



Housing Authority of Plainfield Newsletter

Fall 2015

New Things Coming This Fall!

Message from Randall Wood Executive Director

It is our pleasure to provide you with our inaugural newsletter to highlight the many exciting initiatives taking place at the Housing Authority of Plainfield. We are proud to be one of the most aggressive housing authorities in the state, focused on serving our residents, as well as seeking opportunities to redevelop Plainfield.



There is endless need in Plainfield to provide quality, secure housing. There is also endless opportunity, as we aggressively pursue state and federal funding to accomplish our objectives. As you will quickly see in this newsletter, we are dedicated to our people, proactive in our plans and focused on our future.

You will read about our upcoming project to demolish Elmwood Gardens this fall, our thriving resident association at Richmond Towers and the many ways in which we help our residents. It was a terrific year for our summer camp. The kids took trips horseback riding, bowling, and golfing. There was also time for tutoring.

I urge you to learn more about the Housing Authority of Plainfield and our vision for a bright future. We are also proud to provide tours of our communities and to build bridges with like-minded partners who share our commitment to improving the lives of seniors and families.

Thank you so much for your interest.

Randy



A New Dawn at Elmwood Gardens

It is a new day at the Housing Authority of Plainfield, as we prepare to demolish Elmwood Gardens, a 120-unit development that represents the affordable housing of the past, with long, common hallways in a high-rise building that was not fully accessible to people with disabilities.

We look forward to taking down this structure on West Second Street, using the 3.6-acre parcel to construct 60-70 attractive, energy-efficient townhouse-style apartments that will enhance the entire

neighborhood. The housing authority, with state and federal funds, is prepared to invest \$14-\$20 million into this new community to serve the next generation of Plainfield residents.

"The new Elmwood Gardens will do real justice to the Housing Authority of Plainfield," said Executive Director Randall Wood. "We can't wait to break ground on this project."

The project is being coordinated through Premier Community Development Corp., the housing authority's redevelopment arm.

West End Gardens to be Named After Councilwoman Joanne Hollis



The Housing Authority of Plainfield continues to mourn the loss of former Fourth Ward Councilwoman Joanne Hollis, who passed away last September. She is still fondly remembered for her commitment to Plainfield as an activist for over 30 years, her service as a Plainfield Housing Commissioner, as well as serving as a resident president for 22 years. Joanne was the founder of the Housing Authority of Plainfield Summer Camp and summer youth employment programs.

To remember and honor the selfless work of Councilwoman Hollis, the Housing Authority of Plainfield has decided to rename West End Gardens after her. A ceremony is being planned for October, as the housing authority community comes together to celebrate the life of this devoted mother, daughter, sister and life member of Mt. Olive Baptist Church.

"She was a true trailblazer for resident rights and was passionate about doing what was right," said Executive Director Randall Wood. "Joanne was a vocal advocate for the best interest of the greater good."

Annual Golf Outing a Success

On September 8, the Housing Authority of Plainfield held its eighth-annual golf outing, which raised vital scholarships for local youth to attend college or trade school. The event, held in conjunction with the Premier Community Development Corporation, the redevelopment arm of the Housing Authority of Plainfield, featured ex-NFL players from the New York Giants and the San Diego Chargers.

The outing took place at the beautiful Architects Golf Club in Lopatcong, Warren County.

Former Giants teammates Stephen Baker "The Touchdown Maker" and Eric Dorsey were among the list of celebrities that supported the charitable event. A portion of the funds raised went toward the First Tee Foundation, an initiative dedicated to providing kids from Plainfield an opportunity to develop and gain life-enhancing values through golf.



From left to right: Professional golfer Chris Arceneaux; Stephen Baker "The Touchdown Maker," former Giants football player; Gerry Cooney, former heavyweight contender; Kellen Winslow, former tight end for the San Diego Chargers; Gary Jeter and Eric Dorsey, former defensive ends for the New York Giants; and Al Dixon, former tight end for the San Francisco 49ers.

The friendly round of golf ended with advice from the celebrities.

"The importance of any sport is the bond and relationship that we form with each other," said Kellen Winslow, former tight end for the San Diego Chargers. "It's all about the people we meet and the opportunity we have to help others."

Former NY Giant defensive end Gary Jeter talked about sportsmanship and how it creates a platform for children to increase their potential success.

cannot help themselves," said Jeter. "A lot of it has to do with the people we meet and the friendships that we form."

Since its inception, the golf outing has helped support more than 300 kids in receiving golf lessons, free of charge. And just recently, close to 100 kids had the opportunity to take a swing at the Barclays Youth Clinic in Plainfield.

"This is more than just spending a day playing a friendly round of golf," said Randall Wood, executive director of the Housing Authority of Plainfield. "It's about helping our children succeed and creating public-private partnerships so our community can continue to flourish."

Preventative Health Maintenance Program to Kick Off at Richmond Towers

Beginning this month, seniors at Richmond Towers will receive visits from various doctors as part of a new health consortium. Doctors of varying specialties will regularly visit the senior complex to provide exams and follow-ups to any resident interested in participating.



The exams will be of no cost to residents; the doctors will bill insurance companies for the service.

"A lot of seniors aren't able to go to the doctor as much as they should, so we are bringing the doctors to them," explained Executive Director Randall Wood. "One week, it may be a podiatrist, the next week a cardiologist. We plan to have a full spectrum of doctors coming in, ensuring all senior residents have the opportunity to be screened and served. We think this will be a terrific, well-received service."

Profile of Richmond Towers



Richmond Towers is a 225-unit senior housing complex that serves people with disabilities and others who are age 55 and over. There are two towers, with 12 floors per tower. It is a pleasant community with plenty of programming.

James Marsh, who has managed Richmond Towers since 2001, said he is proud of the active residents' association, which holds regular meetings to identify ways to improve the quality of life. In the last five years, the resident association has maintained and owned its own laundry business, purchased tables and chairs and organized a resident patrol.

Through the coordination of the resident association's board, there are plenty of social activities and birthday clubs in a large community room, as well as exercise and aerobic classes on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Marsh said Union County operates a reduced-price lunch program for residents, while the housing authority coordinates a reduced-price dinner each night. There are barbecues in the summer, holiday dinners at Christmas time, as well as "Friend and Family" days.

"We even had a wedding here," Marsh said. "Richmond Towers is open for all occasions."

The complex includes studio and one-bedroom apartments. He said each floor of the towers has a "captain," a resident who looks out for the others residing on the floor. "This is a very close-knit community," Marsh said. "It is a very happy place to live."

Marsh said Richmond Towers has a waiting list for entry. Those interested in learning more should stop by the Housing Authority, 510 East Front Street or call (908) 769-6335.

Housing Authority Hosts Dick Gregory

On April 11, the Housing Authority of Plainfield was pleased to welcome Dick Gregory, the comedian, civil rights activist and political satirist. Hundreds attended his talk at Plainfield High School, as part of a "Black History Celebration" sponsored by the housing authority in collaboration with the Plainfield Public Schools.



Dick Gregory with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Proceeds of the program went to the Premier Community Development Corp. scholarship program.



PCDC Reconstructs Homes in Plainfield

The Premier Community Development Corporation (PCDC) seeks to establish itself as a premier nonprofit developer and manager of service-enriched mix-income rental housing in central counties of New Jersey. Established in 2007, PCDC primarily serves Union County, but has strong ties to Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties.



PCDC continues to focus on growing and improving its development of new construction in urban neighborhoods. Just recently, PCDC reconstructed a home on West 3rd Street, one of the most challenging neighborhoods in Plainfield. As the developer, PCDC was able to ensure temporary employment and training for local residents during the construction period. In addition to that, crime was even reduced in the immediate area of the site. With the success of this project, PCDC was able to reconstruct more homes in the neighborhood.

Most recently, PCDC was awarded HOME Funds from Union County Division of Housing for 2014 and 2015 for a total of \$480,000 to purchase, renovate and sell two single-family homes.

Scholarship Winner Update



Premier Community Development Corp. Scholarship recipient Lndon Wilson recently graduated from Rutgers University in May.

Congratulations Lndon!

Pictured (L to R): Housing Authority of Plainfield Executive Director Randall Wood, Lndon Wilson, and PCDC Executive Director Lewis Hurd

Check Out Our New Website

To better communicate with our residents and the community at-large, the Housing Authority of Plainfield is pleased to announce its new website:

www.housingauthorityofplainfieldnj.org/.

We hope you "bookmark" the site and frequently return to learn about the new ways in which we are serving our residents, while strengthening the surround community through our revitalization efforts.

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