

## HCA's Two-Family Program



Arlington's many neighborhoods. Two houses have been purchased since HCA's November annual meeting. These homes on Sherborn and Medford Streets are currently being renovated with the help of members of the Housing Corporation, the Interfaith Partnership and other Arlington citizens. We expect tenants will move into these lovely homes within a few months.

In late Spring, when tenants move into two houses recently purchased by the Housing Corporation, a total of twenty-two families will be living in Arlington thanks to HCA's Two-Family Program. Through this initiative HCA purchases and rehabilitates two-family houses to provide rental housing for residents who otherwise could not afford to live in Arlington. The Housing Corporation now owns eleven houses, scattered throughout

Our first house on Smith Street was purchased in June 2001 for \$374,000. We bought our most recent house on Medford Street in January 2004 for \$590,000. Real estate values in Arlington have escalated considerably over the last five years and continue to climb! Through our Two-Family program, however, we create long-term affordable housing solutions for generations of Arlington residents.



**Housing Corporation of Arlington**

20 Academy Street Arlington, MA 02476 • tel: 781.316.3429 fax: 781.641.2103



*Taking steps for affordable housing...*

**Housing Corporation of Arlington**

V. 1 • Spring 2004

## David Levy, Executive Director of the Housing Corporation



HCA's exciting news is that we have recently hired David Levy as our new Executive Director. Our personnel committee was thrilled to lure David away from CASCAP, a Cambridge-based non-profit organization that serves low-income individuals with housing and related services. David has worked in the housing field for over

10 years. His enthusiasm for the job, as well as his experience, makes him very valuable to our organization. Since joining HCA his top priorities have been stabilizing our existing housing units, building membership, and increasing the number of units in our portfolio. David joined the Corporation in December and has already added 4 units to our affordable housing inventory. David, his wife, and their 15-month old son live on Westmoreland Avenue in Arlington.

## Taking a Step for Affordable Housing: HCA's Annual Walk – Sunday, April 4th

For the past two years, the Housing Corporation of Arlington has sponsored a three-mile walk to raise awareness about the lack of affordable housing in Arlington. Participants and donors have included town officials, clergy, businesses and residents of all ages and economic backgrounds.

Last year's "Walk for Affordable Housing" was a successful fundraiser thanks to many teams of individual walkers, families and business people who walked and donated to this important cause. April 13, 2003 was a beautiful, sunny spring day and over one hundred walkers raised \$20,000 to support HCA programs! The great weather was a welcome change from our first event in 2002, which was rather rainy and cold.

This year we hope to attract even more participants. It will be a great event for individuals as well as families. There will be refreshments and entertainment (music by The Hot Tamales and, for the kiddos, Davy the Clown). Along the route there will be designated water stops that will also have treats and surprises. So come out and join us and help be part of creating solutions for Arlington's housing crisis. You'll benefit from the exercise, meet wonderful people and raise money for a good cause. **The walk starts at 1pm Sunday, April 4 at the Arlington High School.** Walk pledge sheets are available in churches and on the community bulletin boards at the libraries, Stop and Shop, Foodmaster, Playtime and Carberry's.

*HCA wishes to thank the following sponsors for their generous support of this event:*

- Belmont Savings Bank
- Calvary Church United Methodist
- Central Bank
- Feinmann Remodeling, Inc.
- Boston Federal Savings Bank
- Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
- Citizens Bank
- Medford Cooperative Bank
- Bowes Real Estate
- Coldwell Banker Cares
- East Cambridge Savings Bank
- Rush-Kent Insurance
- Starbucks (for donating food and coffee)



# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is "Affordable Housing"?

Affordable housing, as defined by the federal government, is housing for low- and moderate-income households earning up to 80% of median income for any given area. In Arlington, this equates to a family of 4 earning up to \$50,000 per year for rental housing, and \$65,000 a year for a first time homebuyer. These income limits are set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and applies to any units subsidized with public funds. Another accepted standard of affordability is that people should pay no more than 30% of their income for housing costs, including rent and utilities when renting, and mortgage payments, insurance, property taxes and condo fees when purchasing a home. Therefore, affordable housing in Arlington means the following:

The purchase price for a single family home or condominium affordable to a moderate-income family is at or below \$250,000. (The median price of single-family homes in Arlington is currently \$435,000.) Affordable rent for a moderate-income family is approximately \$1000/month, without utilities. Many families in Arlington pay more than this amount, often significantly more than 30% of their household income.

## Where do the funds to buy HCA properties come from?

The Housing Corporation receives funding from several different sources. Each property has a conventional mortgage from a local bank (Cambridge Savings Bank). If we mortgaged 80% to 90% of the purchase price, as most people do when buying a home, however, it would be impossible to set rents that would be affordable to low- and moderate-income residents. Instead we offset a portion of our debt with government grants, which significantly lowers our mortgage payments. The Town provides one of these grant sources called Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds that comes to the Town from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We also utilize funds from another federal program commonly known as HOME, which we receive via an area loan consortium. Another portion of our

funds come from individual and corporate donations. Together, all of these sources allow HCA to maintain below market rents.

## Will HCA's affordable housing stay affordable?

The money we receive from HUD comes with a requirement that the property stay affordable to low- and moderate-income households for a minimum of 30 years. HCA's mission is to provide affordable housing to Arlington residents, and we will work to ensure that these properties remain affordable long after their 30-year affordability restrictions expire.

## How can I apply for affordable housing?

There are three places to apply for affordable housing in Arlington.

- The Housing Corporation of Arlington, located at 20 Academy Street, suite 203, has 2, 3, and 4 bedroom rentals available for income eligible families. These units are located throughout Arlington in 2 family houses. Applicants must have sufficient income to support rents between \$900 and \$1100/month, or have a section 8 certificate. Applications can be picked up at any time. The waiting time varies for apartments, as we have been buying new properties at a rate of 2-4 per year.
- The Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) operates several housing assistance programs which provide direct housing in government-owned developments or subsidized housing in privately-owned dwellings for persons of low or very low income. Families may apply for two and three bedroom units. The AHA also has five well maintained developments for elderly citizens. For more information please call 781-646-3400 or visit their website at [www.arlingtonhousing.org](http://www.arlingtonhousing.org).
- The Town of Arlington, from time to time, markets affordable condominiums for first-time homebuyers, as a result of a zoning ordinance that requires new developments with more than 6 units to provide 15% of the units as affordable housing. For more information please call Laura Wiener, Arlington's Director of Housing, at (781) 316-3091.

# The Interfaith Partnership on Affordable Housing

The Housing Corporation of Arlington has a close alliance with the Interfaith Partnership on Affordable Housing.

The Interfaith Partnership started about four years ago as people living, working and worshiping in Arlington described how they were affected by the problem of escalating housing prices. John Mueller, pastor of Calvary Methodist, Reverend Kathy Huff of First Parish Unitarian Universalist, Reverend Linda Privitera at Church of Our Saviour and Father Brian Flatley of St. Agnes Parish met with Laura Wiener, (Arlington's Housing Director) Bob Murray (Consultant for the Town on affordable housing) to talk about ways the Interfaith Community and the Town could work together on this issue. "I remember that day well", says Laura Wiener. "Rev. Privitera said to me, 'well, why haven't you done anything yet [meaning, produced any affordable housing]. You've been here 3 months!' She really had me sweating that day."

The first significant collaboration with the HCA was a public meeting in 2001. About 175 citizens attended this very successful gathering. Individuals and businesses made commitments of time and money. Selectmen Charlie Lyons and



Jack Hurd pledged their support of additional CDBG money towards the goal of purchasing twenty affordable housing units by the end of 2002.

Since then, the Interfaith Partnership has continued to work closely with the Housing Corporation. It has been instru-

mental in encouraging people to participate in work days and the annual spring Walk for Affordable Housing. This year, during the last weekend of February, more than seventy-five people from eight faith communities volunteered their time to help rehabilitate a recently purchased two-family house to ready it for spring occupancy.



The Interfaith Partnership meets monthly and welcomes everyone's participation. We look forward to expanding our labor pool of professional and non-professional volunteers to help rehabilitate two-family houses. The Partnership has several other initiatives in the works including creating a flyer that encourages homeowners to make gifts of property to the HCA and furthering our homelessness prevention fund to provide short-term rental payments for people encountering emergencies.

Members of the following congregations have been involved in the Interfaith Partnership: Calvary United Methodist Church, Temple Shir Tikvah, Church of Our Saviour Episcopal Church, Pleasant Street Congregational Church, St. John's Episcopal Church, First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, St. Jerome's Parish, St. Eulalia's Parish and St. Agnes Parish.

Anyone is welcome to join the Interfaith Partnership. For dates of future meetings contact Rev. John Mueller (781) 641-1567 or David Levy, HCA's Director, (781) 316-3429.

## A snapshot of two of our tenants....

Gretel Hartmann is a single mom who has worked for over four years in Arlington. Until a co-worker told her about the Housing Corporation about two years ago, Gretel was sub-letting a market-rate apartment, unable to find affordable housing in Arlington. One of the Housing Corporation's rental units became available just in time for her daughter to start kindergarten at Dallin. Gretel has expressed great appreciation for the Housing Corporation's efforts to provide people like her with affordable housing opportunities in Arlington.

Several other Housing Corporation tenants are also single parents. One in particular grew up in Arlington and now works in a local bank. After losing her housing several years ago, she and her two children ended up living doubled up with family. Like many who grew up in Arlington, she very much wanted to be able to stay her community, and raise her children with the same pleasures she had growing up. She was very happy to learn about the Housing Corporation and was able to move into one of our two-family houses shortly thereafter.

## Housing Corporation of Arlington Board of Directors

Rev. John Mueller, *President*  
Pam DiBona, *Vice President*  
Laura Wiener, *Treasurer*

Deborah Lewis, *Clerk*  
Janet Blodgett  
Kate Casa

Marc Dohan  
Mary Doyle  
Diane Harrington

Margaret Keady  
Monique Magliozzi  
Neal Mongold