



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO: CMHA IS CULTIVATING PARTNERSHIPS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF HAMILTON COUNTY RESIDENTS

The month of May marks Mental Health Awareness month, a national observance to bring awareness and attention to the importance of well-being. While the observance of mental health began in 1949, it has only recently been an intense focus on this issue and the challenges people living with mental health conditions and their families face daily. Did you know that 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year? One in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. However, only 47% U.S. adults experiencing mental illness receive treatment, and only 65% of U.S. adults experiencing serious mental illness receive treatment. Additionally, one in six U.S. youth have a mental condition with only half of them receiving treatment.

For someone living with mental health conditions, finding and retaining stable housing may be difficult. When safe and affordable housing is inconsistent or nonexistent, this becomes a barrier to recovery for the illness. Many people experiencing mental health conditions tend to cycle in and out of homelessness, jail, shelters, and hospitals.

CMHA continues to cultivate partnerships with community and national organizations in developing and rehabilitating buildings so to assist individuals and families gain access to safe and stable housing. The goals of these efforts are to better assist those who suffer with mental health conditions so they might find better success with recovery.

CMHA began its journey reimagining housing by creating a plan toward a billion-dollar investment to provide better quality housing for individuals and families in 2015. CMHA closed on the first property in 2019 with a total development cost of \$33.4 million. Since that time, we have steadily each year been adding to that development cost as we work towards the billion-dollar goal. We have already impacted the lives of more than 5,000 families throughout Hamilton County.



Understanding the county residents' housing needs is a vital mission for CMHA, one not taken lightly.

**The current projects in the works set to be completed this year are:**

- Riverview Apartments in Walnut Hills – rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities
- San Marco Apartments in Walnut Hills – rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities
- Logan Commons in Over-the-Rhine – new construction of senior housing

**Projects set to complete their financial closing in 2025 and construction completed 18 months after closing are:**

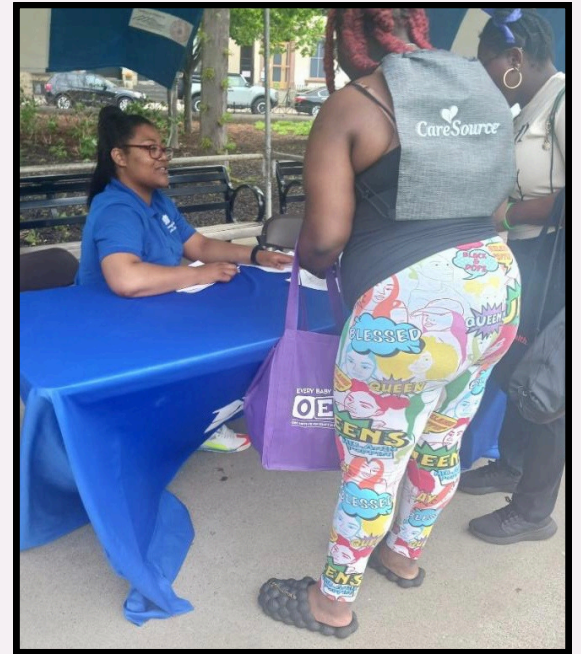
- Marquette Manor in North Fairmont - rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities
- The Beechwood in Avondale - rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities
- Winton Terrace in Winton Hills - rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities
- Anderson Township - rehabilitation and upgrade of facilities

In cooperation with CMHA's efforts to create "sustainable funding models for quality affordable housing," we often work with community, regional, state, and federal partners to acquire additional funding for our new construction and rehabilitation projects. Congressman Greg Landsman is one of these partners that works tirelessly to assist CMHA in obtaining additional funds for projects. On May 13, he visited and toured The Beechwood in Avondale to gain a better perspective of the current conditions under which residents live. Most of the apartments in the 12-story building have decades old kitchen and bathroom facilities in addition to older dilapidated vinyl tile flooring. Congressman Landsman assisted CMHA in winning a \$1 million Economic Development grant through the federal government, which will provide additional funds for better quality and longer lasting materials.



# Asset Management updates

- Produce Perks visited Winton Terrace in May to offer fresh produce for residents
- Molina Healthcare visited Findlater Gardens, Winton Terrace, and Maple Towers
- The Urban League of Cincinnati visited Winton Terrace to share about the program for rental assistance
- Head Start offered Sign Ups at Winton Terrace
- Attended Women Empowerment May 14th Community Action Agency for 513 Rental Relief – provided housing applications, EnVision Center information, CMHA and Touchstone list of housing resources and locations
- Attended Partner Appreciation Event by 513 Rental Relief on May 13th
- CMHA Resident Blitz offered nearly 100 CMHA residents recertification, signed agreements for rental assistance. Additional resources were also provided for rental assistance.
- Ohio Means Job Fair May 15th stopped by at Maple Tower to offer assistance to anyone looking for jobs
- Winton Terrace help several Relocation and Update meetings



## Upcoming events

- Community Empowerment event - May 28, 2024 City West Community, Linn St.
- One Stop Shop - May 31, 2024, 9581 Hawthorne Ave
- Feed the Block - June 13, 2024; 979 Hawthorne Ave
- West End Wellness Fair - June 14, 2024; 1202 Linn St.



# Touchstone News

A Salon event was held on May 10 and sponsored by Oak Street Health who has been holding coffee & chats at the Baldwin Grove, West Union Square, Cary Crossing and The Reserve on South Martin every week during the month of May.

The Salon Event featured a licensed cosmetologist, Meagan Freeman, as well as luncheon for the clients utilizing the salon services on that day. Additionally West Union Residents enjoyed music and gathering. Transportation was provided by Cass Services.

Residents from all four properties signed up to go to the National Underground Freedom Center on Wednesday, May 15. It was a very enjoyable time for everyone, and they plan to go again more in the future. Cass Services also provided transportation.





# Housing Choice Voucher Program

## HVC Honors and Highlights in Appreciation Banquet for Property Owners

Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) held the Annual Housing Choice Voucher Appreciation Banquet on Thursday, May 1, at Cintas Center. The gala event highlights and honors partners who work with CMHA and the HCV program assisting participants with finding quality affordable homes. Ms. Joy Gazaway acted as the MC and host for the event. She introduced CMHA Commissioner Mrs. Bernadette Watson to kick off the evening with a special message about sharing her experience helping people achieve their dreams. She thanked the property owners for their collaboration with the agency. Mr. Gregory Johnson, CMHA CEO, spoke about the unity and stated, “our greatest strength lies in our partnerships, as you [landlords] work with us daily to provide affordable, well-kept, and well-managed properties for our voucher holders.” He thanked them for their partnership with “your assistance and collaboration provide more than 10,000 families across Hamilton County with homes with a quality place to lay their heads and hearts every night.” In addition, he expressed gratitude to the CMHA Board of Commissioners and CMHA staff for the work they do every day.



Top picture: Mr. Greg Johnson with Mrs. Bernadette Watson and Ms. LaVerne Mitchell

Bottom: Hamilton County Commission President Alicia Reece and Mr. Greg Johnson  
Far right: Mr. Johnson handing an award to Rep Dani Isaacsohn.  
Middle right: First Step Home staff receiving award from CMHA staff.

During dinner, Hamilton County Commission President Alicia Reece spoke about her passion for CMHA and Hamilton County’s partnership to stabilize families and create more opportunities through affordable housing. She shared her life experiences with her grandmother living in Over-the-Rhine through her childhood and her desire “where everyone can afford to live, and everyone can afford a piece of the American dream.” She continued in sharing how the county has provided more than \$40 million for affordable housing from their ARPA funds. In addition, \$17 million from the CDBG funds were directed toward CMHA’s Logan Commons project for senior housing. Commission President Reece wrapped up with, “We believe that partnerships are important. We believe that you have to put the money where our mouth is. I believe that people can come through CMHA housing system like my grandmother, like my mother now leading to me being over as president of the Hamilton County Commission...I want to make sure every person in Hamilton County has an equal shot at the American Dream.”

Following Commission President Reece, Ohio State Representative Dani Isaacsohn began by thanking property owners for their collaboration, “I want to begin with the most important message to convey, thank you. Thank you for helping thousands of people in this community

# Housing Choice Voucher Program

## HVC Honors and Highlights in Appreciation Banquet for Property Owners (cont)



have a place to call home for themselves and their families.” He continued by sharing about his connection to CMHA and his passion for affordable housing for everyone. “Today, more than ever, the voucher program and the housing you provide is critical,” he said speaking to property owners. “The vouchers program is at its core a partnership, and it only works because there are people willing to step up to provide the housing necessary and who recognize that providing housing can be about more than just maximizing financial returns.” He concluded with what success can look like for voucher participants and the continued push to “act and legislate” to assist property owners in more ways.

The evening continued with two impactful videos highlighting CMHA’s partnership with two agencies and focused on one important program at CMHA. The Family Self-Sufficiency program at CMHA sets participants up for success through goal setting and saving money. The video took a closer look and focused on Angela Walker, a participant who met her goals of graduating from college, getting a quality job, and purchasing a home of her own. It recognizes that CMHA provides additional opportunities to families that assist them in more ways to continue building and growing in their lives. Strategies to End Homelessness is a significant partnership as CMHA provides 1,100 referrals to them to reduce the number of families experiencing homelessness. Through this partnership, CMHA assists families who may not have a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence and helps them improve their quality of life.

CMHA honored two partners with The Partnerships Awards. The first was First Step Home, which works through the agency’s project-based voucher program, where a subsidy is attached to a unit and provides housing subsidies for special populations. First Step Home empowers women to overcome substance abuse and achieve self-sufficiency while providing a safe and nurturing environment for their children. The second award went to Greater Cincinnati Realtist, which provides training and educational opportunities for their membership of property owners to better understand and work with CMHA. They also support CMHA’s annual Homeownership Fair providing attendees with information on inspections, credit, and other tools to be successful homeowners.

*The additional companies and organizations honored were:*

Housing Our Heroes Award went to Mr. Jamie Collier of 4th Street Management for his advocacy in seeking safe and affordable places for those who have served in the armed forces. He assists veterans in moving quickly through the housing process. He often checks on them following their moves into homes to ensure they have what they need.



# Housing Choice Voucher Program

## HVC Honors and Highlights in Appreciation Banquet for Property Owners (cont)



The Modernization and Neighborhood Stability Award was presented to Fairfield Homes for their construction of Blair Lofts, a 64-unit apartment building in Avondale with one to three bedrooms.

The Commitment to Housing was bestowed on Found House which provides shelter, housing, and support for families experiencing housing insecurity. The Found House staff works tirelessly with tenants to help them understand the processes and keep secure housing.

HCV presented the Initiative Award Plum Tree and Maxine Milner for their enthusiasm in taking advantage of training opportunities in addition to their reliability and professionalism in their repair.

The two Beautification Awards went to Action Property and Second Avenue for their hard work in providing curb appeal and well-kept landscaping.

Aven Realty and 1728 Lincoln earned the Newcomer Awards for modern and updated touches to their newly acquired properties in their first year with CMHA.

Following the award presentations, Lisa Isham, CMHA Vice President of HCV Program Services thanked the partners for their collaboration in providing quality affordable housing opportunities for HCV participants. She also thanked CMHA staff for their dedication.

CMHA Vice Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Ms. LaVerne Mitchell closed out the banquet with special acknowledgement and gratitude, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, to the property owners, CMHA staff, and Mr. Johnson, for his passion and leadership of the organization.

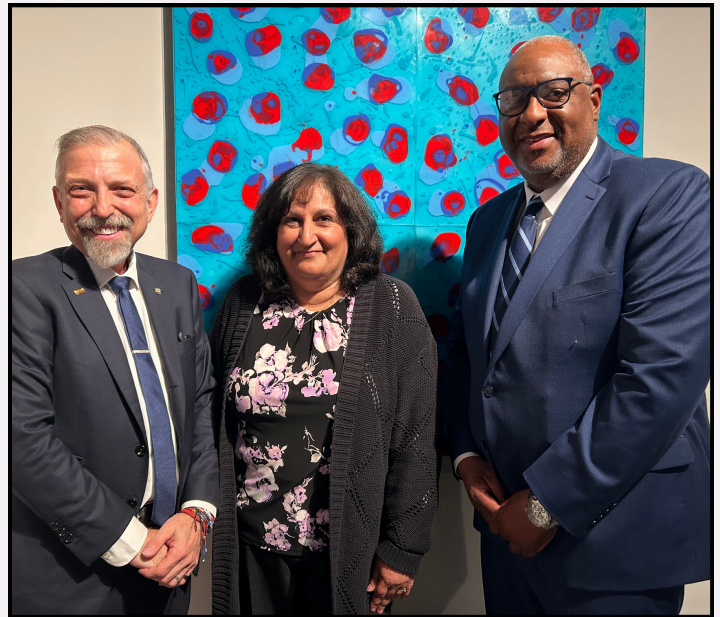




# Development Updates

## NCRC Tours CMHA Properties for Grand Ideas

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition Conference visited Cincinnati in May. The CMHA Development Team spoke at the conference providing information about the development and construction processes that CMHA uses in building new properties and rehabilitating current properties. In addition, Mr. Gregory Johnson spoke at the luncheon sharing his background in public housing and his wealth of knowledge.



Following the luncheon, CMHA staff took about 30 attendees of the conference on a tour of three properties, Bennett Point, Park Eden, and West Union Square, where they were able to see, firsthand the



expert touches that development and construction have added for the residents living experiences. The tour visitors were quite impressed with the amenities CMHA were able to provide to residents.



# Procurement



## How to Do Business with CMHA

How To Do Business with CMHA held an event on April 26 on the CMHA campus. Ashley Clericus, Interim Director of Procurement, provided training on vendor registration and an overview of the procurement processes for new vendors. She introduced business owners to the CMHA website, where they can find current solicitations, and training about preparing a response to a solicitation and invoicing.

In addition, Mike Koch, Manager in Development, shared with the attendees an overview of the Marquette Manor project and talked about upcoming subcontracting opportunities for new businesses.

The event also included a presentation from the Hamilton County Office of Small Business, Alloy Economic Development. This organization offers assistance to small businesses and provides information about a free Business Advisory Program that includes coaching, networking, trainings, and 1 year of funding for electronic accounting and website services.



# Family Self- Sufficiency

## Dress for Success Cincinnati Brings Mobile Styling Bus to CMHA Campus



Seventeen women were fitted for professional looking clothes at a collaborative event with Dress for Success and Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority on May 1. The partnering event assisted the attendees in choosing professional outfits in addition to trying them on for job interviews. The partnership connected participants from Housing Choice Voucher and Asset Management programs with the Dress for Success team for this collaborative effort. Many of the attendees left with new clothes in hand and big smiles.

Through this partnership, Dress for Success partners with other local agencies and non-profit organizations empower women and assist them with increasing their chances of landing employment by ensuring they can make a good first impression.

