Communications at Northampton Community College. Congratulations to all!

FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Promoting Economic Self Sufficiency

All Housing Authorities exist to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for lower income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. However, the Bethlehem Housing Authority is more than merely the “landlord” of nearly 1500 apartments. The Authority works very hard to promote the development of strategies that coordinate both public and private resources that can assist our public housing and housing choice voucher program participants to obtain employment that will enable participating families to achieve economic independence. To assist residents, the Authority provides child care assistance and educational and job training through various partnerships. These services and additional homeownership opportunities are all provided to families participating in our Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program.

The key component of the FSS program is an interest earning escrow savings account that accumulates as the family’s earned income increases. Families receive these funds as they accomplish goals they have in their own individual programs. Some of our families have used these funds to purchase homes, begin small businesses, pay off debts and finance higher education for themselves or their children. FSS programs are unique because of their individual approach to supporting families. FSS programs are one of the few federally supported asset building programs in existence.

We are proud of the accomplishments of our participants and invite you to learn more about Family Self Sufficiency on our website at <http://bha645.homestead.com>, listed under “Programs.”

BHA Field Day

A BRIGHT SUNNY DAY IN SEPTEMBER met BHA families for the annual Field Day at First Tee Center. The day was filled with fun and games including face painting, rock climbing and jumping on bouncy jumping...and of course golf tips. The fun for residents was equaled by that of BHA staff and their families.



Soccer Program



Dozens of kids kicked off the summer at a BHA soccer camp held at Pembroke Village.

Under the leadership of Robbie Robinson and Nick Koufalis campers learned all the skills that many will use as they pursue the sport in school and/or clubs.



CONSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

The Marvine renovations, which we started in 2000, are coming to an end. The 15 apartments left to renovate should be done by the end of the year. Once the Marvine units are done, we will be starting renovations in the Lynfield development. At Litzenberger House, a contract has been awarded to replace the hot water heaters. This work should begin in October.

HUD is encouraging housing authorities to have Radon testing done in the apartments, so we are working on obtaining quotes to have this testing done. Once we have the testing scheduled, you will receive a notice with the test dates, along with simple instructions about the test. It is very important to follow the instructions so we receive accurate test results. The test involves placing a small measuring device, about the size of a 9V battery, in the apartment for 2 to 3 days. The measuring device should not be disturbed during the test period.



Jennifer Rodriguez Wins First Place Paul G. Pecharko Scholarship



JENNIFER RODRIGUEZ, a tenant of the Bethlehem Housing Authority and winner of the 2014 Josefina Berrios Community Service Award, has been awarded a \$2,000 First Place Paul G. Pecharko Scholarship from the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Agencies (PAHRA). Jennifer is studying Business Management at Kutztown University.

Having survived Hodgkin's Lymphoma at age eight and caring for her mother as she lost her own battle with cancer when Jennifer was just sixteen, Jennifer has never let life's trials bring her down. She is described by others as kind, compassionate and strong--both in mind and spirit--smart and independent. Her desire is to 'beat the odds, break the cycle of poverty and serve as an inspiration to young people' to show them that "success can be accomplished no matter where they grew up, their social status, or difficulties or adversities they may have faced."

According to PAHRA Jennifer was awarded the first place scholarship after members met her at a spring conference where she "exhibited the strength and determination that should ensure her success."

Citizens Police Academy

WHEN SUMMER BEGAN many parents planned on having their children do some vacuuming and dusting. But vacuuming for clues and fingerprints? Well, that's what many kids in our communities got to experience through the BPD's Citizen's Police Academy. The brainchild of deputy director Mark Iampietro the summer-long program included youngsters in many aspects of policing. In one session held at Lynfield Terrace the boys and girls in blue helped solve the mystery surrounding a van, including identifying clues on and in the vehicle as well as dusting for fingerprints.

Other programs included a visit by the BPD's mounted horse and canine units and bicycle safety. Under the supervision of Sgt. John Lamana and several officers and with the help of Lynfield resident and BHA board member Rogelio Ortiz many youngsters got a first-hand look at several career opportunities in policing. Iampietro and Sgt. Lamana are planning to make the Citizens' Police Academy available to all BHA communities in the future.





Monacacy Painting



VISITORS TO THE FIFTH FLOOR of Monacacy Tower might think they were stepping off an elevator at the Philadelphia Art Museum. This beautiful painting grabs your attention and draws you closer to marvel at the subject, color and perspective. A traveling exhibit on loan from The Louvre in Paris? Nope! It is the work of a very talented Alexandra Loukas who resides right there at the Monacacy Tower.

Born in Greece, Alexandra's journey took her to Canada and eventually to the Lehigh Valley. While dealing with a health scare she studied at the Baum School of Art in Allentown which helped her focus on

positive things in life. Her work has been exhibited through the Lily Oncology on Canvas: A Cancer Journey International Art Competition. That project brought her works to the prestigious Royal College of Art in London and the Metropolitan Pavilion in New York where it was seen by thousands of art lovers. BHA thanks Alexandra for sharing her work with our residents.

Housing Choice Voucher Income Reporting

THE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM has seen an upswing of unreported income in the last year or so which has resulted in many retro-rent charges. These retro-rent charges must be paid back to the housing authority in order to remain on the HCV Program. Remember, HUD regulations require you to report all income changes within 10 days. Even if you don't have all the document required, reporting timely will prevent you from getting a retro-rent charge and possible termination from the HCV Program.

RESIDENTS' REMINDERS

■ Zulma Rodriguez

I want to take this opportunity to review some tips and information about the care of your home and the grounds:

Utility Bills

If according to your lease, you are responsible to pay a utility bill and you don't pay, it's a lease violation. It's just like not paying rent! Therefore, get on a budget and keep your utilities current. If your utilities are turned off, you risk **EVICTION!**

Washer Machine Hoses

If you own your own washing machine, you should replace your hoses every five years. They get soft and will break or crack. If they break or crack when you are not home, it will cause a lot of damage that you will be responsible for.

Refrigerator Care

If something spills wipe it up immediately, especially the front where the door gasket meets. If sticky and not cleaned it will cause the gasket to pull from the frame and you will be responsible for a new gasket weather it is your own refrigerator, or BHA. So save your money!

Kitchen Cabinet Care

The following is a list of rules and ways to take care of them:

1. No contact or wall paper is permitted on the cabinets or anywhere in the unit.
2. Do not nail or tack anything on the metal back splash behind the stove.
3. Clean grease filter and range-hood regularly after cooking.
4. Do not put larger than a 40-watt bulb in the exhaust fanlight.
5. Do not use soap or water on the wooden cabinets; use the same product you would use to polish your furniture.
6. Wipe water quickly off the front of the cabinets, it will stain and mark the finish.
7. Do not store paper bags or newspaper behind or on the side of the refrigerator; it's a fire hazard.

Do you own a dog?

If you own a dog please be respectful of your neighbors. When walking your dog, please clean up after your dog. There is nothing more annoying than having you or your guest or family members step in dog waste and then enter your house.

HIGHRISE HIGHLITES

■ Millie Matos

REMINDERS: if your building does not have an active resident council and a tenant wants to use the community room, they must put their request in writing with all information and submit to the high rise office.

OFFICE HOURS ARE 8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. If a problem exists where the police should be called, you are to call them immediately and report the problem. Do not wait for the next business day or a meeting to report the matter, it may be too late!

Tenants are permitted to use only 2 washers or dryers at a time when doing your laundry.

SENIOR CENTER GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley hosted a ground breaking ceremony to celebrate the renovation of its Basilio Huertas Senior Center in April. John R. Mehler, Director of the Northampton County Area Agency on Aging, Mayor Robert Donchez, and Congressman Charles Dent were the featured speakers; and Mr. Richard Anderson, CEO and President of St. Luke's University Health Network, was the honorary guest.

The Basilio Huertas Senior Center, named in honor of the former Litzenberger House resident, was awarded \$132,553 as part of the Senior Community Center grant opportunity through the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, aided by former Governor Tom Corbett's commitment to providing programs and services that help older Pennsylvanians lead healthy and dignified lives. The ground breaking celebrated the progress of HCLV's program and the expansion of senior center services. The Senior Community Center grant will allow HCLV to offer additional health and wellness programs. It will also expand services to offer intercultural opportunities for all of the community's seniors.



The 50th Anniversary of Headstart was celebrated at the center in Lynfield this summer. Zulma Rodriguez, property manager, presents a special treat to some hungry kids!

Seniors Ride LANta Buses FREE



SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE LEHIGH VALLEY and throughout Pennsylvania can ride public transit for free.

Seniors ride free anytime on LANtaBus by showing their yellow or blue PA Senior Travel ID or a valid Medicare card. For an application for the Pennsylvania Senior Travel ID card call LANta at **610-776-7433**. You can also print the application from www.LANtabus.com/fares.

CHILDREN OF LYNFLD FUND RAISER

Using social media to raise funds for good causes is catching on in America. The Lynfield Tenant Council began an effort recently on GoFundMe, an internet-based "crowdfunding" website that enables users to personalize a fundraising campaign and share it with the people in their lives.

Donations to the Lynfield Community Center will be used for notebooks, pens and pencils, arts and crafts, recreational gear, and field trips that benefit the children the community.

Check out the campaign by searching the GoFundMe.com site for "Lynfield Kids!"



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Iris Linares
Vice Chairman
David Sanders
Valerie McLendon
Rogelio Ortiz
Resident Commissioner



UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar so you don't miss out on these meetings and activities!

- NOV. 9** Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
- NOV. 11** Veterans' Day, BHA office closed
- NOV. 18** RAB Annual/Public Meeting, noon, Monocacy
- NOV. 26, 27** Thanksgiving, BHA office closed
- DEC. 14** Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
- DEC. 25** Christmas, BHA office closed
- JAN. 1, 2016** New Year's Day, BHA office closed
- JAN. 11, 2016** Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
- FEB. 8, 2016** Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- Central Office **610-865-8300**
- Central Highrise Operations Office (CHOO) Litzenberger,
Bodder, Bartholomew and Monocacy Towers **610-865-8352** OR **610-865-8353**
- Central Family Development Office Pembroke, Marvine,
Fairmount, Pfeifle, Lynfield, Parkridge and Bayard Homes **610-865-8342** OR **610-865-8343**
- Maintenance **610-865-8319**