Annual Meeting Celebrates Housing Gains and Volunteers of the Year

AHC’s Annual Meeting highlighted 2017 activities and accomplishments and honored some outstanding volunteers who are making a tremendous difference with the students in our education programs.

AHC Board Chair Justin Oliver welcomed the crowd and thanked all the corporate donors, community supporters, donors and volunteers for their commitment.

“As a mission-driven organization, AHC prides itself on developing top quality affordable homes for those who need them most,” said Oliver. Thanks to your support, we are not only creating places to call home, but are also helping our residents build stable and successful lives through our Resident Services programs.”

AHC has grown significantly over the years. The organization’s development portfolio now tops 7,000 affordable apartments at 50+ properties in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC.

“The steady growth over the years has helped propel our commitment to our residents,” said Oliver. “Since we began Resident Services nearly 25 years ago, we have increased our investment more than 10-fold and have significantly expanded the range and depth of our programs.”

Today, AHC’s Resident Services initiative has grown to an annual $2 million investment in onsite programs, including our multi-pronged education initiative that nurtures children from Kindergarten through high school.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of AHC’s education programs and integral to our students’ success. During the Annual Meeting, Resident Services leaders presented four awards to our 2017 Volunteers of the Year: the Marymount University Women’s Lacrosse Team; Jamie Usrey, After-School Program Volunteer; Tim Bellaire, Teen Tutoring Volunteer; and Marjorie Macieira, College and Career Readiness Program.

(See page 5 for more details on the honorees.)

“Each one of these award winners is amazing; their dedication and commitment are inspiring,” said Emily Ward, Resident Services Assistant Director. “Along with helping to build academic skills and confidence, the personal relationships they nurture and the broadened perspectives they provide are invaluable to our students.”

Coach Kate Athing and her Marymount University Women’s Lacrosse Team is the AHC Volunteer Group of the Year.

AHC Inc. is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing. Founded in 1975, AHC produces and preserves affordable rental housing; and offers onsite educational services to improve the quality of residents’ lives.
The Berkeley redevelopment, near Four Mile Run in Arlington, is breaking ground next spring. The project includes 256 affordable apartments. We are grateful to Arlington County for allocating $7.4 million in loan funds from the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) for the project. We also recently received $2.5 million in 9% tax credits from the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA).

Key’s Pointe is a large, multi-year mixed-income development in Baltimore. The 62-acre site will eventually provide homes for 900 families and six acres of green space. The first phase (76 apartments) is complete. The second phase (68 apartments) is now underway and is expected to be completed in the spring.

St. James Plaza will be a mixed-income, mixed-use community. The three-acre site in Alexandria includes 93 affordable apartments, an onsite pre-school and adjacent market-rate townhomes. St. James expects to welcome families next spring.

Two projects on the drawing board include an exciting project on the Southwest Waterfront in Washington, DC, a partnership with PN Hoffman (133 affordable and 310 market-rate apartments) and a creative partnership with the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Alexandria, which will create 113 affordable apartments and a new sanctuary on their existing site.

AHC is also working on plans to refinance and renovate several apartment communities, including Lafayette Apartments, a 340-unit partnership with the Jonathan Rose Companies; Colonial Village West, a historic garden-apartment community in Arlington with 70 affordable apartments, and Virginia Gardens, 76 apartments in south Arlington.

Updating and preserving existing affordable apartment communities is a key part of AHC’s mission. In 2017, we completed renovations at two major properties, Woodbury Park in Arlington and Charter House in Silver Spring.

Built in the 1940s, Woodbury Park at Courthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. AHC purchased the 364-unit property in 1987. (continued on page 3)
The process of developing and preserving affordable housing is increasingly challenging due to market pressures and the changing political climate. Here are a couple of ways you can help.

First, on a national level, encourage Congress to continue to support Low-income Tax Credits and Historic Tax Credits. These are two critical tools that help bridge the funding gap and make many of our developments possible.

Second, support local initiatives. For instance, two years ago Arlington passed a much-praised Affordable Housing Master Plan. Its goals include 600 new affordable apartments each year. To date, despite the County’s support, our community has only managed to preserve or build about half that number. Working with the County – and you – we hope to develop new strategies to create more affordable homes for our neighbors.

Third, engage your friends, family, and colleagues in conversation about affordable housing and how it benefits the entire community. Like most, I support affordable housing through the lens of philanthropy and volunteerism, but you can also support affordable housing for broader economic reasons.

This is what I think of as the business case for affordable housing. As a business owner, I long ago recognized the need and importance of affordable housing to maintain a diverse and competitive workforce. Affordable housing provides critical entry points (and re-entry points) for new workers, families, retirees, and others to obtain housing in the communities in which they work at various points in their lives.

Companies large and small depend on this workforce to grow and maintain their business. The businesses provide the jobs that fuel the economy and support our schools and other services. In order to retain and attract great companies you need a high quality of life for their workforce. This includes housing affordability, quality of the schools, access to healthcare and public transportation.

Affordable housing is a critical building block not only for the stability and success of the families we serve, but also for the long-term economic health and prosperity of the community in which we live. I hope you will join me in making the case for affordable housing to our national representatives, local leaders, and friends and neighbors.
Located where families live, AHC’s education programs provide a unique combination of familiarity, support and trust. The nurturing environment enables students to grow and thrive – academically and socially.

“While we provide a safe place for the students to engage in social and academic learning, we also act as liaisons and advocates,” explains Ellen Mullan-Jayes, AHC Resident Services Coordinator. “We are able to fully support students as we have strong relationships with their families and teachers.”

Anila Butt, an AHC resident with two children in the After-School Program, deeply appreciates the program’s proximity and the relationships her family has formed with staff members and reading instructors. Mullan-Jayes regularly attends Anila’s daughters’ parent-teacher conferences and has become a trusted advocate for the family.

“My family loves the program. It’s a place where my kids feel like they can learn everything, know everyone, and feel comfortable,” she says. “They are always sad to leave because they have fun here.”

Patti Sanner, a trained reading specialist, has worked with AHC families for the last eight years. She provides one-on-one help to children who need to develop their reading skills and confidence.

She also believes the program’s close proximity to students’ homes is a key benefit. “There is a strong concept of community here,” she explains. “We are meeting the families where they live.”

The combination of housing plus education really works. “I’ve seen a huge improvement in my children’s academics,” says Anila. “Kareema is very proud of her reading now. She keeps her book close to her when we are at home.”

– Andrew Karpinski

AHC Provides 1000+ Backpacks!

More than 1,000 AHC students started school fully prepared with backpacks and school supplies. We are grateful to our many generous individual supporters and our community partners who donated backpacks or volunteered their time during the distribution process: Boeing, The Reading Connection, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, the Arlington County Community Outreach Program, Police Department, and Parks and Recreation divisions.

When you support the work of AHC Inc., you help provide year-round education programs and vital community resources to neighbors who need us most. Thank you!
Celebrating AHC’s Volunteers of the Year!

Congratulations – and heart-felt thanks – to AHC’s Volunteers of the Year!

**Marymount University Women’s Lacrosse – Volunteer Group**

Head Coach Kate Athing and the Marymount Women’s Lacrosse Team have volunteered with AHC’s After-School Program for three years. Players are paired with the same elementary student each week and have developed close relationships with the youngsters. “The team brings such positive energy with them,” says Becky Koons, Senior Resident Services Manager. “It’s not just about the academic piece (which is great!); they are our buddies, and we are their biggest fans!”

Coach Athing connected the team with AHC’s program when she was looking for something service-oriented for her players. “I believe consistent service is meaningful for both student-athletes and the community,” explains Athing.

**Jamie Usrey – After-School Program Volunteer**

Jamie Usrey, a former Reading Recovery Teacher at Randolph Elementary School, has volunteered in AHC’s After-School Program for the last three years and spends two to three afternoons a week working with young students who are behind in their reading skills. Along with building literacy skills, she also wants her young students to enjoy reading. Jamie has a special warmth and patience that builds students’ trust and confidence. The combination of her professional expertise and innate enthusiasm are making a real difference. “Thanks to Jamie’s dedication and commitment, struggling readers are making outstanding strides toward reading on grade level,” says Lotus Chen, Resident Services Manager.

**Tim Bellaire, Teen Tutoring Volunteer**

Calculator in hand, Tim Bellaire has been working with AHC’s teens for more than two years. A former FBI agent for 25 years, Bellaire found the program after retiring.

“Mr. Tim is recognized by the students as the guy most likely to know or be able to find the answer to anything,” according to Senior Resident Services Manager, Grace Park.

Along with academics, Tim also helps students recognize their own abilities and strengths. “After working with Mr. Tim in 7th and 8th grade, we saw a huge difference in one teen’s motivation, work ethic, and overall attitude toward his schoolwork and ability to advocate for himself,” says Park.

Tim has found volunteering to be a two-way street. “I get as much (or more) out of the volunteering experience as the young adults gain from me. As the saying goes, ‘the more you give, the more you shall receive.’”

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AHC Greater Baltimore

Marjorie Macieira – College and Career Readiness Volunteer

Marjorie Macieira, an Arlington resident who grew up in Brazil, brought boundless energy and commitment to AHC’s College and Career Readiness Program. The program pairs high school seniors with adult mentors to assist them every step of the way through the complicated career and college search process.

Macieira and her high school senior, Jasmine, really bonded. Not only did Macieira help Jasmine go through the whole college process, she also attended school counselor meetings, choir recitals, scholarship ceremonies, and graduation. She even encouraged Jasmine to enter an essay competition. Both were thrilled when she won second place.

Macieira found the yearlong experience to be very rewarding. “I found out that the program is more than just helping with homework,” says Macieira. “You connect with a young person and become important in their life. We both learned much about friendship, trust and being there for each other.”

– Andrew Karpinski

Connecting Housing and Health

AHC Greater Baltimore’s Resident Services team is expanding their focus on helping residents improve their health and wellness.

“If you look at the factors that affect people’s health, housing is one of the largest factors,” says Allison Pendell-Jones, Resident Services Assistant Director. “It’s why we are using housing as a platform for health services.

Using a seed grant from NeighborWorks America, Baltimore’s Resident Services group analyzed residents’ needs, evaluated their current onsite health programs, and identified partnerships that could give residents access to a wider selection of needed health care services. AHC-GB currently collaborates with six groups to offer weekly exercise programs, food distributions, annual vaccine clinics and a health fair.

Thanks to an Enterprise Community grant, AHC-GB Resident Services is building additional wellness opportunities for residents. Specific programs may include helping residents navigate healthcare insurance, exploring access to dental services and insurance, increased health screenings, nutrition workshops to prepare healthy meals on a budget, and incentive programs for exercise.

One group of women is already rising to the challenge. They have been meeting for a Hot Hula exercise class for about a year. The instructor heard they wanted to do more and started an intensive six-week wellness program that includes exercise, nutrition and one-on-one support with personal health goals. “A Better You” meets an extra day each week and participants help keep each other motivated.

Proposed Housing for Veterans Wins Grant

AHC Greater Baltimore received a $750,000 grant to jumpstart a new development on the drawing board, Winans Way in Baltimore. The grant is through Project C.O.R.E (Creating Opportunities for Renewal and Enterprise), which is a partnership between the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland designed to encourage neighborhood revitalization.

Winans Way will address a key need – housing for veterans. The project, which will create 65 affordable apartments, will provide a supportive group environment for formerly homeless veterans who have completed a residential treatment program. The Baltimore Station, an established therapeutic residential treatment program, will provide onsite services and case management.
AHC announced several leadership changes at the Annual Meeting in October, including the retirement of AHC Board member, Jacqueline Coachman, who has served on the board since 2015. “We sincerely appreciate your dedicated service to AHC and your deep commitment to social justice,” said Walter D. Webdale, AHC President and CEO.

Jennifer Endo, who served 19 years as Director of Resident Services, is evolving into a new position as Vice President of Community Relations. Last spring, Catherine Bucknam retired after leading the Community Relations team for 17 years.

Susan Davidson is AHC’s new Director of Resident Services. Her wealth of experience includes 15+ years focusing on services to individuals and families living in affordable housing communities in Northern Virginia – with Wesley Housing and Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development.

Michael Werner joined AHC earlier this year as Senior Vice President, Property Management. Michael brings more than 20 years of property management experience to the position.
Founded in 1975 in Arlington, VA, AHC Inc. is a nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing.

Today, AHC produces and preserves affordable rental housing in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC.

The organization also offers onsite educational services to improve the quality of residents’ lives.

Programs provide access to community resources and year-round educational initiatives, including After-School Program, Teen Tutoring, College and Career Readiness, and Summer Camp.

What’s Inside

AHC Inc. Honors Volunteers of the Year!