For 40 years, AHC Inc. has built and preserved top-quality affordable apartments that thousands of families call home.

AHC’s mission isn’t just about bricks and mortar. Our vision is to create and sustain safe, supportive communities where every child looks forward to a successful future and every resident enjoys a positive role.

AHC’s Resident Services program supports and nourishes that vision. Our goal – to strengthen our families’ economic and social stability – is what sets us apart from other housing organizations.

We are particularly proud of our year-round youth programs that reach children from kindergarten through 12th grade. The Report Card above highlights this year’s milestones.

Our programs also address a wide variety of family and individual needs, including English as a Second Language classes for adults, eviction prevention and financial counseling services, programs for senior citizens, nutrition classes, food distribution services, referrals to other community safety net programs, community building events, back-to-school drives and more.

AHC’s Resident Services outreach continues to grow and evolve. We now serve more than 2,000 residents each year. We couldn’t do what we do without the help of hundreds of volunteers, countless supporters and dozens of partners. It truly takes a village, and AHC is proud of the villages you are helping us create and sustain. Thank you.
After-School Program: Literacy & Self-Confidence

AHC’s After-School Program focuses on improving literacy for elementary students. Staff and volunteers build students’ reading, writing and vocabulary skills through a variety of educational and cultural activities.

Superhero theme is super successful

Each school year, AHC staff members choose a theme to support and enhance the After-School Program’s project-based curriculum. The 2015-2016 theme was Superheroes. Not surprisingly, the students loved it.

After concentrating on fantastical superheroes, students learned about real-life community heroes that ranged from fire fighters to Martin Luther King.

Superheroes, with their own unique superpowers, worked together to save Arlington.

During the last portion of the year, students had an opportunity to turn themselves into superheroes with their very own superpowers. The goal was to help students build self-confidence, step outside themselves, and learn how to work in teams. It worked – and the kids had a blast. The range of heroes and talents was amazing, from Water Girl (I can flood the whole building) to Super Bee (I can fit through anything).

The last day of the program is a culmination of a year’s worth of learning and exploration. It brings everything together and celebrates all that participants accomplished during the year. The program challenged all of the superheroes to work together in teams to save Arlington from super villains. Exercises included building boats from cardboard boxes, using superpowers to clean up the Potomac after an oil spill and saving animals. Thankfully, the superheroes succeeded and Arlington still stands.

Building literacy one child at a time

Building literacy skills is a top priority for AHC’s After-School program. Reading at grade level is a key indicator of overall academic success. This can be particularly challenging for children who do not speak English at home, which is true for 91% of our students.

AHC employs two reading specialists to work one-on-one with struggling readers once a week. The consistency really works. This year 25 out of 31 students, who were identified as reading at levels below their peers, made at least a year’s worth of progress.

Last fall, AHC started a new partnership with Marymount University to complement our existing literacy building efforts. During the first part of the year, Dr. Jennifer Gray, an associate professor in the Department of Education, provided training for our staff and helped analyze our mid-year data. In the spring, 10 to 15 Marymount graduate students studying literacy volunteered with our after-school students once or twice a week to help provide support to the readers who just needed a little boost rather than intensive tutoring.

Students raised funds for local hospital superheroes by selling hand-made crafts and baked goods.

After learning about local heroes, the Woodbury Park/Frederick students decided to raise funds for the National Children’s Medical Center in Washington, DC, because the hospital helped children. The students baked goodies and created a variety of crafts, and raised $140 for the hospital.

A Marymount student works one-on-one with a student.

Students raised funds for local hospital superheroes by selling hand-made crafts and baked goods.
AHC’s program for middle and high school students aims to keep teens in school and help them maximize their options after high school. The program includes one-on-one tutoring, mentoring, college visits, SAT test prep, help with scholarship and financial aid applications, and a variety of enriching experiences.

Hats off to our 16 high school seniors. We are so proud of their determination and perseverance. After completing 82 college applications and 35 scholarship applications, the group received 45 acceptance letters and more than $155,000 in financial aid! Fifteen are heading to college and one is planning to enter the Air Force. Their hopes and dreams include studying engineering, criminal justice, education, nursing, fine arts, accounting, and business administration.

Thank you tutors!

We are deeply grateful to the many volunteers who spent hours (and often years) helping students succeed in high school. Many also helped teens complete college essays and financial aid applications. Your dedication has made such a difference.

Many tutor/teen pairs form deep bonds. Volunteer Ana Venegas met Perla Tellez when she was in 6th grade. They have been close ever since. “Ana has always been there for me. I think we’ll be friends for life,” says Perla. A long-time member of AHC’s youth programs, Perla will be the first one in her family to go to college. She hopes to study nursing or psychology. Ana and Perla’s relationship is a two-way street. “I feel like she’s affected my life, too,” explains Ana. “When I was studying for my Master’s degree I worked extra hard to be a good role model for her.”

Volunteer Ana Venegas (left) tutored Perla Tellez for 6 years and believes they will be friends for life.

Nurturing individual strengths

AHC’s staff work hard to help each student find and build their unique strengths. At Fort Henry, this year’s three graduates are very different – even though two are sisters.

Liya and Sara Hagoss have been in AHC’s programs since 3rd grade. Liya is planning to major in Accounting. “I hope to start my own business and help students like AHC helped me,” she says.

Sara, on the other hand, is passionate about the arts. She writes graphic novels and hopes to study graphic design and studio art. “AHC opened my mind to different things I can work with as an artist,” she says.

Their classmate, Deonte Sutton, was more interested in pursuing a military career than the traditional college route. He hopes to go into the Air Force and work in the cybersecurity field. A member of AHC’s program for seven years, Deonte says, “The program has helped me grow a lot as an individual.”

AHC internships help inspire teens

Each year, several teens work with AHC to get experience in the working world and help them crystallize their own aspirations and interests. Last year, Musa Seid worked in AHC’s office and learned he wanted to explore business as a career. He applied for and received a scholarship to attend Virginia Tech’s prestigious Pamlin College of Business.

Angel Lopez has been a summer camp intern for two years. His passion for art and his positive outlook have made him a favorite with the younger kids. The experi-

Musa Seid

Angel Lopez

ence has helped underscore his interest in working with children. He plans to study special education at Marymount University.
Essay:

How AHC’s Community Centers Affected My Life

First Place: Jennifer Arevalo, 12th Grade, Berkeley Apartments

Jennifer has grown up in AHC’s youth programs and says the community center is like a second home. A rising senior at Wakefield High School, she is both excited and nervous about the college process. She loves drawing and painting and hopes to become an architect. She has three sisters and a brother.

“I have been in the Berkeley Community Center for as long as I remember. There are some people that have left a big impact on my life and I will never forget them. One person has stood out among the rest as one of the kind-hearted and welcoming people I have ever met, Kelly Browne.

When I signed up for tutoring I just thought someone was going to come in and help me with my homework. I never would have thought our relationship would have flourished the way it has. She has helped me open up more than anyone else.

As time went on and years passed I grew to know Kelly in new ways and I also changed. Kelly pushed me to open my horizons and take chances. She always motivated me to try to exceed my expectations. Recently, Kelly moved for her job. Even though she is halfway across the world, in China, we have still kept in contact.

The relationship we have shows how much tutoring can not only change a person, but can also form a lifelong connection. It all wouldn’t have been possible without AHC Inc. and the Berkeley Community Center and for that I am eternally grateful.”

2nd Place: Sara Berhe, 7th grade, Gates of Ballston

Sara is an honor roll student at Swanson Middle School. She enjoys acting and singing and wants to be an actress when she grows up. Her favorite subjects are reading and drama. She has an older sister and a younger brother who are also in our programs at Gates, and two additional older sisters.

“I remember when I moved from Randolph to Barrett. It was mid-way through first-grade. When I first went to the community center, I immediately felt a sense of calmness. So, as I came to my new home filled with boxes, I realized that I had found a reassuring place that I could depend on.

The help I received in terms of homework support and tutoring has helped me improve significantly in my education to the extent I’ve been identified as a gifted student. It also helped me stay on the honor roll and never get below a “B” on my report card.

AHC also helped me make friends when I was new. Indeed, AHC has nurtured me academically, physically and socially and has impacted my life beyond words.”

3rd Place: Jennifer Rivera, 9th grade, Berkeley Apartments

Jennifer is a talkative, lively student who enjoys playing soccer and hanging out with friends. She has volunteered at the Berkeley Summer Camp for two years and really enjoys working with kids. She hopes to become a pre-K teacher or a nurse who works with children. She has two younger siblings.
“I always have a hard time paying attention and I get distracted easily. Then I met Ms. Gabbie, the Resident Services Coordinator at the Berkeley.

The most important trait about Ms. Gabbie was that she was a caring and kind person to me. She was a very good listener and she was respectful. Ms. Gabbie taught me a lot of life skills that I can use now and in the future. She helped me with math and reading.

Ms. Gabbie was my friend and I will always remember her.”

**Artwork:**

**The Place I Call Home**

First Place: Michelle Orellana, 9 years old, Harvey Hall

Michelle Orellana is a curious, bubbly, and energetic force of nature. She is enthusiastic about the After-School program at Harvey Hall and wrote on her drawing: “This is great!” She has a baby sister who she adores and loves spending time with. She is a good student, does well in school and is a strong reader.

Second Place: Angel Barrera, 11 years old, Woodbury Park

Angel has lived at Woodbury Park for as long as he can remember. He drew his illustration while looking out the window of his apartment. The geometric nature reflects his interest in math – his favorite subject. He also enjoys playing soccer and basketball. Angel has three older siblings.

Third Place: Loren Bonilla, 7 years old, Virginia Gardens

Loren is a quiet first grader who has found a way to express herself through arts and crafts. She enjoys drawing and coloring, and making colorful rainbow bracelets with the other children in the program who have become her friends. Loren has a brother and sister and cares very much about her family.

**Communities**

**Resident Services Milestones – Building Futures for More Than Two Decades**

1993 – 1998

Founded AHC’s Resident Services program in Arlington, VA. Served two apartment communities. Started partnerships with local community organizations, including Community Outreach and English as a Second Language programs. Initiated Back-to-School Drive.

1999- 2004

Expanded youth programs thanks to new grants. Started Summer Camp program. Established three more Arlington community centers. Opened first on-site pre-school. Started partnerships with local food assistance programs.

2005 – 2009

Established more comprehensive youth programs due to new multi-year grants. Identified literacy as primary focus of After-School program. Expanded Teen Tutoring to add college access programs. Started programs for active seniors. Launched Baltimore resident services.

2010- 2016

Reached nearly 3,000 residents each year in Virginia and Maryland. Partnered successfully with more than 50 community organizations annually. Initiated programs at senior citizen property in Silver Spring. Established first onsite partnership in Alexandria, VA. Started resident retention and money management programs. Worked with nearly 300 volunteers each year.
Summer Camp: Preventing Learning Loss

AHC’s Summer Camp program is designed to prevent learning loss – a particular challenge for low-income children – through both educational and enrichment experiences. Research shows that low-income students can lose more than two months of reading and math skills during the summer.

Going for the gold

This year’s Summer Camp theme is a winner – the Summer Olympics. Staff members have planned a variety of academic and athletic events throughout the six-week program that reflect the international flavor of the Olympics.

The culminating event will challenge students in a series of events that test skills from math facts to relay races. To broaden students’ horizons, each center is researching three different countries and will vote on which country they want to represent. Ongoing projects will include learning about the countries the children choose to represent.

The students are excited about the Olympics and the competitions. “It’s wonderful to see how all the children are not only working together to build the best teams they can, but also strengthening their interpersonal skills,” says Emily Ward, Resident Services Assistant Director.

Along with the excitement of the Olympics, children are honing their reading and math skills with them-based games like the Mini-Metric Olympics, a fun cooperative and competitive activity designed to explore estimation, various measurements, the proper way to use/read the measuring devices, review the metric system, and practice writing appropriate data tables.

The combination of learning and play really works. Last summer, 93% of the students maintained their reading skills and 87% maintained their math skills.

Field trips expose students to new experiences

Field trips are an essential part of AHC’s Summer Camp experience, and expose children to something new and different. One of this year’s favorite field trips was the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum, an interactive and hands-on opportunity to learn about science, movement and culture.

Other adventures include going roller skating, exploring the Smithsonian museums and attending a play at Imagination Theater. Children also enjoy weekly trips to local swimming pools, libraries and other outdoor activities.
Adult Programs: Building Stronger Futures

AHC provides access to a variety of programs for adults – many through long-time partnerships with community organizations and local government services. Our goal is to give families and senior citizens the tools they need to live securely and successfully. Programs include food assistance, financial planning, connections to social service programs, English Language learning programs, nutrition and health programs and educational/cultural activities.

Seniors successfully aging in place

Affordable housing for seniors is a critical issue. AHC has three properties designed to meet the needs of senior citizens – Hunter’s Park in Arlington, MonteVerde Apartments in Baltimore, and Charter House in Silver Spring. Each community offers a variety of services to help independent seniors age in place, including onsite clubs and social activities, recreational field trips, and health and nutrition programs. Rather than being isolated, they are thriving among friends.

One of the common challenges many seniors face is access to healthy food. On average, a senior citizen receives less than $20 a month in food stamps. AHC has worked hard to develop connections to local food services to supplement seniors’ small food budgets. As a result, all of our properties that serve seniors now have access to regular deliveries of fresh produce, meat, dairy products and staples like bread. “Convenient access to nutritious food makes a huge difference to our seniors’ health and well-being,” explains Cindy Rozon, Resident Services Assistant Director.

Empowering women

In Baltimore, AHC’s Resident Services team has developed several initiatives to help residents build more stable and secure lives. One such effort, the Women’s Empowerment Group, is geared toward young women between 18 and 35 years old. Through monthly meetings and an annual conference, the group gives women the tools and self-confidence to overcome the barriers and obstacles many face on a daily basis.

The group has produced a number of success stories, including Latasha Wesley, a single mother who is now living in a home of her own and working at a job she enjoys. Thanks to the group, she learned how to put together a marketable résumé and identify her interests, strengths and abilities.

“I love working with these ladies and seeing their growth,” explains Ava Laye, Resident Services Manager. I am encouraged and grateful that we (AHC) as a company, are committed to helping residents realize that self-sufficiency is a realistic and achievable goal!!”
Help AHC children return to school excited and ready to succeed! Your gift of $21 means one more elementary-age girl or boy will receive a backpack stuffed with school supplies. Your contribution will help AHC buy more supplies at steep discounts. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of our low- and very-low income neighbors.

Ways to Give

Mail:
Use the envelope inside

Online:
www.ahcinc.org/donate

Phone:
703-486-0626, ext 117

Support the AHC Back-to-School Drive!

AHC is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing.

What’s Inside

- 2015-2016 Report Card
- Superhero theme is super successful
- Building literacy one child at a time
- Thank you tutors!
- Nurturing teens’ individual strengths
- AHC internships inspire teens
- Art and essay contest winners
- Resident Services milestones
- Going for the gold
- Field trips expose students to new experiences
- Helping seniors successfully age in place
- Empowering women

2230 North Fairfax Drive
Suite 100
Arlington, Virginia 22201

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

Please join AHC Inc. to celebrate our 40th Anniversary

Thursday, September 15, 2016
5:30 PM – 8:00 PM
Westin Arlington Gateway Hotel, Arlington, VA
All proceeds support AHC’s Resident Services Program.
For more information or to register, please visit www.ahcinc.org

Celebrate our Housing Hall of Fame Honorees:

From left to right: Dr. Leonard L. Hamlin, Sr., Harkins Builders, Patricia McGrady, Rick Nelson and Walter J. Tejada.

Help set the tone for a child’s school year – fill a backpack by making a gift of $21 or more today.