



## Chester Housing Authority Summer 2018

### BUILDING DEDICATION

Following the class-action lawsuit led by Barbara Muhammad, Ella Thompson, Yvonne Carrington, and the late Ernestine Tilghman, Norma L. Shapiro took charge of the Chester Housing Authority in 1994 and released it in 2014 guiding it through a 20-year transformation. The CHA honored her contribution to the organization by dedicating the Chester Housing Authority Headquarters to her. People entering the “Norma L. Shapiro Building” are also greeted by a plaque commemorating the four women who risked everything to improve the lives and housing for the City of Chester by leading the class-action lawsuit which inspired the reform of the Chester Housing Authority. “From housing units no one wanted anymore to closed waiting lists, Shapiro saw the CHA for what it was; an organization vitally needed, left to fall into disrepair,” Steve Fischer, court-appointed Executive Director of the Chester Housing Authority, said during his speech. “She fixed it. She didn’t bring in big names for brief fixes. She took her time.” Her dedication to the development of the housing sector in the City of Chester is reflected in the success of the organization to this very day and by all who work to provide affordable and acceptable housing to its citizens.



Michelle Tilghman, Barbara Muhammad, Yvonne Carrington, and Vita Tilghman (left to right)

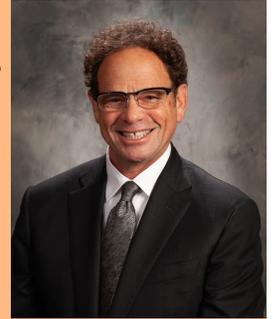


The plaque dedicated to Norma L. Shapiro in front of CHA headquarters on 1111 Avenue of the States



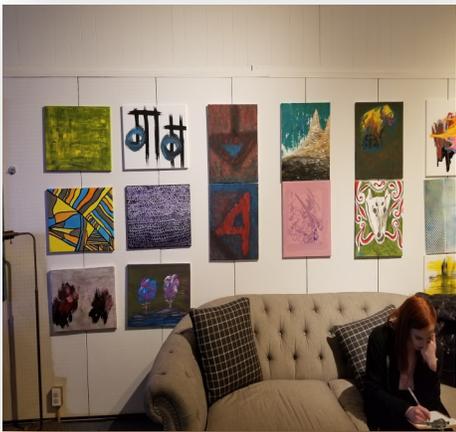
The plaque dedicated to Barbara Muhammad, Ernestine Tilghman, Ella Thompson and Yvonne Carrington

### From The Executive Director :



There has been no shortage of activity at the CHA this year, that’s for sure. Most notably, this was the year we paused to honor the people who led the way in our historic transformation. As reported on this page, we dedicated new headquarters to Judge Norma Shapiro on April 18, 2018. On the same date, we paid homage to four courageous public housing residents who came forward to initiate the lawsuit which eventually brought down the past administration of the CHA and led to a 20-year judicial receivership under Judge Shapiro. As always, with better health in mind, we have a slew of activity going on this summer. From resident job training, to summer camp at the William Penn, to record-setting production and a farmer’s market at the Bennett Farm, to the new “Art is Home” program and much more, CHA residents are engaged and working to progress to their next stages in life. On the business side, we thank the many residents working with us to reconcile rent accounts and institute smoke-free housing. Let’s keep up the good work and enjoy what’s left of the summer.

*Steven A. Fischer*



Sample artworks from the Nebula Gallery

*“We’re really proud to be working with the housing authority.”  
- John Bush*

## RESIDENT TRAINING ACADEMY

The Chester Housing Authority has partnered with virtual and on-site training company, Creative Education Opportunities (CEO Academy), to provide residents with training opportunities in healthcare technology and personal development. The purpose of this program is to equip residents with innovative training, motivation and the support needed to achieve both personal and professional goals. The Resident Training academy is the only one of its kind in our region as it connects residents to training, career coaching and personal development. The sessions are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the William Penn and Ruth L. Bennett Community Centers facilitated by Marrea Walker-Smith. For more information call 888-255-5182.

## ART IS HOME

The Nebula Gallery, located at 602 Avenue of the States, has donated 150 pieces of artwork to be given to new residents. Part of the “Art is Home” collection was created by students from the Chester Community Charter School for the Arts. Families moving into CHA housing units will receive two pieces of art

from the collection. “I think everybody loved the concept,” said gallery owner John Bush. “We’re really proud to be working with the housing authority.” Art is Home is the latest of the gallery’s civic programs since it’s opening in June 2017.

## SUMMER CAMP



CHA Camp at William Penn Homes

The CHA summer camp concluded on Thursday, August 9th. This year, the camp began with participation in the Health Career Summer Academy at West Chester University. CHA campers were able to tour the university campus and attend many healthcare-related seminars and classes such as athletic training, nursing, and respiratory therapy.



CHA campers at the helicopter museum



NBC10 Reporter/ Weekend anchor, Dray Clark at CHA summer camp.



CHA campers dissecting cow eyes at William Penn Homes

## Debbie Parker: 2 years of ANUME Zumba



Debbie Parker after two years.

Debbie Parker is an example of what it means to pursue a goal through sheer determination and commitment. Debbie began the ANUME Zumba class in 2016 suffering from diabetes. She attended the classes consistently every Monday and Thursday for two years. Aside from losing a considerable amount of weight. Her A1c count had decreased to the point that her doctor took her off her diabetes medication. This is a result of her hard work and dedication in the program. "Get a program that works for you and stick with it." said community health worker Deborah Montgomery when asked for advice for those who could be in similar situations to that of Debbie before she began the Zumba class. Debbie's journey is proof that we can all be healthier when we are willing to put in the work needed to get there.

### WORKING TOWARDS A HEALTHIER YOU!

This past May, members of the ANUME health movement and CHA employees were able to attend the third annual Healthier You Conference held by HealthCare Solutions of Delaware Valley. CHA's Executive Director, Steve Fischer, and Executive Assistant, Quineice Harris served on the Executive committee for the conference. The event featured health experts, wellness coaches, fitness demonstrations and more. The conference took place during one day and was for more than 6 hours. The conference gave the attendees the opportunity to understand how changes which are seen as small can have a large effect on health. This allowed them to understand that many chronic health conditions can be reversed or prevented simply by changing our daily behaviors.



Shanelle Johnson, Trena Luke, Cynthia Cartwright, and Sheena Renwick (left to right)

### HEALTHY FOOD FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

The Farmer's Market features the fresh fruits and vegetables grown at the Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm. The address is 1318 Carla's Lane Bennett Homes Pavilion. The Farmer's Market accepts all benefits such as EBT, WIC vouchers and Chester food bucks. There will also be food demonstrations where viewers can receive \$4 in food bucks and samples. The Farmer's Market will take place every 1st and 3rd Thursday June through October. Fresh food does not have to be inaccessible when there is a farmer's market.



Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm staff and volunteers.

### COME JOIN ANUME

**FOR 2\$:**

**Zumba**

Monday & Thursday 6:30pm-7:30pm

**Hip Hop Aerobics**

Tuesday & Wednesday

6:00pm-7:00pm

### SMOKE-FREE POLICY

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development requires all public housing units to be smoke-free. Also, no one may smoke within 25 feet of any building on public housing grounds. This



smoke-free policy is a measure taken to reduce secondhand smoke. Secondhand

smoke contributes to disease and early death. The only proven way to completely protect against secondhand smoke is to eliminate smoking both indoors and close to the building. Other methods such as moving to another room, turning on a fan, opening a window, blowing smoke away, or using air fresheners are not effective means of preventing secondhand smoke. This policy does not require residents to quit smoking but to smoke only in designated smoking areas or off of the properties. Residents should remind neighbors, visitors, and others living with them to follow the rules. This effort to protect residents will only be successful if everyone looks out for one another. For those looking to quit smoking, ChesPenn offers **FREE** support for **EVERYONE** who is looking to quit; whether you are a patient of theirs or not. Those interested should call 484-784-4260.

## CHA Police Saving Lives:



We commend CHA Deputy Chief John Fetzer in his service to our community. On April 20th, Deputy Fetzer saved the life of Michael Peace who was suffering from three gunshot wounds. Deputy Fetzer's heroism illustrates that the abilities of a police officer go beyond law enforcement but include the capacity to save lives.

## COMMUNITY CONNECT

Participants in Housing Choice Voucher and Public Housing Programs are receiving a brand-new smartphone. This program is in partnership with Terracom wireless to improve communication between the Chester Housing Authority and program participants. Public Housing Residents have been sent a letter with a date and time for Terracom to visit them.

Housing Choice Voucher Program participants will receive

their phones when they meet with the CHA for recertification.



## WOMEN'S CIRCLE: THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On June 9th, the Women's Circle Anniversary was held at the Booker T. Washington Community Center. The Women's Circle honored residents of the former Lamokin Village (LV) housing site. The festivities at the reunion included a buffet brunch, a performance of old school jams from the 50's, 60's, and 70's by Mr. Harry Jackson, and a raffle. Almost fifty (50) people were in attendance as a panel of former LV residents spoke about their experiences. The panelists shared experiences living in Chester during the War on Drugs/Poverty era and how community ties were developed in the midst of crisis for almost eighty (80) years. The event also featured the unveiling of the LV Historical Society (LVHS). This will incorporate past photos, news articles, memorabilia and oral/video history to showcase in 2020 during the 80th anniversary of the LV.



## RENT AMNESTY



The Rent Amnesty period ended on June 6, 2018. First, the Chester Housing Authority wants to thank the clear majority of tenants (close to 80 percent) who respect the terms of the lease and pay on time every month. Those who are chronically late and outstanding on the rent, will hear from the Chester Housing Authority with an ultimatum to resolve their debt.

Public Housing is not supported as strongly as it once was by the government. If it is to survive as a resource to families, everyone has to do their fair share as determined by program rules we all signed on to. Because this is Public Housing, your rent amount is what has been determined to be "affordable" for your family. The Chester Housing Authority looks forward to reconciling all accounts and doing as few evictions as possible.

This Newsletter was written by CHA summer intern, Kaleb Forson, from Swarthmore College.

