

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2021

JUNE



BREWINGTON OAKS DEMOLITION



VOLUME 2 ISSUE 6

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The Rockford Housing Authority board voted unanimously Thursday, April 15th to demolish the vacant Brewington Oaks housing development in the city's ORCHID neighborhood. Approximately 90 of the 418 apartments were declared uninhabitable in 2018 and RHA determined that the units were beyond cost-effective repair.

Brewington Oaks opened in 1969 to provide housing for senior citizens and the disabled. The buildings were originally called Campus Towers because of they were located close to the former site of Rockford University. The towers were renamed to Brewington Oaks after Al Brewington, a man who worked his way from maintenance to the second in charge in his 21 years with the organization.

Commissioners awarded a \$1,544,400 demolition contract to N-TRAK Group of Loves Park to raze the twin 14-story towers at 505 and 515 Seminary Street. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development gave RHA permission to demolish the towers in 2018 but we have asked developers last year to submit requests for qualifications to possibly redevelop the site.

"I feel we've done our due diligence in exploring other options," RHA Board Chairperson Karen Hoffman said. "The issue has been before the board since

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February of 2020 and during this time it's been the responsibility of RHA to physically and financially maintain this property."

"Five developers responded, two of whom proposed to renovate the existing towers while three proposed demolition" Laura Snyder, RHA CEO said.

Haight Village Neighborhood Association President Lisa Jimenez spoke in favor of the demolition with some conditions.

"We'd like to see what the plans are going to be and what they will include," Jimenez said. "Our hope is that we'll have more community engagement that's a little more organized as well as the future development having some sort of greenspace and riverfront access and a component of market-rate housing."

RHA is pleased to have come to a decision about Brewington Oak's future. We hope that the community of Rockford feels that this was the right choice and we cant wait to see what the future of the space will look like!

FATHER'S DAY

Father's Day falls on June 20th and has been celebrated since 1910! Father's Day was only observed in Washington until 1972- 58 years after President Woodrow Wilson made Mother's Day an official holiday that The United States celebrated Father's Day nationwide. Did you know there are more than 70 million fathers in the United States?

In 1909, a Spokane, Washington woman named Sonora Dodd, one of six children raised by a widower, tried to create an equivalent holiday to Mother's Day to celebrate male parents. She ventured to local churches, the YMCA, and government officials to help support her idea, and she was successful. The state of Washington then celebrated the first statewide Father's Day on June 19th, 1910. The holiday slowly started to spread nationwide. Today, Father's Day is always celebrated on the third Sunday of June, this year falling on June 20th.

Father's Day celebrations look different to everyone, whether you're celebrating a father, spouse, step-father, brother, or a father figure in your life. Traditionally people celebrate the Father's in their life with family gatherings such as barbeques, lunches, or dinners. Here are some unique ways to spend Father's Day:

- Cook his favorite meal with him
- Watch his favorite movie series together
- Have a game night
- Get active! Whether your Father is a golfer or into hikes, accompany him on his favorite activities!

However, you plan to celebrate Father's Day, make sure to let the Father's in your life know how much they are appreciated. Happy Father's Day from RHA!

JUNETEENTH

June 19th is Juneteenth, and it is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. In 1865, on June 19th, Union soldiers came to Galveston, Texas, and delivered the news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. The reactions of the now freed slaves were a feeling of shock and happiness. Many people wanted to head west as it represented true freedom for many. While others desired to reach family from other states, some traveled to Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The Juneteenth celebration was a time for reassuring each other, praying, and gathering with remaining family members.

There are many ways to celebrate Juneteenth, and it is almost always focused on education and self-improvement. Today you may see some people celebrating with barbecues, family gatherings, or going to a church service dedicated to Juneteenth. In present-day, Juneteenth is being observed more and more, institutions such as the Smithsonian, the Henry Ford Museum, and others have begun sponsoring Juneteenth-centered activities.

In Rockford, there will be a Weekend of Collaboration and Celebration at Sinnissippi Park on June 19th and 20th. The celebration is hosted by Juneteenth 1865, a Rockford-based organization founded by Tommy Meeks. "Juneteenth 1865 was created with the sole mission to promote and cultivate knowledge and appreciation of African American history." The celebration in Rockford will have music, black-owned businesses, food trucks, kid's activities, vacation and cash giveaways & more! New this year, in addition to the Juneteenth Awards, the Juneteenth Committee is asking for nominations for the Juneteenth Community Awards sponsored by Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The application Deadline is June 9th, 2021.

For more information about the celebration and to submit a nomination application, please visit: <https://www.juneteenth1865.com/learn-more-rockford-juneteenth-celebration/>

JUNETEENTH

Juneteenth

31st ANNUAL CELEBRATION

Juneteenth 1865

At Sinnissippi Park

SAVE THE DATES
JUNE 19TH & 20TH
A Weekend of Collaboration & Celebration

Juneteenth Celebration

Music | Black Owned Businesses | Food Trucks | Community Awards | Live Performances | Celebrity Guests | Kids Activities | Vacation & Cash Giveaways & More!
(Hosted By Tommy Meeks)

Saturday June 19th

Black Graduation Hosted by Tony Turner Conscious Coaching (1pm-3pm)
Juneteenth1865 Celebration (3pm-9pm)

Sunday, June 20th

Juneteenth Gospel Tribute 2021 Hosted by Harlan Jefferson and Red (5pm-8pm)

Harlan and Red

Tommy Meeks

Tony Turner



DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT

Mrs. Sybil Mueller has been with the Rockford Housing Authority for nearly 12 years. During her time here, Sybil has progressed through the ranks, currently serving as the Housing Choice Voucher Programs Manager. She is extremely committed to our mission, vision, and values. Sybil is hardworking and always willing to assist her fellow staff. "Sybil excels at every position she has held within the Rockford Housing Authority."

As acknowledged by both peers and subordinates, Sybil "always seems to make her department run smoothly and is always friendly and confident, no matter what her department is facing" even while in the face of a crisis. Sybil is "most helpful and so knowledgeable", she exemplifies RHA's core values which is evident in her caring, respectful nature, as well as the professional leadership of her department. She genuinely embodies the company's spirit and our core values in everything she does, and she inspires us all to do the same!

We are proud to have Sybil as a member of our team and look forward to her future at RHA.

FAIRGROUNDS SECTION 18

The Rockford Housing Authority is preparing to submit a Section 18 application that would allow HUD to provide 164 Tenant Protection Vouchers meaning families residing in units that receive Section 18 approval would be protected with comparable housing resources (Tenant Protection Vouchers.) TPVs are Section 8 assistance that is authorized and funded annually by Congress, public housing authorities are generally eligible to receive replacement TPVs for all units approved under Section 18 that have been occupied within the previous 24-months of HUD approval. Section 18 refers to Section 18 of the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. This section authorizes a PHA to demolish and/or dispose of public housing with HUD approval if the units meet the criteria of [current guidance](#).

RHA will keep updating the status of the application as time goes on. For more information about Section 18 please visit: https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/repositioning/section_18_key_take-aways



ILLINOIS COVID-19 UPDATE

On Monday May 17th, 2021, Gov. Pritzker announced the Illinois Mask Guidance with CDC for fully vaccinated people. Illinois will be following the current CDC mask and socially distanced guidelines. The CDC continues to require masks for everyone in healthcare settings, in congregate settings and on transit. In addition, in line with CDC guidance, the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health require masks in schools. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services requires masks in daycare.

"While the updated guidance from the CDC is welcome news, let me remind everyone that this guidance is only for those people who are fully vaccinated," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Individuals who do not have the protection afforded by one of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines should still wear a mask."

While the state has made their decision regarding who should wear a mask and social distance, The Rockford Housing Authority would like to inform that when in a communal area, masks must be worn appropriately at all times and social distancing needs to be maintained for our residents and staff's safety. We are keeping up with the CDC and States recommendations, but as of right now, our current COVID-19 procedures are still in place. We ask that all staff and residents of RHA respect others and continue to keep another safe and healthy.

"Getting vaccinated is the ultimate protection from COVID-19 and the quickest ticket back to normal life," said Governor JB Pritzker. "With public health experts now saying fully vaccinated people can safely remove their masks in most settings, I'm pleased to follow the science and align Illinois' policies with the CDC's guidance. I also support the choice of individuals and businesses to continue to mask out of an abundance of caution as this pandemic isn't over yet."

FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE CAN:

- Resume activities without wearing masks or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance
- Resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel
- Refrain from testing before leaving the United States for international travel (unless required by the destination) and refrain from self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States
- Refrain from testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic, with some exceptions for specific settings
- Refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic
- Refrain from routine screening testing if feasible

FOR NOW, FULLY VACCINATED PEOPLE SHOULD CONTINUE TO:

- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations



RHA IS NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS!

ROCKFORD HOUSING AUTHORITY IS NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR SELECT HIGH-RISES; PARK TERRACE, OLESEN PLAZA, AND NORTH MAIN MANOR.

North Main Manor- 505 N. Main St.- Rockford, IL 61103- North Main Manor is located in the downtown area surrounded by Parks and near the scenic Rock River; convenient to Rockford Public Library, churches, banks, and downtown activities. The building has a diverse selection of floor plans and amenities, including full cable service, on-site laundry facilities, private off-street resident parking, and modern TV entry system. Heat, water and gas are provided. There are some accessible units available at North Main Manor.

Park Terrace- 1000 Chamberlain- Rockford, IL 61107- Park Terrace is centrally located near Rockford's downtown area with convenient access to the East side business district. With its spacious apartments and other amenities, Park Terrace offers the enjoyment of a beautiful park like surrounding with friendly people. Enjoy active, independent living. Appliances are furnished for each apartment. Private off-street resident parking. On site laundry facilities. Located on the RMTD bus line. Full cable service is available with local TV stations. There are one- and two-bedroom units available. There are some accessible units available at Park Terrace. Heat, water, and gas furnished.

Olesen Plaza- 511 N. Church St.- Rockford, IL 61103- Olesen Plaza is centrally located near Rockford's downtown area surrounded by parks with convenient access to cultural centers, an art museum, and the main branch of the public library. There are also several financial institutions within easy walking distance of the building. Each apartment is furnished with appliances and an air conditioner sleeve. Convenient parking for residents is provided on the grounds. Full cable service is available with local television stations. A coin operated laundry is on the premises.

For additional information contact management at (815) 489-8663 or by cell phone at (815) 509-9576 for either of these properties.



Are you ready to launch your future? The Lifeforce Development Institute is a second chance for some and a life changing moment. The course offers every week pathways out of poverty lessons, financial empowerment skills, and interview skills preparation and hopefully a job. "It's never too late to start over. If you weren't happy with yesterday, try something different today. Don't stay stuck, do better."

Launch My Future, as the phrase implies, are multiple intensive, accelerated training programs designed to move your life in a new direction. The skills that are gained in the various programs offered by the RHA Human Services Department are pivotal to workplace success.

Registration for the next LDI semester is now open! The classes start on August 12th, 2021. Apply here: <https://launchmyfuture.com/registration/>

The LDI course is 12- weeks and anyone 17 years or older, as a potential student, is required to fill out and turn in a copy of the LDI Participation Agreement.

Graduates leave the program with five certificates:

- LDI Job Readiness/Career Readiness Certificate
- Bridges Out of Poverty/ Getting Ahead Certificate
- Personal Finance Education Certificate
- Connect Home Digital Literacy Certificate
- Work Keys Certificate

Benefits:

- A weekly stipend is given
- Computer
- Professional clothing voucher
- 90 days of Debt Management Plans with a professional debt management agency

The Enrollment Process Includes:

- Submit Application by Deadline.
- Interview for the program.
- Sign Participation Agreement.

Expected Outcome of LDI Graduates:

- Employment
- Certificate of Workforce Readiness
- Professional Development Mentor
- Continuous Educational Training

MICHAELA HARRIS PRESENTS SECTION 3 NEW RULE AT PHADA CONFERENCE



Rockford Housing Authorities Michaela Harris, Section 3 Manager, had the chance to speak at the PHADA Conference, held virtually this year on May 18, 2021 regarding The New Section 3 Rule – What You Need to Know. The panel discussion was about the new requirements for the Section 3 Rule, how it will impact residents, and what people can do to prepare. Michaela discussed some challenges and strategies for implementation and the day-to-day work of compliance and enforcement. The purpose of Section 3 is to "ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, be directed toward low-income persons. See more information about Section 3 on the next page of the Newsletter. One of her points included the programs and initiatives such as; Resident Assessments; Develop a data base of barriers and challenges your residents face, The Section 3 Portal on the RHA Website, Training Programs; Section 3 and the Lifeforce Development Institute, and Public Events; Tour training facilities for the trades, how to do business with your PHA, and Education events, i.e., Women of Influence. Michaela stated, "This was a great platform to share what RHA is doing to implement the new section 3 rule in the areas where we have been successful in." We are so happy that Michaela was able to share the programs and initiatives of RHA and help other agencies implement those into the new rule.

You can view the complete discussion here: https://whova.com/embedded/session/annual3_202105/1543606/?view



Rockford Housing Authority
223 S Winnebago Street
Rockford, IL 61102

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT SECTION 3?

HUD Section 3

The purpose of Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 is to “ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State, and local laws and regulations, be directed toward low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low-income persons.”

RHA works to ensure the provision of employment, training, contracting, and other economic opportunities to its residents and other low-income persons. In doing so, RHA utilizes Section 3 as a means of promoting stability and self-sufficiency to Section 3 Residents.

Section 3 Job Bank

RHA has created a Job Bank for residents of the Rockford Housing Authority and residents of the metropolitan area to self-certify as low-income.

Once you self-certify through our site you will then receive job alerts from our contractor/vendor base. You will also be notified of other Section 3 opportunities in our community. Signing up for the RHA Job Bank is easy! If this opportunity interests you, then view this link to begin:
<https://www.rockfordha.org/section-3/>



SECTION 3 OPPORTUNITY