



Housing. Community. Affordability.

Housing Corporation of Arlington

20 Academy Street Arlington, MA 02476

www.housingcorporation.org

V.11 Spring 2010

Stimulus Program Set to Help Arlington Residents

The Town of Arlington has selected Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) as the lead agency for Arlington's Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). This new federal initiative is aimed at assisting very low-income households for up to eighteen months. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, \$1.5 billion will be distributed to 400 communities across the country for homelessness prevention services.

Like the rest of the country, Arlington residents have fallen on hard times. Many have lost their jobs, and for some, unemployment has run out. Those who were self-employed—consultants, small business owners, and others—are struggling to find work and have no safety net. Families and individuals are left to look for other ways to make ends meet: doubling up with relatives, reluctantly using credit cards and leaving bills unpaid.

HCA has experienced a steep rise in the number of Arlington residents seeking assistance. In the last six months of 2009, those requesting help from HCA increased by 70% over the previous year. A month before HCA's annual Homelessness Prevention Fund (HPF) appeal went out to the Arlington community, HCA had virtually run out of funds to help Arlington residents stabilize their

housing situation. Although the small HPF grants given to families and individuals in danger of becoming homeless are helpful to many, it was clear that the demand for assistance was outpacing the resources that HCA could provide.

Arlington's HPRP provides short- and medium-term assistance and services to families and individuals who are homeless or in danger of homelessness due to circumstances arising out of the downtown in the US economy. Unlike HCA's original HPF which only gives short-term grants for housing assistance, the HPRP will help very low-income households with rent assistance and other housing-related services for up to eighteen months.

HCA Executive Director David J. Levy is pleased to take on this new challenge. "Not only does this program save taxpayers from paying toward the shelter system, but it helps families and individuals to remain in their homes or find stable housing. This perfectly aligns with HCA's mission." Starting in January, HCA began assisting Arlington residents struggling to stay in their housing with the HPRP.

If you think you or someone you know may benefit from Arlington's HPRP, please contact our office at 781-316-3451 or HPRP@housingcorporation.org.

SAVE THE DATE

FOR OUR NINTH ANNUAL

WaLK

FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

SUNDAY, APRIL 11

1:00 – 3:00 PM

JASON RUSSELL HOUSE

(Corner of Mass Ave and Jason Street)

Contact Jennifer at 781-316-3451
or walk@housingcorporation.org
for more details!



Harmonizing a Home

Last spring, HCA was approached by Red Door DesignWorks (RDDW), a local interior design firm, looking to donate their time to help one of HCA's tenants organize and update their apartment. Red Door DesignWorks brings their modern eclectic design sensibility to every project, with the mission of enhancing the look and functionality of their clients' interiors. HCA held a lottery, and the winner had the good fortune to work with Allison Carswell and Andrea Canty of RDDW to make over their living and dining rooms. It was a great opportunity for one of our families to transform their apartment into a more enjoyable living space. Thank you, Red Door DesignWorks!



Light on the Horizon: The Future of Housing

In late October, HCA celebrated our 23rd year with our 2009 Annual Meeting at Arlington's Town Hall Auditorium. Our keynote speaker, Barry Bluestone, founding director of the Kitty and Michael Dukakis Center for Urban & Regional Policy and Dean of the School of Urban Affairs & Public Policy at Northeastern University gave HCA supporters a preview into the 2009 Greater Boston Housing Report Card which was released the following morning.

Professor Bluestone's latest analysis of housing data looked at the Boston area's housing cycle compared with the rest of the nation and projected where we may end up over the next three years. He discussed the importance of having an ample housing supply, and the impact of high rents and housing prices on the economy in the Greater Boston area. Professor Bluestone expressed significant concern that metro areas like Greater Boston were losing young working families due to high housing prices and that if this trend continued it could deteriorate Boston's ability to attract a skilled workforce.

The evening included the annual presentation of HCA's Deacon Frank Mandosa Community Service Award. On behalf of HCA's board and staff, Board Member Mary Doyle presented



Keynote speaker Barry Bluestone

HCA's 2009 award to Liz Jaramillo of the Friends of Gateway for mobilizing the Arlington community to care for the over seventy homeless families staying at the Cambridge Gateway Inn, located on the Arlington town line. Liz's efforts organizing clothing, food, and toiletry drives, as well as activities and events for the families, provided critical supports to households dealing with the effects of homelessness.

HCA also acknowledged outgoing Board Member Laura Wiener for her incredible work in promoting affordable housing issues over the past two decades.

We Welcomed Two New HCA Board Members at this Year's Annual Meeting:



Mark Lesses helps buyers and sellers of residential real estate in Arlington and surrounding communities. He has been a licensed real estate broker since 1996 and in 2002 became a Coldwell Banker Vice President. Mark grew up in Cambridge and has a thorough knowledge of many Greater Boston communities. Prior to becoming a realtor, Mark was a residential renovation contractor and is still a licensed builder. Mark lives in Arlington with his wife, Joanne Lutz.



Tom Nee has been a resident of Arlington since 1995. With over 16 years of affordable housing experience, he is currently the Director of Property Management for Caritas

Communities Inc. Tom has his CPM (Certified Property Manager) designation through the Institute for Real Estate Management and is a current member of CHAPA (Citizens' Housing and Planning Association). Tom believes affordable housing can be a core foundation for future success and opportunities. Tom and his wife Maureen are the proud parents of three young sons.

Forest-Peirce Project Ribbon Cutting

On Thursday, November 5th, HCA celebrated the completion of a rehab and construction project that created a total of ten new affordable housing units—units that are in short supply and desperately needed in Arlington. HCA board and staff were thrilled to show neighbors, lenders, tenants, and other guests around the Forest-Peirce Project site.

Housing Corporation of Arlington purchased these ten additional units in February of 2009 within two properties on Forest and Peirce Streets in Arlington, with the goal of converting these tired rental units into bright, modern, comfortable homes. The apartments are located in two buildings on adjacent lots, which helps reduce the costs of rehabilitation, future upkeep, and management. The site is convenient to public transportation, and each of the units includes off-street parking. Of the ten new apartments, five have two-bedrooms, making them suitable for families with children, while the remaining five are one-bedrooms, suitable for couples and singles. Rents start at \$750 per month—about 30% lower than the market rate for this kind of home.

Peter Feinmann and his team of skilled craftsman and builders designed and renovated these new affordable housing units, handling construction and project management for the effort. The company donated a portion of the team's time for this endeavor. Feinmann's crew designed clean, modern kitchens and bathrooms for the units, replaced roofs, rebuilt front and back porches, and installed new high-efficiency heating systems. Peirce Street received new windows and both buildings were insulated, which should help the new tenants when it comes to heating their homes this winter.

Among the speakers at the ribbon cutting ceremony were State Representative Jay Kaufman who spoke about the importance of affordable housing in Arlington and David Rockwell, Director of Lending from Massachusetts Housing Partnership, who discussed HCA's progress to develop affordable units through the years.



From left to right: Ernest Zupancic (US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development), Clarissa Rowe (Arlington Selectwoman), Peter Garbati (North Suburban Consortium), Megan Mulcahy (Massachusetts Housing Partnership), David Rockwell (Massachusetts Housing Partnership), Michael Kuhn (Cambridge Savings Bank), Peter Feinmann (Feinmann, Inc.), and David Levy (Housing Corporation of Arlington)

With significant investments from the Town of Arlington's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, HOME program funds from the North Suburban Consortium, a construction loan from Cambridge Savings Bank, and a permanent loan and subsidy from the Massachusetts Housing Partnership, HCA has preserved the existing units as rentals—eliminating the possibility that the apartments would be lost to condominium conversion.

Last winter, due to overcrowded shelters, over seventy homeless families were placed at the Cambridge Gateway Inn on Route 2, located right on the edge of Arlington. According to David Levy, Executive Director of HCA, the plight of

homeless families staying at the Gateway Inn has highlighted the significance of HCA's work, and the need for these kinds of homes, "The Gateway situation helped shine a spotlight on the plight of displaced families in the Cambridge-Arlington area. HCA is proud to be located in a community which mobilizes to help those in need. Each unit HCA rehabs is another win for affordable housing—another option for people wishing to live in Arlington who would otherwise have had to leave," Levy says.

HCA's deepest thanks and appreciation goes out to our HCA supporters for helping us continue to increase affordable housing in our community and making projects like this one a reality.

Join us for HCA's Spring Clean Up!

MAY 22 • 9 AM – NOON

This is your chance to work outside with fellow affordable housing supporters to help beautify HCA's properties.

BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Contact Joanna at 781-316-3606 or
jain@housingcorporarlington.org for more details!

HCA's Inaugural Weatherization Day

Under the dedicated leadership of Laurel Kayne and Jeremy Marin from A-HEET (Arlington Home Energy Efficiency Team), along with half a dozen team leaders including Arlington Select-woman Annie LaCourt, local electrician Joe DeNatale, Audrey Schulman, Jason Taylor, Woody Swan, Forbes Little, Marc Breslow, and Martin LaMonica, a crew of forty volunteers helped weatherize one of HCA's two-family houses on a rainy morning last September.

Volunteers painstakingly insulated the heat and hot water pipes, caulked windows and moldings, replaced incandescent bulbs with energy efficient CFLs, insulated electrical outlets and sealed exterior penetrations. From basement to attic, all parties involved had a hand in making the property as airtight as possible.

Peter Feinmann, president of Feinmann, Inc., orchestrated the final blower door test with his crew at the end of the work day. The average reduction in "air leakage" after weatherizing a typical home



is around 11%. As part of this effort, the A-HEET crew reduced one unit's air flow by 12% and the other by 24%!

Both tenants, who also participated in the work, were awed and extremely grateful for the improvements being made to their apartments from so many hard-working volunteers. "I'm overwhelmed with what has been given to us," one tenant tearfully stated.

HCA and A-HEET look forward to teaming up in 2010 to weatherize another HCA home. Interested volunteers should contact Joanna at 781-316-3606 or jain@housingcorporationarlington.org.

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