

# Rochester Housing Authority times

## Opportunities for growth

Dear residents, participants and community partners,

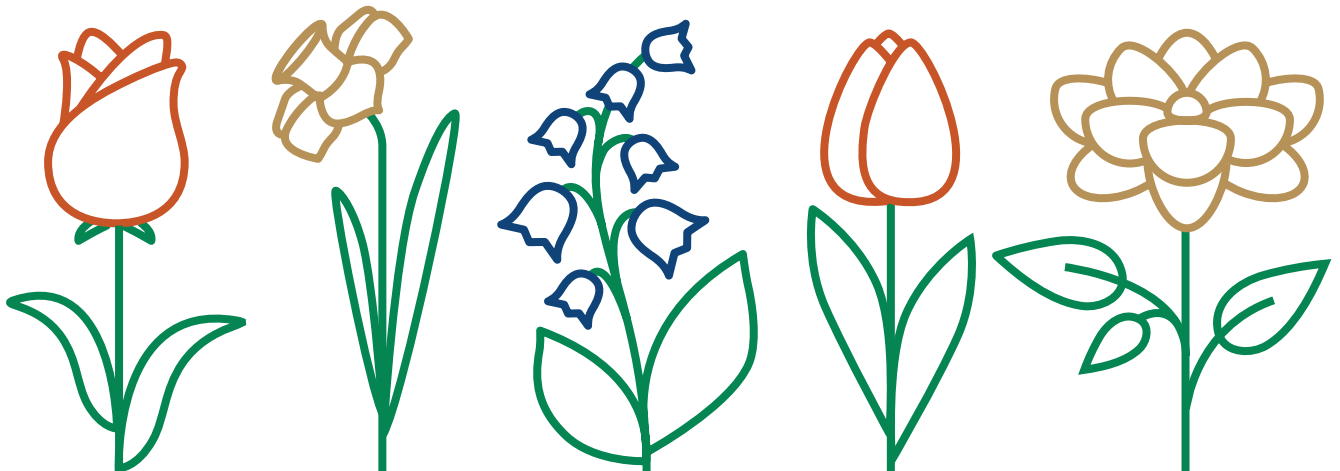
The Shared Leadership Team at RHA is excited for spring and the new opportunities the season brings. Some important initiatives our team working on right now includes:

- Annual Agency Plan will be out for public comment on 3/30/19 for 45 days with a Public Hearing scheduled for 5/15/19 at 2:00 at 675 West Main St.
- Regularly scheduled mandatory staff trainings continue monthly to build staff capacity
- We are planning events for residents and staff for the upcoming summer

As always, we remain focused on our mission of providing quality housing opportunities and related services for our residents and program participants serving more than 25,000 lower-income families, seniors and disabled residents in the five-county Greater Rochester area. We're here to serve you!

Cheers, The Shared Leadership Team: *Interim Executive Director Mr. Shawn Burr, Diversity, Inclusion & Compliance Officer Mrs. Cynthia Herriott, Executive Personnel Administrator Mrs. Rashondra Martin, Esq. and Interim Director of Finance, Sinclair Carrington*

Executive Briefings



**Administration  
Headquarters**  
675 W. Main St.,  
Rochester, NY 14611  
585-697-3600

**Application  
Processing Center**  
270 Lake Ave.,  
Rochester, NY 14608  
585-697-7180

**Resident Services  
Center**  
495 Upper Falls Blvd.,  
Rochester, NY 14605  
585-232-1112



ROCHESTER  
Housing Authority



# Welcome to the Team!

Left to right: Resident Commissioners Patterson, Cummings and Otis; Interim Executive Director Burr; Acting Board Chair Edwards; General Counsel Bullard and Commissioner Lee.

We're excited to welcome several new members to the RHA team. If you see them around your building or out in the community, say hi!



### Board of Commissioners

**Joanne Larson:** Commissioner Larson was appointed to serve on the Board of Commissioners by Mayor Lovely Warren. During the day you will find Commissioner Larson working at the University of Rochester as the Michael W. Scandling Professor of Education Chair, Teaching and Curriculum.

As we welcome Commissioner Larson, we want to say THANK YOU to former Commissioner Rosemary Rivera, leader of the Section 8

committee, who's term ended this past January.

Five of the Board of Commissioners' seven members are appointed by the Mayor, as per NYS Public Housing Law. The remaining two members are appointed by residents and participants during our bi-annual elections.

### Resident Commissioner Florine Cummings:

Commissioner Cummings was elected by fellow residents and participants to serve on the RHA Board of Commissioners this past fall. Commissioner Cummings takes over for former Resident Commissioner Willie Otis. As we welcome Commissioner Cummings to the team, we also say thank you to Willie for his dedicated service to his fellow residents.

## Resident spotlight

This Newsletter's Resident Spotlight shines on **Roy Brock**, a resident at Holland Townhouses for the past two years. Roy was nominated by the Public Housing Department for spearheading an initiative to reboot Holland's Tenant Association, of which he is now President.



"I started the Tenant Association here because I wanted Holland residents to have a better sense of community and find ways we can support the neighborhood. I'm looking forward to doing my part to lift residents' spirits and ultimately bring total change to my community."

In just a short time, Roy and his Tenant Association have already begun building several new programs including after school tutoring, a Holland neighborhood Clean Sweep, and planting flowers for residents. He is also working with the City's Traffic Bureau to help elevate a resident parking issue.

"RHA is doing so much to help us, but I feel the residents have a responsibility to do their part too. I hope that taking on this role as President and working with RHA to help make my neighborhood better, will inspire other residents to get involved and be active participants in forward progress."

Roy is very active in his community, he sits on the board of Celebration of Life Community Inc. where he is part of the Help Me Read initiative at School No. 17 where professionals and volunteers tutor more than 200 students. Roy also volunteers his time as a high school basketball referee.

In addition, Roy's book, *Success Philosophy* hits store shelves on April 19, 2019. "I wanted to do something that would motivate and inspire kids and show them how to achieve their wishes and desires, find financial independence and live well balanced lives."



# *Congratulations*

## *2018 Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Graduates!*

Since beginning the FSS program nearly 20 years ago, RHA has assisted more than 400 families realize personal goals through the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and RHA funded Family Self-Sufficiency Program. The program is designed to help public housing residents, Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 participants, and residents of multifamily assisted housing, to increase their earnings and build assets and financial capability. The program's goal is to build self-sufficiency and transition people out of supportive services. Rochester Housing Authority had 23 residents and participants complete the program in 2018. These graduates marked significant milestones, reaching their employment, educational, and personal goals.



## *Interested in the FSS Program?*

### *Here's how it works:*

Once an eligible family is selected to participate in the program, the family signs a five-year FSS Contract of Participation that specifies the rights and responsibilities of both parties. The FSS contract incorporates the family's individual training and services plan (ITSP). That is, the series of intermediate and long-term goals and the steps the family needs to take – and the services and resources they may need to access – to achieve their goals. Some of the services coordinated through the program include child care, transportation, education, job training, employment counseling, financial literacy, and homeownership counseling. An interest-bearing escrow account is established for each participating family. Once a family graduates from the program, they may access the escrow and use it for any purpose.



# Events at RHA



Our Public Housing Department held a Thank You Party for residents at Hudson Ridge Tower on February 1 to celebrate the completion of the elevator project and recognize the resident's cooperation during the project. A great time was had by all!



On February 15 we held a College Fair for residents and participants at our Resident Services Office. More than a dozen representatives from area colleges and supportive education services attended to speak with college-bound teens about opportunities. Resident Services staff also helped students fill out FAFSA forms, a service provided year-round to residents and participants of RHA.

Our Procurement and Capital Projects team recently held its annual Contractor's Open House on February 28. The event was an opportunity for contractors and vendors to learn more about RHA's processes, 2019 rehab and construction projects and other contracting opportunities.



**Know anyone interested in working with RHA?** We are always seeking to partner with new local vendors and contractors, especially Section 3 and WMBE businesses, to further our mission of providing safe and quality housing for the more than 2,500 low-income housing units under management. Learn more about business opportunities at <https://www.rochesterhousing.org/business-opportunities>.



**Want to be in-the-loop on upcoming events and educational opportunities?** Follow us on Facebook at [www.rochesterhousing.org/rochesterhousingauthority](http://www.rochesterhousing.org/rochesterhousingauthority) to stay informed on all the latest news and happenings.



## **GET NOTIFIED** *Make Sure You're on the List*

Notices from Leasing Operations will no longer be sent by mail. Our Leasing Operations Department (Section 8 & Programs) will now provide updates to residents, participants and landlords through our website – [www.RochesterHousing.org](http://www.RochesterHousing.org), our Facebook Page – [www.facebook.com/RochesterHousingAuthority](http://www.facebook.com/RochesterHousingAuthority), email (as appropriate) and through our new robocall system.

So we notify you with essential information, please contact us to provide your most current phone number by calling 585-697-6105 or visiting the Leasing Operations office at 697 West Main Street.

## **INSPECTION CHANGES** *What you need to know*

The Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 Program, requires unit inspections every two years. Participants have the right to request a mid-lease inspection any time for health and safety concerns. To place a request, call RHA's Inspection Unit at (585) 232-1601.

## **RENTAL PAYMENTS** *Never Pay for RHA*

Participants are never responsible for paying Rochester Housing Authority's portion of rent. If you receive a payment request outside your current lease agreement, call us immediately at (585) 697-6105 and inform your Housing Specialist.



# **Construction Projects in Progress**

Many projects are underway or pending, with improvements for residences across the city of Rochester. Here are a few construction highlights:



**Lexington Court Sitework Project:** Entry renovations at Lexington Court are moving right along with sidewalks now poured. The new columns and lighting have also been completed at each entry. Improvements to drainage and repaving of the parking lot have also been made at this location. Once the weather breaks, the lawns will be restored and reseeded.



**Lena Gantt Siding & Roofing Project:** This recently completed project included the replacement of new roofs and siding. Not only is the site more attractive, there are improved energy efficiencies to help save costs during Rochester's long winters.

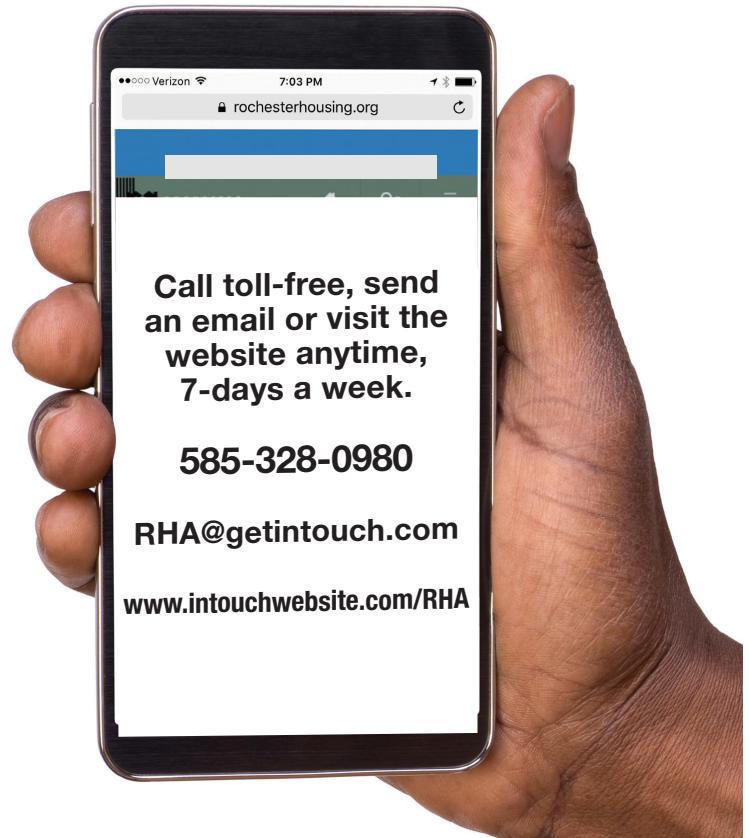
**Bond-Hamilton Redevelopment Project:** As part of RHA's "Change the Face of Public Housing" initiative, a modern design and major rehabilitation is in the works for this location. The upgrades will better match the neighborhood's look and feel and will include more green space along with updated interiors and exteriors.

Many other projects are in various stages of planning and design. Please visit our website for bidding opportunities.

# The InTouch Hotline

We would like to remind you that the InTouch Hotline is available for residents, participants, landlords, employees and community partners. This communication system is designed to make it as convenient as possible for you to **confidentially** share your concerns, questions, and comments directly to our senior management.

A third-party organization will ensure complete anonymity of messages received, unless there is a physical or verbal threat, illegal activity, or you chose to identify yourself. This arrangement ensures that anything you say can be completely confidential, so you can share your concerns with us openly.



## Tips from Mike the Maintenance Man



I don't know about you but I'm ready for winter to end! Lucky for us, spring is right around the corner, time to open the windows and let the fresh spring air wander through our homes. The birds are chirping, and flower buds are starting to peek up through the last of the melting snow. Around this time every year, I get ready for spring cleaning. It's takes a little bit of work but is well worth the feeling of a fresh start, leaving winter behind! Here's a few important to-dos to consider in addition to your typical spring-cleaning chores:

- Check the smoke alarms and review with the family on what to do in case of a fire.
- Replace the furnace filter, it's been a long winter and you don't want to blow dust back into your clean home!
- Check the dryer to make sure that the lint trap is cleaned out and that the vent hose is hooked up and working properly to avoid a fire hazard.
- Check your home for wear & tear, faucet leaks, loose door hinges, etc. and make a 'repairs-to-do' list or call your landlord for assistance.

Try to make it fun for the whole family and complete a couple of tasks each week. The next thing you know we're outside in the warm weather, visiting with neighbors and starting up the barbeque!



# Rochester Housing Authority times

## Fall season brings exciting changes

Dear residents, participants,  
family and friends;

Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) is looking forward to a positive and productive fall and winter season. Our communities are busy and vibrant spaces, and seasonal change brings with it a time to renew and reflect on upcoming goals and milestones.

The team at RHA is grateful for the efforts to encourage dialogue with our residents. This newsletter highlights a longstanding member of our community, Dot Tucker, a true advocate dedicated to helping others for nearly two decades. We are also thankful that the City of Rochester and Brighton are leading the way in support of non-discrimination in housing, with their recent legislation reminding us that diversity and fairness

are necessary for all to thrive. We also are excited to announce new funding from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that will enable us to better serve Rochester's disabled population through our Section 8 (HCV) program.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *RHA Times* and all the exciting news from our departments who are working together to help open doors to brighter futures for all. From all of us on the Shared Leadership Team, may your home be filled with love and joy this holiday season.

Cheers, The Shared Leadership Team:  
*Interim Executive Director Mr. Shawn Burr; Diversity, Inclusion & Compliance Officer Mrs. Cynthia Herriott; Executive Personnel Administrator Mrs. Rashondra Martin, Esq.; and Interim Director of Operations, Christopher Clarke.*



Executive Briefings



## Customer Care is Our Mission

As many of you may have seen around your homes and communal areas, Rochester Housing Authority has recently launched a Customer Care initiative. You will see posters reflecting our dedication to ensuring you have a positive experience with our associates every time you engage with us – because *Housing is our Passion, and Service is our Mission.*

Administration  
Headquarters  
675 W. Main St.,  
Rochester, NY 14611  
585-697-3600

Application  
Processing Center  
270 Lake Ave.,  
Rochester, NY 14608  
585-697-7180

Resident Services  
Center  
495 Upper Falls Blvd.,  
Rochester, NY 14605  
585-232-1112



ROCHESTER  
Housing Authority

# Low-to-No Income Insurance Options

This is a Paid Article by YourCare Health Plan

YourCare Health Plan offers free or low-cost health insurance programs in the Greater Rochester region. Residents in Monroe and Ontario Counties may qualify for one of these great plans – Medicaid Managed Care, Child Health Plus, and the Essential Plan. Our health plans offer full coverage and no deductibles.

As a YourCare member, you can receive one-on-one service from our friendly and knowledgeable team, and specialized care management services for things like prenatal care, asthma, diabetes, and more. We also boast one of the largest provider networks in the region, so you can keep your doctor or search for someone near you. In addition, YourCare offers Be Better Benefits member incentives, where you can earn up to \$125 per year in rewards for completing regular health screenings.



To find out if you or someone in your family qualifies for a YourCare health insurance plan, please call us at 1.866.273.6121, or visit our downtown enrollment center at 16 W. Main St., Rochester. Learn more about YourCare at [yourcarehealthplan.com](http://yourcarehealthplan.com) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

## Congrats Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Graduates!

Rochester Housing Authority's summer 2018 graduates marked significant milestones, reaching their employment, educational, and personal goals. Together, these graduates have earned a combined \$50,000 in escrow savings to put towards their new homes.

**Ms. Beaty** began her FSS Contract of Participation in December 2015, pursuing credit restoration, education and pre-home ownership qualifications. Ms. Beaty is planning on using her savings to purchase a home.

**Ms. Calloway-Griffith** began her Contract of Participation for the FSS program in September 2011. She sought to restore her credit and obtain full time employment. Ms. Calloway-Griffith is no longer receiving subsidy from Section 8 and has completed the FSS program. Ms. Calloway-Griffith is planning on using her savings towards homeownership.

**Ms. Dillard** began her FSS Contract of Participation in December 2015 and worked diligently to achieve her goal of full-time employment. Ms. Dillard successfully obtained employment in February 2016, and pursued credit restoration and homeownership in addition to her contractual goal.

**Ms. Crews** began her Contract of Participation for the FSS program in April 2018 with the goal of homeownership. She received training through Neighbor Works, obtaining a mortgage through the first home club at Canandaigua National Bank. She was able to purchase her home in June 2018.

**Ms. Morse** began her FSS Contract of Participation in August 2012. Her contract goals were to seek and maintain employment and credit restoration. She increased her credit score by 62 points.



**Ms. Griffin** began her Contract of Participation for the FSS program in July 2011. Her contract goals were to seek and maintain employment and homeownership. Ms. Griffin has completed all the steps for homeownership and closed on her home in August 2018.



## Resident spotlight

This Newsletter's Resident Spotlight shines on **Dot Tucker**. Dot has lived in Hudson Ridge Tower since 1998. A longtime advocate for residents, Dot has served as President of the Resident Council since 2001 and president of the Jurisdiction Wide Council. She has assisted many of the other resident councils with budgeting, training, and fundraising.

"In the beginning, I hit the ground running," she shared. "I was excited about doing it."

Dot's dedication and enthusiasm encouraged the formation of many social groups throughout the years, including bi-lingual Bible Study and the popular "Fun Night," where residents enjoy socializing and playing bingo/dominos several times a week.

Dot is a sounding board for residents and notes that most topics that come up with residents focus on three key areas: management, maintenance and security. Residents are comfortable going to Dot with their concerns, and she is always ready to listen and help them reach solutions independently when possible. Hudson Ridge Tower is fortunate to have Dot serving the community. Her efforts are appreciated and greatly valued.



## Upcoming events



Our residents and families have a busy calendar with a variety of exciting events and educational opportunities.

- **October 30** – Job Fair at Resident Services Office, come learn about exciting community employment opportunities, and interview on-the-spot.
- **November 29** – Area colleges will be onsite at Resident Services to share information about their schools and available scholarship opportunities.
- **December 13** – Annual Toy Giveaway with Santa and Mrs. Clause at Resident Services *\*please RSVP\**
- **December 15** – Senior Holiday Party will be held this year at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, *\*please RSVP\**



# Important Landlord Updates

Eight months ago, RHA established a Landlord and Participant Advisory Forum and since has met and reviewed various ways to improve services for participants and landlords for our HCV/Section 8 program. Recently, landlords received a letter detailing key improvements to processes including:

## Inspections – Initial or Move-in

- RHA is no longer inspecting units that are occupied by a person.
- Landlords are required to have utilities turned on prior to the unit's initial inspection.
- The landlord must be present for the initial inspection.
- Starting November 1, 2018, RHA will require a \$50 fee for all third and subsequent inspections.
- Units that fail an inspection must have all cited deficiencies corrected and re-inspected within the 30-day allotted time period.

## New Portal System

- For increased communication and sharing, RHA has developed a portal for landlords/owners that provides information on Housing Assistance Payments as well as inspection findings and history.

## Email Addresses

- RHA is requiring landlords to provide an email address, so we can easily, and more efficiently send inspection reports and correspondences.

## HOUSING FOR ALL Removing barriers

We are grateful to the City of Rochester and Brighton for their efforts in fighting discrimination in housing. Thanks to their support, every individual within the city and the Town of Brighton is assured that they will not face discrimination, prejudice or intolerance. By reinforcing the importance of equality—equal opportunity and no discrimination in housing regardless of income—the City of Rochester and Brighton improve the well-being of all.



## 2018 Planning: Your Input Counts!

RHA is now accepting community input on changes to our **2018 Annual and Administrative Leasing Operations (HCV/Section 8) Plan**.

The plan can be accessed at: <http://rochesterhousing.org> or reviewed in-person between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, at 675 West Main Street, Rochester, New York 14611.

On Tuesday, October 16, a public hearing will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the McHugh Room at RHA's 675 West Main Street location. Interested parties are invited to sign-in and speak for a limited time.

Those who have lengthy comments/questions should submit in writing to RHA, Attention: Administrative Plan, 675 W. Main Street, Rochester, NY 14611.



## Recent projects: A place to go when in need

This past August, RHA cut the ribbon at 1-3 Whalin Street in the South Wedge neighborhood. This property is now the region’s first dedicated emergency home for families affected by fire damage. RHA plans to provide additional dedicated “emergency homes” over the coming years, one property in each of the four quadrants of the city, so families have minimal disruption from their regular day-to-day routines.

The duplex property had sat vacant for two years, until Rachael, a single mother, and her two young children (Maddie and Aiden) attended the March 2018 RHA Public Board Meeting and shared their tragic story. They were displaced after a fire destroyed their home, and were left homeless and without their personal belongings during the coldest time of year.

“When Rachael Conrad shared her story that day, I knew we had to do something,” said RHA Board Vice Chair John Page. “It’s heartbreaking to imagine a family on the street with no access to safe shelter, food, or clothing – and even more unbearable that, until we created this program, there was nothing like this to help families longer-term on their road to recovery.”



During the ribbon cutting ceremony, RHA dedicated 1 Whalin Street as “Maddie’s Home” and 3 Whalin Street as “Aiden’s Home” in honor of the family who brought this issue to their attention and who, through sharing their loss and struggle, will help many Rochester families for years to come.

Each home is decorated with a custom dedication plaque signed by the maintenance crew at RHA who took this vacant property and gave it new life.

## Projects on the horizon

Many projects are underway or pending, with improvements for residences. Here are a few highlights:



Lexington Court

**Lexington Court Sitework Project:** Entry renovations at Lexington Court are moving right along with sidewalks now poured. The next step is installing new updated columns and lighting at each entry. Improvements to drainage and repaving of the parking lot have also been made at this location.



Lena Gantt

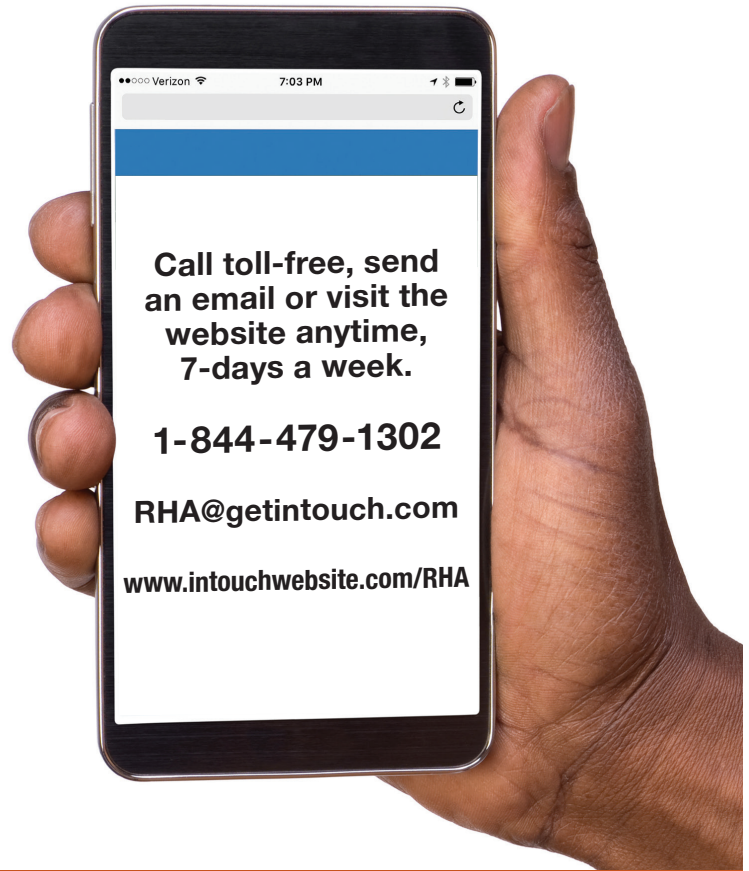
**Bond-Hamilton Redevelopment Project:** As part of RHA’s “Change the Face of Public Housing” initiative, a modern design and major rehabilitation is in the works for this location, to better match the neighborhood’s look and feel. This will include more greenspace and updated interiors and exteriors.

**Lena Gantt Siding & Roofing Project:** Nearly completed new roofs and siding will greatly improve energy efficiencies at this location for the long winter ahead.

# *The InTouch Hotline*

We would like to remind you that the InTouch Hotline is available for residents, participants, landlords, employees and community partners. This communication system is designed to make it as convenient as possible for you to **confidentially** share your concerns, questions, and comments directly to our senior management.

A third-party organization will ensure complete anonymity of messages received, unless there is a physical or verbal threat, illegal activity, or you chose to identify yourself. This arrangement ensures that anything you say can be completely confidential, so you can share your concerns with us openly.



## *Voice Your Choice – Resident Commissioner Election*

On November 1, 2018 from 9:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., RHA residents and Section 8 participants will have the opportunity to voice their choice in electing two Resident Board Commissioners. Those elected to serve will advocate on all RHA Public Housing and Section 8 residents' behalf.

For Section 8 Rental Assistance Program Participants voting is at 675 West Main Street, Rochester, NY 14611. For Public Housing Residents voting is at your Respective Management Offices (where rent is collected).

Elected resident board commissioners sit on the RHA Board with full voting rights and will officially take their seat beginning November 14. They are responsible for helping to develop solutions for housing concerns presented by RHA residents and participants. For them to successfully represent you, we ask that you share your thoughts and concerns with them during your building's scheduled monthly input sessions.



ROCHESTER  
Housing Authority