Twenty-five years after AHC Inc. began offering onsite activities at one Arlington property, our Resident Services program has blossomed into a wide array of educational opportunities and social services that reach more than 3,000 children, teens and adults in Virginia and Maryland annually.

Over the years, AHC’s comprehensive commitment to “Housing + Education = Success” has helped countless residents put down roots, build stable and self-sufficient lives, and reach their potential.

The program’s growth reflects the effectiveness of providing services where residents live – and expanding to respond to residents’ evolving needs. Today Resident Services offers an array of multifaceted initiatives, including education, eviction prevention, financial literacy, community engagement, and health.

100% High School Grads

One of Resident Services’ proudest accomplishments is that ALL of our high school seniors have graduated from high school on time and most have continued onto college.

Lydia Abraha, a 2018 high school graduate, is one of many children who has grown up in AHC’s education programs. She joined the Afterschool Program when she was six, participated in Summer Camp and Teen Program, and recently completed the College and Career Readiness Program.

A dedicated student, Lydia was accepted into eight colleges. She chose Virginia Tech because she plans to study mechanical engineering. She credits AHC staff and tutors Tim Bellaire and Christine Mader for helping her succeed.

“I can’t imagine my life without the memories and positive impact AHC has provided me,” says Lydia. “One of my role models was Ms. Christine. She was my tutor since 6th grade and always encouraged me to reach for my dreams, no matter how big.”

Thank you to all our supporters for 25 great years!
Afterschool Program Builds Literacy and Friendships

AHC’s Afterschool 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.

Each year nearly 100 children attend the Afterschool Program located at five AHC apartment communities. Staff and 70+ volunteers cultivate a nurturing, relaxed environment where learning is fun. Because nearly all of the students are English Language Learners, the primary academic focus is improving the children’s understanding and use of English.

Over the years, the program has developed multiple strategies to help children improve literacy skills, including reading specialists who work one-on-one with struggling readers; group projects that help build research, comprehension and presentation skills; and committed volunteers who work with children on homework and reading.

The volunteers also provide a wonderful non-academic benefit – the undivided attention of a caring adult.

Last year, our comprehensive approach helped 93% of the students read on grade level or improve their reading skills by one grade level.

The Afterschool Program also provides a wonderful opportunity to build long-lasting friendships in a comfortable, stress-free environment.

And, since many students attend year after year, the program fosters close relationships. One young student found it easier to cope with her grandfather’s death because she could talk with her best friend who was also in the Afterschool Program.

Project-Based Learning Engages Students

Project-based learning is a cornerstone of AHC’s programs for elementary students. The popular teaching method actively empowers children to take the lead in directing their own learning and project development. The approach builds invaluable life skills like self-confidence, leadership, organization, and teamwork.

The 2017-2018 theme focused on Entertainment, including careers and animation. Teams created a variety of activities to spark students’ enthusiasm and creativity.

After learning about broadcast journalism, Fort Henry students organized and performed a complete news show that included weather reports, sports news and more. Everyone had a role in the show’s success, from news anchor to map maker.

Taking storytelling to another level, Gates of Ballston youth created graphic novels. Working in small groups, students had a great time writing and illustrating their stories – not even realizing they were also building valuable literacy skills.

Woodbury Park students used their creativity to raise $183 for a local arts group.

Volunteers Carol Harris (left) and Helen Onufra love helping youth improve literacy.

Creating graphic novels helped Gates of Ballston youth build storytelling skills.

– Catherine Bucknam
Summer Camp Prevents Learning Loss

AHC’s Summer Camp for children grades 1-5 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. Compounded year after year, this learning loss contributes to a significant gap in academic achievement by the time youth enter middle school.

Our campers, ages 6-10, could hardly wait for the fun to begin this summer. The six-week camp operates at five AHC complexes in Arlington and serves nearly 100 students. Combining plenty of physical exercise with project-based learning and math and sight word practice, each afternoon is designed to keep youth safe and engaged.

Four field trips to area museums add to the fun. Visits to the Spy Museum, the Museum of Natural History, the Baltimore Aquarium, and the Maryland Science Center will enhance the children’s exploration and understanding of forensic science and the sea.

The field trips are a great way to introduce them to the larger world around them and to the area’s cultural treasures.

The kids enjoy every day and are better prepared to start the new school year. For the last few years, nearly all campers (94%) have maintained vocabulary skills over the summer.

“I love summer camp because it’s more relaxed and we have more time to really get to know the kids, which helps us better meet individual needs during the school year,” says Senior Resident Services Manager, Becky Koons.

The Resident Services staff have chosen Science for the summer camp theme with subthemes of Forensic Science and Under The Sea. Group projects spark the children’s imagination and creativity, while reinforcing language skills and demonstrating the practical applications of science and math.

Help AHC children return to school excited and ready to succeed. Your $21 gift provides a backpack stuffed with school supplies!

WAYS TO GIVE
Online: www.AHCInc.org/donate
Mail: AHC Inc.
2230 N. Fairfax Dr., Ste 100
Arlington, VA 22201
Tax-deductible check payable to AHC Inc.
Phone: 703-486-0626, ext 117
**Teen Program Plants Seeds for Success**

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, standardized test prep, and a variety of enrichment opportunities.

Sixty teens participated in AHC’s Teen Program last year. More than 2/3 earned above a 3.0 grade point average or higher.

The program also challenges youth to set enrichment goals like developing a new hobby, learning a new skill, or doing community service. A remarkable 98% of teens reported achieving their enrichment goals.

The dual approach is helping students broaden their horizons and build self-confidence. Nine out of 10 teens reported that their academic and enrichment goals will help them make better choices about their future.

This year, we honored several volunteers who reached the five-year milestone, including Hanh Nguyen, who distributes food from Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) to Hunter’s Park senior residents each week, and tutors Karen Trochlil and Allison Thiriez.

A heartfelt THANK YOU to ALL our volunteers.

**Summer Internship Program Builds Invaluable Skills**

As part of our commitment to students’ leadership development and long-term success, AHC offers summer internships to help teen program participants gain job experience. “It is really helpful for students to have the opportunity to learn how to work with a manager, be on time, and take on responsibility,” explains Milenka Coronel, College and Career Readiness Manager.

The extra income helps support the whole family, too.

This year, AHC offered five paid Summer Camp internships. All participants are current or previous AHC program participants.

Daniel Rodriguez, a recent high school graduate, believes the internship will help him in his goal to become a teacher. “This is a great opportunity to experience new things and help me grow,” says Daniel. He hopes to work with AHC’s Afterschool Program next fall while he’s taking classes at Northern Virginia Community College.

Michelle Salinas, a rising sophomore at Liberty University and AHC program graduate, is working with AHC’s College and Career Readiness Program this summer thanks to the Housing Association of Nonprofit Developers (HAND) internship program.

As a teen, she enjoyed volunteering with AHC’s younger students. “That experience helped inspire me to do something in the medical field with kids,” says Michelle. Today, she is following that dream and studying to be a nurse who works with children.
College and Career Readiness Program

Our new College and Career Readiness Program helps high school seniors successfully transition to their next step. The program includes a full-time manager and pairs students with adult mentors for a full year. Components include a comprehensive kickoff in the fall, college visits and practical workshops on life skills like budgeting and interviewing.

20 Grads Going to College!

AHC’s Class of 2018 is remarkable. Perhaps most life-changing, ALL of the students are the first in their families to attend college. Students’ future hopes and dreams are wide-ranging, including cyber security, film and media studies, special education, mechanical engineering, criminal justice, auto mechanics, architecture, social work, animation, civil engineering, pre-med, and international relations.

20 Grads Going to College!

Together, the group earned more than $700,000 in scholarships and financial aid. Three students received full-tuition scholarships. Flor Caceres is attending Lafayette College through the POSSE Foundation. Ruth Mengesha is going to James Madison University through the Centennial Scholars Program. And, Undrakh Tsend earned a full scholarship to the College of William and Mary.

Along with students’ hard work, the College and Career Readiness program succeeds thanks to mentors who work one-on-one with students throughout their senior year.

Volunteers help students keep up their grades and complete college and scholarship applications. Their commitment produces real results. This year, students applied to 93 colleges and universities and were accepted into 62.

Many of the graduates have grown up in AHC’s education programs. Three of this year’s class started in Kindergarten.

The multifaceted program really works. Since AHC began tracking in 2008, 100% of the high school seniors have successfully graduated on time.

Volunteers needed for all fall programs. Email volunteer@ahcinc.org today!
Arlington Social Services: Expanding Strategies to Stabilize Families

Each time AHC builds an affordable housing community we become a support system for so many families and individuals. In recent years, AHC has seen a growing number of residents who need extra support to thrive. Increasingly, families are struggling to pay the rent and cover the costs of food, health care and child care.

The challenges can be steep. More than 60% of AHC residents qualify as very low-income and receive governmental rental subsidies. Many work two or more jobs to make ends meet. Most live paycheck to paycheck. Any unexpected emergency, large or small, can catapult them into a crisis.

To help stabilize at-risk families, Resident Services is expanding our social services outreach to help ensure adults are self-sufficient, productive members of the community. Our strategy includes eviction prevention, financial education, nutrition classes, health workshops and help accessing child care and food distribution programs.

Eviction prevention is key

Because housing is the primary factor in family stability, AHC started an eviction prevention program five years ago. The program continues to grow. Last year, Resident Services prevented 117 families from eviction in Arlington. We are proud all are still living in an AHC community.

AHC has created a multi-pronged strategy to help families avoid eviction. Because each situation is different, solutions often require extensive one-on-one staff time, a variety of community programs, educational opportunities, training in budgeting and financial management, and help with getting a job.

For immediate stabilization during crises, our social services team works closely with the Community Assistance Bureau of Arlington County’s Department of Human Services, which provides both financial assistance and case management to help families get back on their feet.

We also offer a financial literacy series, Money Smarts Pay, through a partnership with the Virginia Cooperative Extension. The seven-week course is offered at AHC properties in both English and Spanish.

To encourage consistent participation, we provide child care and serve a nutritious meal to all participants and their children before every class. This year, 32 families completed the seven-week intensive series.

We are working to expand our financial capability services. In January, AHC was awarded two funding proposals with Citi and JP Morgan Chase (both working closely with NeighborWorks America). Upcoming plans include training staff to become one-on-one financial coaches.
Baltimore Resident Services: Connecting Housing and Health

Studies increasingly show a strong correlation between housing and health. After three years of providing health-related services at two AHC Greater Baltimore (AHC-GB) communities, we are now assessing the impact of the programming on health outcomes and identifying areas for further investment.

We are grateful for the support of our partners at NeighborWorks America, Enterprise Community Partners and Impact 1890 to accomplish this assessment.

Additionally, AHC-GB is working with a public policy intern to compare our health program with other similar projects around the country. The result of this effort will be an in-depth report comparing approaches and results, and a webinar hosted by NeighborWorks America.

AHC-GB primarily provides health services at two properties.

At MonteVerde, we focus on programs designed to help seniors live independently. We connect them with health resources, including onsite screenings and benefits enrollment guidance.

The programs at Greenspring Overlook, designed for a variety of ages, include weekly exercise classes and wellness support groups.

Specific initiatives include:

**Building Community.** AHC-GB offers a variety of programs to help residents avoid isolation – particularly critical for seniors. One of the most popular activities is Art with a Heart, which has provided onsite classes for seniors and youth for nearly five years. Another community-building activity is “A Better Me,” a wellness support group at Greenspring Overlook. Participants meet twice a week, read health-oriented books, and help one another reach fitness and other personal goals.

**Onsite Health Services.** Accessing health services is a challenge for many low-income individuals, particularly senior citizens. To respond to this challenge, AHC-GB is bringing health providers to seniors.

One successful pilot program includes monthly visits from a nurse practitioner who monitors residents’ health and provides general and preventative health care services. Of the 18 seniors who participated in the pilot, 15 reported stabilized or improved health. Eight also reported fewer emergency room visits.

Other onsite services include flu and shingles shots and screening for glaucoma, breast cancer, and prostate cancer thanks to St. Joseph’s Hospital.

**Nutritious Foods.** Eating nutritiously can be challenging and costly. AHC-GB is partnering with several organizations to make accessing healthy food easier for seniors.

My Groceries to Go! provides nutritious foods supplied by USDA to eligible seniors. Our local partner, the Maryland Food Bank, delivers a box of non-perishable items to MonteVerde once a month. Volunteer residents administer the program onsite and distribute the boxes to more than 100 participants.

AHC-GB also offers healthy cooking classes once a month through partner Holistic Living, and weekly shuttle buses to local farmers markets where seniors can use vouchers to get free, nutritious food.

We are grateful for the support of our partners at NeighborWorks America, Enterprise Community Partners and Impact 1890 to accomplish this assessment.

AHC-GB offers a variety of programs to help residents avoid isolation – particularly critical for seniors. One of the most popular activities is Art with a Heart, which has provided onsite classes for seniors and youth for nearly five years.

Another community-building activity is “A Better Me,” a wellness support group at Greenspring Overlook. Participants meet twice a week, read health-oriented books, and help one another reach fitness and other personal goals.

Onsite Health Services.

Accessing health services is a challenge for many low-income individuals, particularly senior citizens. To respond to this challenge, AHC-GB is bringing health providers to seniors.

One successful pilot program includes monthly visits from a nurse practitioner who monitors residents’ health and provides general and preventative health care services. Of the 18 seniors who participated in the pilot, 15 reported stabilized or improved health. Eight also reported fewer emergency room visits.

Other onsite services include flu and shingles shots and screening for glaucoma, breast cancer, and prostate cancer thanks to St. Joseph’s Hospital.

Nutritious Foods. Eating nutritiously can be challenging and costly. AHC-GB is partnering with several organizations to make accessing healthy food easier for seniors.

My Groceries to Go! provides nutritious foods supplied by USDA to eligible seniors. Our local partner, the Maryland Food Bank, delivers a box of non-perishable items to MonteVerde once a month. Volunteer residents administer the program onsite and distribute the boxes to more than 100 participants.

AHC-GB also offers healthy cooking classes once a month through partner Holistic Living, and weekly shuttle buses to local farmers markets where seniors can use vouchers to get free, nutritious food.
What’s Inside

Connecting housing and health through programs that build community

Celebrating 20 grads – all the first in their families to go to college!

Creating edible seascapes as part of Summer Camp’s Science theme

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