In September, AHC Inc. celebrated its 40th Anniversary with more than 300 supporters, donors, community partners and founders. We’re thrilled to direct the event proceeds to our Resident Services program.

As part of the celebration, we honored five new Housing Hall of Fame members for their vision, dedication and advocacy on behalf of affordable housing.

The honorees include Dr. Leonard L. Hamlin, Sr., Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Arlington; Patricia McGrady, decades-long affordable housing activist and volunteer; Rick Nelson, former Director of Montgomery County’s Department of Housing and Community Affairs; J. Walter Tejada, former Arlington County Board member; and Harkins Builders, long-time business partner and supporter.

“It truly takes a village to provide affordable housing,” said Justin Oliver, AHC Board Chair. “Our honorees represent the community partners, volunteers, local government, elected officials, and business partners that are all critical to bringing affordable housing to life. Your commitment is what enables AHC to successfully continue building homes and futures.”

We also celebrated student winners who submitted winning essays and art work based on the themes of “How AHC’s Community Centers Affected My Life” and “The Place I call Home.”

During the event, attendees re-elected four AHC Board members: David Barsky, Jason Dalley, Justin Oliver and John Snyder. C.C. Jenkins, a long-time AHC supporter and prior Board member, was elected to return to the Board. Gladis Bourdouane, who retired from the Board, was celebrated for her service and commitment.

(For more details on the event, Housing Hall of Fame honorees and photos, please visit www.ahcinc.org)
Renovation, Redevelopment, New Construction and New Partners

No two affordable apartment projects are the same – some are new construction, some come from preserving and updating existing complexes, while others come to life thanks to partnerships among development companies, investors and experienced nonprofit developers like AHC Inc. Here are some of AHC’s 2016 projects that are underway or on the drawing board.

Renovation

The renovation of Woodbury Park, 364 units, in Arlington, VA is nearly complete. Built in the 1940s, the historic garden apartment community now includes an exercise room, expanded community space and updated apartments with new flooring, windows, appliances and fixtures. Landscaping has also been completely updated throughout the three-acre complex, including the center courtyard.

AHC Greater Baltimore also completed the renovation of Madera Apartments in Baltimore’s Park Heights neighborhood in 2016, including central air conditioning, new windows, roof replacement, new wheelchair-accessible units, and kitchen appliances.

Redevelopment

In May, the Arlington County Board approved the redevelopment of The Berkeley, which currently provides 137 affordable apartments. AHC has proposed redeveloping the 1960s property with two five-story buildings with 257 apartments, including at least 155 committed affordable apartments. The project is still on the drawing board. Final financing and unit layouts will be determined over the next 8 to 12 months.

New Construction

St. James Plaza, the future home of 93 new affordable apartments, is underway in Alexandria. The project expects to welcome residents in late 2018. Plans include a community center with a full-day pre-kindergarten program. The remainder of the three-acre site will have a public, landscaped area and 31 new market-rate townhouses.

New Partners

PN Hoffman, AHC, and several other partners won the right to develop Waterfront Station II, which will include affordable and market-rate apartments, a theater, and retail in Southwest Washington, DC.

City of Alexandria officials, including Mayor Allison Silberberg and City Council members, along with project partners Capital One Bank, Hudson Housing Capital, and NeighborWorks America, helped AHC break ground at St. James Plaza.

AHC, PN Hoffman, and several other partners are working together to develop Waterfront II, a 59,000-square-foot lot adjacent to the Southwest Waterfront Metro station in Washington, D.C. The LEED Gold design includes a 400,000 square-foot, mixed-income, mixed-use building with 133 affordable apartments (30% of the total), 310 market-rate apartments, a black box theater, and retail space.

AHC Inc. has also joined forces with Jonathan Rose Companies (JRC) and The Community Development Trust in a joint venture partnership to preserve a 340-unit affordable apartment community in Fairfax County. The project will preserve Lafayette Apartments, a garden-style apartment complex built in the 1960s. The partnership is planning a moderate renovation and repair program in 2017.
Many thanks to all who joined us for AHC’s 40th Anniversary! We are grateful to our generous corporate partners, including our major sponsors Harkins Builders, Capital One, Hudson Housing Capital, Shulman Rogers, Hertzbach & Company, and The JBG Companies.

Barbara Favola, VA State Senator; Adam Ebbin, VA State Senator; Dr. Leonard L. Hamlin, Sr., honoree; Patricia McGrady, honoree; J. Walter Tejada, honoree; Jay Fisette, Arlington County Board Co-Chair; and Libby Garvey, Arlington County Board Chair
AHC was founded in 1975 to ensure low-income residents could afford to live in Arlington, which was already becoming more expensive. Since then, AHC and partner Arlington County have helped 2,500 low- and moderate-income families purchase and maintain homes.

AHC’s commitment to affordable homeownership has continued to expand. In Maryland, AHC partnered with Montgomery County to purchase bank-owned homes in areas hard hit by foreclosure. We renovated them and resold them to moderate-income homebuyers.

In Baltimore, AHC initiated a comprehensive effort to revitalize and renovate an entire block to provide affordable homeownership opportunities. Eleven historic row houses on the block have been completely renovated, with more in the works. The effort is beginning to pay off. Four first-time buyers, including a nurse and a postal worker, have purchased homes and are putting down roots.

HC has built 10 affordable apartment communities from the ground up. Each is different, but all are welcoming environments that look and feel much the same as nearby market-rate developments.

Hunter’s Park, one of AHC’s earliest construction projects, blends into the community along busy Lee Highway in Arlington. The 74-unit project, built for active senior citizens, replaced two small houses and under-utilized retail. The community opened in 2005, and nearly 80 percent of the original residents still live there. The common areas include a comfortable living room with a fireplace, library and rooftop patio. A vibrant Resident Services program provides lots of activities from exercise classes to gardening workshops.

Today, AHC offers three affordable apartment communities (Arlington, Silver Spring and Baltimore) to help older individuals maintain their independence and age in place.

Finding space to build affordable housing has become increasingly tough. To meet the challenge, AHC has developed innovative approaches to creating parcels of land. Efforts have included purchasing sites to combine with existing AHC properties, swapping land, and re-developing small buildings into larger apartment communities.

AHC’s first innovative effort turned an under-used parking lot at Woodbury Park, a 10-acre, 1940s apartment community, into two nine-story buildings – The Frederick (108 affordable apartments) and The Park at Courthouse (98 market-rate condominiums). The Frederick is named in honor of Lou Ann Frederick, AHC’s Executive Director from 1978 to 1998.

The new structures, which were designed as mirror images, are architecturally integrated into the adjacent garden apartment community. The project also added a larger community center, a new Montessori pre-school, and space for AHC’s corporate office.
Over the years, AHC has developed more than 7,000 quality affordable apartments; helped thousands of children, families and senior citizens through our Resident Services programs; and expanded beyond our Arlington roots to also serve communities in Alexandria, Fairfax, Montgomery County, Baltimore, and Washington, DC.

**Education**

Since 1993, AHC’s Resident Services program has been helping residents build stronger lives. Over the years, the program has evolved into a multi-faceted effort that includes year-round educational programs for children, classes for adults, and access to myriad services. Today the program reaches 2,000+ residents each year.

Because our programs are located where people live, they are a vibrant part of the community’s fabric. Many children have grown up in our programs.

The Vigil family has raised their four children at Virginia Gardens since 1997. Their daughter, Iris, started participating in AHC’s education program when she was in kindergarten. She graduated last spring from George Mason University, the first step in her dream to becoming a pediatrician. She is also fulfilling a family dream: She is the first to graduate from college.

**Preservation**

Preserving older, affordable apartment communities is an AHC priority. Over the years, AHC has acquired dozens of aging apartments that would otherwise have been lost to upscale redevelopment. In Arlington, AHC has preserved 16 older complexes, including four essential historic properties.

One of the largest communities AHC saved is Gates of Ballston (464 apartments). A community-wide team worked together for more than five years to save the 1930s property from demolition. The historic renovation preserved 75 percent of the apartments as affordable rental housing and created 72 three-bedroom units for families.

The project received numerous awards, including a Historic Preservation Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The new 10,000-square-foot community center was recently renamed the Rinker Community Center to honor Charlie and Lora Rinker, leading activists who fought to preserve the Gates.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships with local governments, community groups and financial institutions are the foundation on which AHC is built. We couldn’t do what we do without our many partners, and we are grateful for each and every one.

The support and leadership from local governments are critical to getting affordable housing off the ground. We are also fortunate to have built partnerships with community organizations, such as other nonprofit developers and churches, to advocate and plan housing developments together. Our partner investors, financial institutions, architects and builders then help us turn blueprints into vibrant living spaces.

Our Resident Services program also relies on numerous partnerships, including volunteers who inspire our students, community organizations that provide invaluable services, and generous donors and corporate sponsors who support our efforts. Many thanks to all!
AHC’s Teen Program is adding a new component this year—helping teens discover and build on their individual strengths beyond their academic abilities. “We are continuing to emphasize the importance of doing well in school, but we also want to help our students broaden the ways they think of their own value and success beyond academic achievements,” explained Emily Ward, Resident Services Assistant Director.

Along with scholastic support, all students are exposed to practical, career-readiness skills, such as job interviewing, resume writing, and organizational abilities.

Each student is challenged to develop a personal goal for the year, which can range from making honor roll to getting a role in the school play. “We hope helping them find and successfully accomplish something they are passionate about will lead to job or education opportunities in the future,” said Ward.

Students in 11th and 12th grade are assigned a specific mentor to make the process even more personal and individual. Along with basic homework guidance, mentors help the youth and their families through the often intimidating process of transitioning to adulthood, including the college application process or career-oriented next steps.

Local Radio Show Spotlights AHC’s Youth Programs

A local radio show, Grace in 30 on WERA 96.7, recently interviewed volunteer Chris Banks and Resident Services Director, Jennifer Endo, about AHC’s education programs. Chris Banks has tutored Natnael, a freshman in high school, since he was in 6th grade. They have formed a close relationship that has helped Natnael broaden his horizons and excel academically. To listen to the show, visit http://bit.ly/RadioAHC.

Gold Medal Summer Camp

Our Summer Camp’s Olympics theme was a real winner! Along with providing an exciting international framework for learning opportunities, the Olympic theme was also a wonderful way to encourage physical activity, interpersonal skills and teamwork.

Along with broadening their world view, campers also expanded their academic skills. Ninety-four percent of students maintained their reading skills. Fueling this accomplishment was the camp’s emphasis on recreational reading. The first week, students read 218 books. During the last week of camp, students reported reading 454 books!

Children also kept their math skills active. Eighty-three percent of campers maintained their math abilities, and 39% of those who were behind improved their skills.

The camp’s true measure of success was that none of the participants—neither the elementary students nor the teens who were interning—wanted the camp to end!

Thank you to all who helped support AHC’s Summer Camp. You truly helped create a wonderful summer of learning and fun for more than 120 children.

Students loved choosing countries to learn about and represent during AHC’s Summer Camp.
Baltimore Job Readiness Program Builds Financial Stability

Three years ago, AHC Greater Baltimore initiated a Job Readiness initiative as part of an overall Assets Building Program designed to help residents build long-term stability and financial independence.

The challenges facing our Baltimore residents – more than half are unemployed – are steep. In response, AHC-GB’s program takes a holistic approach to providing residents with the assets they need – financial education, benefits screening, access to credit building/repair opportunities, high school graduation (GED), and job readiness – to change their lives.

The Job Readiness component is a comprehensive effort to help residents overcome the barriers they face when finding employment. More than just needing resume and interview skills, residents often face daunting obstacles, including transportation, proper identification, and legal challenges. Thanks to the hiring of a part-time job coach, growing partnerships with local job training programs, and ongoing support, the strategy is working. So far, nearly 40 people have begun steady jobs.

Overcoming obstacles

When he started AHC-GB’s job-readiness program, Darnell (not real name) had lost his warehouse job and had been applying for jobs on his own unsuccessfully. AHC-GB’s Job Readiness Coach, Kisha Webster, referred him to Maryland New Directions, which included a training program for the Port of Baltimore.

Darnell was one of only eight individuals selected for the training.

Unfortunately, he soon faced another setback – he was ineligible for employment at the port due to a prior criminal conviction. AHC-GB helped with legal services to successfully appeal on his behalf. During this process, Darnell secured temporary work at the Port for $10 an hour. Because he could not afford transportation to the jobsite, AHC-GB provided him with a bus pass until he received his first pay check.

After six months, Darnell was offered a full-time position at the Port of Baltimore with a starting salary of $14 an hour with an increase after a probationary period. He is now gainfully – and happily – employed. Thanks to the AHC-GB program, Darnell had the tools and the ongoing support to successfully access a job-training program, work out legal issues, afford to get to work and, finally, earn a full-time job with opportunities for advancement.

AHC Greater Baltimore Residents

98% report very or extremely low income
50% are unemployed
85% are single-female headed households
50% rely on benefits as a sole source of income
40% are un- or under-banked and lack adequate credit history

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

Support the AHC 2016 Holiday Fund Drive!

Each time AHC builds an affordable housing community, we become a support system for children and families. Making a difference is only possible with your help.

Ways to Give

Online: www.ahcinc.org/donate
Mail: Use the enclosed envelope
Phone: 703-486-0626, ext 117
Workplace: CFC# 77198

Housing + Education = Success

Your kind gift to the AHC Holiday Fund Drive helps our low-income neighbors access year-round educational programs and community resources. On behalf of families like nine-year-old Sophia and her big sisters, Lucia and Benita, Thank You!

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.