AHC’s Resident Services program began in 1993 in Arlington, VA, with a simple concept – give kids something productive to do after school. Today that basic goal has evolved into a year-round effort that touches thousands of children, teens, adults and senior citizens each year.

Our Resident Services initiative works so well because we provide programs where people live. This convenience, along with our nearly 25 years of commitment, has helped our staff develop long-term and trusted relationships with the people we serve.

Over the years, our scope has expanded to help residents in a variety of ways, including eviction prevention services, nutrition training, financial literacy classes, referrals to other community safety net programs, enrichment opportunities for senior citizens, back-to-school supply drives and more.

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

Our Resident Services program continues to evolve. We couldn’t do what we do without the help of hundreds of volunteers, countless supporters and dozens of partners. It takes a village, and AHC is proud of the villages you are helping us create and sustain.

Thank you.

2016-2017 REPORT CARD

After-School Program
118 students participated
90% of the students who were assessed at the beginning and end of the year were reading on grade level or improved their reading skills by one grade level
28 out of 29 struggling readers made at least one year’s worth of progress in their reading skills and eight of those students more than doubled their expected progress.

Teen Program
62 students participated regularly
45 maintained an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher
47 students set and achieved an academic goal for the year

College and Career Readiness Program
15 students graduated from high school
100% of the seniors received admission to college and are enrolled in Fall classes
Students received $500,000 in financial aid and scholarships.
All are the first in their families to attend college in the U.S.

2016 Summer Camp
115 students participated
88% maintained or increased math skills
94% maintained or improved reading levels
Students increased the number of books they read from the first week to the last week of camp by over 100% (from 245 to 499 books).
After-School Program: Literacy & New Experiences

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

Shenandoah Trip Caps off National Parks Theme

This year’s After-School theme was National Parks. Since most AHC students had never visited a National Park, planning a year-end celebration to Shenandoah National Park was a natural fit.

Throughout the school year, students learned about National Parks through a variety of activities, including exploring topics like recycling, caves, animals, habitat conservation, and map reading. Students also made their own park badges, did reports on parks around the country, and even created edible experiences by making “walking tacos” and “s’mores in a cone”!

The students were incredibly excited to experience a National Park in person. They expected it to be like a regular playground and were delighted it was so different. They had a blast hiking a trail, learning to read trailheads, and actually touching some of the pelts of animals who live in the park. Most of all, they loved exploring the open spaces and seeing the stunning vistas for themselves.

Reading at grade level is a critical indicator of academic success – as well as life-long achievement. To give our students the foundation they need to succeed, building literacy skills is our After-School Program’s top priority.

AHC staff members continually strive to enhance the ways we help our students learn. This year we introduced several new elements that had a meaningful impact, including a focus on phonics.

Because so many of our students are English language learners, they lack a strong foundation in phonics. To address this, staff created a daily word challenge that students could work on independently or with a partner. The challenges became a favorite part of the day and the repetition helped boost students’ skills. By the end of the year, 60% of participants rose to the expected phonics level for their grade, up from only 22% in September.

Other new elements included literacy training for volunteers, Literacy Tool Kits filled with resources and games, and a Literacy Committee of staff members who met several times a year to identify opportunities for greater impact.

The program additions contributed to students’ impressive progress this year. At the end of the year, 90% of the students were reading on grade level or improved their reading skills by one level. Nineteen students more than doubled their expected progress, including seven who tripled their goal!

We are particularly proud of our struggling readers’ accomplishments. Twenty-eight out of 29 youngsters made at least a year’s worth of progress in their reading skills and eight of those more than doubled their progress, which indicates they are catching up to their peers.

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Summer Camp Prevents Learning Loss

AHC’s Summer Camp for children grades K-5 is designed to prevent learning loss through both educational and enrichment experiences. Learning loss is a particular challenge for low-income children. Research shows that they can lose more than two months of reading and math skills during the summer.

Creativity and Exploration

AHC’s Summer Camp is distinctly different from the school year and provides fun and engaging enrichment activities to help students maintain and build academic skills over the summer.

AHC intentionally selects camp themes that expose participants to new experiences so they can return to school self-confident and stimulated by a variety of learning opportunities.

This year’s theme is creativity – a broad umbrella designed to spark innovation and exploration. The goal is to encourage students to use their imagination and problem-solving skills. Team efforts include developing inventions in a “Shark Tank” framework and creating wearable designs out of trash bags for a group fashion show. Students are also working together to invent more efficient versions of everyday things found in homes.

Activities to strengthen academic skills are incorporated throughout the day in such entertaining ways that children don’t even realize how much they are learning. For instance, recognizing sight words – about 100 of the most commonly used words for each grade level – is one of the educational tools used to build literacy skills.

A strong grasp of sight words improves a student’s ability to read fluently, which promotes better reading comprehension and more enjoyment. Every summer, staff create a host of fun activities to reinforce sight words.

At Woodbury Park, for instance, “Sight Word Slap” challenges students to race one another to slap specific words with a fly swatter as leaders call out words. Another activity is “Cup Crash,” which requires campers to stack 20 to 30 plastic red cups in a pyramid. Each cup has a sight word on it. The manager calls out a word and a student has to find it among the cups and smash it with a ball. Not surprisingly, the whole pyramid crashes each time, which is exactly why students love the game!

The combination of learning and play really works. Last summer, 94% of the students maintained or improved their reading skills and 83% maintained or increased their math skills.

Field Trips Broaden Horizons

Field trips are a key component of AHC’s Summer Camp. Each week, campers experience something new and different. This summer’s outings include the Children’s Science Center in Fairfax, with opportunities to test wind currents, create magnetic slime and other hands-on activities. Other trips include the Imagination Stage in Bethesda, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, and the Heritage Farm Museum in Sterling, VA.

Children also love the weekly trips to local swimming pools and other outdoor activities.

“Providing opportunities to experience new things first-hand is an investment in our students’ long-term learning and growth,” says Emily Ward, AHC Resident Services Acting Director. “We are grateful to all of our donors who make these field trips possible!”
Teen Program Builds Academic Success & Self-Confidence

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, college visits, SAT test prep, and a variety of enrichment opportunities.

AHC’s Teen Tutoring Program pairs participants with enthusiastic volunteers who help with homework and studying for tests. Many youth have parents who are working at night or lack the educational background to help their children.

AHC’s volunteers help fill in the gaps. Many volunteers work one-on-one with participants year after year. These positive and consistent relationships are integral to the students’ success – both academically and socially.

Along with academic goals, teens also set enrichment targets like a new hobby. They work with staff to identify areas of strength and passion so they can nurture their skills over the school year. These experiences help build their resume and college/scholarship applications while providing an opportunity to learn about themselves and explore future career avenues.

The consistent adult support is helping students accomplish their goals. Last year, 72% of the participants achieved an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher or made significant academic achievements. And, 77% of the teens successfully met their enrichment goal.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kathy Desmond

Kathy Desmond has volunteered with AHC’s Teen Tutoring Program for four years. Although she has been involved with AHC for many years – even serving as President in 1985 – she was drawn to tutoring by the opportunity to work one-on-one with young people.

“I love the face-to-face connection and it’s so rewarding to see someone do better and know you had a part in it,” says Desmond.

She has worked with Kiki, a rising junior at Wakefield High School, for two years and has seen her grow into a determined and successful student who has improved her GPA by almost two points!
The first full year of our new College and Career Readiness Program has been amazing – for both the students and the mentors. Many have formed close relationships that will last beyond graduation.

The program started last summer with training for mentors and goal setting for students. Throughout the year, mentors and students met on their own schedules to work through the career and college search process, including applications, essays and financial aid.

The hard work paid off. All of AHC’s seniors are on their way to college. All are also the first generation in their families to attend college in the U.S. Together, the group was accepted into 54 colleges and won $500,000 in scholarships!

Most of the students have grown up in AHC’s education programs. Anghela Soto, for instance, joined AHC’s After-School program when she was in kindergarten. She is headed to Old Dominion University in the fall to study cyber security and business. “Being in AHC has helped me tremendously,” she says. “I’ve learned how to be independent, be responsible with my tasks, and how to set goals. The field trips were also helpful. That’s how I learned about ODU.”

15 Grads Going to College

Tommy Bayou started AHC’s After-School Program in 5th grade. He is going to Georgetown University with a full scholarship. He has known Emily Ward, AHC’s Acting Resident Services Director (left), since then. “A big part of my success has been because of Miss Emily and AHC,” said Tommy. “She’s helped me a lot and I don’t think I would have gotten here without her.”

Marjorie Macieira (right) was Jasmine Connor’s mentor. Their partnership helped Jasmine blossom. She won several scholarships and is going to NOVA to pursue an education degree. “I want to be a teacher because I believe all kids are unique and no one should be forgotten,” says Jasmine. “I have a learning disability and I just want to give back to our community.” Macieira is proud of Jasmine’s efforts. “She has such passion and dedication. No matter what comes her way, she never gives up.”

Report Card

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Teens proudly celebrated their college choices at a special AHC “Signing Day” celebration.
Community Partnerships

AHC has more than 30 partnerships with local community groups, government initiatives and other nonprofit organizations. These partnerships help expand AHC’s range of services and provide valuable connections and support systems for residents. We are grateful for each and every one of our partners!

Community Partner Spotlight: Fenwick Foundation

The Fenwick Foundation (Fenwick), a nonprofit dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of older adults, veterans, physically/mentally/intellectually disabled and other special needs individuals and caregivers, has become a cherished AHC partner.

Fenwick provides our residents with a variety of outside opportunities each month. Some of AHC’s senior residents have received professional dental care; and some senior residents and families have received social and entertainment and educational and sporting outings – including the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus, Washington Nationals, Washington Wizards, and Baltimore Orioles, as well as plays, concerts and museums.

“We love Fenwick activities,” says Juanita Lee, a retired medical professional, who lives at Charter House, an AHC senior property in Silver Spring, MD. “This year, I’ve been to a baseball game, a play, and the holiday lights show.”

“It’s an opportunity to get out and open your mind up to different experiences,” adds Norma Hanna, a Charter House resident who worked with the Food and Drug Administration for almost 30 years.

“The Fenwick Foundation provides a wonderful service,” says Haley Mixon, Charter House Resident Services Manager. “They are truly making an impact on our seniors’ quality of life and well-being.”

Arlington Food Assistance Center Awards AHC Staff

The Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) is one of AHC’s longest serving partners. Every week the nonprofit organization delivers healthy food to low-income residents at several AHC properties. The group also provides snacks and nutrition programs for the children in our After-School Program.

Recently, the organization presented Community Partner Awards to three AHC staff members: Ana Ochoa (Hunter’s Park), and Becky Koons and Ellen Mullan-Jayes (Woodbury Park/Frederick). The AFAC program at these properties provides much-needed food to more than 120 families.

In partnership with Arlington County’s Community Outreach Program, AFAC also serves more than 100 families at our Gates of Ballston community each week.
Baltimore Resident Services: Building Financial Stability

Financial stability is a challenge for many AHC Greater Baltimore residents. Ninety-eight percent report very low or extremely low incomes and 85% are single-headed households. Four in 10 do not have bank accounts and lack adequate credit history.

AHC-GB has developed a variety of initiatives to help residents overcome these challenges, including access to banking, job readiness, and credit building. New this year is an emergency matched savings program. The program’s personal touch — monthly one-on-one meetings with staff members who are certificated financial coaches — encourages residents to stick with the program and keep going.

“The aim of our program is not to instruct or prescribe what our residents should do. They are smart and resourceful, with their own goals for themselves and their families,” explains Allison Pendell-Jones, AHC Greater Baltimore Resident Services Assistant Director. “We are here to help them reach those goals by opening up access to financial opportunities and overcoming personal and societal obstacles.”

The combination of access and one-on-one support is changing lives. In 2016, 27 participants obtained a new or better job and 77 individuals connected with a workforce resource. Seventy-one clients received monthly Financial Coaching and connected to a banking opportunity. Sixty-one clients set aside money for savings and 50 individuals took steps to improve their credit.

Women’s Empowerment Program Holds 4th Annual Conference

Several years ago, Senior Resident Services Manager Ava Laye initiated a program to help young women escape the cycle of poverty and rise to their potential. Four years later, the Women’s Empowerment Program has become a collaborative community effort with a strong group of successful alumni.

“I am so proud of these women,” says Laye. “None of them were working. Now all of them have been on the job for more than a year and are building a better quality of life for themselves and their children.”

This year’s Women’s Empowerment Conference drew about 25 participants. The day-long event included workshops and group discussions with alumni and new participants talking about persisting through such challenges as finding transportation to work, maintaining childcare and improving job skills.

Many thanks to community sponsors, MECU Credit Union, Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Maryland Educational Opportunity Center, &pizza, and Strong City Baltimore for their support.
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AHC Inc. is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing. Founded in 1975, AHC produces and preserves affordable rental housing in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC, and offers onsite educational services to improve the quality of residents' lives.

Housing + Education = Success!

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Your gift of $21 means one more elementary-age girl or boy will receive a backpack stuffed with school supplies. Your donation plus our access to steep shopping discounts will help some of the neediest families living at AHC Inc. communities. Thank you!

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