Faith-Based Partnerships: Housing and Public Good

Partnerships between churches and affordable housing developers offer opportunities to combine assets and create long-term community benefits. Many faith-based communities are grappling with how to make the best use of their land, while continuing to meet social justice missions.

Some churches are solving this dilemma by selling or leasing their land to nonprofit developers like AHC Inc. to build affordable housing, a gift for the community.

By doing so, they are relieved of a heavy financial burden, can use the proceeds to find or build space better suited for their needs, and have the satisfaction of knowing their land will be used for public good.

Since 2009, AHC has partnered with three churches to build affordable apartment communities in Northern Virginia. Along with much-needed housing, each development has brought additional benefits to the neighborhoods they serve:

**Educational opportunities**

St. James Plaza, with 93 new affordable apartments, opened its doors in early 2018. The $32 million development transformed a three-acre parcel of land owned by St. James United Methodist Church into a vibrant mixed-income, mixed-use community in Alexandria, VA.

Thanks to a partnership with The Campagna Center, St. James Plaza also includes a brand new preschool for 50 children. The 2,300-square-foot space, which features three light-filled classrooms, offers educational opportunities for both low-income students on scholarship and full-tuition students from the neighborhood.

**Community services**

When deciding how to develop its ½-acre site in Arlington, the Macedonian Baptist Church identified affordable housing as a top priority for the community. Working together, AHC and the church created The Macedonian, 36 new affordable apartments.

The new building, which welcomed residents in 2011, also includes the offices of the Bonder and Amanda Johnson CDC, a non-profit organization with deep roots in the community. The CDC offers a variety of programs and services for the neighborhood and residents of The Macedonian.

**Putting faith into action**

The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Alexandria, VA, which had a robust outreach program but a declining congregation, decided to evaluate how to best utilize their two-acre site. In 2014, 96% of the parishioners voted to approve the redevelopment of their property for affordable housing.

The church is now working with AHC to transform their land into 113 affordable apartments that will welcome low-income working families in 2021. The site will also include a new, smaller church that will accommodate the congregation’s worship and meeting needs plus outreach efforts.

AHC Inc. is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing. Founded in 1975, AHC builds and preserves affordable rental housing. The organization also offers onsite educational and social services to improve the quality of residents’ lives.
9 Apartment Communities, 1,300 Homes

AHC’s 2018 projects and 2019 plans include new construction, redevelopment, and renovation. Projects are spread throughout the region and serve a range of income levels.

Virginia
1. The Apex – $100 million redevelopment, 256 apts, Arlington
   Construction is underway for the redevelopment of this 1960s property (formerly The Berkeley Apartments). The Apex will welcome families in 2020.

2. Colonial Village West – $24 million renovation, 70 apts, Arlington
   AHC is planning a substantial renovation in 2019 of this 1940s traditional garden-style apartment community.

3. Lafayette Apartments – $6.5 million rehabilitation, 340 apts, Fairfax
   The renovation of this 17-acre community will be completed in 2019. AHC, along with Jonathan Rose Companies and the Community Development Trust, acquired the property in 2016.

4. The Spire – $46 million new construction, 313 apts, Alexandria
   The Spire, a partnership with the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Alexandria, is transforming the church’s property into a multifamily building and a new church. Construction is starting in 2019.

5. St. James Plaza – $32 million new construction, 93 apts, Alexandria
   St. James Plaza opened in 2018 and transformed land owned by a long-time local church into a vibrant mixed-income, mixed-use community that includes a preschool and 31 market-rate townhomes.

Maryland
6. Bucknell Apartments – $6.6 million acquisition, 40 apts, Silver Spring
   AHC partnered with Montgomery County to acquire this 40-unit garden apartment in early 2018. The community serves families at risk of homelessness along with other income levels.

7. Greenspring Overlook – proposed renovation, 189 apts, Baltimore City
   Greenspring Overlook offers 189 affordable, garden-style apartments for families. A renovation of the property is in the planning stages.

8. Key’s Pointe – $23.3 million new construction, 68 apts, Baltimore City
   The second phase (68 apts) wrapped up in 2018. The multi-year redevelopment with The Michaels Organization is creating 900+ mixed-income homes. Planning for the next phase will occur in 2019.

9. Waterfront Station – $175 million proposed development, 465 apts (136 affordable)
   Plans are underway for a projected 2020 construction start for this large, mixed-use, mixed-income project. AHC is part of a joint venture that includes PN Hoffman, City Partners, and Paramount.

Washington, D.C.

- **The Apex**
  - $100 million redevelopment
  - 256 apts
  - Arlington

- **St. James Plaza**
  - $32 million new construction
  - 93 apts
  - Alexandria

- **Waterfront Station**
  - $175 million proposed development
  - 465 apts (136 affordable)

**Strong Community Relationships.** Working closely with local governments and neighborhoods is one of the key ingredients to developing affordable housing. Over the years, AHC has built strong relationships among the many local communities we serve.

Revolving loan funds from local jurisdictions, like Arlington’s Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) can make or break a project. AHC is proud that local governments have invested $105 million over time in AHC’s projects through local loan funds.

**Personal Commitment.** We believe in what we are doing and take pride in doing it well. Our senior staff has decades of experience bringing housing to life. Ken Rehfuss, who works with AHC’s Construction Management team and has 40 years of building experience, sums up this commitment: “Everyone wants to have a place they can call home, and I have always felt privileged to help residents achieve this important goal.”

St. James Plaza Wins Two Regional Awards

St. James Plaza recently received two prestigious regional awards. In November, the property was named the Best Affordable Housing Development at the 2018 Virginia Governor’s Housing Conference. The award goes to a housing development that is “innovative in its concept and design and exceptional in meeting the needs of the targeted client population.”

Earlier this fall, St. James Plaza was awarded the 2018 Excellence in Construction Award by the Metro Washington and Virginia Chapters of Associated Builders and Contractors. Many thanks to the wonderful team who created the building – Cunningham Quill Architects and Harkins Builders.

AHC’s Construction Management team oversees development projects from the drawing board to final inspection. From left to right: Tom Wallinga, Marion Moore, Carlton Miller, Timothy Craft, and Brian Scott. Not pictured: Ken Rehfuss.
The special ingredient in AHC’s education programs is the personal touch – the consistent supportive relationships that students develop with AHC volunteers.

Many of our volunteers form lasting connections with students that truly change their lives. Congratulations and heartfelt appreciation to our 2018 Volunteers of the Year:

Laura Noble – Afterschool and Summer Camp
Laura has volunteered two afternoons a week for more than four years. She is warm, encouraging, and smiles A LOT. She makes everything fun, including helping struggling readers enjoy books. Laura says the time she spends with the children is a joy. We say she is a gift to AHC and to our students.

Kathy Desmond – College and Career Readiness
Kathy is a long-time AHC supporter; she was Board President in 1985. She has worked with the same teen for years and regularly goes above and beyond. Kathy’s ongoing support has been key to helping her student through some rough patches and raising her GPA significantly.

Terron Sims – Teen Tutoring
Terron has been a Teen Tutor for more than 13 years. A West Point graduate, Terron brings a combination of teasing and tough love to his role. By building trusted relationships with students, he helps them build on their strengths and become the best they can be.

AHC Supports Fire Prevention Month
AHC Management is hosting activities at our 40+ apartment communities in Maryland and Virginia to remind all of our residents about preventing fires.

Virginia General Assembly Honors AHC
Virginia Delegate Patrick Hope and State Senator Barbara Favola presented a Virginia General Assembly Resolution to AHC President & CEO Walter D. Webbade and Board Vice-Chair John Snyder at AHC’s Annual Meeting. The resolution commends AHC Inc. for the “organization’s accomplishments in preserving quality affordable housing for residents of the Commonwealth with limited economic means.” From left to right: Patrick Hope, Walter D. Webbade, Barbara Favola and John Snyder.

New AHC Board Members
AHC is deeply grateful to our Board of Directors members who dedicate their time and expertise to our mission. This fall at our Annual Membership Meeting, we welcomed three newly elected Board members and thanked two outgoing members for their service.

New AHC Board members from left to right: Catherine Sadaat, Wanda Pierce and Rachael Schroeder.

Terron Sims
Terron has been a Teen Tutor for more than 13 years. A West Point graduate, Terron brings a combination of teasing and tough love to his role. By building trusted relationships with students, he helps them build on their strengths and become the best they can be.

Kathy Desmond
Kathy is a long-time AHC supporter; she was Board President in 1985. She has worked with the same teen for years and regularly goes above and beyond. Kathy’s ongoing support has been key to helping her student through some rough patches and raising her GPA significantly.

AHC is deeply grateful to our Board of Directors members who dedicate their time and expertise to our mission. This fall at our Annual Membership Meeting, we welcomed three newly elected Board members and thanked two outgoing members for their service.

New AHC Board members from left to right: Catherine Sadaat, Wanda Pierce and Rachael Schroeder.

Terron Sims
Terron has been a Teen Tutor for more than 13 years. A West Point graduate, Terron brings a combination of teasing and tough love to his role. By building trusted relationships with students, he helps them build on their strengths and become the best they can be.

Kathy Desmond
Kathy is a long-time AHC supporter; she was Board President in 1985. She has worked with the same teen for years and regularly goes above and beyond. Kathy’s ongoing support has been key to helping her student through some rough patches and raising her GPA significantly.

AHC is deeply grateful to our Board of Directors members who dedicate their time and expertise to our mission. This fall at our Annual Membership Meeting, we welcomed three newly elected Board members and thanked two outgoing members for their service.

New AHC Board members from left to right: Catherine Sadaat, Wanda Pierce and Rachael Schroeder.
AHC College Students Are Succeeding in College

Despite the many barriers facing first-generation, low-income youth, AHC’s high school graduates are outperforming their peers across the country. We couldn’t be prouder. More than 100 AHC students have graduated from high school on time since we began tracking the data. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of our high school graduates have enrolled in college. This is substantially above the 58% national average of first-generation college students. Not only are our students going to college in large numbers, but they are also overcoming the odds and sticking with it. Based on current data, 75% of AHC’s students who started college are still enrolled or have earned a degree. Their dedication is comparable to students with college-educated parents (74%) and dramatically above first-generation students (56%) still enrolled or graduated.

There are many elements behind AHC students’ success. The first is students’ individual determination and drive coupled with parent encouragement. AHC’s education programs nurture students’ abilities and support them every step of the way from Kindergarten through 12th grade and into their college experience. The secret ingredient is the personal touch – the consistent, supportive relationships students develop with AHC staff and volunteers that broaden their horizons, build their confidence, and inspire them to push themselves to achieve great things.

Baltimore’s Health Programs Saving Lives

AHC Greater Baltimore started offering health screenings at the MonteVerde Apartments five years ago. The free prostate and breast cancer screenings, in partnership with the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center, have made a big difference to the senior residents.

“We are literally saving lives,” explains Latrice Coode, Resident Services Manager. “Since we started, at least one person each year has discovered something that needed to be treated. Early detection means a cancer diagnosis is not a death sentence.”

Regular visits from a nurse practitioner are also helping the seniors. Karriem Abdullah, a 79-year-old resident, has type 2 diabetes and struggles to keep his blood sugar at a healthy level. He and his wife, Shirley, credit Nurse Practitioner Tyra Carter for helping him turn a corner.

Today his blood sugar level is in the low 100s – down from the 300s. “We appreciate Nurse Tyra’s help so much,” says Shirley. “She opens your eyes about what’s happening and why and how you can take steps to make improvements. She’s a real motivator to get your health in order.”

New Programs and Partnerships to Prevent Homelessness

Five years ago, AHC started an Eviction Prevention Program in Arlington to keep residents at risk of eviction in their homes and on the path to a more stable financial future. Strategies included connecting families to resources that provide rent relief or financial capability classes.

The program continues to expand. This year, AHC is adding more activities to help residents build assets and stability, including one-on-one financial coaching, connecting residents to mainstream banking, budgeting, building savings and improving credit.

Key partners include Arlington County’s Community Assistance Board, A-SPAN, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension, among others.

This fall, several AHC families are also participating in the new “200 Bridges” pilot that provides intensive wraparound services to help stabilize some of Arlington’s most vulnerable households.

The program is part of Arlington County’s Bridges Out of Poverty initiative, a partnership among 30 organizations, including AHC, to create an efficient and empowering safety net for at-risk, low-income residents.

850 AHC Students Start School with Full Backpacks

Thanks to hundreds of supporters, 850 children living at AHC’s affordable apartment communities in Arlington started school with brand new backpacks stuffed with school supplies.
HomeFront is published by AHC Inc.

www.ahcinc.org
Board of Directors
Justin Oliver, Chair
John V. Snyder, Vice-Chair
David Barsky, Secretary
C.C. Jenkins, Treasurer
Robert Bushkoff
Jason C. Dalley
Wanda L. Pierce
Catherine Sadaat
Rachael Schroeder
Walter D. Webdale, President

What’s Inside

Stay connected!
Keep up with the latest information on affordable housing and resident services, follow AHC on Facebook at AHC Affordable Housing, Twitter at AHC Inc and Instagram at @AHC_Inc.

Creating Faith-Based Partnerships

Celebrating Volunteers of the Year

9 Affordable Apartment Communities in Development

Founded in 1975 in Arlington, VA, AHC Inc. is a nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing.

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

The organization also offers onsite educational and social 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.

Maryland

Washington, DC

Virginia

Stay connected!
Keep up with the latest information on affordable housing and resident services, follow AHC on Facebook at AHC Affordable Housing, Twitter at AHC Inc and Instagram at @AHC_Inc.