

In this Issue

A Word of Thanks	1
Bennett Farm Expansion	1
Second Year of Summer Meals	2
Anūmē	2
Are You a Good Tenant?	2
The Women's Circle	3
Fathers Are Talking	3
CHA Police's Latest Addition	4
CHA and Anti-Smoking	4
Homeownership Opportunity	4
CHA's Low Loss Award	4

Keep track of all the activities taking place around the CHA at our website, www.chesterha.org. Just look for the Activities Calendar on the right side of the home page:

Activities Calendar

July 2015						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

A Word of Thanks

On June 23rd, we were hit with a tornado-like storm, very unusual for our area. In a matter of minutes, devastating damage occurred to our city. Residents and staff are to be commended for their hard, around-the-clock work, patience and understanding as we spent the next few days repairing building damage and cleaning up.

Steve Fischer

Summer 2015

Bennett Community Farm Expansion



The Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm is a space where food production, educational programming and community ownership come together to create a sustainable food system. Since The Urban Tree Connection (UTC) and Terrence Topping-Brown began managing and working the farm, there has been much growth and progress. With new programs and technology, the farm is a great place for children and young adults to play and learn new skills while building a new generation off community minded urban farmers. **Read more on page 3**

Programs offered at the Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm

Hands-On Learning, Arts & Crafts, Simple Science and Life Skills

Tuesdays and Thursdays
4PM-6PM
On time Registration Sign-Up Required by Parent/Adult

Farmer's Market Food Stand

Fridays 12PM-3PM
Farm fresh produce for sale, reasonably priced
FMNP Coupons and Cash accepted

Workshare Volunteers Needed

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
10AM-2PM
Volunteers receive a share of produce in exchange for helping on the farm while learning gardening and growing techniques

Internship Programs

Internships available for high schools and college students
Experience and training in sustainable food production

Summer Meals Program Enters Second Year



Summer Meals Volunteers (L-R): Kayla Rudd, Brittney Whitfield, and Lesley Rudd (Bennett Site Supervisor)

After a highly successful first year, the Summer Meals program is in the middle of its second year of operation. The program provides free breakfast and lunch to children of Chester under the age of 18. Meals are prepared by residents and are ensured to be well-balanced. Last year, the program served over 5,700 meals to children, and is on track to exceed that number this year.

In addition to the Summer Meals program, food workshops are held at the Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm on Tuesdays and Thursdays for children and Mondays and Wednesdays for adults. Also, the community center computer labs have been upgraded and are open to supervised learning between meals.

Check out the Summer Meals Program at any community center for breakfast from 8:45–9:45AM and lunch from 12:00–1:30PM, Monday through Friday.



Find a New You at Anūmē



There's excitement at the Booker T. Washington Community Center, 611 Central Ave. Chester, PA. Join the Chester Housing Authority's Anūmē (a-new-me) program Mondays through Fridays each week to get into shape while having fun. Classes include Zumba, line dancing, hip-hop aerobics, step exercises, and Walking for Jazz. "I like how it brings the community together to better their health," says Anūmē coordinator Deborah Montgomery, "We have people from all over the city participating."

Within the last two years, Anūmē has accomplished much. The program has conducted two 12-week fitness challenges, hosted multiple health events at our three main community centers, offered 240 minutes of exercise options each week, led residents to lose a total of hundreds of pounds, hosted 10 healthy cooking seminars, and conducted multiple participant blood pressure screenings.



Anūmē instructor leads a Zumba class

Are You A Good Tenant?

A tenant in good standing:

- Pays his/her share of the rent in full and on time each month.
- Notifies the housing agency for approval, prior to permitting a new person to move into the unit
- Fully reports all household income and notifies the housing agency of any change in household income
- Keeps the unit, common areas, and yard in good condition in accordance with the lease
- Immediately reports maintenance issues to the housing agency
- Does not engage in drug-related or violent activity nor abuses alcohol in such a way that it threatens the health, safety or peaceful enjoyment of others (One Strike Policy).
- Ensures all guests and visitors follow all the rules under the lease
- Is considerate of their neighbors by keeping noise down
- **Ensures all children under the age of 18 comply with the City of Chester's Article 721 Minor's Curfew. (9:30 pm Sunday through Thursday nights and 11:00 pm on Friday and Saturday nights)**
- Ensures all children of school age are in school during school hours

We appreciate your support and cooperation in making the Chester Housing Authority's affordable housing programs a success in our community.

The Bennett Farm provides an arts and crafts, simple science and life skills program for kids (snacks are provided) and internship programs for young adults. Farm Manager Terrence Topping-Brown who holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Shippensburg University and has agricultural research experience, oversees these programs. The farm also provides opportunities for workshare volunteering in which volunteers receive a share of produce in exchange for helping on the farm while learning gardening and growing techniques.



Farm Manager Terrence Topping-Brown

Recent farm upgrades include an automatic irrigation system and plans to plant at least 20 new fruit trees including pear, plum, peach and cherry trees.

The produce grown at the farm is sold on Fridays at a food stand. You will find fresh tomatoes, squash, kale, collard greens, basil, sweet potatoes and much more. Spread the word!



If you are interested in buying food or participating in the farming programs, please contact Terrence by email (Terrence@urbantreeconnection.org) or phone (610-506-0424) for more information.



NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

Homeownership can often be just out of reach for many with limited incomes. That's when our Neighborhood Opportunity Program steps up. It includes a range of accounts and options that can bring homeownership closer for more people:

- An affordable, everyday checking account with easy access
- Mortgage options with reduced fees, reduced rates and flexible underwriting guidelines
- Easy access to government programs that offer additional flexibilities
- Special loan options that can make home improvement/maintenance more affordable
- Knowledgeable Bryn Mawr Trust mortgage personal in local neighborhood offices who can help people understand and select the program that makes the most sense for them



Bryn Mawr Trust
www.bmtc.com 610.525.1700

MAKING HOMEOWNERSHIP
MORE AFFORDABLE

The Women's Circle



"Good food, good info and good friends: that is what you'll find at our monthly meetings at the Booker T. Washington Center," said Tara Fontaine, founder of the Women's Circle. 'The Circle' invites all women to speak about issues that concern them while also learning from guest speakers. Meetings focus on the roles and experiences of women in the family and community featuring topics such as pregnancy and "what women want." While many sessions are open to male participation, some are for women only.

Fathers Are Talking



Come join us at Fathers Are Talking. 'Leave your title at the door'. Every other week, we are having a conversation about fatherhood and the issues of manhood in our community. All are welcome to join the conversation, whether you are a father or not. Our network has expanded as we have been asked to speak at area schools.

Officer Elijah Johnson Joins CHA Police Department



OFFICER ELIJAH THOMPSON

After 13 years of working at police departments in Chester City and Philadelphia, Officer Elijah Thompson has returned to the Chester Housing Authority.

He may be the latest addition to the Chester Housing Authority Police Department, but he isn't a new face. Previously, Officer Thompson worked for the CHA Public Safety Division from 1998 to 2002. In 2002, he transferred to the Chester City department, but continued to live at Chattam Estates for eight years to provide security presence.

Since rejoining the CHA this summer, he has received a warm welcome. "When I came back, it was like a big reunion." Officer Thompson enjoys the direct contact he gets with residents as part of the CHA Police. "In a small department, I get a chance to see the people."

CHA Receives Low-Loss Achievement Award



TINA JOHNSON AND VICTOR MARTINEZ

The Chester Housing Authority was awarded a Low-Loss Achievement Award for the past six years. This insurance liability award was given to the CHA for having very few accidents that are caused by defective or dangerous property. This is proof of the good work done by the property management team keeping the grounds and buildings free of hazards.

Homeownership Option

Eligible Section 8 Families can use their housing voucher assistance towards the payment of a mortgage. Instead of sending housing assistance payments to a landlord, a subsidy is sent to qualified lenders for assistance in paying a mortgage.

How Do I Qualify?

- Enroll in the FSS Program
- Be employed for at least 2 years
- Earn at least \$10,300 annually (Exceptions Apply for Disabled and Elderly Households)
- Be a participant in good standing in the Housing Choice Voucher Program
- Have seasoned savings
- Prequalify for a mortgage with an approved lender

What Can I Do to Learn More About Homeownership?

- Attend a Homebuyer Education Class
- Find out your credit score and work with a credit counselor to clear up credit problems that may prevent you from getting a mortgage.

CHA Awarded for Anti-Smoking Efforts



The Chester Housing Authority has recently been recognized by the PA Dept. of Health for anti-smoking efforts. The CHA has been discouraging smoking in public areas with 'Young Lungs at Play' signs at all community centers and playgrounds. Our mission at CHA begins with housing but it doesn't end there. Providing residents information and activities on health and wellness is a very important component of what we do. In addition to the signage, the CHA also offers smoking cessation classes for adults.