

The RHA IN FOCUS

Newsletter 2021

SEPTEMBER



EUNICE BEEKS-GREEN

IN MEMORIUM

1962-2021

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 9

1-2... [In Memory of Eunice E. Green](#)

3... [National Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

4... [The History of Labor Day](#)

5... [COVID-19 Update](#)

6... [20 Years Ago..](#)

7... [Director's Spotlight & Jobs Plus Program](#)

8... [Save The Date! Construction Trade Convention: Women at Work.](#)

IN MEMORY OF EUNICE E. GREEN

The Rockford Housing Authority lost not only a colleague but a friend this month. Eunice was born on May 12th, 1962, in Rockford; she went to West High School and went on to receive a Master's degree from the University of Phoenix. Eunice was a part of the RHA team for 27 years as our Public Relations Manager. She was very dedicated to the Lifeforce Development Institute students, along with all the residents she came in contact with. She was always ready to help the next resident, student, or co-worker that needs it. Eunice demonstrated all of the RHA core values and beliefs but really exemplified being resourceful and caring about her job and the people involved.

Eunice was a faithful member of St. Paul Church of God in Christ. She served as an Evangelist with the Women's Ministry, Women's Auxiliary, Jail Ministry, and Singles Ministry.

The RHA wanted to take a moment and share some words and fond memories about Eunice:

Continued on page 2



LAURA SNYDER, RHA CEO

“For nearly 23 years, Ms. Eunice Beeks-Green served as a Rockford Housing Authority team member. Beginning her career as an assistant property manager, Eunice assisted families throughout our family developments. In 2010, Eunice transitioned from our operations team to our human services. I believe that all would agree; this is where she discovered her calling. Immediately becoming a beacon of hope and a ray of sunshine for our residents, Eunice worked diligently every day to ensure our elderly or disabled residents were provided with the services needed to help them maintain independence and dignity.

Eunice was an instrumental part of our Lifeforce Development Institute instructors panel educating and mentoring those eager to grow personally and grow to be self-sufficient.

Understanding the impact that Covid-19 and isolation had on everyone, especially those living alone, Eunice took it upon herself to check in with residents merely to see how they were doing. Again proving that her whole heart was part of her work and her work was part of her family.

Eunice will be greatly missed, spoken of often, and with each memory shared, a smile will ensue. As a member of our family, Eunice will forever be in our hearts.”

ODESSA WALKER

“There are so many things I could say about Ms. Eunice, but one thing I will say is that she was a beautiful soul. She always went above and beyond to help everyone she could. There is a scripture in the bible that says “The greatest among you will be your servant” Thank you Ms. Eunice for being the greatest among us. She had a heart of servitude and she did it with gladness and in the spirit of excellence. Thank you, Ms. Eunice, for showing us how to live a fulfilled life.”

OWEN CARTER

“I met Eunice in 2005. I just remember her kindness and willingness to help, just the joy she had for assisting those in need. She will forever be missed. She wasn’t just an employee of the Rockford Housing Authority; she wasn’t just a friend, she was part of our RHA family.”

MICHAELA HARRIS

“When I think of Eunice, I think of kindness, compassion, and overflowing joy. One of my favorite memories with her was the staff party, where we voted for employees to win awards. Well, Eunice won the “Difference Maker Award,” and she won by a landslide. I think the title of the award is so indicative of who she was as a person. We will never find another Eunice.”

ROSALIND GULLEY

“Eunice was very caring and very compassionate in her role within RHA and outside of RHA. I admired her strength, and I loved her dearly as a co-worker who always gave good advice and guidance when needed. I experienced great joy working with Eunice as our longtime President of RHA’s Compassion Committee, and as an honor to her, I will continue to remain on this Committee. Her presence will be greatly missed, but her spirit will always be with us as we continue to serve as she did with much love and compassion. I love you, Eunice. Your sister in love.”

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

From September 15 to October 15, National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated. The month traditionally honors the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino Americans and all heritage rooted in all Latin American Countries.

Hispanic refers to a person from, or a descendant of someone from, a Spanish-speaking country.

Latino/a or Latinx refers to a person from, or a descendant of someone from, a country in Latin America.

Hispanic Heritage Month began in June of 1968 and was only celebrated for a week. California Congressman George E. Brown first introduced it. The push to recognize the contributions of the Latinx community had gained more popularity in the 1960s when the civil rights movement was at its peak, and there was awareness spreading across the nation, of the United States’ multicultural identities.

On September 17, 1968, Congress passed Public Law 90-48, officially authorizing and requesting the Presidents to issue annual proclamations, then declaring September 15th and 16th to mark the beginning of the National Hispanic Heritage Week. The timing of the month coincides with the Independence Day celebrations of several Latin American Nations.

From 1968 until 1988, presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan issued the yearly proclamations, setting aside a week to honor Hispanic Americans. Then in 1987, U.S. Rep Esteban E. Torres of California proposed expanding the observance to cover its current 31-day period. The bill was passed on August 17, 1988, and on September 14, 1989, President George H.W. Bush became the first president to declare the 31 days from September 15 to October 15 as National Hispanic Heritage Month.

You can celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month by supporting local Hispanic businesses, researching the culture, and check out the YWCA La Voz Latina; “YWCA La Voz Latina maintains a strong focus on helping Latino/Hispanic families achieve self-sufficiency and become active and productive members of our community”.

YWCA La Voz Latina offers a wide variety of services and programs for the Latino community in the northwestern counties of Illinois. The department maintains a strong focus on education for youth and adults, health promotion, and strong families.” Visit their website here to view all the programs they offer: <https://www.ywcanwil.org/la-voz-latina/>





THE HISTORY OF LABOR DAY

Labor Day is celebrated on September 6th this year and pays tribute to the contributions and achievements of the American worker. The labor movement created Labor Day in the late 19th century and became a federal holiday in 1894. It has been celebrated on the first Monday in September since. It symbolizes the end of summer for many Americans and is celebrated with parties and a day off of work.

Labor Day is an annual celebration of workers and their achievements. In the late 1800s, at the top of the Industrial Revolution in the US, the average person living in America worked a 12-hour day for seven days. Children as young as 5 or 6 also worked in mills, factories, and mines across the country, earning a fraction of their adult wages. Labor unions grew more popular and vocal in the 18th century and began organizing strikes and rallies to protest poor working conditions and wages. The idea of the “Workingmen’s holiday” celebrated on the first Monday in September caught on in other industrial centers across the country, and many states passed legislation recognizing it. However, Congress legalized the holiday 12 years later when strikes and boycotts became more prominent than ever, including one of the biggest Midwest Railway companies, the Pullman Railway, that crippled traffic worldwide.

Labor Day is celebrated in cities and towns across the United States and is celebrated in many ways. RHA would like to take the time to thank all of the RHA staff for keeping a positive attitude during these past couple of years and for continuing to keep RHA running smoothly.



COVID-19 UPDATE

The new variants of COVID-19 have been the culprit for the spikes in cases across the United States. A new study showed that vaccinations and even prior infections provide less protection against these variants. The study done at Oregon Health & Science University said in order to protect against the Alpha, Beta, and Delta variants is to double down on both vaccinations and public health measures during this ongoing pandemic.

The study went on to find that the people they looked at “who either received the Pfizer vaccine or previously had COVID-19” that their antibodies did a poorer job of counteracting the virus after exposing their blood to both variants. “We know that the virus continues to evolve for its own advantage,” says co-senior study author Fikadu Tafesse, Ph.D., assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology in the OHSU School of Medicine, in a [university release](#).

The research team says that it’s a positive that vaccination and earlier infections still provide some protection from COVID-19. Co-senior study author Marcel Curlin, M.D., associate professor of medicine (infectious diseases) in the OHSU School of Medicine, believes that with enough vaccinations and proper health safety measures the [pandemic will end sooner](#) rather than later.

ILLINOIS COVID-19 UPDATE

In light of the recent spike in COVID-19 related hospitalizations and cases in the state of Illinois, Governor JB Pritzker officially reinstated an indoor mask mandate, regardless of vaccination status, during a news conference in Chicago. The mandate started Monday, August 30th 2021. Please view this link to see the full conference: <https://illinoisnewsroom.org/press-briefing-on-covid-19/>

20 YEARS AGO..

The tragic event of 9/11 happened 20 years ago. What happened on that day shaped and changed The United States forever. The 9/11 Memorial & Museum will be having events and tributes for the victims and their families. "During this 20th anniversary year, we will share the history and lessons learned with a new generation, teach them about the ongoing repercussions of the 9/11 attacks, and inspire the world with memories of our fortitude, strength, and resilience."

Each year on the exact anniversary of 9/11, the families will gather at the Memorial Plaza in New York City to read aloud the names of the 2,983 men, women, and children whose lives were taken on that tragic day. In addition, the museum is also offering an "Anniversary in the Schools Webinar" that provides the chance for students and teachers worldwide to commemorate the 20th anniversary. The webinar is entirely free, and it will feature personal stories from the 9/11 family members, first responders, and a live chat where people can ask questions. <https://www.911memorial.org/learn/students-and-teachers/anniversary-schools-webinar>

HISTORY

According to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, "9/11" is shorthand for four coordinated terrorist attacks carried out by al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist group, that occurred on the morning of September 11, 2001. Nineteen terrorists from al-Qaeda hijacked four commercial airplanes, deliberately crashing two planes into the upper floors of the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center complex and a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The Twin Towers ultimately collapsed because of the damage sustained from the impacts and the resulting fires. After learning about the other attacks, passengers on the fourth hijacked plane, Flight 93, fought back, and the plane was crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania about 20 minutes by air from Washington, D.C. The attacks killed 2,977 people from 93 nations: 2,753 people were killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon and 40 people were killed on Flight 93.

Take the chance to learn about this day by reading an article, donating to the museum, or asking questions. We will never forget this day as a nation. <https://www.911memorial.org/>



DIRECTOR'S SPOTLIGHT

Ever since Mr. Alex Keedi came on board to the Rockford Housing Authority, he has hit the ground running. Alex has taken the Job Plus Initiative and created a program that caters to the needs and wants of the Rockford Housing Authority Residents. The Jobs Plus Initiative launches in 2022 and already Alex has residents excited and jumping at the bit to enroll their families into the program.

Alex's teamwork, enthusiasm, and support on various projects are such valuable contributions. Alex's passion is so contagious that it sparks motivation in those he works beside. His exceptional skills and expertise added to the RHA Human Services team will indeed progress the department to new heights! It is impossible for Alex's work to go unnoticed because of the emails and calls from coworkers, residents & community partners that express how great it is to work with Mr. Alex Keedi.

Alex has the creativity and determination to do whatever it takes to help residents achieve extraordinary levels of success. This award given to Alex is proof that good things come to those who are willing to sacrifice to reach a worthwhile goal.

Alex, Thank you for choosing to be a part of this agency.

JOBS PLUS PROGRAM

Rockford Housing Authority is so grateful to be awarded the Jobs Plus Grant and be able to implement the Jobs Plus Program in our company. The Jobs Plus Program is an opportunity for residents to meet self-sufficiency, offer rent incentives, and have community support for work. The Jobs Plus Program Manager, Alex Keedi, said, "The Jobs Plus Program is important because I believe employment brings hope and meaning into people's lives."

Over 71 % of RHA residents have earned incomes that qualify as very low income. Therefore, The Rockford Housing Authority, RHA Jobs Plus Program, will incorporate strategies to develop a locally-based work culture for the residents living in the targeted public housing community.

Alex Keedi stated, "To be able to lift individuals up and have them reach their own success. That's what is important to me. It is my hope that this program makes them feel financial empowered." Alex also said that getting into this program will give residents the skills and support to achieve their goals. Jobs Plus can help residents not be limited by their own circumstances. Alex mentioned that there will be ways to integrate the Jobs Plus Program with some of the other programs RHA offers, such as, Lifeforce Development Institute and The Family Self Sufficiency Program.

We will continue to keep the RHA community updated on days of workshops and other Jobs Plus events!





Rockford Housing Authority
223 S Winnebago Street
Rockford, IL 61102

SAVE THE DATE! CONSTRUCTION TRADE CONVENTION: WOMEN AT WORK.

Rockford Housing Authority is excited to announce that we will be hosting a virtual Trade Convention on September 30th from 3:00-5:00. Registration will be needed to attend the event, and it is open to all RHA residents and Rockford community members. This is the first year RHA is hosting the Women at Work Construction Trade Convention but we will be making this an annual event!

The Women at Work Trade Convention is an opportunity to learn from women in the trades such as construction, painting, and electricians and to look at the Apprentice Trainee Positions available. The trades industry is a male-dominated career, but many women still manage, work, and love these jobs. This trade convention is a time to explore jobs that many women don't think about strictly because they don't know about them. Some key points that will be discussed:

- Discover how you can become financially independent through rewarding careers in the union construction industry, including how to join registered apprenticeship programs.
- Hear stories and experiences from women in the trades as well as entrepreneurs from the construction industry
- Learn about the local programs and resources available to help you prepare to apply for apprenticeship programs.
- Be part of a national movement of tradeswomen gaining ground in the industry.

Registration will be open soon, and we hope you join our presenters and us!

