

HOUSING HEADLINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE BHA

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Park Dedication Pays Tribute to Former BHA Resident

Dona Reynolds poses on the park bench, dedicated in her son's name.

Kenny Staples was cheerful, friendly, happy, fun loving, hard-working and talented. He was also disabled, but on Wednesday, June 26, 2013, dozens of his friends and family members gathered to pay tribute and remember him for what he was able to accomplish during his brief life. Kenny, who was wheelchair-bound never let his disabilities hold him back. He led a remarkably full life as an independent adult and several speakers made note of this during a memorial celebration in his honor.

June 26 marked the tenth anniversary of Kenny's tragic passing. He was onboard a transit bus when it caught fire. He was on his way home from his job at the Good Shepherd Home in Allentown. "Kenny worked every day and arrived back at his apartment the same way as when he would depart in the morning", said BHA deputy director Mark Iampietro. "With a big happy smile on his face." Kenny's demeanor was noted by each speaker. BHA executive director Clara Kendy remarked how Kenny's smile would "light up a room." His mother, Dona Reynolds regaled the audience with stories of Kenny's epic sense of independence. "Kenny would never take no for an answer, so he never let the disabilities prevent him from living his life", she said. She shared a simple note that Kenny wrote to her following his placement at Monocacy Tower years before. In the note, Kenny described his apartment with great pride. "He loved being independent and especially being at Monocacy", she added.

As a lasting and fitting tribute to Kenny, the Authority had a plaque attached to a bench in Johnston Park and dedicated it in his honor. The bench sits within view of the fourth floor apartment on the west side of the building that he proudly called home for many years. "I feel that he is up there, watching and grinning from ear to ear", said Mrs. Reynolds who was joined by her five surviving sons, their families and other well-wishers. ▲



BETHLEHEM
HOUSING AUTHORITY

645 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

610-865-8300

Fax: 610-865-8318

TDD 610-865-8333

www.bha645.homestead.com

FROM THE
**EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**

HIGH PERFORMER STATUS

In spite of the HUD funding cut backs and our complicated change of software systems, BHA has once again been designated as a high performer for our public housing program. The Supervisors and Managers have all worked toward cut backs in each of their departments. The focus this past year has been:

- 1.) What can we do without?
- 2.) How can we generate income? We are continuing with this theme for the current fiscal year.

I am happy to report that so far, we have managed to save money and still provide useful services to our customers, as evidenced by our continued support and commitment through Field Day, Beautiful Yard Contest, Roses for 90+ years residents on Valentine's Day, Gift cards for graduating high school seniors, Adult Literacy and Computer classes for high rise residents, just to name a few. Our monetary support of the Northeast Ministry and Boys & Girls Club also continues. Last year we welcomed Head Start to our Lynfield Community Building and they are back for another year.

In 2014 we will be celebrating BHA's 75th Anniversary. We hope to enlighten you to the various programs, partnerships and friendships that we have enjoyed over the years. You will be as amazed, as I am proud of the accomplishments in just the last ten years. We will provide the residents with a calendar highlighting our partnerships and a booklet, for our partners and friends, which will include an annual report. Staff photos will be included in the booklet as well. Later this year, we will post a calendar of events on our website, please try to join us in celebrating our 75th year of service to the residents of Bethlehem.

Clara A. Kendy

Bethlehem Family Becomes Habitat's 101st Homeowner

Natasha Velez recently became the local Habitat for Humanity program's 101st proud homeowner. The ceremony took place under mostly sunny skies on August 10th, and it involved a blessing of the home by Rev. Robert Biszek of Holy Infancy Church, plus the presentation of gifts from local firms and agencies that sponsor the Lehigh Valley program. Dot Cressler served as Natasha's mentor and she presented the Velez family with a handsome bible. Kelly Berfield of Habitat introduced the program and introduced the various speakers, including the construction manager and Natasha herself. For her part, Natasha thanked everyone who made her dream of homeownership possible. She was well-supported by all, including the Bethlehem Housing Authority, who as the home sponsor, purchased all building materials for the project. BHA was represented by Zulma Rodriguez, Miriam Maldonado and Mirella Snow. ▲



Natasha poses with her daughter in their yard.



BHA Executive Director, Clara Kendy addresses the residents from both family Developments and high rises on June 17, 2013 at the R. J. Bartholomew House. Seated to her left is the Executive Director of the YWCA, Stephanie Hnatiw.



RESIDENTS' REMINDER

ZULMA RODRIGUEZ

The summer has flown by and we are anxious to see the results of our annual **"Beautiful Yard Contest"** in September. Watch for the results in the next newsletter.

This important reminder to all residents...if you change your own motor oil, you are to dispose of the spent oil in a responsible manner. There are reputable local firms who can help you dispose of oil in an environmentally proper manner and they can be found in the yellow pages of the phone directory or online. If you are caught improperly disposing of oil on BHA property, you can face serious legal consequences. It is far easier to do this properly.

The holiday season is soon upon us and as always we encourage residents to get into the spirit by decorating their homes. We caution however that you do so in a manner that is responsible with respect to our properties. You are to use proper fasteners when hanging ornaments on the outside of your home. Our office can advise you further.

Saturday, Aug. 24 was a beautiful day for an outdoor event and the Lynfield Tenant Council organized a terrific day-long picnic for the community. Dozens of residents took the time to support the LTC by coming by to enjoy food, friends and fellowship under sunny skies. Roy and Martha wish to thank not only the residents, but also the local businesses whose donations helped to make the party such a success. Several BHA staff members showed up to say "hello", including Mrs. Kendy, Ms. Snow and our community police officer Sgt. John Lamana. ▲



ABOVE: Members of the Godbolt family unveil the sign identifying the newly dedicated athletic complex.

RIGHT: Steve's family and friends pose at the park.

Late Director Honored by BHA, Northeast Ministry

The Bethlehem Housing Authority and the Northeast Ministry joined forces in August to honor the memory of late Northeast Ministry executive director Steve Godbolt. The athletic complex surrounding the Marjorie B. Fink building is now named in his honor. "We discussed an honor for Steve and we agreed that naming the sports complex was most appropriate", said BHA deputy director Mark Iampietro. Steve maintained an office inside the Fink Building, where he reported every day for more than two decades, but to those who knew him, Steve spent equal time out back, encouraging his young charges. "Sports and recreation was a big part of the overall program provided through the Ministry", said BHA recreation supervisor Robbie Robinson. "Steve was involved in every aspect of the program and he really knew how important sports were in developing character", he added.

The ceremony was held August 10th, just three days after what would have been Steve's 55th birthday. On hand were Steve's parents, his seven siblings and his life mate, Virginia Forrest. Also present and speaking were BHA director Clara Kendy, Ministry board member Joane Hockenbury, Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan, Godbolt family members Natalie Seier, and Mike Godbolt, plus Ministry participants, Zach Borghi, Oliver Paulino and Ce Ce Gee. Monsignor William Baver was present to lead the group in a prayer of remembrance. The program ended with the unveiling of a sign proclaiming the area as "The Steven P. Godbolt Memorial Recreation Complex". A handsome plaque was placed inside the building lobby describing Steve and his contributions to the community. ▲



HIGHRISE HIGHLIGHTS

MILLIE MATOS

BHA-TV has gone from being just a dream to being a daily part of our lives. As you know, all necessary communications between BHA and high rise residents will now be accomplished through television. What this means is that the dozens of yellow, paper notices we used to deliver to you are now a thing of the past. The important information will now be delivered instantly via cable TV. The BHA channel is the latest innovation, designed to save time and money, while affording you with convenience. When we need you to move your car from your lot due to snow removal, we will let you know via BHA-TV. If the janitor plans to wax the floor, we will alert you through BHA-TV. If there is a special meeting that you need to know about, again, BHA-TV will inform you. In addition, up to the minute weather will be available through BHA-TV, and all types of other information will be a part of the package ▲

CORRECTION

Our last issue of Housing Headlines incorrectly identified the recipient of the Family Self-Sufficiency check (Page 3). The recipient should have been identified as Jeniffer Medina.



Family Self-Sufficiency Program Success Story

This edition of our newsletter highlights yet another success story in our Family Self-Sufficiency program. We at BHA are so very proud of the achievements of all FSS participants because we constantly are reminded of the human potential that all people possess. Many of our client/participants come to us with low self-esteem. They have been told over and over that they will never amount to anything, and most end up believing this. Our task is to convince them that they can achieve anything that they put their mind to.

Lissette Rivera's story is so typical of many residents of public housing. Just when she thought she was at a dead end, Lissette was introduced to FSS here at the Housing Authority. Every obstacle that she knew prevented her from achieving success was identified and then addressed. She knew that education was a key component to success, so she obtained a high school diploma and a college degree. From there, the challenges were identified and conquered. The education and training led to a job/career. Steady employment led to cleaning up her credit and allowed her to obtain a driver's license and to the purchase of a car. With all of this behind her, Lissette was then able to focus on a seemingly impossible goal – home ownership. "Home ownership truly represents success to most of my clients because it represents commitment". Mirella Snow said. "The ability to qualify for a mortgage and then to be able to buy and own a home is the ultimate responsibility for most folks. Lissette has proven to herself and others that she has what it takes to do these things".

Lissette may have proven a thing or two to the doubters but she gives credit where credit is due. "It has taken a lot of hard work but I have to say that the support given by BHA through Mirella, the staff and this wonderful program has made everything possible. I am truly blessed and grateful for every opportunity. Any success I and my kids experience is due in large part to this program." ▲





CONSTRUCTION CHECK LIST

CURT KICHLINE

Marvine renovation marches onward. We are in the final phases of this big project. Pfeifle residents will soon have their very own laundry facility once the improvements are complete at the former community building on Dover Lane. Marvine roofs are being replaced as needed and the vinyl siding replacement at Parkridge is proceeding thanks to great weather. We are in the early stages of façade improvements for several properties and we are considering upgrading generators in our high rises. ▲

LET'S PLAY "FIVE QUESTIONS"

It's easy...anyone can play. We posed five questions to different staff members.

Five Questions for: **Sue Balmoos**

Fantasy dinner guest(s)

Winston Churchill, Abraham Lincoln, and Ben Franklin

Secret talent

I am an expert scrap booker

Guilty pleasure:

Sushi and more Sushi

Dream vacation:

The Bad lands of South Dakota

8th day of the week:

Spend it in bed reading a great book with no distractions

BHA will be celebrating 75 years of service during 2014. Look for a schedule of events in the Winter newsletter.



In August, BHA resident Aaliyah Vazquez received a certificate and gift card as PAHRA's choice to represent Pennsylvania in the NAHRO National Poster Contest. The theme was "What Home Means to me".

Local Fighter Returns to Winning Ways

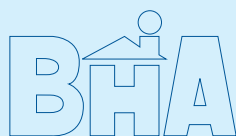
Ronald Cruz defeated Rondolfo Armenta on August 10 at the Sands Event Center by knockout. Ronald, who suffered his first loss last September, bounced back from that setback as well another defeat in June. Ronald admitted to being less than 100% during this period due to an injury. He looked sharp in dispatching Armenta during what was a scheduled 10 round fight. The referee stopped the fight in the second round, making the hometown crowd happy with the verdict. Ronald won again when he scored a sensational final round knockout over Alberto Morales on September 26 at the Sands. ▲





Bethlehem Housing Authority
645 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018-3899

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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!

Nov. 11BHA office closed for Veterans Day
Nov. 12Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
Nov. 13Resident Advisory Board Meeting, 2 p.m.,
Monocacy Tower
Nov. 28, 29.....BHA office closed for Thanksgiving
Dec. 9Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m., Monocacy Tower
Dec. 25, 26.....BHA office closed for Christmas
Dec. 31, Jan. 1BHA office closed for New Year's
Jan. 20BHA office closed for Martin Luther King Day
Feb. 17BHA office closed for Presidents 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