



# BUILDING BLOCK

## CHA Hosts Voter Registration Drive



*Tariq Hammett, one of the event attendees who successfully registered to vote*

On Wednesday, October 7th, CHA hosted a voter registration event outside of the Red Brick Café. The event took place from 6 - 9 pm,

with live music from the Young Picassos band and food by the Red Brick Café and Brian Wright throughout the evening. Masks were worn and social distancing guidelines were strictly followed as participants were encouraged to complete their voter registration prior to the presidential election on November 3rd. CHA Executive Director Steve Fischer emphasized that CHA is “always creating



*Donna Harrington (left) and Tina Johnson (right)*

opportunities for our residents to be more involved in their local community” and acknowledged that “voting and filling out census forms are two actions that can have a huge impact for our city.” The event successfully registered a total of 27 new voters, with many of them also completing their U.S. Census forms.



*CHA employee Donna Harrington (right) registering attendee (left) to vote*



### From Steven A. Fischer, CHA Executive Director

The seasons change so quickly. Much of what we have reported on this edition has come and gone. For voting this year, we were quite engaged in educating and registering. We also did multiple videos as part of our *Building Community* series. As we are still in the throes of the COVID-19 Pandemic, much of the content is related to that. It's a new year but the fight for our health is the same. Keeping our housing situations intact is as important as ever. If you have fallen behind on rent, pay particular attention to the article on our Eviction Prevention program on page three. Regarding your children's education, please look for and respond to upcoming communication from the school district about your children's education and how that will go the rest of the year.



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## CHA Hosts Luncheon to Honor Their Essential Workers

Essential workers have played a vital role in the ability of the Chester Housing Authority to continue its work through the COVID-19 pandemic. These workers have not missed a day of work since the pandemic hit in March, and they have gone above and beyond to keep the CHA up and running. In honor of the hard work they have done, the CHA hosted a socially distanced luncheon for their maintenance department at the Red Brick Cafe on October 21st.



*Mechanics Tariq Hammett and Adam Corley*



*Mechanics Wilbert Jarrett and Tina Johnson*



*From left to right: Mary Militello (CHA Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program), Anthony Dorsey, Betty Dorsey, and Steven A. Fischer (CHA Executive Director)*

## Ready-Set-Go! : A Step-by-Step Guide to Cleaning Your House

Earlier this year, CHA Voucher-Program Member Betty Dorsey began teaching classes to CHA residents on best practices to keep their homes clean. She emphasized the importance of keeping a neat house, including the ways in which this affects all other aspects of a family's life. After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Dorsey was forced to cancel her in-person classes, but she was determined to continue to share her home-care knowledge with other members of the community. She worked with the CHA to create "Ready-Set-Go!", a step-by-step guide to cleaning every room in your house, which also includes tips for children to encourage them to engage in tidying habits. "We had to make it simple, showing different techniques that people can use. We made it nice, colorful, and easy to read. One of my biggest goals is getting the book to all housing authorities across the United States. Residents have to be more active in keeping their communities clean," said Dorsey. Mary Militello, the Director of the Housing Choice Voucher Program at CHA who worked closely with Dorsey on the project, said that the CHA "...added a few things to make it work for us, but content is probably 95% Betty gleaning what she thought was important. We're very proud of all the great work she did." At \$12 a copy, Dorsey keeps some of the profits while donating the rest to support the CHA's work. More than 1,000 copies of *Ready-Set-Go!* have been sold to date. Betty's book can be purchased at <https://www.chesterha.org>.



# Empowering Our Residents Through Education

The CHA M.A.D Scholarship provides \$1,000 to Housing Authority residents interested in continuing their education. The scholarship is open to residents of our Public Housing and our Housing Choice Voucher Programs. Applicant must be a CHA resident who is either a graduating high school senior and is planning on enrolling in an accredited college or university or is a currently enrolled college student.

### How to Apply:

1. Complete a scholarship application (3 ways to submit)
  1. Complete and submit online via the CHA website scholarship page
  2. Hand deliver at 1111 Avenue of the States Chester, Pa 19013
  3. Email to [qharris@chesterha.org](mailto:qharris@chesterha.org)
2. Submit a most recent report card (for high school students) or current roster or transcript
3. The student must have at least 2.5 GPA
4. College Acceptance Letter (for high school students)
5. The Applicants must submit a 300-500 word typed essay (no more than 2 pages) titled: "How a college education will change my life"
6. Deadline for applications and essays must be submitted by 4 pm on Monday, March 1, 2021

To submit an application or view more information, visit <https://www.chesterha.org>, go to the "Community Investment" tab, and click "Scholarships."

## Eviction Prevention Program

The moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent has expired. Eviction court resumes on January 28, 2021. If you are delinquent on your rent and want to avoid losing your home, you have a final opportunity to avoid being evicted. You must contact **Marrea Walker-Smith, CHA Project Consultant, by calling 610-904-1111 ext. 127** or via email at [msmith@chesterha.org](mailto:msmith@chesterha.org) to make a repayment agreement or get information on other rental assistance options.

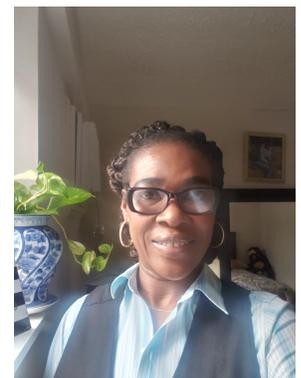


## CHA Fall Interns



**Ramiro A. Hernandez**

Ramiro is a second-year student at Swarthmore College, where he is majoring in Peace and Conflict Studies, Educational Studies, and Medical Anthropology. His work at CHA focuses on analyzing survey data surrounding CHA's Spanish-speaking residents. He is also the Co-Chair of the Federal Training Institute at the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).



**Paulette M. Mason**

Paulette is a senior at West Chester University, where she is majoring in Social Work.

## Reminders for HCVP CHA Residents

### General Reminders

All Occupancy Specialists are completing certifications and income adjustments for their respective caseloads. CHA residents, please continue to use email and voice mail to reach your assigned Occupancy Specialist. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the HCVP and admin staff have limited hours in the office and will continue to work remotely until further notice.

### Repairs

Please ensure that you are reporting repairs that need to be made in a timely manner. Contact your landlord first if you have repairs that need to be completed. If the owner does not respond in 24 hours for an emergency repair or 4 days for a routine repair, contact Sheena Renwick at 610-904-1111, Ext. 109. Make sure you also change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors!

### Mailing List

Have you joined the CHA mailing list? Stay up to date with waiting list openings, special events, and other important information. Go to <https://www.chesterha.org> and hit the "Subscribe" button to subscribe.

## Bennett Boxes: The Ruth L. Bennett Community Farm

Starting in April in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Bennett Farm began distributing free fresh produce boxes. From April through November, roughly 200 boxes containing at least 10 pounds of food were distributed. Many families and housebound seniors relied on these boxes as their source of fresh produce during the quarantine. Funding for the boxes came from The Foundation for Delaware County and the CARES Act for Emergency COVID relief. Also, this season, six youth participated in the Farm's Youth Crew program, three of whom were returning from last season. The youth assisted with planting, watering, harvesting, and produce box distributions all season. A highlight of the season was when Grammy-winner Jahlil Beats, who was raised in Chester, came to visit the farm and interacted with the youth. Despite being in a pandemic, our farm staff was able to show the community that we still have their back. We look forward to what next season's harvest will bring.



*Jahlil Beats visits farm to interact with youth*

## Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP) Highlights

### Overview

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, CHA had a very successful first-time leasing initiative for persons in the Mainstreaming Persons with Disabilities program. More than 30 disabled households found suitable housing and have begun receiving rental assistance. CHA provided additional support in setting up several households to mitigate the spread of the corona virus and to ensure successful tenancies.

### New Initiatives

CHA is working on a joint funding application with the Chester County Housing Authority to receive vouchers and encourage mobility to higher opportunity areas. We are in the process of applying to national funding competition due in February, which we will most likely not hear back from until late summer 2021.

### Holiday Display

If you are in the neighborhood, drive by and see the holiday display created for your enjoyment. Due to the pandemic, we can't have holiday gatherings, but we still want to share the joy of the season! Wishing every one a happy and healthy New Year!