COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

VIRGINIA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | FALL 2015

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

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Housing Success Story

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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 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 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.

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.
VHDA + Housing and Supportive Services
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 vahhs.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.

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 (CHRIP) 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 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 + 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.

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.

The former Planters Brick Tobacco Sales Warehouse, circa 1840, located in Clarksville’s historic district is currently slated for redevelopment.

To learn more about how VHDA 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.

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VHDA + Virginia Habitat for Humanity Network

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 than 90 Habitat affiliates are conducting their early 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.

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 condominium 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.
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.

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.

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’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.

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**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
804-343-5564
Mike.Hawkins@vhda.com

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