



the Community Voice

CHARTER OAK COMMUNITIES

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR COC RESIDENTS

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Chief Operating Officer

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Director of Facilities & Building Systems

Mary Beth Henry, Editor



Nancy Forvil & Elijah Varlack attended the 6/18/11 Father's Day Celebration on the East Side; see story on page 2.

Remaining Board Meetings for 2011:

- Wednesday, July 20th
- Wednesday, August 24th
- Wednesday, September 21st
- Wednesday, October 26th
- Wednesday, November 16th
- Wednesday, December 14th

All meetings are held at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first floor meeting room unless otherwise noticed.

COC Receives “High Performer” Recognition

Charter Oak Communities (COC) has received the highest possible operations rating from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal branch of U.S. government that oversees public housing in American towns and cities and on Indian reservations.

To be designated in the “High Performer” category, housing authorities must receive an overall score of at least 90 percent or greater, based on total available points in the HUD uniform rating system (up to 100 points), which is called its Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). The designation is made one full year following the close of the fiscal year, so this recognition reflects COC’s 2009 fiscal year performance.

PHAS scoring is based on ratings for four key indicators, including physical condition; financial condition; management operations; and capital fund programs. The audit also reviews each public housing sites’ building exteriors, building systems, dwelling units and common areas.

PHAS is an “apple to apples comparison” of public housing authorities that helps them identify areas for improve-

ment, and qualifies high-performing authorities for incentives such as relief from some reporting requirements, increased grant funding and reduced federal monitoring.

PHAS is a wide-ranging measurement of essential housing operations. It is designed to improve the overall delivery of public housing services, and enhances trust among public housing agencies, residents and the general public. COC staff is proud to have received these high marks, and see it as a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff, residents and contractors. PHAS is an important and useful management tool for effectively and fairly measuring critical factors that affect the day-to-day quality of life for our residents, as well as our long-term financial and system stability.

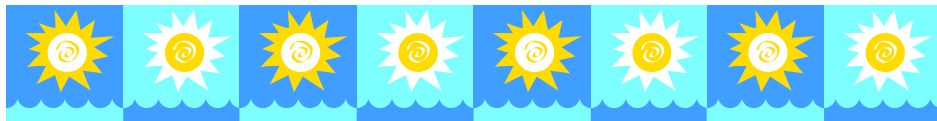
Among the State’s 51 housing authorities, 34 completed the PHAS review for fiscal year 2009, and a dozen of those qualified for the “High Performer” designation. “Charter Oak Communities should be proud of this significant achievement and their dedication to helping others,” said Barbara Fields, HUD New England Regional Administrator.

COC Receives Two Grants

Two grants totaling \$130,000 for Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) activities have been awarded to COC, one for Section 8 residents and the other for Public Housing residents.

Family Centers will provide the services, including employment training, job development and self-sufficiency. The grant through Section 8 is ongoing but this will be the first year that Public Hous-

ing residents will have access to these services. We hope to offer a variety of helpful programs such as credit repair and family budgeting. HUD is seeking to break down the economical barriers for families, the elderly and persons with disabilities. In order to promote this effort, we will explore ways to serve the non-elderly disabled population with options to return to work, if possible.





COC Employee Profile



Jacqueline Figueroa began her career at COC as an intern in November 1994. She worked at a variety of assignments gaining exposure to purchasing, accounting and leasing. She returned as a full-time employee in 1997 in the leasing department. She interacted with clients on a daily basis to assess their needs for housing assistance within the state and federal guidelines.

Subsequently, Jackie worked in data processing as well as in Section 8 as an Eligibility Specialist. In November 2010, Jackie was promoted to HCV (Housing Choice Voucher) Manager and oversees the Section 8 Department. She supervises a staff of six and is in constant contact with landlords, residents, various agencies and community organizations. Recently, Jackie obtained a Housing Choice Voucher Executive Management Certification. This in-depth training provides tools to meet staff development needs as well as a basic understanding of the need for policy and procedure development and financial management.

Jackie received an Associates Degree from Norwalk Community Technical College in 2005 with a major in General Studies. In September, she will be attending Sacred Heart University with a major in Finance in order to complete her Bachelor's Degree.

Jackie is a hard working and dedicated individual. She always goes out of her way to help residents with any issues that arise.

A busy mom of three, Jackie is used to juggling many competing demands and getting the job done.

Update on COC Projects

The warm temperatures of summer bring the perfect weather for our contractors to be their most productive. This productivity has been seen in several projects that have been or are almost completed. The ongoing Masonry & Concrete Repair Work at Stamford Manor is moving into a new phase with the completion of the railing replacement. The contractor will be concentrating on brick replacement and concrete repair and the new coating to the building will give Stamford Manor "a new look".

The projects that have been completed or are phasing down include the Elevator Replacement at Rippowam Manor, the Fire Panel Replacement at Glenbrook Manor, and the Roof Replacement at Quintard Manor. All three of these tasks have been welcomed by the residents.

New projects that are recently underway include the Elevator Replacement at Glenbrook Manor and the Entry Door Replacement at Czescik Homes. Again, these are welcome improvements to these developments.

Projects that are also in the pipeline include the Elevator Replacement at Stamford Manor (elevator #2). The contract will be signed this month and work will start shortly thereafter. The Exterior Façade Repairs to the EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finish System) at Rippowam and Glenbrook Manors have been awarded and work is slated to start later this summer or early fall.

It continues to be a busy summer with many anticipated accomplishments and continued improvements to the developments of Charter Oak Communities.



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Father's Day Celebration

Family Centers partnered with Charter Oak Communities to host the first Father's Day celebration at the East Side's Lawnhill Terrace. This event was part of a nationwide Father's Day Initiative, sponsored by HUD in which Housing Authorities from throughout the country brought communities together to honor fathers, mothers and special adults for being role models to children and younger adults. The East Side Father's Day celebration hosted a community-wide barbecue (catered by Garden Cater-

ing) and art project in which adults and children decorated and wore t-shirts depicting their pictures of fatherhood and thriving families. Over 100 East Side residents attended the festivities which were held on Saturday, June 18th. Family Centers and Charter Oak Communities look forward to making this a yearly event that will be celebrated throughout the Stamford community. In the above photo, attendees work on decorating their t-shirts.



Westwood Photo Gallery



Phase I of Westwood is complete and looks absolutely spectacular. Residents have begun the move in process. Photos courtesy of Sean Carty.



Walter Kulowiec and his sister, Emily Symeon are residents of Wormser Congregate. See story on right.

Resident Corner

Emily Symeon and her brother Walter Kulowiec were children of Polish immigrants. There were five brothers in the family and one sister, Emily.

Both Walter and Emily were born and raised in Stamford. Both are active in Holy Name Church in Stamford. Emily even knew Edward Czeskik for whom Czeskik Homes is named.

Emily lived in the South end of Stamford and her brother in Springdale before they both lost their respective spouses (Charlie and Ella) and decided it was too hard to take care of their homes by themselves. Emily had to climb 18 stairs and it became difficult on a daily basis. Emily first came to Wormser Congregate in 2008 and a short time later, a unit was vacated right next to Emily and Walter moved in next to his sister. Although Emily is 95, she still drives and takes Walter to appointments as he can't drive due to cataracts.

Walter enjoys visits with his two daughters, son-in-laws and grandchildren. His granddaughter Lela is a lawyer in Virginia and his grandson, Tyler, is a professor at Yale University.

Emily has three sons. All three went to college on sports scholarships – baseball is in the blood.

Emily attended Shorts Secretarial School in Stamford and held various positions doing office work. She worked until she was 79. Emily has had many hobbies over the years including bowling and fishing. She would catch eels, skin them and serve them for dinner. Two of Emily's sons live in Florida. She recently flew to Florida with her grandson in order to celebrate her 95th birthday.

In 1942, parental consent was needed when it came time for Walter to sign his contract (with a big \$100 bonus) by a Red Sox Triple-A Scout. His mother wouldn't sign as she wanted her son at home. Emily and her brother convinced dad to sign the contract and away Walter went to Oneonta of the Canadian-American League. They flew him to New York where he worked for \$50 a week. Walter was slated to report to spring training with the Boston Red Sox in March of 1943 until the disruption of World War II. He and his unit built 80 bridges and did most of their work at night when they were under fire. Walter vividly remembers being shot in his right leg during battle in Luxemburg, Germany on February 6, 1945 at 4:00 in the morning. Unfortunately, several other men in his unit were killed. Walter was taken to a field hospital where they cut almost 2 lbs out of his leg. He still has the souvenir of the shrapnel from his leg for which he was awarded a purple heart. Walter felt lucky to be alive after being shot. When he returned from the war, Walter couldn't run so well due to his injury but he was still able to swing a bat. The scout that originally signed him to his first pro contract had since become a scout for the Pirates and paid Walter \$500 to play in Fargo, ND (Class C League). Transportation for Walter and his wife was provided. Water played the entire season and did very well with a batting average of .342.

Subsequently, Walter worked as a meat cutter for 10 years prior to being employed at Pitney Bowes Manufacturing Company for 27 years where he worked on postage meters.

Both Walter and Emily have strong faith. Walter received a prayer book from his father when he left for war and he still keeps it with him to this day. They both attend mass every day by watching Father Gatzak on Channel 20 at 10:00 AM.

Emily enjoys card games, especially bingo and pinochle and participates in the exercise program at Wormser. Emily and Walter are pleased to live so close to one another.



Cooking Safety



Over half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents. Please use the following common sense tips while cooking:

1. Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen while cooking—take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk;
2. Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out—so they don't get knocked off the stove;
3. Take care if you're wearing loose clothing as it can easily catch fire;
4. Keep paper towels and cloths away from the stove;
5. Double check the stove is off when you've finished cooking.



See photos from 5/14/11 Vita/Fairgate Community Health Center Dedication. Top left: Anne Fountain, MPH, Director of Health and Social Services, City of Stamford, Rev. Richard Futie, Pastor, Sacred Heart Parish, Vincent Tufo, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Charter Oak Communities, David Smith, Senior Vice President, Strategy and Market Development, Stamford Hospital and Ludwig Spinelli, Chief Executive Officer, Optimus Health Care cut the ribbon at the dedication. Top right: Post House residents (from left to right) Patricia Quinn, Leora Shepard, Carmen Roldan & Nichole Charles pose for a picture in front of the beautiful window art at the Fairgate Community Health Center. Left: Commissioner Sheila Williams-Brown has her blood pressure checked.