

HOUSING HEADLINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE BHA

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More than Bricks and Mortar

2014 marks Bethlehem Housing Authority's 75th anniversary and there will be a variety of activities throughout the year to commemorate the event. The Authority was created in 1939 and since that time, it has been Bethlehem's leader in providing low-cost housing. Over the decades, many thousands of city residents have benefitted from the programs which today have grown to include much more than just homes. "We are rightfully proud of the fact that we not only provide new or newly renovated homes, but also many programs designed to help residents end the cycle of poverty and dependency", said BHA Executive Director Clara A. Kendy. In coming issues, we will discuss BHA's contributions to the community in greater detail. In the meantime, here is our special commemorative logo. You'll be seeing a lot of it in 2014. ▲



Bethlehem YWCA Honors BHA with Award

For more than 87 years, the Bethlehem YWCA has been at the forefront of women's issues in America. From job training to domestic violence issues, to women's health, scholarships economic empowerment to racial and civil justice, the Y has defended the rights of citizens.



Clara Kendy shows the 2013 Empowerment Advocate Award, with proud commissioners Dot Saby, Dave Sanders and Joe Long.

The Bethlehem branch has been presenting an annual "Breaking the Glass Ceiling" award in recent years. This award recognizes local companies who go a step beyond in promoting women's and minority rights. The Bethlehem Housing Authority was recognized for its efforts with the Empowerment Advocate Award on Saturday, October 26, 2013. The gala was held at Lehigh's Mountain Top Campus and it was attended by more than 100 people. Representing BHA were director Clara Kendy, who accepted the award on behalf of BHA, and board members Dot Saby, David Sanders and Chairman Joseph

Long. BHA staff members Mark Iampietro, Gene Gonzalez, Zulma Rodriguez and Millie Matos also attended. The authority was honored for its commitment to diversity. Many BHA employees are female or of minority background. ▲





FROM THE
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

In our last Newsletter, we mentioned BHA's upcoming 75th Anniversary and it has finally arrived. One cannot understand the depth of how we have changed and grown over the years without going to our website and looking at the history page and vintage photos. Not only have we generated thousands of jobs for contractors, electricians, painters, etc., but we take most pride in our accomplishment of providing thousands of families, elderly and disabled tenants the opportunity to live in safe, decent, affordable housing.

We hope to reach out to as many residents as possible in the upcoming months, to make them aware of the services that we offer to them. Special attention will be given to children's programs, as we want them to be engaged in activities that fit their needs and or desires.

I want to encourage all to view our website: www.bha645.homestead.com. This is where you will find the programs we offer and general information about BHA. Looking forward to an exciting year, where I hope to see many of our long time residents and meet as many of the new residents as possible.

Clara A. Keady

Recreation News: Annual Field Day Is a Success

A small army of volunteers led by BHA Activities Coordinator Robbie Robinson produced another successful Field Day event at the First Tee Center on September 14th 2013. "It was a little cooler than usual, but we had a great time", said Mr. Robinson at the conclusion of the annual event. The day was filled with games and activities for all ages. Seniors enjoyed Bingo in the Family Development Office. Teenagers participated in a basketball tournament. Young children were able to try their hand at rock climbing, have their face painted and take turns in the moon bounce. A soccer mini-clinic was sponsored by local businessman Nick Koufalis and small children took part in the Bethlehem Police Department's "Operation ID" program. BPD officers were on hand to share the fun. They included Sgt. John Lamana, Officers Blake Kuntz, and Tom DeFrank. Free hot dogs, soft drinks, snow cones and pop corn kept everyone satisfied, while a prize raffle was the usual highlight of the afternoon. As a special treat, kids of all ages were introduced to the game of golf in the state of the art center, where they could putt or strike full shots at one of seven hitting areas. ▲



Above, Officer DeFrank fingerprinting Gabriella Vazquez.



Right, Nick Koufalis poses with some young soccer enthusiasts.



Other activities included face painting, rides and a bike raffle.





RESIDENTS' REMINDER

ZULMA RODRIGUEZ

Here's a reminder to all Family Development residents and visitors. Please observe all parking regulations on BHA property. One such example is the rule that forbids parking on grassy areas. Parking is reserved for macadamized areas set aside specifically for parking. Parking is never allowed on lawns and other grassy areas at any time.

I always remind residents that although we like to see nice holiday decorations on the outside of the homes, you are cautioned to never damage the building as you apply the decorations. There are proper types of hangers that are to be used. Never apply tapes or hammer nails and hooks into the building. If you need advice, call the FDO at **610-865-8342**.

Adopt a fire hydrant! Do a good deed for your community - clear snow away from fire hydrants this winter. This provides quick access for firefighters and water maintenance workers in case of an emergency. ▲

Mirella Snow reports that BHA's Family Self-Sufficiency program has had terrific success over the past decade. According to our records:

Public Housing:

- ▶ 22 families purchased homes
- ▶ 11 families completed the program by reaching the FMR; 3 families purchased homes; 2 are in the process of home ownership

Section 8:

- ▶ 5 families purchased homes
- ▶ 2 families completed the program by reaching the FMR; 1 family purchased a home

BHA-TV Up and Running

In the planning stage for over a year, a new method of getting important information from BHA to residents became a reality in August. BHA-TV as it is known combines our constant need to inform residents with modern technology. "In the past, we would create, translate, print and deliver hundreds of paper notices each month", said BHA deputy director Mark Iampietro. "The cost to do this was considerable. We had to factor in the time spent by the staff to do this as well as postage costs", he explained. "When you add up the sheer number of notices each year it is obvious that major savings could be realized through this new initiative. The other issue was that since we maintain minimal staffing levels, we found that we no longer have to divert critical manpower to the creation and distribution of notices. Resources can be better managed this way", Mr. Iampietro continued.

BHA-TV eliminates the need and the related costs to manage regular notifications, while allowing for constant reminders to go out every day. "We can inform residents about important emergency



Residents like Cecilia Keenan can catch all of the latest BHA news plus current weather and news by tuning in to BHA-TV in the comfort of their apartment.

contact numbers, remind them about meetings, and instantly inform them if there is an emergency they need to know about", said High Rise manager Millie Matos. "In addition, my clerks can concentrate on their regular duties".

Although BHA-TV is currently available only to high rise residents, we will be looking into a similar system for other communities if technologies permit it. For now, BHA high rise residents are enjoying the show. In addition to BHA-related news, up to the minute local weather and news is part of the package. This, plus the fact that BHA now saves paper makes BHA-TV a great idea whose time has come. ▲

Family Self-sufficiency – Mirella Snow

BHA Proud of its Success Stories



Mirella Snow has managed BHA's Family Self-Sufficiency for quite a few years now but she never tires of announcing her success stories. "I really do enjoy being able to show off the residents who make it through our program", she said recently. "These people are internally motivated. All we do is guide them through the process. We put all of our resources toward the goals that they set and then in a little time, they are on their way." Lissette Rivera and Jeniffer Rivera are two examples of FSS success. Lissette always felt that she could accomplish more but she needed an assist. "I ended up achieving all my goals including a high school diploma, a college degree, my driver's license, rebuilding my personal credit, purchase of a car as well as employment in my chosen field." Home ownership is next on the horizon for this young lady. Would anyone bet against her? Jeniffer was an unemployed person who had no idea what she wanted, but was pretty certain what she did not want. "I didn't want to set a poor example for my daughter", she said. FSS allowed Jeniffer to clear her credit, find a job and establish a household budget. Now she plans to buy a home.

Mirella appeals to all of you living in BHA...to all who may feel life is at a dead end...don't despair. Our staff stands ready to assist you in attaining your dreams! The program is for both the public housing and Section 8 programs. Call FSS at 610-865-8372. ▲





HIGHRISE HIGHLITES

MILLIE MATOS

The Litzenberger House's tenant council is an active one and during the past year, they held parties on Valentine's Day and on Christmas for residents. They also started a "Walking Club", which sets fitness and fun as their goal. The walkers like to use the beautiful greenway right behind their building. The officers are President: Evelin Rivera, Vice-President: Angelina Roque, Treasurer: Carmen Rivas and Secretary: Lucy (Aida) Soto

Now that the colder weather is upon us, it's not too late for me to pass along some common sense tips on how to stay comfortable inside your BHA apartment. First, make certain that your windows are tightly closed and latched. This will eliminate drafts from getting inside. Obviously, this is also why your window air conditioner should be removed. When inside on the coldest nights, and after you have set a comfortable temperature, you should wear appropriate clothing. A sweater, socks and slippers and an afghan may be necessary to ward off the bitter chill in the dead of winter. If you think you may have a "no heat" emergency, call maintenance as soon as possible. ▲



A walking club has been formed at Litzenberger House thanks to the new tenant council. Here, the participants pose on the south side greenway behind the building.

Frank Hirner (left) and Fred Magocs pose with Clara Kendy in October. Both gentlemen reached retirement age after long careers within the BHA maintenance department.



Frank's career began in 1969 when he was hired as a part-time employee. He rose through the ranks, becoming a full time employee, eventually receiving a promotion to the mechanic position.

Frank recently became a granddad, so we're certain that babysitting will be a big part of his retirement. Frank joins an exclusive club of former employees whose career spanned parts of six decades!

Fred's thirty-plus year career began in the late seventies when he was hired as a janitor. He rose through the ranks and saw action in every location during his time at BHA. Most of his time was spent as a maintenance aide. Fred is halfway through the "Honey Do" list he was presented with by his wife when he stepped down. We wish both Frank and Fred plenty of time to do what they want and the good health that makes it all possible.

Annual Beautiful Yard Contest Once Again Showcases Superior Properties

For more than ten years now, BHA has encouraged and rewarded those who take exceptional care of their properties. BHA folks have really shown off their pride over the years by expressing themselves with sometimes creative, but mostly just plain neat and colorful front yard displays. "We certainly appreciate your efforts at beautification", said BHA director Clara Kendy at the September 13 ceremony. "People new to Bethlehem are very impressed by the overall good appearance of our properties, and the Beautiful Yard contest is a big reason why", she added. Tenants vied for nine prizes which included cash and certificates. The winners were Maria Montanez, Carmen Perez and Luz Berrios of Parkridge, Javimarie Reyes, Elena Negron and Yolanda Cruz-Roman of Lynfield and the Northeast's



Linda Lenner, Yamiel Lopez and Justina Santiago. This year's contest was judged by Claire DeFazio of Community Services for Children and Ann Gibson of the Northeast Ministry. Congratulations to all of the winners. ▲

Yamiel Lopez of Pfeifle Homes became a first time winner with this colorful display.



Contest winners pose with Mrs. Kendy and Mr. Lampietro.





CONSTRUCTION CHECK LIST ✓

CURT KICHLINE

Contractors are currently working in four buildings in Marvine as comprehensive renovations continue. We are bidding work to modernize our generators in the high rise buildings; We are beefing up security by strategically placing cameras in BHA property. ▲



The Lynfield community building at 1889 Lynfield Drive is a hub of activity. The new tenant council is always scheduling activities and here we see a great one. The "Homework Club" provides a nurturing, friendly setting close to home for school-aged residents to work toward scholastic achievement. Here, Giovanni Rosa assists Xavier Rosa with his homework.



From your Community

Police Officers: Sgt. John Lamana reminds all parents that sharing important information with your youngsters is critically important in the event of an emergency. Make certain children know basics like their home address and a contact number for a parent or other responsible adult. You might be surprised how many youngsters do not know this important information. If you ever need assistance or advice, please call the substation at **610-865-7222**. ▲



Halloween is usually the time when kids come around asking for candy and treats. Not so this year. BHA enjoyed the unexpected pleasure of receiving gifts from youngsters in the form of homemade cupcakes. Director Ann Gibson and the Northeast Ministry started a new club called the Service Project Club. The kids in the club think up ways to reach out to others and then implement the project. On hand to make this delivery were Anthony Aquino, Annewry Caraballo and Shawn Westwood. They and supervisor Julio Freytes wanted to thank BHA for all that they do to support the Ministry throughout the year.

DID YOU KNOW?

What do you think you know about the Affordable Care Act?

Our friends at AARP want you to have information. If you are 65+, here are some facts for you:

- The law strengthens Medicare by including more preventive benefits, lowering the price of prescription drugs in the Part D doughnut hole, and fighting waste and fraud.
- Your guaranteed benefits are protected.
- The health care law lowers prescription drug costs.
- More preventive care is covered.
- The health care law fights fraud, scams and waste that take money from the Medicare program. The law strengthens Medicare by adding more resources to catch those who fraudulently bill Medicare.

Pfeifle Residents Welcome New Laundry Facility

Pfeifle Homes residents have enjoyed many terrific amenities while living in their community over the years. Pfeifle was one of the very first communities specially built for senior citizens. Their compact one-story design makes them attractive places in which to live. Each apartment has nicely landscaped areas in front and back. Inside, the kitchens and bathrooms are attractive, modern and functional. "If there was a drawback, it was that there was no provision for washers and dryers", said BHA's planning director Curt Kichline.

This one drawback has been fixed recently. The grand opening of the Pfeifle Laundry took place on November 19th. Pfeifle residents were afforded the chance to visit the new facility and to become familiar with it. The facility is for use by Pfeifle residents only and is open for set hours during the day. The building is secured and entry is only possible by use of a keyless fob. "In addition, residents will utilize the cashless machines by having debit-style cards at their disposal", said Mr. Kichline. The facility is located at 1310 Dover Lane in the heart of the community. ▲



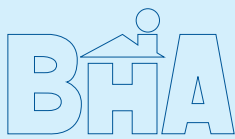
Miriam Maldonado demonstrates use of the money card to Pfeifle residents.





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ADMINISTRATION

Clara A. Kendy,
Executive Director
 Helen Jarinko,
Executive Secretary
 Mark Iampietro,
Deputy Director
 Eugene Gonzalez,
Deputy Director

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Joseph Long
Chairman
 David Sanders
Vice Chairman
 Iris Linares
 Valerie McLendon
 Dorothy Saby
Resident Commissioner



UPCOMING EVENTS

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
 SO YOU DON'T
 MISS OUT ON THESE
 MEETINGS
 AND ACTIVITIES!**

Jan. 20BHA office closed for Martin Luther King Day
 Feb. 10.....Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
 Feb. 17.....BHA office closed for Presidents Day
 March 10Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
 March 12Resident Advisory Board Meeting, 2 p.m.,
 Monocacy Tower
 April 14.....Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
 April 18.....BHA office closed for Good Friday
 May 12Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
 May 26.....BHA office closed for Memorial Day

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