



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

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# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**Chelsea Andrews**  
Executive Director

November 16, 2022

# HOC AT-A-GLANCE: OCTOBER 2022

- HOC continued to engage in its core activities providing support and enrichment programming to our clients, fulfilling our HUD required obligations and enhancing our clients' experience. October highlights include:
  - The achievement of our Finance Division
  - Introduction of our Legislative Update
  - Highlight of services provided by our Office of Resident Services
  - Updates from our Housing Resource Division
  - Real Estate Development activities
  - Updates from our Information Technology Division
  - Two pinnacle events must also be noted: Fundraising efforts in support of HOCP and our residents, and appreciation of our staff

*NOTE: HOC's offices remain closed to the public; however, we continue to provide high-level customer service through virtual meetings and program offerings, on-site engagement at properties and meet with clients in-person by appointment*



# 2022 Inspire Celebration

HOC, along with our nonprofit HOCP, hosted the “**2022 Inspire Celebration**” at the VisArts Center in Rockville. This invitation only event included donors, dignitaries, Council-members as well as our County Executive, Marc Elrich. Attendees were treated to inspiring stories about our programs, our customers and our two Inspire Award winners, ComuniBuild Foundation and Dr. Ikenna Myers. Guest speaker Diane Yentel, President and CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, offered insight and inspiration regarding the current status of affordable housing in our area. A former HOC customer, Dr. Sang Tran, engaged in a one-on-one conversation with Chelsea Andrews discussing how the money raised by Community Partners goes to provide programs that help children like him succeed.

The “**2022 Inspire Celebration**” was the culmination of a fundraising effort that raised a record amount of over \$200K to go toward HOC programming.

[Take a look at the Inspire Celebration gallery](#)



# 2022 Staff Appreciation Day

We celebrated our employees with a “*Staff Appreciation Day*” at Smokey Glen Farm. Staff participated in games such as bingo, mini golf, ping-pong, and basketball while eating a catered lunch and socializing with coworkers. Some staff also participated in a raffle to win gift baskets; which also raised a record amount of over \$2,000.00 to contribute to Community Partners programs!



## Finance Division News:

- HOC has been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association (“GFOA”) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finance Reporting
- The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by an agency and its management
- This is the Finance Team’s 13th GFOA Certificate of Achievement Award
- We congratulate the entire Finance staff for their hard work and dedication in receiving this prestigious award



# Legislative Update:

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On November 1, 2022, the County Council passed Bill 17-22 and Bill 26-22

- Bill 17-22:
  1. HOC Commissioners must complete training on the Montgomery County Public Ethics Law
  2. Unless otherwise authorized by law or by the Ethics Commission, a person that is engaged in a procurement matter with HOC must not employ or offer to employ an HOC employee if that employee significantly participated in the procurement
- Bill 26-22: Bill 26-22 introduces radon testing requirements for rental housing. The law will take effect on July 1, 2023, and applies to all ground-contact or basement units of a residential rental single-family home (not including condo units) and multifamily buildings. A more detailed narrative to include the fiscal impact of Bill 26-22 is being prepared for the Commission



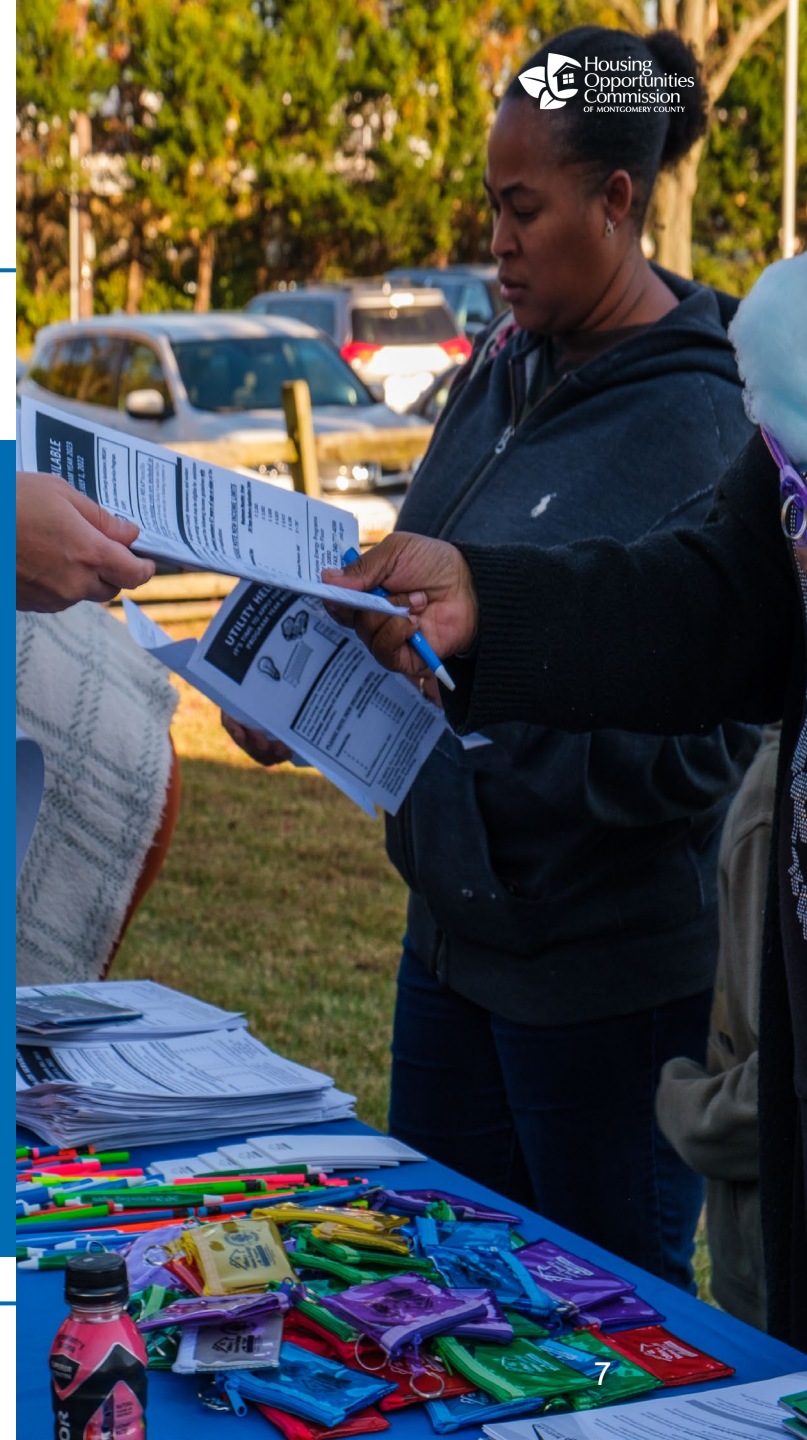
# Resident Services:

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## Service Coordination and Programming

The Service Coordination and Programming units provide assessment, counseling, information, referrals and program services to HOC customers

- During the month of October 2022, staff continued to provide services virtually and in person
- HOC's customers also continued to receive referrals to unemployment assistance, Temporary Cash Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Maryland Energy Assistance Program, and other benefit programs
- Resident Counselors have also attended the Housing Resources Division virtual briefings for new voucher recipients to provide information on the services that Resident Services offer



# Resident Services:

## Cider Mill

- The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services' Street Outreach Network ("SON") began its facilitation of Safe Zones at Cider Mill in October. Safe Zones is an afterschool initiative that provides safe places and programming for youth. The goal of the initiative is to prevent violence in the community. Resident Services staff will work in partnership with SON to expand the initiative to Seneca Ridge
- Facilitated a multicultural enrichment event at Cider Mill on October 27, 2022 to promote learning of other cultures
- Continued to assist the Property Management staff to address rent delinquencies by conducting outreach, assessments, and providing referrals



## Resident Services:

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- Facilitated resource-sharing workshops on October 25 and October 26 and a computer-coaching workshop at Forest Oak Towers on October 20
- In partnership with St. John's Church of Bethesda, facilitated the nutritional education and food distribution event at Waverly House in Bethesda on each Friday during October
- Facilitated multiple community activities which are highlighted below:



# Resident Services:

## Forest Oak Towers Bingo

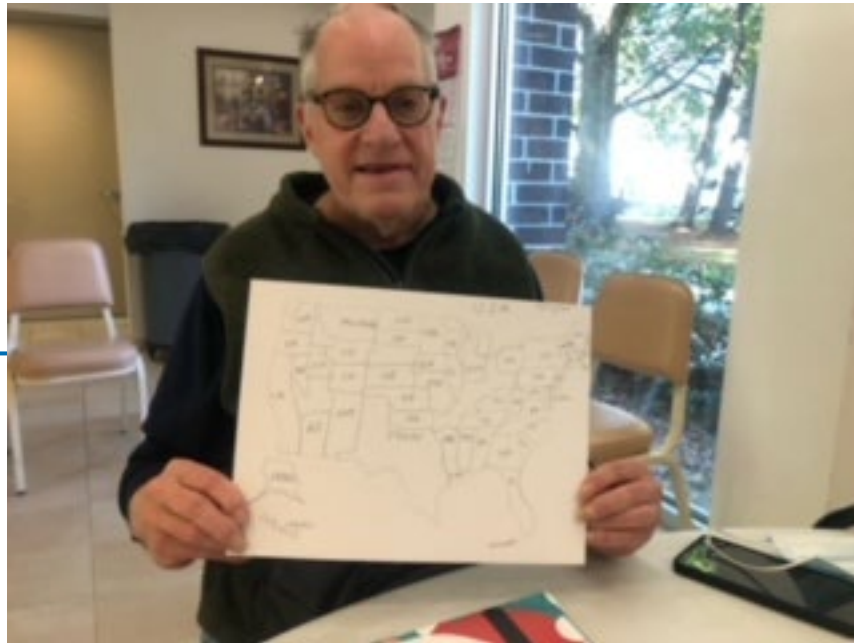
Community Bingo held at Forest Oak Towers to promote socialization



# Resident Services:

## Arcola Towers Art Workshop

Arts for the Aging art workshop at Arcola Towers



# Resident Services:

## Arcola Towers Art Workshop

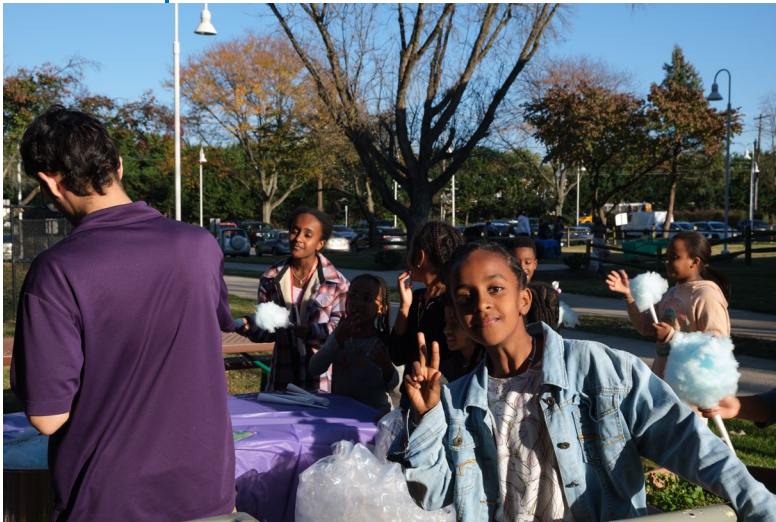
Arts for the Aging art workshop at Arcola Towers



# Resident Services:

## Magruder's Discovery Fall Harvest

Community event held at Magruder's Discovery on October 21st to engage customers, celebrate the season and share resources



# Resident Services:

## Tanglewood: Passing of the Torch

Community event held at Tanglewood Apartments on October 26th to celebrate the retirement of long-time counselor Antoinette Walker, and introduce the new counselor (Saida Workneh) to the community



# Resident Services:

## Seneca Ridge Fall Harvest

Community event held at Seneca Ridge on October 21st to engage customers, celebrate the season and share resources



## Resident Services:

### Relocation and Re-Certification Assistance

- Assisted customers on an ongoing basis with relocations and other needs for RAD and renovation projects at Residences on the Lane, Stewartown Homes, Shady Grove Apartments, Willow Manor Apartments, Bauer Park, Town Center Olney, Sandy Spring, Willow Manor and Georgian Court
- Provided continued outreach and assistance to customers who have failed to submit all required documents for re-certification by the stated deadline



# Resident Services:

## Rental Assistance

Provided face-to-face and electronic outreach and assistance to customers with applications for rental assistance programs



## Resident Services:

The Resident Services Division develops and implements programs that provide meals, educational, recreational and enrichment opportunities for HOC's customers. Listed below are highlights of programming activities for October 2022:

- The Resident Services Division continued to provide food resources and other. In October, 400 HOC customers were provided with food
- The Resident Services staff also continued to facilitate the Senior Nutrition Program. The Senior Nutrition Program provides meals and opportunities for seniors to socialize
- The Resident Services Division facilitated three Fall Harvest community events in October. These were aimed at engaging our customers, sharing information on resources, and to celebrate the fall season. These events were held at Magruder's Discovery (October 21), Seneca Ridge (October 21) and Paddington Square (October 26)

# Resident Services:

## HOC Academy

### Youth Education/Enrichment

- HOC Academy staff continued with the facilitation of the STEAM Forward program in October
- The highlight for the month was the program's first field trip to the I-Fly Indoor Sky Diving facility in Gaithersburg
- The HOC Academy staff also continued to recruit youth for the STEAM Forward's College Success Program, which will begin in November 2022



# Resident Services:

## I-Fly Sky Diving Field Trip

Recreation activity for youth in the STEAM Forward Program



# Resident Services:

## HOC Academy

### Adult Education and Workforce Development

- Two (2) Small Business Strategy Course (“SBSC”) alumni from FY’22 completed the legalization process for their business in October 2022. The following alumni established trade names for their businesses that will assist with the marketing of their products and services:
  - Shayla Ford; Trusted Blessings Incorporated
  - Lakesia Dempsey; 4 My Neighbor
- The HOC Academy staff hosted a marketing webinar titled “Integrate MailChimp to Your Website” on October 12th
- Additionally, the Small Business Strategy Course (Cohort #3) began classes on October 17th



# Resident Services:

## Financial Literacy

- The Financial Literacy Coach continued to work with HOC's customers and individuals on the Housing Path waitlist to begin to establish a strong financial foundation
- During October, the Financial Literacy Coach provided one-on-one financial literacy coaching to 13 HOC customers and 18 individuals from the HousingPath waitlist
- During October, the Financial Literacy Coach also facilitated financial literacy workshops. Six (6) HOC customers and five (5) individuals from the waitlist attended the workshops

# Resident Services:

## Supportive Housing

- The Supportive Housing Program provides housing assistance and case management services to 239 participants who are formerly homeless with disabilities
- In October, program staff continued to conduct home visits with program participants, provide case management services and pay rent and utilities
- Program staff also continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients to secure housing and provide financial assistance
- Program staff continued to implement the Rent Supplement Program (“RSP”), which provides a shallow rental subsidy (up to \$600 monthly) to county residents who struggle to pay their full rent with their current income. The program serves a large number of seniors on fixed incomes
- In October, staff engaged new landlords for the program and was able to increase the total number of participants to 261. The number of participants that can be served is approximately 275

# Resident Services:

## Fatherhood Initiative

- In October, the program enrolled 38 fathers for the first cohort of the new grant year
- The program facilitated a Fall pumpkin painting event for fathers and their children on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The purpose of this event was to promote engagement between fathers and their children and to celebrate the Fall season





# Housing Resources Division:

## Housing Choice Voucher (“HCV”) Program

- Monthly, HOC selects applicants from the Housing Path Waitlist to achieve a 95% program utilization rate. The current utilization rate remains 95%. There are currently 253 families who have been issued vouchers and are searching for suitable units to rent; 151 contracts are pending execution. Four-Hundred families were selected from the HCV wait list last month
- During the month of October, the Housing Resources Division received one request for voucher extension beyond the initial 90-day period
- Sixty-one (61) customers were recommended for program termination effective October 1, 2022
- The Resident Services Counselors conducted outreach to every customer in the termination window to ascertain why the annual requirement was not completed and provide assistance. They were able to assist 29 families with the recertification requirement and overturn the termination
- Termination proceedings will continue for 32 families for the following reasons:
  - 1 – Deceased
  - 1 – Nursing Home
  - 30 – Unable to reach by phone or email. Counselors left messages

# Housing Resources Division:

## Emergency Housing Vouchers (“EHVs”)

HOC has an allocation of 118 Emergency Housing Vouchers

- Currently 85 families have successfully leased units
- Thirteen families with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent
- Staff are reviewing six (6) certification packets to determine program eligibility
- HOC requested 14 additional referrals from HHS for the EHV Program

# Housing Resources Division:

## Family Self Sufficiency (“FSS”)

- Staff continues to engage in marketing the FSS program to Housing Choice Voucher participants by phone and regular virtual information sessions
- The FSS team conducted two (2) virtual information sessions in October for prospective applicants
- One family graduated from the FSS program in the month of October with an earned income of \$81,900. She obtained employment in the housing field as a Property Manager and exited the Housing Choice Voucher program
- Marcus Brown, FSS Coordinator joined the HOC team on October 31, 2022. He is responsible for the management oversight of the FSS Program
- In response to the Streamlining and Implementation of Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief, and Consumer Protection Act Changes to the FSS Program, staff has prepared letters to our FSS customers apprising them of the regulatory changes and encouraging them to transfer to the new Contract of Participation (“CoP”)



# Information Technology Division:

## Yardi PHA Client Portal for RENTCafe

The total population of registered HCV participants and participants who have been contacted to enroll in the system increased from 1,886 to 2,469 (30.9%). Below are recent statistics since enrollment of the first cohort began after the launch of the portal on July 11, 2022

Status of HCV Participant System Enrollment and Recertification	9/28/2022	10/26/2022	Rate of Increase
Completed registration	1,423	1,834	+28.8%
Contacted for enrollment	463	635	+37.1%
Completed annual recertification online	988	1,346	+36.2%

# Information Technology Division:

## Yardi PHA Client Portal for RENTCafe (cont.)

- Seventy-three percent (73%) of registered participants have completed their annual recertification online through the portal. There was a slight increase in this measure from last month's report, which resulted from making the month of February 2023 available, in addition to November 2022 – January 2023, for registered participants to complete their online annual recertification
- Written and electronic communications continue to be sent to the first cohort of HCV program participants who have not registered or have registered, but not started their online annual recertification process for follow up. A second cohort of 712 HCV program participants were invited to begin the enrollment process in early October

# Information Technology Division:

## October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

- October marked “Cybersecurity Awareness Month”. In 2004, the National Cyber Security Alliance and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) launched this initiative to help all Americans perform activities online more safely and securely. As businesses and organizations have increasingly relied on online transactions and services to conduct business, the role of every day computer users in the protection of data and information systems is critical to defending against ever increasing cyberattacks that can threaten business operations
- IT launched a phishing campaign for HOC staff. The phishing campaign simulated a phishing attack in a controlled manner and provided training to those users were lured into clicking hyperlinks in the phishing email message. The results of the phishing campaign will be considered in the training plan for cybersecurity awareness education at HOC

# Information Technology Division:

## IT Support for HOC Events

IT provided event support for the INSPIRE Celebration in Rockville, MD on October 13, 2022. The IT Events team was responsible for pre-testing and staging equipment, transporting the equipment, configuring, testing and setting up equipment on-site, providing audio-visual and technical support during the event and securing and transporting equipment back to HOC. The success of this event was a major collaborative effort of which the IT Division was pleased to have been involved



# Real Estate Development Division: —

- The Executive Director and several members of staff toured multiple properties, some of which are currently under construction, including the new Upcounty Customer Service Center
- The sites visited during the tour were The Laureate (under construction), Washington Square (stabilized), Residences on the Lane (new lease up), and The Leggett (under construction)





# Real Estate Development Division:

## The Laureate

- On November 2, 2022, HOC staff toured the under-construction Laureate development, a joint venture between HOC and its development partners EYA and Bozzuto Development
- The Class-A, new-construction mixed-income and mixed-use housing development is a short walk to the Red Line Shady Grove Metro Station



# Real Estate Development Division:

## The Laureate (cont.)

- The \$121 million, 268-unit, transit-oriented development will house the future HOC UpCounty Service Center and feature a variety of unit types, of which 30% (80 units) will be affordable, including 67 units at 50% AMI and 13 units at 65% AMI (MPDU income limit)



# Real Estate Development Division: The Leggett/SCRRAC

- At nearly 94% complete, construction progress continues at The Leggett and the South County Regional Recreation and Aquatic Center (“SCRRAC”), which upon completion, will represent one of Montgomery County’s cornerstone senior living mixed-income and mixed-use communities located in downtown Silver Spring
- The Leggett will be a pioneering senior housing community consisting of 267 mixed-use and mixed-income units (including replacement housing for the current Elizabeth House residents), the SCRRAC, and a Senior Resource Center/Primary Care Facility that will be operated by Holy Cross Hospital, all located on Elizabeth Square

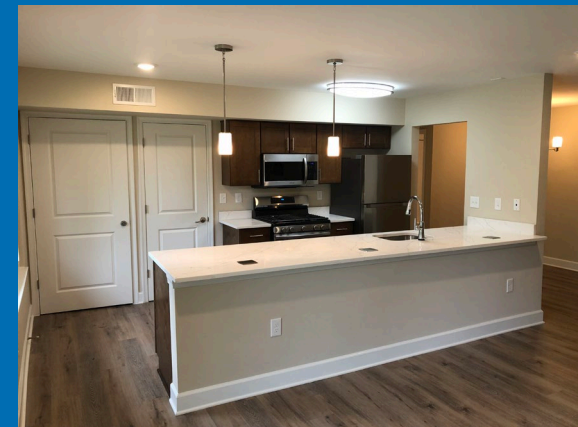


# Real Estate Development Division:

## LIHTC Resyndications:

Shady Grove Apartments | Georgian Court Apartments | Stewarttown Homes

- Renovations continue at the 144 units Shady Grove Apartments and 147-unit garden-style multifamily Georgian Court community, with both communities just over 50% complete. The general contractor, Hamel Builders, is renovating the residential units and making substantial improvements to the community rooms at each development
- Shady Grove will see a dramatic physical change that will enhance the front door and leasing experience for residents and the office staff and add much-needed activity space, including a new fitness center



# Real Estate Development Division:

LIHTC Resyndications (cont.):

Shady Grove Apartments | Georgian Court Apartments | Stewarttown Homes

- Georgian Court will benefit from an exterior addition to its community room that will add programming space and better overall circulation
- The 94-unit Stewarttown Homes is approaching the final phase of renovations with an approximate completion of December 2022



# Real Estate Development Division:

## Heritage Emory Grove – Community Development Network

- On October 27, 2022, HOC staff participated in an all-day site tour and speaking panel held by the Community Development Network (“CDN”) at Heritage Emory Grove as part of CDN’s annual Community Development Week
- The event provided additional historical context on the racial injustices and practices that led to division and loss of the pillars of the Washington Grove and Emory Grove communities, respectively, which are the genesis and foundation for the future development plan to restore what was lost



# Real Estate Development Division: \_\_\_\_\_

## Heritage Emory Grove – Community Development Network (cont.)

- Attendees toured the future development sites of the Heritage Emory Grove project, including Johnson's Local Park, HOC's holdings (Emory Grove and Camp Hill Square), and the Emory Grove Church-owned properties



# Tobytown Listening Session

November 17, 2022 (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM)

## LISTENING SESSION AT TOBYTOWN

WITH HOC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
CHELSEA ANDREWS





# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

THE END

