

Building BLOCK



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR STEVE FISCHER:

The number one reason why people work in the human services field is to assist and support the development of children born into poverty. So it is no surprise that this edition of *Building BLOCK* leads with scholarship awards. How proud we are of Latisha Cunningham and Rachael Peterkin.

You will note that every story in this issue is health-related. As we are still in the throes of the COVID-19 crisis, health awareness and education have risen to high priority topics if they weren't already. Read about what's happening with the A-NU-ME exercise program, the Bennett Farm, a garden contest among our residents and COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

Last but not least, Widener University student Ijjae Hill and Dr. Marina Barnett reached out to CHA residents to examine access to health care in Chester. Our residents did not hold back and provided truly honest and insightful answers to their questions, and then some. I would be remiss if I did not mention by name Deborah Montgomery, Tina Johnson, Rod Powell, Nolan Fontaine, Regina Reason, and Emerson Hughes.

As the summer winds down, let's hope we have better luck with the school year this time around.

Norman Wise (left, Director of Housing Operations), Latisha Cunningham (center) and Rachael Peterkin (right) with their checks at the M.A.D. ceremony

CHA AWARDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE SCHOLARSHIP

The Chester Housing Authority awarded the Making a Difference (M.A.D.) Scholarship to two Chester City residents. Despite the pandemic, the ceremony was able to happen in person this year, and both recipients received their \$1000 check on June 15th. The two awardees were Rachael Peterkin, a current senior at Archbishop Carroll High School planning to attend Drexel University in the fall, and Latisha Cunningham, a senior at West Chester University who is a non-traditional student and mother of three.

“Every year we are blown away by our applicants, and this year was no different,” said CHA Executive Director Steven Fischer. “What struck us about Rachael and Latisha, in particular, is how they both want to use their education to make the lives of those around them better, and that’s really in line with our values at CHA.”



Ijjae Hill

CHESTER HEALTHCARE

This June, Ijjae Hill, a student at Widener University, hosted a community conversation about access to healthcare in Chester, including concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. Various resident representatives, including many from the CHA council board, came together to discuss problems such as poor insurance, the lack of information about COVID-19 vaccines, overt focus on trauma care rather than long-term health impacts, and inaccessibility to mental health support. The conversation ended with various ideas on how healthcare in Chester can be improved, as well as with commitments to meet again in the future.

NO KID HUNGRY PILOT PROJECT

The purpose of the No Kid Hungry Pilot Project is to ensure vulnerable families with children aged 0-5 have access to sustainable sources of nutritious foods through participation in WIC, and/or referrals to SNAP and other services. Ruth Bennett Homes in Chester, PA will be used for dropping off and picking up eWIC cards. Signs will be posted locally to encourage more enrollment in the WIC program. A \$25 grocery gift card and flyer on how to choose healthy food when shopping will be given to eligible clients who are in immediate need of assistance, i.e., emergent need of food or infant formula. Surveys will be used to determine eligibility for the gift card and each foundation program will be allotted a certain number of gift cards to be distributed to clients in need.



**Choose Healthy.
Choose WIC!**

**Call today.
484-471-3320**

PA WIC is funded by the USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



EARTH DAY AT FARM

This April 14th, over fifty volunteers joined the Chester Housing Authority's Ruth Bennett Community Farm for a day of service in celebration of Earth Day. Natania Schaumburg, the farm manager, led the volunteers in various activities caring for the plants and farm grounds. This year's volunteers' work assisted the farm in preparing for the summer and helped the CHA's biweekly food distribution.



Volunteers at the Ruth L. Bennett Farm on Earth Day



Chester residents at the information session

CHESTER TRADES EDUCATION PROJECT

Starting in September, the Chester Trades Education Project will run a local career training program for the profession of carpentry. This program will Chester residents prepare for entry-level positions in residential carpentry. Students will learn the basics of blueprint reading, design concepts, and other basic technical skills. For further information, call 215-796-0902, or email jalinder@riversidefutures.org.

JOIN AN ANUME FITNESS CLASS

We are excited to announce our ANUME fitness classes are back in session. Each class is only \$2 and is capped at 15 people due to COVID safety. Classes are held at the Booker T. Washington Community Center (611 Central Ave.).

Zumba:

Monday & Thursday @ 6-7 PM

Cardio Drum/Step:

Tuesday & Wednesday @ 6-7 PM



GARDEN CONTEST

The Chester Housing Authority sponsored a gardening contest lead by community health worker Debrah Montgomery for residents to show off their gardening skills. Submissions were judged based on their general appeal and neatness, use of color, variety of plants, sustainable features & methods used, and garden hardware, furnishings, and art. The first-place winner, Daphne Payne, received a gift card of \$100. The second, third, and fourth place winners were Gina Mays, Tasha Merritt, and Iris Wilson, who were each awarded gift cards of \$75, \$50, and \$25, respectively.



Top left: Daphne Payne, top right: Gina Mays, bottom left: Tasha Merritt, bottom right: Iris Wilson

VACCINE CAMPAIGN

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chester Housing Authority has been working tirelessly to support residents and keep the Chester community safe and healthy. This summer, the CHA has been working to increase awareness about the dangers of COVID-19 and accessibility to information about vaccination. When it comes to the pandemic and vaccination, misinformation and distrust are some of the biggest problems. To combat these issues, the CHA has created various flyers and social media advertisements to inform residents of their options and encourage them to take COVID vaccination seriously.

This newsletter was written by CHA interns, Annette Kim and Zack Monterosso, from Swarthmore College.



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