

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

VIRGINIA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | FALL 2015

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Promoting Community Housing Options
- 2 Preserving the Vital Supply of Affordable Housing
- 3 Bringing Comfort and Community to People with Disabilities
- 4 Creating More Integrated Housing Options for People with Disabilities
- 4 Adaptive Reuse for Mixed-use Development
- 5 REACH Virginia Funding Resources
- 5 Housing Choice Voucher Set-aside
- 6 Building Support for Increased Opportunities and Capacity
- 6 VHDA Renter Education: Solving an Evolving and Unmet Need
- 7 Campaign to Help Consumers Make Wise Housing Choices
- 7 Using Grant Funds for Condo Outreach and Education
- 8 Beth Seward Inducted Into Top 40 Network
- 8 Bruce DeSimone Honored With Virginia APA President's Award
- 8 National Awards



All smiles about the revitalization of New Phoenix Village Apartments — *This extensively renovated apartment community is now providing quality, affordable housing for people with disabilities. Pictured from left to right are: Sue Armstrong, HNNCSB, resource development specialist; Dottie Holmes, HNNCSB, property management specialist; Craig Gooch, Community Housing Partners, superintendent; and Andrea Diggs, HNNCSB, service coordinator. Story on page 3.*

VHDA + Rush Lifetime Homes

Housing Success Story for People With Disabilities

Born with an intellectual disability, Jimmy Rush lived at home with his loving parents for 22 years. Unfortunately, his behavior changed to the point that he was admitted into the Central Virginia Training Center, an institution for people with profound disabilities. He was unhappy there, and his health deteriorated. This led his mother, other parents and several Lynchburg area groups to organize a housing program for folks like Jimmy. As a result, Rush Lifetime Homes, Inc., (also known as Rush Homes) was born with the mission of providing affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities.

After buying a house for Jimmy and a roommate in 1998 with the help of a VHDA loan, Rush Homes worked on a series of small projects involving four single-family homes, four duplexes, one fourplex and two two-bedroom apartments.

The next step was to advance into the larger multifamily housing development arena. So in the fall of 2011, Rush Homes opened Victoria Ridge, with 24 newly constructed apartments and a total development cost of \$4.45 million. The five funding sources included VHDA Housing Credits and VHDA permanent

Continued on page 2



Promoting Community Housing Options

By Mike Hawkins, Managing Director of VHDA's Community Outreach Division



As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the 30th anniversary of the Virginians with Disabilities Act, VHDA is engaged in an important partnership involving several state agencies and regional teams. The goal is to advance housing options and choice for the Commonwealth's intellectually and/or developmentally disabled (ID/DD) citizens covered by the 2012 Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Whereas Virginia had previously focused on institutions as the primary approach to serve the ID/DD population, the ADA and subsequent Olmstead decision by the U.S. Supreme Court require a broader array of housing and service options which enable disabled citizens to be more fully integrated into our communities.

VHDA's Community Outreach Division has supported this movement toward greater choice in several ways:

- Establishing a set-aside through our Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program to serve the ID/DD population while helping create the framework with HUD to leverage the participation of other local HCV programs.
- Using resources through our Capacity Building program to strengthen the ability of organizations and regional partnerships to foster collaboration among local housing and services providers.
- Working to design programs funded by VHDA REACH resources that can help identify and enhance housing units to serve the ID/DD population.

This edition of our *Community Outreach Report* elaborates on these efforts, as well as on the work of VHDA-supported non-profit organizations that promote affordable housing options for people with disabilities. ■

Housing Success Story

Continued from page 1

financing. All of the apartments are fully accessible and energy efficient.

Continuing its mission, this spring Rush Homes opened Armstrong Place — an adaptive reuse of the historic Armstrong Elementary School. This unique project also included transforming the school's auditorium into a neighborhood community center operated by the City of Lynchburg. Total development cost was \$6.4 million, with VHDA providing Housing Credits and a permanent loan.

Today, Rush Homes has a VHDA Capacity Building grant and a VHDA predevelopment loan for their next project. Currently, there are 300 people



The newly completed Armstrong Place is an adaptive reuse of the historic Armstrong Elementary School in Lynchburg.

who need affordable and accessible housing on their waiting list.

For more information on creating housing for people with disabilities, please contact: Director of Community Housing Beth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■

VHDA + Wesley Housing Development Corporation Preserving the Vital Supply of Affordable Housing

Housing costs in many Northern Virginia localities are expensive. Recognizing the struggle that many families face, Wesley Housing Development Corporation is committed to providing affordable rental housing solutions. As a part of that commitment, Wesley Housing is actively working to maintain and modernize its apartment portfolio while keeping units affordable.

VHDA partnered with Wesley Housing to provide predevelopment loans for Lynhaven Apartments in Alexandria and William Watters Apartments in Arlington, both of which are owned and operated by Wesley subsidiaries. Both properties needed substantial rehabilitation, including exterior work and upgraded kitchens and baths to improve energy efficiency and water conservation.

VHDA provides predevelopment loans to support public and non-profit

housing partners looking to develop and maintain affordable housing. These loans can help offset the costly and high-risk stage of putting together a potential affordable housing project.

Wesley Housing was able to bring together the Lynhaven and William Watters projects through the creative packaging of the two properties into one financing project (Lyn-Watters). VHDA issued \$7.3 million in short- and long-term tax-exempt bonds, including \$2 million in low-interest SPARC funds. Burke & Herbert Bank invested \$4.1 million in equity through Hudson Housing Capital, while the City of Alexandria and Arlington County made subordinate loans of \$1.5 million and \$820,000, respectively. The project is currently under construction with a projected completion date of May 2016. ■

VHDA + Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board Bringing Comfort and Community to People With Disabilities

Like its mythical namesake, the Phoenix Village Apartments development in Newport News has been extensively renovated and reborn as the New Phoenix Village Apartments. Originally built in 1981, this apartment community began its transformation in 2013 when the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board applied for a \$1.8 million VHDA SPARC rental housing loan.

"We have a great partnership with VHDA," said Joy Cipriano, Director of Property and Resource Development for the HNNCSB. "Their sense of mission is so in line with ours, that we don't have to be afraid to take some risks to make big things happen. As a result, what we're hearing from the residents of New Phoenix Village Apartments is that the results of the renovations are wonderful."

Those results feature comfort and convenience, with energy-efficient heating and cooling units and universal design for each of the 45 original apartments. There are 25 one-bedroom and 13 two-bedroom apartments that serve residents within the \$19,800 to \$34,080 income range. All apartments are ground floor accessible and ADA-compliant. Once complete, the rehab will also have three additional apartments and a community center.

"Until now, the only way those living here have been able to enjoy a sense of community was by

sitting on their front porches," said Cipriano. "Having an actual onsite community center is going to amaze them, and provide a much needed place for residents to gather for celebrations, events and companionship."

In addition to VHDA, other financing partners included the City of Newport News, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development and the Virginia Housing Trust Fund. The Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority is handling the management of the apartment community.

"What we're hearing from the residents of New Phoenix Village Apartments is that the results of the renovations are wonderful."

The rehabilitation of the New Phoenix Village Apartments has been transformational for more than its residents. "Before the renovations, New Phoenix was a sad-

looking complex and that did not go unnoticed, since it's located right outside of Fort Eustis," Cipriano said. "Now that it's had a major facelift, inside and out, it's improved the neighborhood to the point that we're having more interest from offsite services, like the Food Bank, that feel more comfortable being involved with our residents and the surrounding neighborhood. To echo the folks who call New Phoenix Village home, it's just wonderful."

To learn more, contact Director of Community Housing Beth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■



Creating More Integrated Housing Options for People with Disabilities

Virginia launched its Housing and Supportive Services (HSS) initiative to kick-start an intensive community engagement effort to further the state's commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Olmstead decision. The goal is to support communities with the largest number of individuals impacted by the DOJ Settlement Agreement by increasing the integrated housing options available for individuals with an intellectual and/or developmental disability (ID/DD).

VHDA is doing our part by supporting regional planning teams in Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads-Peninsula, Hampton Roads-Southside and the Greater Richmond metro area

through collaboration with the Virginia Departments of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Aging and Rehabilitation Services, Medical Assistance Services, and Housing and Community Development.

The initiative began in January 2015 with a meeting of stakeholders experienced in housing and supportive services. Each regional team committed to a 100-Day Challenge to run from June 5 to October 20. To date, each team has included local stakeholders and developed concrete goals. Like other such challenges, each team set ambitious goals. These goals focus on identifying those interested in housing, streamlining local processes, acquiring additional

housing resources and housing individuals within a limited timeframe.

For detailed information about the HSS initiative, visit vahss.org or contact Diego Liberczuk, Housing and Supportive Services Program Manager, Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources at Diego.Liberczuk@governor.virginia.gov.

To learn more about how VHDA supports the creation of affordable housing for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, contact Director of Community Housing Beth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■



The former Planters Brick Tobacco Sales Warehouse, circa 1840, located in Clarksville's historic district is currently slated for redevelopment. The stately brick front hides the building's overall poor condition.

VHDA + Southern Virginia + Southside Planning District Commission Adaptive Reuse for Mixed-use Development

Vast natural resources and easy accessibility are just a few of the assets that Southern Virginia offers. Recognizing their collective strengths, in the past few years the region's localities have developed greater regional partnerships to facilitate economic development.

This approach to economic development focuses on local communities and entrepreneurship, in addition to efforts to recruit large employers. As a part of this strategy, and building on years of effort to combat blight and declining investment in small towns, two Mecklenburg County towns partnered with the Southside Planning District Commission and VHDA to look at downtown residential development as an opportunity for economic growth.

The Town of South Hill used VHDA's Mixed-use/Mixed-income (MUMI) planning grant to explore the potential for the adaptive reuse of four vacant downtown properties and to identify other potential properties.

The Town of Clarksville is using a MUMI planning grant to look at the opportunity for redevelopment of a significantly historic, but severely dilapidated, former tobacco warehouse. In addition to physical assessments of the buildings, the town is studying the market for affordable rental housing, and assembling potential designs for adapting the properties to include downtown rental housing.

Both studies will provide the municipalities with strategies to achieve

their development priorities and help them identify potential developers with the interest and experience to take on these types of projects.

For more information on VHDA's MUMI program, contact Director of Community Housing Beth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■

REACH Virginia Funding Resources

REACH Virginia (Resources Enabling Affordable Community Housing in Virginia) is VHDA's initiative to serve the housing needs of Virginia's diverse communities through a variety of programs.

Capacity Building Grant enhances the capacity and skills of organizations to develop, operate and preserve affordable housing opportunities.

Community Homeownership Revitalization Program (CHRP) provides funding for affordable first mortgages that support a local jurisdiction's efforts for targeted revitalization.

Community Impact Grant supports the planning process of local governments, redevelopment and housing authorities, and communities that have identified an area for mixed-use/mixed-income development as a major component

of revitalization. It also assists local affordable housing planning activities.

Granting Freedom provides funding for modifications to make living spaces more accessible for disabled veterans and servicemen and women.

Predevelopment Loan/Grant provides below-market financing for typical predevelopment expenses.

Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grant serves lower-income renters with disabilities by funding modifications to create a more accessible rental unit.

For details, contact Director of Community Housing Elizabeth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com.

VHDA REACH Housing Counseling Grant provides direct housing

counseling and education, and flexible funding for capacity in the areas of marketing, outreach, referrals / information, staff training, partnerships / collaborations, quality assurance / program oversight and technology upgrades.

For details, contact Housing Education Director Kelly Gill-Gordon at 804-343-5534 or Kelly.Gill-Gordon@vhda.com.

Other Funding Resources

HUD Housing Counseling Assistance Program supplies funds for providing counseling and advice to renters and homeowners about property maintenance, financial management / literacy and handling the responsibilities of renting or homeownership.

For details, see contact information for Kelly Gill-Gordon above. ■

VHDA + Virginia Public Housing Authorities Housing Choice Voucher Set-aside

As a result of the 2012 Settlement Agreement between the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Virginia, HUD and Fair Housing approved VHDA's request to establish a tenant selection preference and set-aside of Housing Choice Vouchers for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) and/or developmental disabilities (DD).

In the first year, FY 2015, VHDA set aside 32 vouchers. As of October 2015, 28 clients had moved into a community-based system of support that provides them with more integrated living; four clients are currently searching for the best housing to suit their needs. For FY

2016, VHDA has set aside 65 vouchers. We're partnering with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to accept referrals from their waiting list to house the clients in VHDA's service area.

VHDA is just one agency working to improve housing for clients leaving training centers, nursing homes or intermediate care facilities or who meet the criteria for the DOJ Settlement



Agreement. The goal is to have all public housing authorities (PHAs) in Virginia provide a set-aside for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities in their voucher or public housing programs. To date, 11 PHAs have been approved by HUD. VHDA has also referred 85 clients to PHAs outside of VHDA's area of operation.

For more information on the Housing Choice Voucher Program, please contact: HCV Program Director Sharon Fairburn at 804-343-5920 or Sharon.Fairburn@vhda.com. ■

Building Support for Increased Opportunities and Capacity

Virginia's Habitat for Humanity network provides homeownership opportunities for low-income households through a strong volunteer and sweat equity model. These opportunities range from single-family homes in a rural setting to multiple units in urban communities that support broader neighborhood revitalization goals. In addition, more Habitat affiliates are expanding their new construction orientation to include rehabilitating vacant homes for new buyers or helping low-income owners rehabilitate their existing homes.

VHDA partners with Virginia's Habitat network through several programs and initiatives designed to strengthen local affordable homeownership possibilities. This includes pro-bono loan servicing, a loan program that helps sustain new home development and an annual Habitat build by VHDA volunteers.

Our Habitat affiliate capacity building initiative is a more recent development that is part of VHDA's broader Capacity Building program. Currently, we're working with five Habitat affiliates to help focus on opportunities related to strategic planning, staff training and technology enhancement. As part of this effort, affiliates were surveyed to determine their familiarity with VHDA programs and services, and to identify capacity building needs across the entire Habitat network in Virginia. Survey results will help develop training to further advance the use and impact of VHDA services to the Habitat network.

To learn more, contact Housing Education Director Kelly Gill-Gordon at 804-343-5534 or Kelly.Gill-Gordon@vhda.com. ■

VHDA Renter Education: Solving an Evolving and Unmet Need

VHDA has offered homebuyer education since 1996. Recognizing that information and resources to help consumers make financially sound and informed decisions are essential to Virginia's rental housing market, VHDA decided to expand our housing education beyond homeownership. To help focus attention on the importance of rental housing, our Housing Education department developed a user-friendly "How to be a Successful Renter" eBook. It concentrates on three core principles: pay rent on time, maintain the property and abide by all lease provisions. This free eBook is available on vhda.com/RenterEd.

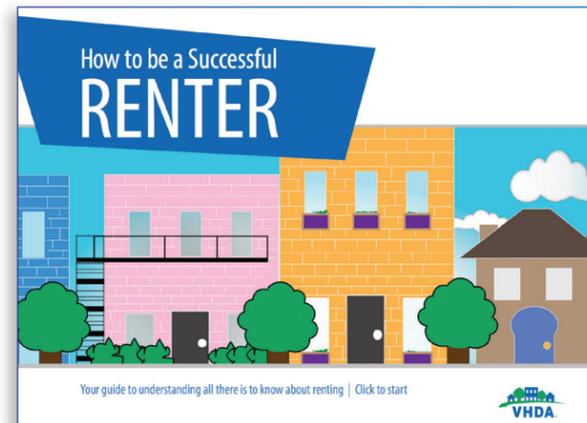
We began by identifying over 700 industry professionals to verify the need for, and possible use of, a rental education manual. Across Virginia, those providing rental counseling, group workshops, locator services, and financial and legal assistance were surveyed. In addition, VHDA associates facilitated regional roundtable discussions in Abingdon, Emporia, Exmore, Hampton, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Manassas and Richmond.

These sessions provided an opportunity for stakeholders and partners to examine the feasibility of a rental education manual as a useful tool for consumers, landlords and educators. VHDA associates also met with staff from the Richmond HUD office, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation's Fair Housing office, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Legal Aid Society of Eastern Virginia.

Development of the eBook took survey results and roundtable comments into consideration. The result is an in-depth renter tool that spells out Virginia's laws and regulations in a consumer-friendly format. Both the renter's rights and responsibilities are detailed, as well as common misunderstandings, challenges, barriers, landlord-tenant issues and fair housing concerns.

The importance of being a knowledgeable renter is reinforced with information that includes tips, alerts, examples and additional resources.

VHDA's eBook is designed as a replicable model to support Virginia's



rental industry professionals, who are encouraged to share it with applicants, renters and colleagues. "How to be a Successful Renter" information is supported by a quiz, certificate and partner PowerPoints for each chapter. Those providing counseling, education and other renter services can implement all or part of the nine-chapter eBook to enhance their housing services and programs.

The free eBook is available for download at vhda.com/RenterEd. For more information, send an email to RentalEducation@VHDA.com. ■

VHDA + HUD-approved Housing Counselor Agencies Campaign to Help Consumers Make Wise Housing Choices

Housing counselors can help people make wise decisions about finances and housing — but many people don't even know they exist!

In January 2014, VHDA sent a survey to all 32 HUD-approved Housing Counselor agencies in Virginia that receive funding through the HUD grant administered by VHDA. As a result of this survey, we found that Housing Counseling agencies hoped to increase their client base by improving public awareness of their organizations and the programs offered.

Although a full range of marketing is being used by HUD and various other agencies, the individual agencies can't sustain a long-term marketing effort or expend enough capital to be successful in their communities. Since every counseling agency shares common goals, VHDA was



able to aggregate the needs expressed in the survey to facilitate an efficient and more effective result.

As part of a statewide campaign to raise awareness of Housing Counselors, advertising was developed to encourage Virginians to visit vhda.com/HousingCounselors. This new page on our website provides details about the benefits of housing counseling and an easy way for consumers to find a housing counselor in their area using HUD's search tool. Professional media buying firms prepared the campaign's media plan. It included newspaper, radio, ads on Realtor.com, Facebook ads and boosted posts, and Google's PPC and Display network.

With the new Web page receiving over 11,000 unique page views from June 1 to August 31, 2015, it looks like awareness is definitely on the rise. ■

VHDA + City of Alexandria + Arlington County Using Grant Funds for Condo Outreach and Education

The importance of condominium housing as a resource for low- to moderate-income first-time homebuyers is widely recognized in the Northern Virginia market. In fact, condos in Alexandria are over 47 percent of the city's total stock of ownership housing. While condos have represented the most affordable type of housing, many have declined in value. In addition, many condominium communities have experienced rapidly increasing monthly fees and special assessments that can jeopardize affordability.

In 2013, the City of Alexandria and Arlington County responded to this situation by collaborating on a series of educational workshops to increase public understanding of common-interest communities and strengthen the management practices of these communities. Supported in part by a \$5,000 REACH non-

profit support grant from VHDA, the workshops cover governance practices, restrictive covenants and other important topics. To date, the initiative has reached more than 250 Northern Virginians, including Habitat for Humanity homeowners living in condo communities.

The city and county both have long histories of offering VHDA first-time homebuyer classes and pre-purchase counseling. Condominium education is an expansion of that outreach. Since VHDA holds a portfolio of condo mortgages in Northern Virginia, the initiative should also increase educational opportunities for many VHDA mortgagees.

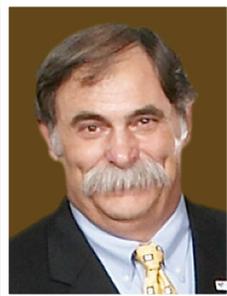
For more information, contact Director of Community Housing Beth Seward at 804-343-5615 or Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com. ■

Beth Seward Inducted Into Top 40 Network



The Virginia Housing Coalition, in partnership with VHDA, recognizes Virginia's top professionals under 40 who have demonstrated both distinction in their professional accomplishments and dedication to their community. Among their 2015 inductees is Beth Seward, VHDA's Director of Community Housing (REACH Team), who was recognized for her instrumental role in advancing our Capacity Building grant initiative. ■

Bruce DeSimone Honored With Virginia APA President's Award



VHDA Senior Community Housing Officer Bruce DeSimone recently received the 2015 President's Award from the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association. He was chosen based on his years of dedication to developing and presenting multiple courses for planners on housing and housing finance issues, hosting chapter events and his strong support of planning education. ■

National Awards

VHDA's in-house Marketing and Creative Team earned three Communicator Awards this year: one gold plus two silvers. The Communicator Awards is the leading awards program honoring creative excellence. This year there were more than 6,000 entries from ad agencies, production firms, in-house creative teams, graphic design and public relations firms. VHDA's winning entries included an online video, a logo design and a series of print ads.

National Council of State Housing Agencies (NCSHA) Award of Excellence for Management Innovation (Technology Category): VHDA was presented with an award at the NCSHA 2015 Annual Conference & Showplace for our Map Gallery Apps. These custom applications show the economic impact of our housing programs in various parts of the state, displaying the data in an interactive, user-friendly map format. The Map Gallery Apps, including a short video tutorial, can be seen at vhda.com/Impact. ■

VHDA Community Outreach Leadership

601 S. Belvidere St., Richmond, VA 23220

877-VHDA-123 | Virginia Relay Partner: 711 (in Virginia) or 800-828-1140

Sharon Fairburn

HCV Program Director
804-343-5920
Sharon.Fairburn@vhda.com

Kelly Gill-Gordon

Housing Education Director
804-343-5534
Kelly.Gill-Gordon@vhda.com

Bob Halloran

Marketing Director
804-343-5507
Robert.Halloran@vhda.com

Barry Merchant

Senior Policy Analyst
804-343-5730
Barry.Merchant@vhda.com

Beth Seward, LEED AP

Director of Community Housing
804-343-5615
Elizabeth.Seward@vhda.com

Mike Hawkins, PhD, AICP

Managing Director of
Community Outreach
804-343-5654
Mike.Hawkins@vhda.com



VHDA is a self-supporting, not-for-profit organization created by the Commonwealth

of Virginia in 1972, to help Virginians attain quality, affordable housing. VHDA provides mortgages, primarily for first-time homebuyers and developers of quality rental housing. We use no state taxpayer dollars, but raise money in the capital markets to fund our loans. We also teach free homeownership classes, and help people with disabilities and the elderly make their homes more livable. VHDA works with lenders, developers, local governments, community service organizations and others to help put quality housing within the reach of every Virginian.

▶ vhda.com/CommunityOutreach

▶ Sign up for our eNewsletter: vhda.com/Updates

▶ vhda.com/blog | [Like us on Facebook](#)

