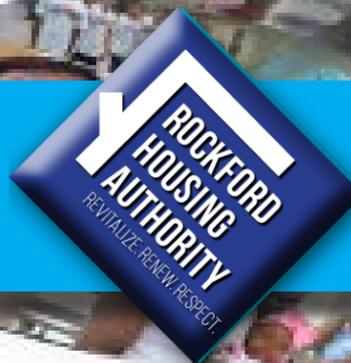




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QUARTERLY
NEWSLETTER

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**Housing Choice Vouchers
(Section 8)**

May 21st RHA hosted the latest HCV Landlord meeting. Over 700 invitations went to Rockford area landlords. We are thankful for those who participated in productive discussions about topics from payment standards to HQS (housing quality standards) inspections. Of those who participated there was a great diversity of landlord experience; from less than thirty days to more than twenty years of HCV program participation. Highlights of discussions included:

- 1) Payment standards – Payment standards are used to calculate the housing assistance payment (HAP) that the public housing agency (PHA) pays to the owner on behalf of the family leasing the unit. The range of possible payment standard amounts is based on HUD’s published fair market rent (FMR) schedule for the FMR area in which the PHA has jurisdiction. FMRs are based on either the 40th or 50th percentile of rents charged for standard rental housing in the FMR area.
- 2) HQS Inspections – The goal of the housing choice voucher program is to provide “decent, safe and sanitary” housing at an affordable cost to low-income families. To accomplish this, program regulations set forth basic housing quality standards (HQS) which all units must meet before assistance can be paid on behalf of a family and at least annually throughout the term of the assisted tenancy. HQS defines “standard housing” and establishes the minimum criteria necessary for the health and safety of program participants. An inspection check list is available through a RHA housing specialist.
- 3) HCV subsidy payments – subsidy payments are paid by the fifth of the month.



Successful HCV programs are based in quality relationships between the housing authority and landlords and landlords and tenants. We encourage all landlords to participate in the landlord meetings. Thank you to all landlords who participate in the program.

Red Nose Day at RHA

Red Nose Day is the day in the U.S. annually and every two years in the UK, when people across the land can get together and do something funny for money at home, school and work. Funds raised go to the Red Nose Day Fund which distributes the money through programs to keep children and young people safe, healthy and educated. Red Nose Day USA is run by Comic Relief Inc..

“I am proud of our work to eliminate childhood poverty; being part of Red Nose Day helps to show yet another way we are committed,” Board Commissioner, Jerry Lumpkins. RHA staff and Board participated in the 2016 Red Nose Day, May 26th.



**Do Something
Funny for Money**



Say Something, Do Something can be the tag line of many motivational efforts. From sharing information on family, friends, coworkers involved in unethical activity to dangerous situations the words can have an overriding meaning. At RHA we have long asked staff, under our ethics policy to Say Something, Do Something and we have asked the same of our residents at times of violence. Historically we have had better outcomes from the first request and unfortunately, little from the second. Resident fear is often cited as the cause. Residents fear calling the police; fear saying something, doing something. Is this true? What we learned is this condition is not one that plagues all low income neighborhoods, not just RHA properties.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), analyzed victimization reports from 2006-2010. In its 2012 'Victimizations Not Reported to Police, 2006-2010' report, the BJS found "the victim feared retaliation by the offender or didn't want the offender to get in trouble" only accounted for 13% of unreported crimes. It seems the real barrier is the lack of being a member of a caring community.

The Rockford community is not just boundaries which may be marked on a map. Our community can be approached as a value, not just a locality. As such it can be used to bring together a number of elements, solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust. A "community" plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging. The fact that people live close to one another does not necessarily mean that they have much to do with each other. It is the nature of the relationships between people and the social networks of which they are a part that is often seen as one of the more significant aspects of 'community'. When people are asked about what 'community' means to them, it is such networks that are most commonly cited.

I feel compelled to ask... Are each of us doing our best to develop social networks or when we see acts of incivility or "unusual events" that create unhealthy conditions in our community, do we Say Something, Do Something? Over the coming months RHA will launch a platform to engage community voices to, yes prevent violence but why must it only be violence? Why can't we, move to address all social injustice? I leave you with... Saying nothing and doing nothing, is indeed doing something. The absence of a decision is in and of itself a decision and that is not leadership or living by our values. We can all do better. I look forward to hearing your voices and seeing the results from your effort.



Rockford Housing Authority is pleased to announce that Ann Johns has joined the organization as the Procurement, Contract and Section 3 Compliance Manager with a strong background in procurement and contracting experience. She is passionate about assisting people and small businesses achieve success and fully understanding contracting with Federal, State and local government funded agencies. As a researcher and an educator she has been diligent about breaking down complex issues; the typical "red-tape" concerns.



Most recently Ann was the Director of the Rock Valley College Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) program for four years. Prior to working at RVC she was with the State of Wisconsin PTAC program for twenty years. Prior to her career with the PTAC Centers, Ann established and operated a small woman-owned business in Rockford which specialized in selling machine and hand tools to government agencies. Thus providing her with an appreciation of contracting for the business owner's perspective. Ann attended the University of Arizona and San Jose State University in California

"I look forward to Ann's leadership in helping RHA achieve continued growth in business with woman, minority and Section 3 business enterprises," Ron Clewer, CEO.



Rockford Housing Authority is pleased to announce that Marcus Hill has joined the organization as the Resident Services Manager. Marcus Hill is a graduate of Rockford University with a Bachelor Degree in Psychology and Physical Education. He was previously employed by the Illinois Department of Human Services as a Case Worker/Job Specialist after spending much of the past five years helping people with criminal records find housing, education, and work through Chicago based Safer Foundation jail re-entry program.

He was also a member of the Rockford City Council from January 2014 through April 2015 and represented the 6th ward. Hill spends his spare time as a coach for Rockford Christian school freshman basketball team and also coaches and trains for AAU level basketball. He has 15 years of coaching experience; has coached for the RPS 205 school district, Boylan High School, and is a member of the RAVE Authority Board. He prides himself on helping others, community involvement, and making positive change in the world.

According to Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) half of all hourly workers leave new jobs in the first four months, and half of senior outside hires fail within 18 months. While RHA has had better than average hiring practices there is still room to improve our hiring practices so all associates find success. This helps the individual, the team and the agency. This is where onboarding comes in.

Onboarding helps new hires adjust to the social and performance aspects of their jobs so they can quickly become productive, contributing members of the organization.

As part of the RHA onboarding program, RHA is utilizing the recently released HUD Lead the Way platform. HUD is now providing a free, online training to help Public Housing Agency (PHA) boards and staff fulfill their responsibilities in providing effective governance and oversight. To date a majority of RHA's leadership team and Board have completed the training. All members will complete the training.

Lead the Way helps enhance skills in six key aspects of PHA governance and financial management:

- Asset Management
- Budgets
- Assessing Your PHA
- Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Ethics
- Know Your PHA

Lead the Way is just one of the many training opportunities available to new and existing RHA staff and leadership. RHA remains committed to providing relevant training and our onboarding platform is one of these newest commitments.

Better Buildings is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) designed to improve the lives of the American people by driving leadership in energy innovation. Through Better Buildings, DOE partners with leaders in the public and private sectors to make the nation's homes, commercial buildings and industrial plants more energy efficient by accelerating investment and sharing of successful best practices.

RHA joined the Better Buildings Challenge in 2014 as a show of the Board and agency's commitment to improving our properties and being fiscally responsible. We knew we had a barrier to overcome - Maintaining our building portfolio with regulatory constraints and continuously reduced annual funding. We knew building and tenant energy efficiency was one solution; a big solution!

Two years later, RHA stands again as an innovative leader and industry driver. HUD recognizes the need for "green" and has now implemented a "Green Physical Needs Analysis" or GPNA as a mandated assessment of public housing assets. The GPNA tool includes a comprehensive list of building/site systems and components, with measurable line items, that make up a complete assessment - including energy efficiency upgrade options. RHA has already implemented more than \$11 million in such upgrades since 2011; leading our market by not only recognizing but implementing solutions!

At a recent invitation only event at the White House, Franklin (Lynn) Orr, Under Secretary for Science and Energy said to a room of about forty, "If you are in this room it is because you are recognized as a leader in our nation's energy efficiency efforts." RHA was proudly represented.

Ron Clewer, CEO of RHA stated, "I am proud of our Board, RHA staff and my colleagues for again placing our agency amongst the leaders of industry. In the challenge, this included Pepsi, Toyota, 3M, HEI Hotels and Resorts... and RHA." To date challenge partners have saved \$1.3 billion in energy.

