

RHA 2013 HOUSING IMPROVING COMMUNITY ->

How the Rockford Housing

Authority is recreating itself and

changing the way it supports the

Rockford community.



OUR VISION

REUITALIZE

RENEW

RESPECT

REINFORCE

REDEVELOP

Rockford Housing Authority proudly serves our city of 157,280 through 1,922 housing units and 2,155 Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers. We have realigned our goals and continue to realign our organization to not only become a better provider of public housing, but to have a more positive influence on the economy, social fabric and livability of our city. We envision a time when all Rockford neighborhoods contribute to the appeal of our city - neighborhoods enriched by pride, hard work and investment. Neighborhoods where respect, excellence and a sense of community ownership are evident



RHAHOUSING BREAKDOWN

Did you know that more than half of RHA residents are Senior and Disabled citizens?

SENIOR/ DISABLED HOUSING

(1039 total units)

Brewington Oaks → (418)

N. Main Manor → (187)

Park Terrace → (183)

Olesen Plaza →

Buckbee → (43)

Midvale →

FAMILY/ SINGLES HOUSING

(883 total units)

Scattered Site Homes → (302)

Fairgrounds Valley → (210)

Blackhawk Courts → (196)

Orton Keyes → (175)



Summit Green → (27)

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

RHA has set the following priorities to help achieve our larger vision:

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Reduce RHA's
fixed and operating
costs so that more
resources are directed
to the advancement
of its residents
through active case
management and
other programs.

Raise expectations
for RHA resident
accountability and
create and enhance
opportunities for
residents to increase
their self-sufficiency and
economic
independence.

RHA's ReBuild program will lend a helping hand to family residents seeking to change their lives.

For able family resident heads of households, public housing is not intended to be housing of last resort. It is intended to be temporary, transitional housing: a safe harbor on a way to a better life.

To ensure this is the case, RHA's Board and Staff are determined to require more from family residents. Our goal is to hold family heads of household accountable for their actions (and inaction) while inspiring them to help themselves toward more self-sufficient ways of life.

We have worked hard to free up funding to provide educational assistance, life skills classes and to enforce rules and regulations. One such program, ReBuild, is a robust, structured and progressive case management program designed to help



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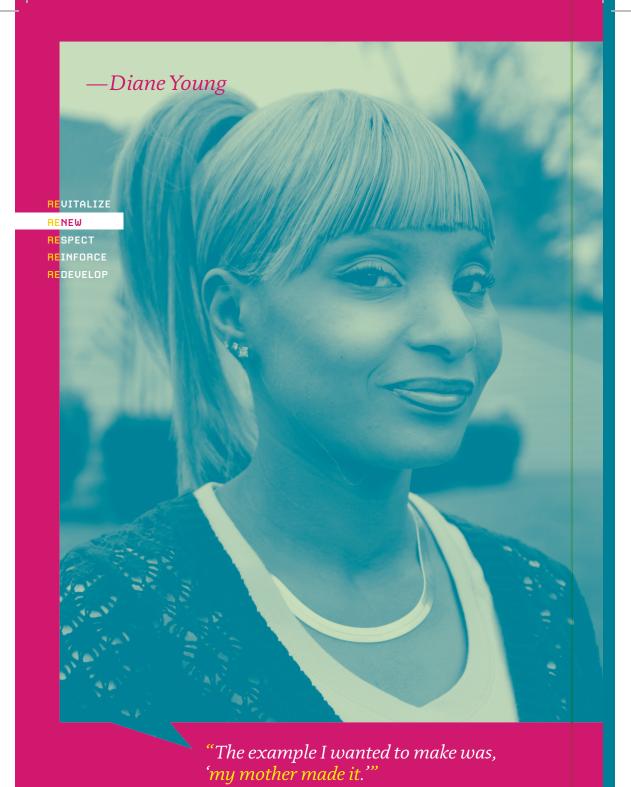
residents along their way to self sufficiency. ReBuild was launched in November, 2011.

ReBuild and other techniques will contribute to better outcomes.

RHA is implementing new data tools and ReBuild Case Management to:

- —Identify the needs, skills, and necessary training for residents
- —Match residents with appropriate internal and external programs
- —Monitor and encourage progress via our new internal case file audit system











Diane Young faced so many challenges in life. With the help of Rockford Housing Authority and other good people, she has overcome them all. Born to a drugaddicted mother, and having become a mother herself at iust 16 vears old. Diane used education and an iron will to advance herself and her family. She is a CNA, an LPN and holds Associates and Bachelors Degrees. She intends to earn a Masters. Diane worked 32 hours/week while studying for her Bachelors Degree at Judson College in Elgin, while also raising three children.



RHA Today:
By streamlining operations and maintenance, RHA has more than doubled support for residents with programs like ReBuild, a powerful new case management program.

Diane owns her own home and leads her family by example. "I knew I had become part of a system - and I knew I didn't want to always need that system's help to survive," she said. "I also believe that when you get help, you owe it to society to help others. So many good people have helped me over the years at RHA. If I can be an example to others, I'm very proud of that. And I'm happy to help."

"Diane is a shining example of what public housing can achieve when we all - staff and residents - work together and never give up," said Cherene Sweeny, RHA Resident Services Manager. "I worked with her as a Case Manager many years ago. It's such a joy to have watched her achieve so many goals. And, she's not done yet."

Visit <u>rockfordha.org</u> to view a video and learn more about Diane first-hand.



Eddie Torrance's family moved around a lot when he was a child, but settled into RHA's Fairgrounds family site when he was in middle school. Because security was significantly more lax at that time, gang influence existed there, so Eddie got on his bike and rode away, visiting the YMCA and friends off-site. At the urging of his mother, Vanessa, he was determined to keep his young life on track through sports, school and positive friendships.

Vanessa set the tone for all her children and encouraged them to work hard, get an education and lift themselves out of poverty. She did it by example; she went to school while raising her kids and became a practicing nurse. She eventually purchased the home she had lived in with RHA Section 8 support and still lives there today, proudly and happily.



For his part, Eddie enrolled in Western Illinois University, finished his Bachelors in Florida, and



earned a respected position of leadership as a Sergeant of the Rockford Police Department. He visits Fairgrounds as often as he can and strives to influence young residents in the most positive way possible: by example. "They will tell me I don't know what it's like being a young black person in poverty, but I can say 'I was there.""



Visit *rockfordha.org* to view a video about Sergeant Eddie Torrance.



"I went away to school and I brought my education right back home; right back to Fairgrounds."





Because Alice Jenkins' husband was disabled, and their income level qualified them for housing assistance, the couple moved into RHA's Olesen Plaza in 1991. She says the new environment took some getting used to, but it wasn't too long before it became "home."

Alice has cheerfully reinforced that feeling by virtue of her proactive and tireless efforts as a RHA volunteer. She serves on Olesen's Resident Council, the RHA Home Board and as Resident Appointee on RHA's Board of Directors.



Did you know that RHA provides Service Coordinators for Seniors: They coordinate events, workshops, classes and assist with applications for public aid, Medicare, SSI and more!





"I feel I owe something back to RHA. We need the help, but it shouldn't be given for free if residents are capable of pitching in," she says. "There are many people less fortunate than me. I want to do what I can to help them, even if it's just a little. A little here and a little there can add up to a lot."



"I think being a better neighbor is about communicating better. Also, I try to be a positive influence on the community and help bring positive things to life, like community gardens, special events and activities. There's so much to do. And we are trying to change the negative perception of public housing," she said. "We're just people – like everyone else. The best way to change those stigmas is with positive actions. Actions speak louder than words"

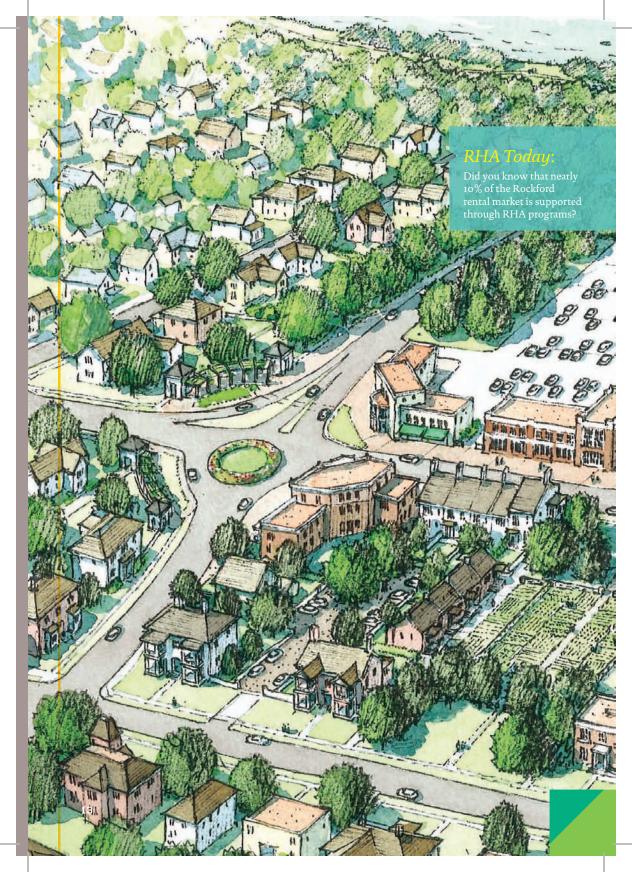
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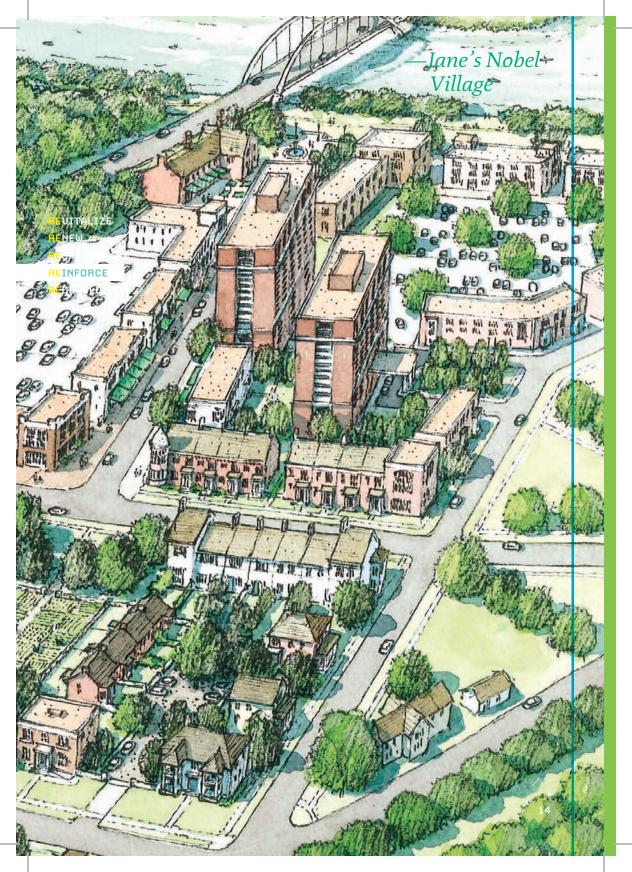
With challenging goals and a refreshed vision, RHA intends to pursue a new kind of development strategy with an emphasis on de-concentration of supportive housing.

RHA will renew and refresh existing properties and completely redevelop neighborhoods in order to transition more residents into modern, affordable housing developments and scattered site housing.

RHA will develop non-HUD income streams through partnerships with private entities, use of tax credits and project-based vouchers.

This will help reduce the concentration of public housing in some of our most distressed city neighborhoods.





Neighborhood growth requires political will, investment and a smart strategy: a visionary development plan for the former Jane Addams site.

RHA is committed to revitalizing the former Jane Addams site and announced visionary plans for Jane's Nobel Village in 2010. The plan includes a mix of real estate products including market-rate residential and commercial components based on the principles of the Congress for the New Urbanism that promotes a healthy, stable and economically vital neighborhood.

The sustainable design is pedestrian and transit friendly with open, welcoming and active common spaces that benefit the entire neighborhood. Amenities include community gardens, parks and green space, and local and easily accessible retail outlets.

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REINFORCE REDEVELOP Importantly, the plan greatly also reduces the density of public housing in the neighborhood, which answers an overarching goal of RHA. It also links residents to the Rock River, a wonderful natural feature that has for too long been inaccessible in this once-burgeoning neighborhood.

RHA and its talented consultants sought design inspiration in the storied and historic fabric of the original Jane Addams neighborhood and its old Rockford College Campus. Handsome buildings have been designed that reflect the look, feel and significance of the original Rockford College and leverage the architectural styles of the neighborhood's beautiful, historic homes.

Our goal is a livable neighborhood that enhances our community and the lives of all residents near and far.





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