

Helping Low-Income Families Stay Housed and Secure During a Pandemic

As the pandemic continues to disproportionately affect low-income households, AHC and AHC Management staff are working nonstop to help residents stay housed and stable.

This summer HomeFront highlights the resiliency of our residents, the outpouring of community support, the generosity of neighbors, and how we, as a nonprofit affordable housing organization, are in a unique position to help struggling families cope with the challenges of COVID-19.

As the pandemic took hold in March, our Resident Services staff pivoted to help residents weather the storm. By late July, our team had helped more than 2,500 households navigate and access essential services such as rental assistance, utility assistance, benefits applications, food assistance, unemployment and more. Our 25-member team continues to work one-on-one with residents to help them identify and access the services they need. This personalized approach is integral to keeping our families secure and housed.

To provide additional stability, AHC extended our rental relief program through the end of 2020.



Volunteers have sewed more than 600 face masks for AHC adults and children.



Local communities, organizations and volunteers are banding together to help low-income families during the pandemic.

because of COVID-19. In addition, there will be no rent increases through January 1, 2021. We are encouraging all residents to work with AHC Management staff to create plans to spread out payments on rent balances for up to a year.

We are grateful for the strong support we are receiving from the jurisdictions we serve, including Arlington County, Alexandria, Montgomery County, Baltimore County, and Baltimore City. Along with rental assistance, several local governments are also providing face masks and other services to our residents.

The support is making a huge difference. The vast majority of our residents are making at least partial rent payments, which will help them avoid falling too far into debt.



Resident Services staff, including Amara Jordan and Ellen Mullan-Jayes, are grateful for the outpouring of support.

A special shout out to some organizations that have responded to the COVID-19 crisis with extraordinarily generous support, including NeighborWorks America, the Arlington Community Foundation, Virginia Housing, the Weinberg Foundation, and the Clayton Baker Foundation.

A huge thank you to all the individuals who have helped our residents, including those who have contributed to AHC's Emergency Response Fund. Your support is helping our residents feed their families and stay housed and secure. We are also immeasurably grateful to the volunteers who have helped our students virtually, sewed hundreds of face masks, or distributed groceries or other necessary supplies to our residents. You are all heroes.

About AHC Inc.

Founded in 1975 in Arlington, VA, AHC 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.

To learn more about AHC's activities and to keep up with our latest news, please check out the "What's New" section on our website (www.ahcinc.org) and follow us on Twitter @AHCInc., Facebook @AHC Affordable Housing, Instagram @AHC_Inc and Linked In @AHC Inc.

Volunteers and Community Partners

Combatting Covid-19 Together

By offering programs and access to services right where people live, AHC and our community partners are helping residents weather the pandemic.



AHC Residents, including these seniors at Charter House, are helping with weekly food distributions.

Responding to Food Insecurity

As our residents struggle to meet basic needs, accessing food has become a critical concern. The response from local communities and organizations has truly been inspiring. Each week a variety of private and public groups deliver more than a thousand meals to our residents – particularly our seniors. Area food banks have stepped up deliveries to meet the 30 to 50 percent increase in need.

Innovative restaurant partnerships like “Buy a Neighbor Lunch” through Volunteer Arlington and a Montgomery County initiative have become win-win strategies that not only provide nutritious meals to our residents, but also support small businesses. Amazon also partnered with a local restaurant to provide 2,200 meals.

Targeted community initiatives are also popping up. A creative partnership between farmers’ markets and the Columbia Pike

Revitalization Organization (CPRO) is providing much-needed fresh food to residents along the Columbia Pike corridor in Arlington. And a generous community gardening group is dropping off fresh produce twice a week to a new AHC property.

Bridging the Internet Divide

The pandemic is shining a bright light on the digital divide. This summer, AHC teamed up with Capital One and Comcast to provide affordable internet access for low-income families at St. James Plaza in Alexandria. Thanks to a grant from Capital One, households that qualify for Comcast’s Internet Essentials program will receive free internet



Jeaneth Romero says the new internet access and Chromebook will be invaluable in helping son, Diego, succeed in his virtual classes in the fall.

service for 14 months. Capital One also donated new Chromebooks to all St. James residents.

Residents are thrilled to have accessible, stable internet service – a lifesaver for those trying to stay connected to schools, jobs, healthcare, and family and friends.

AHC is committed to digital equity. We are developing plans to provide free internet service at Arlington View Terrace East, expected to open in 2023.

Connecting Virtually with Students

As schools shut their doors this spring, our Resident Services staff took a deep breath and immediately began working on new strategies to keep students engaged and inspired.

New partnerships and dedicated volunteers have helped immensely. Numerous tutors started meeting virtually with their students several times a week. And, a new Tuesday Tales series provides weekly videos of volunteers and staff reading books for elementary students.



AHC students are enjoying Rosie Riveters’ STEM kits.

One new partner, Rosie Riveters, which concentrates on STEM learning for youth, developed hands-on, at-home boxes for elementary students. The curated kits included everything students needed to participate in hands-on learning from home.



Long-time volunteer Bernie Piper tutors Seid a couple times of week virtually.

Resident Services

Building Futures for Our Residents

AHC's Resident Services, with year-round education and social services programs, reaches more than 3,000 residents each year.



Each week summer campers receive all the materials they need to participate in activities plus extra supplies to explore on their own.



All 31 of AHC's Class of 2020 are the first in their generation to go to college!

Congratulations to AHC's Class of 2020

AHC's Class of 2020 is the largest yet with 31 graduates. We are proud that ALL are planning to further their education. Together, they earned a whopping \$1.24 million in scholarships and aid. More than 1/3 of this year's class participated in AHC's education programs for five or more years. Eight students joined us in elementary school!

As first-generation students, going to college will change their lives – as well as their families' lives. A college degree is a critical step in overcoming systemic barriers and establishing successful, stable, and productive lives.

Students' dreams vary considerably. The most popular career paths are computer/IT, business/economics, and medicine. Others include mechanical engineer, journalist, social worker, architect, and lawyer.

Thank you to the mentors, volunteers, donors, and partners who have helped our students succeed!



Summer campers are creating crafts, going on virtual adventures and participating in STEM activities.

Summer Camp Prevents Learning Loss

AHC's Summer Camp is designed to help our elementary students stay engaged during the summer and prevent learning loss – a key challenge for low-income youth. This year's Summer Camp looks a lot different than previous years, but campers are really getting into the virtual activities and lessons. They are also enjoying "seeing" fellow campers – even if it's on a Zoom call.

Each week, students pick up camp kits with everything they need for the week. Activities include physical fitness, STEM projects,

math lessons, literacy lessons, and arts and crafts. Staff are combining virtual field trips with activities that reflect the online adventures. This year's "Empowerment" theme is woven throughout the camp and all students receive a book that amplifies the theme of racial pride and justice.

Thank You to Volunteers!

We couldn't do what we do without the help of the hundreds of amazing volunteers who contribute so much to the success of our residents and programs. This past year, 400 volunteers provided more than 6,000 hours to AHC's education and social services programs. That includes 23 dedicated individuals who have volunteered for more than five years.

We are immensely grateful to all, including many volunteers who have stepped up to help during the pandemic.



Congratulations to Hanh Nguyen, retired AHC employee and long-time volunteer, for receiving Volunteer Arlington's Lifetime Service Award.

Multifamily Development

Developing Affordable Homes

AHC is currently working on building or preserving more than 1,000 affordable apartments in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC.



The Apex will be the largest multifamily solar project in Northern Virginia.



Virginia

Largest solar project in Northern Virginia. Crews are putting the finishing touches on 360 solar panels that will line the sides of both buildings at *The Apex* in Arlington.

The project will generate 130 KW, the largest solar multifamily project in Northern Virginia, and will generate enough power for 10 to 11 average single-family homes! We will “flip the switch” on the solar panels this fall.

Virtual town halls. We are starting to work with residents to prepare for the redevelopment of *Arlington View Terrace East*, which won competitive 9% Low-Income Tax Credits this year. We are holding virtual meetings to keep residents informed and updated during COVID-19. Construction is expected to start in early 2021.

Construction during COVID-19. Despite the pandemic, construction on the 113-unit *Spire* in Alexandria is still on schedule. Working with Harkins Builders, we have put in place extra coronavirus

safety measures to monitor job site compliance and workers’ health. The adjacent worship space being developed by our partner, the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, is also taking shape.

Maryland

Renovation underway. After two years of planning, AHC Greater Baltimore’s *Greenspring Overlook*, an aging garden apartment, is getting a fresh look. The renovation will improve building systems and energy efficiency. Like all of our Baltimore projects, the 189-unit community serves low and very low-income families.

Public housing transformation. Working with The Michaels Organization and the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, AHC Greater Baltimore is redeveloping

Poe Homes, currently 288 public housing units, into 600 mixed-income homes in Southwest Baltimore as part of a HUD Choice Neighborhoods planning process.

Washington, DC

Mixed-income, mixed-use redevelopment. Plans continue to move forward for *Waterfront Station*, a \$175 million development that will include 465 apartments (136 affordable). AHC is part of a joint venture that includes PN Hoffman, City Partners, and Paramount.



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