

Rochester Housing Authority **times**

Letter from Shawn

Happy Spring!

The weather has finally taken a turn here in Western New York and we are treated to the first signs of change from the doldrums of winter to the blossoming of spring.

I am reminded of a quote from Henry David Thoreau: "Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed... Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."

I believe we here at RHA are planting those seeds and are indeed creating wonders. From administrative to maintenance, we all share in the mission to create opportunities for those in need; those in the Greater Rochester area looking to find suitable housing, better their lives, and improve their living situation. I have faith in RHA and the good we have done and continue to do for the people in our region.

I continue to be proud of our people and our work. I am also proud to continue sharing the same mission as state and local lawmakers. We were happy to participate with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand in her LIHEAP press conference this past fall, in which she called for emergency supplemental funding for the low-income home energy assistance program. The program allowed for over one million New Yorkers—including those in the Rochester area—to heat their homes affordably.

On a personal note, I have completed the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association's (PHADA) / Rutgers University Executive Director Education Program, which trains participants from around the country stay current on PHA functions and industry standards. This certification will allow me to better serve my position, and in turn, those that work for and utilize the services of RHA.

I ask you to use this seasonal change as a reminder to check that your smoke and CO detectors are working. Remember, the good that we do affects the good that will continue into the future.

Shawn Burr, Executive Director



Executive Briefings

**Administration
Headquarters**
675 W. Main St.,
Rochester, NY 14611

585-967-3600
**Application
Processing Center**
270 Lake Ave.,

Rochester, NY 14608
585-697-7180
**Resident Services
Center**



**ROCHESTER
Housing Authority**



Towne Hall Meeting

The RHA recently held a well-attended Towne Hall Meeting that outlined our Strategic Plan and updated the progress on our Six Goals, which are as follows:

1. Provide
Increase and improve RHA housing opportunities, while maintaining the quality and security of RHA housing communities.
2. Support
Increase RHA's engagement with residents, participants, and the Greater Rochester community to create a supportive environment focused on resident and community needs.
3. Serve
Improve customer service externally and internally.
4. Grow
Improve, diversify, and grow overall revenue, resources, and community partnerships in service of the greater Rochester community sufficient to achieve goals 1-3.
5. Communicate
Enhance external and internal communication and collaboration.
6. Cultivate
Foster an inclusive and supportive work environment.

Human Resources

We continue to implement our strategic plan goal of "Supporting our Employees to Enhance an Organizational Culture of Excellence."

To that end, we hosted a wonderful staff "Lunch-and-Learn" with success coaches from MVP and had an enjoyable Employee Appreciation Day. Our Wellness Committee continues its important work, focusing on mental health tips, how best to utilize staff dental benefits, our referral program, which offers a bonus to RHA employees who refer a job candidate, and Kudos Korner, which recognizes employee members who have shown exceptional performance or made a significant contribution to our organization.

We also are excited to announce our successful recruitment efforts which resulted in the hiring of 14 new employees in these departments: Capital Projects, Compliance, Maintenance, Leasing Operations, Public Housing, IT, and Resident Services.



RHA gives a special welcome to Daniel Long, our new Director of Development & Capital Projects who began in his position in mid-March.

Of course, with new hires also comes retirement of those who have been with us for a while. We send our thanks and well wishes to Frederick Crocton (44 years), Harold Zink (33 years), Cathy Robinson (30 years), Sinclair Carrington (28 years), and Kathy Short (20 years).

Frederick Crocton

At age 22, Frederick Crocton started working at Rochester Housing Authority, moving up from maintenance labor all the way up to mechanic. For 25 years, he worked at Danforth East and West, then added Hudson-Ridge, University Towers, and ultimately all of RHA's high rises to his work locations.

In March, RHA presented Mr. Crocton with a very special commemorative plaque both to recognize his nearly 45 years as an RHA employee and congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement. When asked what kept him working for so many years at RHA, Frederick answered immediately: "It was my co-workers and the residents," he said. "Rochester Housing Authority felt like a big family."



And it was his family, particularly his mother, who instilled in him the importance and value of work. At age 16, Frederick got his work permit and started working at restaurants and summer camps.

Although Frederick may not be working at RHA anymore, that doesn't mean he won't continue staying active. He plans on being a regular at the "Y" and volunteering at senior programs. He's promised that we will continue to see him volunteering at some of our special events like our picnics and Christmas party.

His advice? "You gotta give back, stay focused, and keep moving!" Thank you to Frederick for all his years of service to RHA. We will miss him!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

RHA values diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunity in its outreach practices and decisions. We are happy to report that we have finalized our Language Access Plan (LAP) to adopt new procedures and work with community organizations to enhance RHA services for limited English-proficient residents.

Our DE&I Committee will work with RHA's Language Access Liaisons and other key stakeholders on the implementation of our LAP procedures. We will review and report annually on our LAP efforts.



Diversity Committee

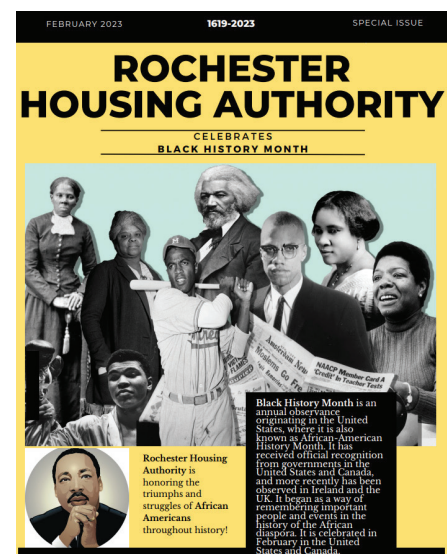
We are proud to have received kudos from Chief Executive Officer, President and Counsel of the Harrisburg Housing Authority Senghor Manns, who has spoken highly about our work, saying that RHA has "One of the better diversity efforts amongst housing authorities."



Reaves and Deputy Chief Keith Stith from the Rochester Police Department; a Black History Month Luncheon; and a donation to Black Community Focus Fund.

Throughout February, we celebrated Black History Month with a special 15-page newsletter; an email featuring contributions of Black Americans, Black History Month Speakers Lt. Bing

In March, we recognized Irish Heritage and celebrated the colorful Hindu Holi Festival, widely popular all over India and in Indian communities around the world. In addition, we sent informational emails acknowledging Indigenous Peoples' Day and Día de los Muertos.



Don't Struggle with High Internet Fees!

RHA residents can qualify for a \$30/month discount on internet services. Applying is easy: Have your social security number available, then call: (877) 384-2575. (Be sure to ask about a one-time discount of up to \$100 for purchase of a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet through a participating provider.)

Once you are approved, contact your Internet Service Provider and ask them to apply the discount to your monthly bill. That's it!



Homeownership

We currently have three families with anticipated home closings and three who closed this year. Thirty-one families have been approved for financing and are currently searching for homes.

2022-2023 Annual and Capital Fund Program Plan:

The Rochester Housing Authority announces a 45-day comment period to run through May 3, 2023 to solicit suggestions concerning the 2022-2023 Annual and Capital Fund Program Plan. A copy of the plan may be accessed on the RHA website Agency Plan - Rochester Housing Authority. A hard copy version may be reviewed at the RHA Administrative office located at 675 W. Main St. between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:00 pm Monday through Friday.

In-Touch Hotline

Our In-Touch Hotline is available for residents, participants, landlords, employees, and community partners to anonymously share concerns, questions, and comments directly to our senior management. Call (585) 328-0980 or email reportfraud@rochesterhousing.org.

Continued Partnership

We continue our partnership with Trillium's COVID testing/Primary Care services.

Family Self-Sufficiency Program Update

Many of you know of our Family Self-Sufficiency Program, the voluntary employment and savings incentive program. Last year's families earned a combined \$96,000 in matched savings! If you're interested in learning more, please contact your Public Housing or Leasing Operations Department Housing Specialist or fill out the FSS Interest Form on our Resident Services webpage. We currently have approximately 200 participants enrolled in the program. In May we will celebrate the graduation of nearly 60 individuals from 2020-2022.

We are also excited to share the news that we recently received a Family Self-Sufficiency grant of \$316,764, a 6% increase over our previous award.



New HUD Regulatory Requirement

A new regulatory requirement in April 2023 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that RHA must inform its public housing residents of the “over-income” mandate. For those families whose income currently exceeds the applicable over-income limit, they have two years from the date of the over-income determination to find new housing, with an additional six-month window for a family to complete its move out of public housing. RHA’s Resident Services department will assist in providing additional opportunities and resources for these families, some of whom also may have the ability to become successful homeowners.



Thanksgiving event with Lily of the Valley Church

Thanks to the generosity of Lily of the Valley Church of God & Christ, free Thanksgiving meals were prepared and served to the more than 100 senior residents of RHA’s East and West Danforth Towers.

Community Choice Demonstration Sites



Senior Holiday luncheon

In December, we celebrated our Senior Holiday Luncheon in-person for the first time since 2019. More than 150 seniors attended, enjoying prizes, games, music, and raffles in addition to a delicious lunch at Harro East Ballroom. We were treated by an RHA Senior choir who entertained everyone with their holiday music.

NYS PHADA College Scholarship Award

The scholarship committee of the New York State Public Housing Authority Directors Association (NYSPHADA) is proud to announce that the recipient of the 2023 NYSPHADA College Scholarship Award was Daniel Shiferaw. This scholarship was established to recognize the outstanding achievement of a graduating senior living in either public housing or receiving assistance through a housing program administered by a NYSPHADA member agency. A luncheon was held at the 2023 NYSPHADA Annual Spring Conference on April 19th at the Turning Stone Resort and Casino.

Community Choice Demonstration

In 2022, RHA was one of nine Public Housing Authorities selected to join HUD’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Mobility Demonstration Program, now called Community Choice Demonstration (CCD). This six-year study is designed to increase participation from voucher families with children under 17 to receive better access to low-poverty neighborhoods and other opportunity areas with high-performing schools and other strong community resources.

We have randomly selected 405 qualifying families with 70 enrolled so far. Each family was then randomly chosen to receive either standard housing support services or enhanced support services specific to the program. Interested families can reach out to (585) 697-6210 or email: communitychoice@rochesterhousing.org.

Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing

The RHA is proud to partner with the Canandaigua Veterans Administration for the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, which combines Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The V.A. provides these services



for participating veterans at VA medical centers (VAMCs) and community-based outreach clinics.

The V.A. Medical Center Campus in Canandaigua has 12 VASH units available, 11 of which are currently in use. The goal of RHA is to reach net zero homelessness in the veteran population, which currently stands at 89%, so there is still some work to do.

Participants who wish to receive a HUD-VASH voucher must be referred to RHA by the Department of Veterans Affairs. For more information, or to inquire about eligibility for this program, contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at (585) 463-2612 or on the Canandaigua VA website, www.va.gov/finger-lakes-health-care.

Community Updates

We are proud to announce that Shawn Burr has joined the Steering Committee for the Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative (RMAPI). Our own Melissa Berrien co-chairs RMAPI's Housing Work Group as well.

Partnerships

The RHA is proud to have developed partnerships with the following organizations: Partners Ending Homelessness, RMAPI Housing Working Group (focus on our community's full housing system), the Boy Scouts, Connected Communities Housing Committee, Closing the Gaps Six City Cohort, Office of Financial Empowerment, Private Sector Rental Market Study Working Group, Eviction Response Team, Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning, and the Benefits Cliff Project with Action for a Better Community.



Job Openings

Administrative Assistant

Building Maintenance Supervisor

Capital Projects

Chief of Maintenance

Clerk I

Clerk III/Typing

Clerk III/Typing/Bilingual

Computer Communications Technician

Housing Specialist

Human Resource Consultant I

IT Call Center Analyst

Mail Room Clerk

Maintenance Mechanic

Project Assistant

Sr. Accountant

Sr. Rehabilitation Specialist

Sr. Maintenance Mechanic - Electrical

Stock Clerk

System's Engineer



Capital Projects

Kennedy Tower: hallway/unit rehabilitation is 99% complete

Danforth Towers East & West: façade repair is 82% complete and will resume work when the weather allows.

Bronson Court: furnace & water heater installations are complete, and the roof replacement project is starting.

Bond/Hamilton: "Change the Face of Public Housing" project has been approved to proceed by the HUD Special Applications Center office.

Atlantic Townhouse: Work is beginning on the building exterior and Sitework project.

Holland Townhouses and Lexington Court Apartments: window refurbishment projects are underway.

Hudson Ridge Towers: beginning work on the upgrade to the lobby at Hudson Ridge Tower with the direction of Public Housing starting in April.

Maintenance Requests

321 Lake Tower: interior work includes painting the community room and lobby and removing old carpet and installing plank floors in the community room.

Kennedy Tower: a gazebo has been installed.

University Tower: outdoor grills will be added as residents have requested.

Maintenance Requests

If you have a non-emergency request, please fill out the form found here: <https://www.rochesterhousing.org/forms/maintenance-request>.

All work orders will be addressed in 1-5 business days. If you are a Voucher Holder or Shelter Plus Care participant, please contact your Housing Specialist at (585) 697-6105 to request an HQS Inspection.

For emergency requests only,
please call (585) 464-9600.





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