



Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Chelsea Andrews
President

January 10, 2024

HOC Emergency Response Update

Westwood Tower

In response to Saturday, Jan. 6th electrical issue:

- HOC spearheaded a collaborative effort involving multiple county agencies
- Conducted a rapid relocation of all residents to area hotels
- Continuing ongoing communication with residents (via email and direct phone calls)
- Evaluation and repairs are underway
- Conducting ongoing emergency response team meetings to ensure repairs are completed, support continues for residents and a staged plan is in place for residents return

HOC AT-A-GLANCE: December 2023

December's highlights:

- HOC in the News
- Legislative Updates
- Highlights from our Resident Services Division
- Highlights from HOC Academy
- Housing Resources Updates
- Mortgage Finance Division update



HOC IN THE NEWS:

Odd Lots

- Housing Production Fund stars in Bloomberg “Odd Lots” podcast
- Senior Vice President of Real Estate Zachary Marks was a featured guest
- Podcast focused on HOC’s innovative Housing Production Fund



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Federal Budget

- Appropriations for HUD will expire on Jan. 19, 2024 if a new “THUD” bill is not adopted before then
- Shutdown on Jan. 19 would include appropriations for HCVs and related programs
- Staff has developed contingency plans and would rely on HUD guidance until an appropriations bill is adopted

Federal Tax Package

- Efforts to include elements of the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act in the 2018 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act which expired at the end of 2023
- Could significantly increase the allocation of LIHTC and enact several other reforms to the LIHTC program

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

State Legislation

- State legislative session convened today.
- A particular focus is on legislation that eliminates barriers to affordable housing in zoning and development review. There is legislation from the Governor, Del. Stewart, the County Council, and local legislation implementing the recommendations of the recent workgroup. Staff is preparing a comprehensive update on this topic.
- On Dec. 21, 2023, Montgomery County House Delegation's Education, Elections and Housing Committee unanimously voted to approve MC-3, a bill removing special public hearing requirements from HOC's authorizing statute.

County Legislation

- Council Bill 38-23 regarding the First Right of Refusal had its first Planning, Housing, and Parks Committee hearing in December and will have a second work session after the Council returns from winter recess.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming

Workshops

- **Dec. 19:** Facilitated Resource Sharing workshop
- **Dec. 20:** Facilitated the Fundamentals of Housing workshop

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families**
 - **After-School / Out-of-School Programs:** SON facilitated the Safe Zones program at Cider Mill for 30 participants



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 7 and 14:** Residents at Forest Oak Towers participated in two holiday bingo events
 - **Dec. 11:** Willow Manor at Clopper's Mill held a holiday brunch



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 14:** Stewarttown's annual holiday gathering
 - **Dec. 15:** Magruder's Discovery Holiday Express party
 - **Dec. 15:** Fenton Silver Spring holiday party



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 15:** Plum Gar Community Center hosted the Holiday Store for residents of Stewarttown Homes, Shady Grove Apartments, The Willows, Seneca Ridge, Town Centre/Sandy Springs/Pond Ridge, Washington Square/Camp Hill and Cider Mill Apartments



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 18:** Diamond Square Holiday Bingo
 - **Dec. 20:** Residents on the Lane Pizza Party
 - **Dec. 20:** Residents were referred by Resident Counselors from Town Centre/ Sandy Spring, HCV and Scattered Sites to receive holiday assistance
 - **Dec. 21:** Holiday meal event for youth at The Willows
 - **Dec. 21:** Seniors at The Willows gathered for a festive holiday meal



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 21:** The Resident Counselor, in partnership with Goshen Church, hosted a holiday communal meal for residents at Forest Oak Towers
 - **Dec. 21:** Holiday party for residents of the Washington Square and Camp Hill community
 - **Dec. 22:** Residents at Forest Oak Towers participated in a holiday event that featured gift raffles and refreshments



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 18 - 25:** Holiday Cheer Gift Bag and Gift Cards Distribution
 - Holiday Gift Cards, sponsored by HOCP, were distributed to seniors at Chelsea Towers and Magruder's Discovery
 - Olney Moms sponsored a gift distribution for families at TCP-Olney
 - Holiday Baskets, sponsored by the Rainbow Community Center in Silver Spring, were distributed to families at Tanglewood

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Dec. 21:** Omega Psi Phi toy distribution brought together families at TCP and Sandy Springs to receive holiday assistance.
 - Holiday gift bags were distributed door-to-door at Glenmont Crossing, Strathmore Court, The Lindley, Brooke Park, Bauer Park and Parkway Woods. More than 200 residents received gift bags, which were sponsored by HOCP.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Youth and Families:**
 - **Computer Distribution:** Nearly 200 Chromebook laptop computers distributed to HOC residents at events at the Gaithersburg and Silver Spring libraries and at Magruder's Discovery and Seneca Ridge
 - Laptops will provide families the technology connection needed for a range of everyday activities



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors :**
 - **Dec. 6:** Holiday card event: Arts for the Aging (AFTA) hosted virtual holiday card events at Residences on The Lane and Arcola Towers
 - **Dec. 7:** Residents at Waverly House gathered for a fun and artistic watercolor activity



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors :**
 - **Dec. 8:** Resident Services hosted a blood clinic and education exercise in collaboration with the University of Maryland Student Nurses at Forest Oak Towers



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors:**
 - Dec 3: Sip & Paint at Arcola Towers
 - Dec. 7 and 14: Forest Oak Towers hosted community bingo events
 - Dec. 12: The Cub Scouts Holiday Sing-ALong
 - Dec 15: Catered holiday dinner at Arcola Towers
 - Dec. 20: International Holiday Dinner



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

Resident Well Being

- **Activities for Seniors:**
 - Dec. 18: Holiday Luncheon
 - Dec. 20: Field trip to see the Winter Lights at Great Seneca Park



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont.)

- **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 Apartments, 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
- **Rental Assistance:**
 - Continued to provide outreach to customers to provide information on, and assist them in applying for rental assistance through the CDBG and ERAP programs
 - Provided face-to-face and electronic outreach and assistance to customers with applications for rental assistance programs.

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont'd)

- **Rental Assistance:**
 - Housing Stabilization staff continued to process applications under the Emergency Assistance Program. Residents have received assistance for security deposits, rent, utilities, moving and storage.



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Service Coordination and Programming (cont'd)

- **Food Assistance:**
 - Provided food and other resource support to **over 300 HOC customers**
 - Continued to facilitate the Senior Nutrition Program, which provides meals and opportunities for seniors to socialize



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy

- **Elementary Initiative:**
 - **Youth Enrichment Series (YES):**
Completion of Session II clubs at Washington Square and Georgian Court featuring nutrition and physical fitness and science experiments



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy (cont.)

- **Middle/High School Initiative:**
 - **Dec 16:** The Fatherhood Initiative and HOC Academy joined forces to host the “Dads, Families and Drones” event with 23 families



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

HOC Academy (cont.)

- **Adult Education and Workforce Development (AEWD):**
 - Small Business Strategy Course (SBSC) alumni continue to report their progress and new business ventures
- **Assistance Program (TAP) recipient highlights/milestones:**
 - Two (2) Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) participants reported completing two or more benchmarks toward their overall goals
- **Other Updates/Upcoming Events:**
 - HOC Academy is sponsoring a 10-Week Small Business Strategy Course. Cohort #2 began the week of October 2nd and concluded the week of Dec. 11.
 - A total of 21 students began the course and 15 students completed the course, with a completion rate of 71 percent

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Financial Literacy

- Provided one-on-one financial literacy coaching to 13 HOC customers and three individuals from the HousingPath waitlist
- Financial Literacy Coach also facilitated group financial literacy workshops for HOC customers and individuals on the waitlist



RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Supportive Housing

- Program **served 230 participants** by conducting home visits with program participants, providing case management services, and paying rent and utilities
- Continued to help Emergency Voucher recipients secure housing by providing housing location services, as well as financial assistance for application fees, security deposits, moving expenses and household items
- Program **staff increased program participation to 275** this month, just 25 shy of the 300 person target for the program. Staff will continue to monitor program expenditures to determine if additional participants can be served

RESIDENT SERVICES UPDATE:

Fatherhood Initiative

- **Dec. 15:** Ice Skating Relationship Building at the Wheaton Ice Rink
- **Dec 16:** STEM Day (Dads, Families and Drones) event in partnership with HOC Academy



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

- Currently, **117 families** with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent; and **179 contracts** are **pending execution**
- Utilization rate has increased to **98%**
- During December, the Division received **two requests for voucher extensions** beyond the initial 90-day period



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications

- Overall, **444 of 758** customers submitted paperwork electronically
- **Seventy-three (73)** customers were recommended for program termination effective December 1, 2023



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

RENTCafé Used to Support Online Annual Recertifications (cont'd)

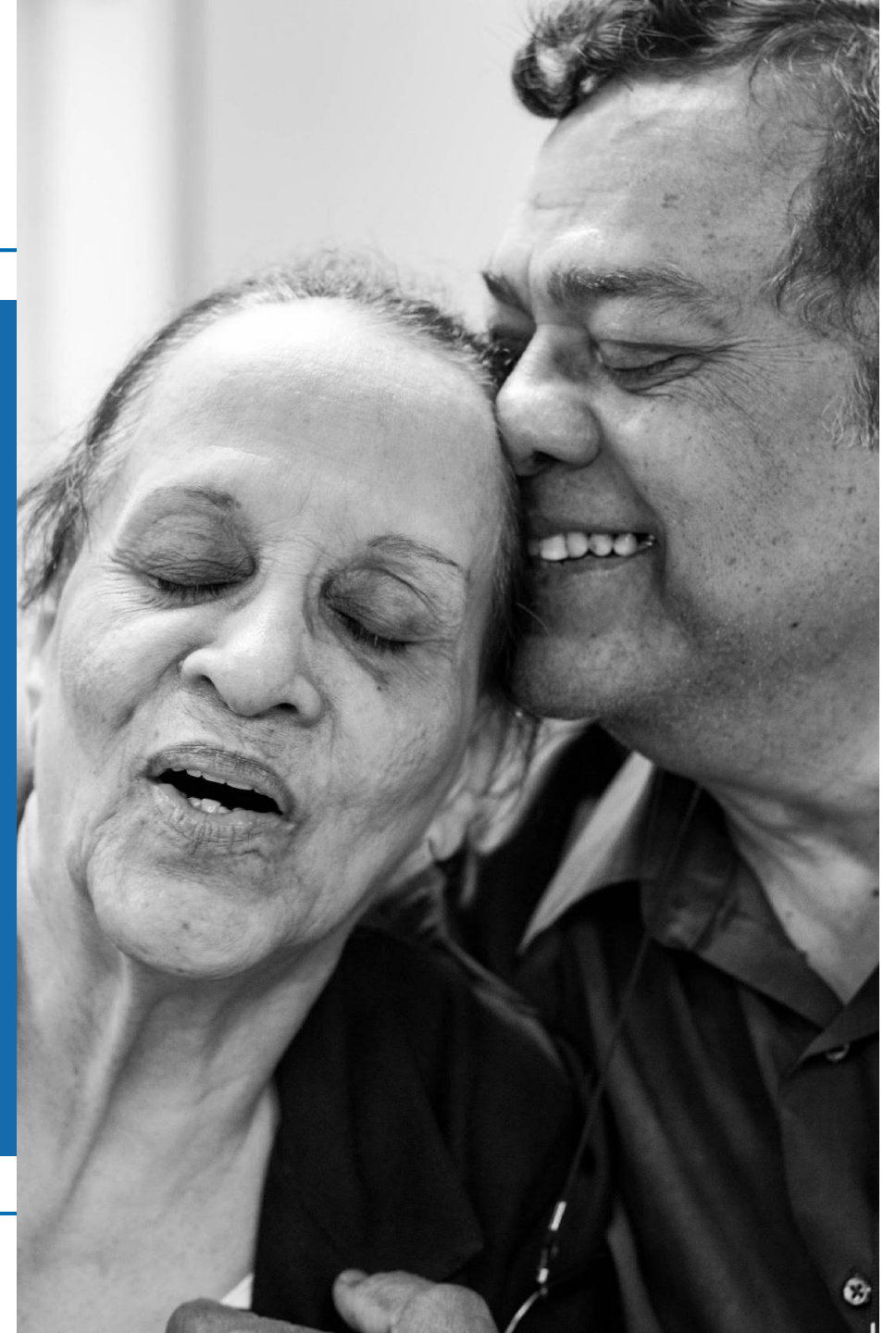
- Resident Services Counselors assisted **40 families** with recertification requirement and overturned the termination. Termination proceedings will continue for **9 families** for the following reasons:
 - 3 - Deceased
 - 3 - Vacated the Unit
 - 1 - Voluntary Withdrawal
 - 26 - Failed to respond to Counselor outreach



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs)

- HOC has an allocation of **118 EHVs**
- Currently **102 families** have successfully leased units
- **Ten (10) families** with issued vouchers are searching for suitable units to rent
- To date, **nine EHV customers** have exited the program



HOUSING RESOURCES UPDATE:

Family Self Sufficiency (FSS)

- **Two new families enrolled in the FSS program, resulting in a total of 367 program participants**
- **Eighty-eight (88) referrals were completed**



MORTGAGE FINANCE UPDATE:

Record Year for Single-Family Lending

- The Single-Family Group closed a record 75 loans from August to December of 2023
- Worth noting - 47 loans (60%) closed utilizing the Montgomery County Homeownership Assistance Fund (McHAF) closing cost funds totaling \$1.2 million



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

THE END

