

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2021

APRIL



APRIL IS DIVERSITY MONTH

“April is Diversity Month, a time to recognize and celebrate other cultures and populations. This month, take time to recognize the diversity in your workplace, school, or home. By celebrating the unique cultures, backgrounds, and traditions of others, we can gain a greater appreciation for the diversity that surrounds us.”

“Unity through Diversity” April is Diversity Month. It started in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity around us all. Our world is filled with a plethora of races and religions, all equal in every way. Diversity means understanding each individual is unique and celebrating our differences, whether race, religion, ethnicity, gender, physical/mental abilities, or other ideologies. As we enter April and celebrate our diversities, we can allow ourselves to explore different ideas, cultures and better understand each other. We see diversity every day; it could be your parents’ religions or ethnicities, foods we eat to celebrate a holiday, or even which holidays we celebrate.

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Diversity by definition is “the state of being diverse; variety.” Or “the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.” When they see the word diversity, some people may only think of race; in reality, it means everything about one individual. Some people have blue eyes, and some have green eyes; that is diversity. Some people are wealthy, and some are middle class. Diversity can be about anything in the world that makes you stand out from the next person. People also assume that diversity is a bad thing when it is, actually, an amazing thing! If everyone looked, talked, walked, and acted the same, it would be a non-interesting world.

This April is a great time to learn. Seek to understand the diversity in your community and or the world! Some of the things you can do to celebrate Diversity Month are maybe trying a new recipe, reading a book about other cultures, or even checking social media and seeing what others are doing to celebrate.

Rockford Housing Authority is no stranger to diversity in our community and workplace. Diversity and inclusion have always been the bedrock of our core values, ensuring that everyone sees themselves represented and included. It is a crucial part of who we are.



COVID-19 VACCINATION UPDATE

Currently, there are now more than 900 public vaccination sites across Illinois, including local hospitals, pharmacies and county health departments. For help making an appointment, [call the state Vaccine Appointment Call Center at 1-833-621-1284](tel:1-833-621-1284). The call center is available from 6 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. Agents will help callers navigate online registration sites or make an appointment on the caller's behalf if they are unable to get online.

ILLINOIS COVID-19 UPDATE

Right now, Illinois is in Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. Phase 4 is Revitalization. As more people receive the vaccine we are on our way to Phase 5, where business and events can happen at full capacity. To fall into Phase 5 according to the Restore Illinois plan “The state could advance if there is a non-increasing trend in hospital admissions for COVID-19 like illness, COVID-19 patients in the hospital and mortality rate while ICU bed availability must remain greater than or equal to 20%. The state will consider new knowledge of variants, vaccine effectiveness and the potential necessity of a booster shot as we move forward.”

As of March 23rd, the daily COVID-19 cases are 17. The 7-day rolling positivity rate is 3.4%, and the total administered Vaccine doses are 101,229. If we continue to wear masks, social distance, and wash hands we may be bridging the gap to Phase 5. Click here for an informational video about Phase 4:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzgFpOGn7XE&t=10s>





FAIR HOUSING MONTH

National Fair Housing Month is celebrated in April, the same month in 1968 when the Fair Housing Act was signed. We recognize this month in hopes to end housing discrimination and raises awareness of fair housing rights.

In 2021, the Fair Housing Act celebrates its 53th anniversary. Made to protect Americans from discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of housing based on color, race, national origin and religion, the act later stretched to sex, disability and family status. This year HUD chose the theme of “Fair Housing: more than just words”

It is the RHA Mission that states that, “A quality home is the foundation of society & community: quality home life provides hope and the pathway to our goals.” Responsible and respectful people deserve the opportunity to contribute to attaining a comfortable quality home and neighborhood all can have pride in. Communities that promote diversity and inclusion, provide access to opportunities for self-sufficiency. A thriving community means clean neighborhoods, safer streets, more local businesses, and equal housing for all.

Working for the community for over 70 years, we have gotten to know and experience the community and its needs. Through this we have devised ten attributes to govern our business by – we call these our Core Values. These Core Values, which are fundamental to us, is the cornerstone of the Rockford Housing Authority. We put them at the forefront of every plan, event and project we do, because we care about our employees, our residents, our strategic partners and the greater Rockford community.



Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairperson on the Commission of Human Rights, shared the following in 1958.

“Where after all do universal human rights begin? In small places, closest to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person: The neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

EARTH DAY, APRIL 22ND

Earth Day has been celebrated since 1970. Earthday.org, or Earth Day Network (EDN), the official Earth Day nonprofit organization, states its mission is to “diversify, educate and activate the environmental movement worldwide.” They also pick a theme each year. The theme of 2021 is Restore Our Earth. To kick off their theme of 2021, EarthDay.org is supporting local communities, focusing on areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental issues with a cleanup.

Earth Day is a day to recognize the Earth and help clean up the world to the best of one’s abilities. Our world needs a transformation with innovative solutions. While some people look at Earth Day as a day to recognize pollution and litter in our communities, it’s much more than that. It’s about taking action for climate change, educating future generations about environmental impacts, conservation and restoration (oceans, forests, and communities), and educating people on recycling. All of these things and more are a part of Earth Day; Whether you clean up your neighborhood on Earth Day or just educate yourself on the little things you can do to help end climate change, it still counts.

Change starts with action; during the last year, we have had so much change in our communities, so why not make a change to a cleaner world? The United States Environmental Protection Agency has some tips that you can do to live greener;

- Throw away less- Recycling
- Choosing Greener Products
- If possible, use cleaner energy choices
- Reduce water use

Visit this link to see all the articles for these tips and FAQ’s: <https://www.epa.gov/environmental-topics/greener-living>

Since 1970, Earth Day celebrations have grown and gone global. Last year people in 184 countries and 5,000 environmental groups celebrated Earth Day, according to EDN. Festivities included; hiking, a talking drum chain in Gabon, Africa, to people gathering at the National Mall in D.C. Today EDN has 75K+ partners working to drive positive environmental action and 1 billion individuals mobilized for the planet’s future, making it “the largest secular civic event in the world.”

Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful is the local chapter of the Keep America Beautiful, an award winning, non-governmental nonprofit organization. Their mission is to “Improve our environment through education, public awareness and community involvement.” KNIB is committed to “educating and involving individuals in productive solutions that keep our community environment clean and green.” For Earth Day they are hosting an “Earth Day Awards and Art Auction.” KNIB is looking for artist to donate a piece of art that will be auctioned off at their live event. The annual Recognition Award will also be apart of the Earth Day event, they are asking to nominate someone who you think exemplifies award winning commitment to improving the environment!

Categories are:

- Outstanding Corporate Friend of the Environment
- Outstanding Single Friend of the Environment
- Environmental Steward of the Year
- Hutchcroft Environment Youth Award

You can nominate someone and learn more about the local organization Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful here: <https://www.knib.org/#EarthDayAwardsArtAuction>

This year educate, donate, clean up your communities, and promote a greener world. For more information and how you can take action this Earth Day, please visit: <https://www.earthday.org/>



MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT VACCINE STUDY

In a report published in the MMWR, and from an article in Time Health scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report more news from real-world studies of people who have gotten the COVID-19 Vaccines.

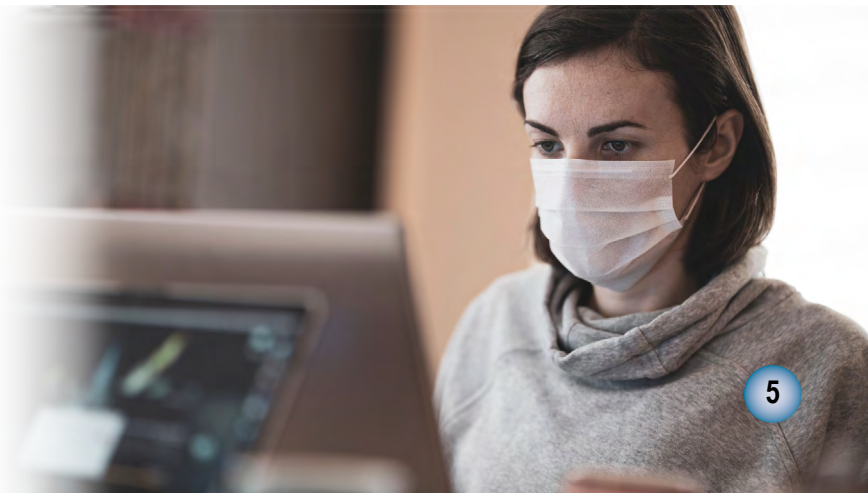
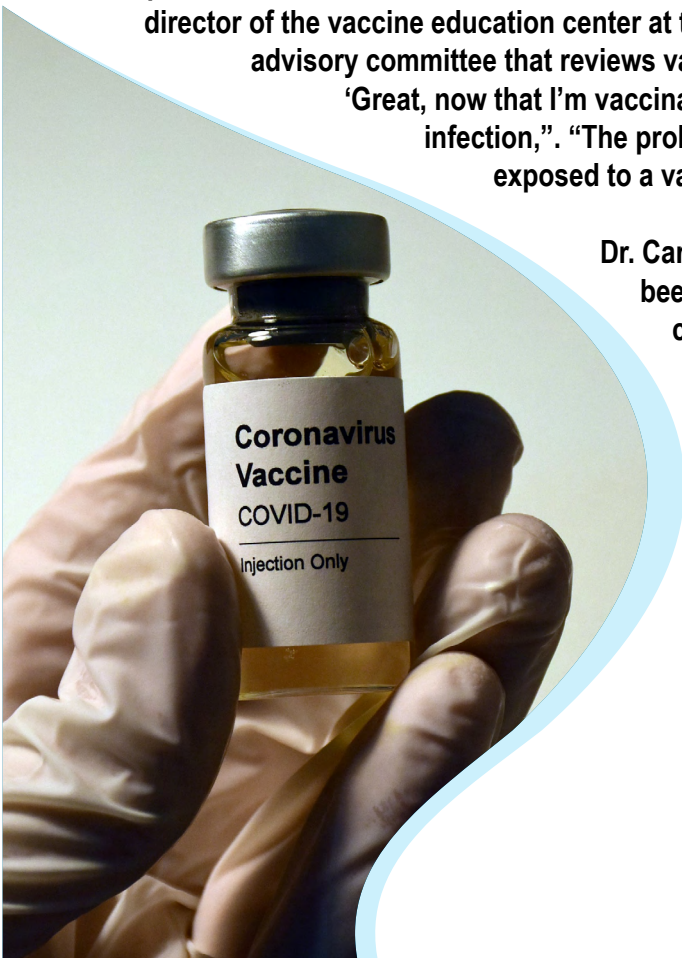
According to Time Health's, Alice Park "In the study involving 3,950 health care workers, first responders and other essential workers who were vaccinated between December 2020 and March 2021, the researchers found that the two-dose vaccines are 90% effective in protecting people from getting infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19. A single dose of the shot provided 80% protection from infection."

The study showed that people were vaccinated with one of the first two authorized shots, from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, which both require two doses and rely on mRNA technology.

Time Health's, Alice Park, states "In the MMWR study, CDC scientists found that two weeks after getting both doses, people in the trial were nearly fully protected against getting infected with the virus, compared to people who weren't vaccinated." The MMWR study was able to assess this by having each of the participants to take weekly COVID-19 tests by nose swab. Most positive tests occurred in people who had no symptoms at the time they were tested and did not know they were infected.

People vaccinated with either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna shots can still get infected, and sick. Dr. Paul Offit, director of the vaccine education center at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and member of the FDA advisory committee that reviews vaccines states "People may interpret these results as meaning, 'Great, now that I'm vaccinated I don't need to wear a mask because I'm not at risk of infection,'". "The problem with that are the variants. You can still get sick if you are exposed to a variant, and you can still shed and spread the virus."

Dr. Carlos Del Rio professor of medicine at Emory University, who has been vaccinated stated "Until there is a lot less transmission in the community, I will continue wearing a mask," "The protection against infection wasn't perfect—80% to 90%. Can I increase that to closer to 100% by wearing a mask? Yes."





WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: BECOMING A LEADER IN THEIR INDUSTRY

Rockford Housing Authority hosted the Women of Influence Event! The event was a live webinar/Facebook live with panelists of influential women in our community. The event was held on March 31st.

PANELISTS

CEO: Laura Snyder – CEO of the Rockford Housing Authority

Business Owner: Debbie Walter – President of Lawncare by Walter

Non-for-profit: Dee Lacny – Executive Director of Rock House Kids

Union Trades: Dixie Perko - Journeyman Wireman of IBEW Local 364

Political Leader: Karen Hoffman – 8th Ward Alderman for Rockford

Pastor: Apostle Evelyn Ramos Anderson – Hopar Adonai International Ministries

Author & Hair Stylist Business: Chandra Williamson- Chan W Braids (business) – “The Curse is Broken/Overcoming (book)

Lead Moderator- Michaela Harris- Section 3 Compliance Manager

Moderator- Odessa Walker- RHA Director of Human Services

Moderator- Laura Martinez- FSS Specialist

Women can not only do well in any industry; they can lead that Industry. They can be the CEO, the Job Foreman, or a Business Owner. In 2020 HUD estimates that 74% of Public Housing households have a woman as the head of the home, in 2020, women had to work an extra 24 days to make the same money as men, and women only make \$.82 on every dollar a man makes. To overcome these statistics, we must create awareness about the barriers women face in the workforce and encourage Industry Leaders to challenge these barriers. To incite change, we must create conversations about these issues, inspire women, and give them the tools to succeed. The event's roundtable discussion included stories from Women Leaders in our community with opportunities to learn their rules for success and apply them to your life. We took an in-depth look at these barriers and challenges and discussed how women can succeed in any industry.

Michaela Harris, Section 3 Compliance Manager and creator of the Women of Influence Event stated she wanted to do the event to bring awareness to our women in the community and “open their eyes to bigger and better opportunities.” The event inspiration came to fruition when Harris saw all the statistics of women in different industries and knew she had to shed light on the issues. Michaela said that the event went above her expectations saying “we knew when we assembled the panelists, they were quality panelists, but the vibrancy of their answers, the wealth of information, and their personal experiences they shared, was a huge takeaway.” This was the first Women of Influence Event and Michela hopes to make it an annual event, hopefully next year in person. In the summer Michaela plans to have another event exploring more about women in the Trades industry.



RHA DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT MARCH 2021

RHA's March Directors Spotlight winner is Te'Airia Robinson! As a new member of our Leadership team, Te'Airia currently performs the role of the HR generalist.

With less than a year in this role, unforeseen circumstances forced Te'Airia to fulfill all duties within the HR department. In doing so, Te'Airia has proven that tenacity, enthusiasm, and perseverance are critical components for an effective leader.

Her kindness towards others and her willingness to go the extra mile is on display every day when she interacts with our employees and service providers. Te'Airia's professional manner and her welcoming personality, are only two of the traits that make us proud to call Te'Airia part of our team. **Congratulations Te'Airia!**





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DID YOU KNOW WHAT PUBLIC HOUSING OFFERS?

Public Housing was established to provide safe rental housing for low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. Public housing comes in all types and sizes, from scattered sites to high-rises.

According to HUD, approximately “1.2 million households live in public housing units, managed by some 3,300 Housing Authorities.”

The role of housing authorities is to be responsible for the management and operation of the local housing program and make sure that there are services providing homeownership opportunities for qualified families; employment training opportunities, and other special training and employment programs for residents; and support programs for the elderly.

Rockford Housing Authority offers programs such as; the Family Self Sufficiency Program, the Resident Opportunity Self Sufficiency Program, and the LifeForce Development Institute, to name a few. All of these Resident services offer the RHA community something to grow with and hopefully lead to financial self-sufficiency.

