

President/CEO's Report

Housing Authority Of The City Of Orlando, Florida
 Vivian Bryant, Esq., President/CEO
 Ed Carson, Chair

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DESK

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- PHADA 2015 Commissioners Conference
 St. Pete Beach, FL
 January 25-28, 2015
- HDLI 2015 General Counsel's Forum
 Tampa, FL
 January 29-30, 2015
- NAHRO 2015 Legislative Conference
 March 15-18, 2015



VIVIAN BRYANT, ESQ.
 PRESIDENT/CEO

In May of last year, I was invited to travel to Atlanta, Georgia with a coalition of local leaders from the LIFT Orlando representing the non-profit, business and education community to tour the innovative East Lake Purpose Built Community. The East Lake community was one of the nation's first U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOPE VI developments and once home to East Lake Meadows, a poverty-stricken, crime-ridden, failed public housing project. Today, violent crime is down 95 percent, property values are up, and a charter elementary school is one of the highest performing in the city.

The Orlando contingent toured the award-winning Charles W. Drew Charter School and YMCA, the East Lake housing development and surrounding neighborhood. The feeling of hope and transformation was in the air; the energy was infectious. East Lake is a shining example of what extraordinary neighborhood revitalization can occur when residents, government, the private sector and the education and non-profit communities work together to transform communities and peoples' lives. Purpose Built has replicated those results in nine (9) more cities across the country Atlanta, GA, Birmingham, AL, Charlotte, NC, Houston, TX, Indianapolis, IN, Rome, GA, Spartanburg, SC, New Orleans, LA, Omaha, NE.

Maybe Orlando will be next!

Purpose Built Communities is a non-profit consulting firm dedicated to transforming struggling neighborhoods into vibrant, sustainable communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. The Purpose Built Communities model for holistic community revitalization is based on three strategies: building high-quality mixed-income housing; creating quality cradle-to-college education options; and generating services and facilities that assist low-income families and attract middle-income residents.

LIFT Orlando was organized in 2012 and has as its mission to break the cycle of poverty through neighborhood revitalization by unifying the public and private sectors around a common agenda to remove barriers and unlock the pathways to progress and opportunity for the most vulnerable families in the city. LIFT is initially targeting neighborhoods west of Orlando's business core, specifically those near Citrus Bowl Sports Complex.

Sources: www.Purposebuiltcommunities.org; LIFT Orlando

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End of the Year Luncheon at Lorna Doone



Friday, December 19, 2014, the Lorna Doone Resident Association held its December End-of-The-Year Luncheon from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the 4th Floor Community Room. The activity was a success as the residents socialized, enjoyed holiday music and shared a congregated meal to celebrate the end of 2014. OHA Lorna Doone's Site Manager, Mr. Victor Pazmino attended the activity.



“I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Board of Commissioners' Meeting

The Orlando Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will hold its Board Meeting, Thursday, January 15, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at the OHA's Administration Building, Board Room, 390 N. Bumby Avenue, Orlando, FL 32803.

Orlando Housing Authority residents interested in attending the meeting who need transportation, and/or have special needs, please call the Community Affairs and Communications Department at (407) 895-3300, extension 6101.

Commissioner Sheehan's "Wheels for Kids" Bike Give-Away



On Monday, December 22, 2014 District 4 Commissioner Patty Sheehan held the 13th Annual Wheels 4 Kids Program donating 88 bicycles and protective helmets to children ages 5 to 15 from the Reeves Terrace community in front of Howard Middle School. The program was started by Commissioner Sheehan in 2002 as the children no longer had a bus system to take them to school. Commissioner Sheehan's sponsors included Baker Barrios, Brasfield and Gorrie, Ustler Group GAI Consultants, Olde Towne Brokers, Workscapes, South Street Ministries, Massey Communications, Orlando Housing Authority, Orlando Police and Fire Departments. Orlando

Housing Authority's staff Ms. Jessica Jimenez, Mr. Antony Watson and Mr. Joe DeJesús also attended and assisted with the event.

The following articles were reprinted from FOX 35 Orlando website. The event was featured on their news program several times; Article 1 December 16, 2014 and Article 2 December 22, 2014.

Article 1

Orlando Firefighters held a "Wheels for Kids" blitz build at Fire Station One downtown. The charity began in 2002 by City Commissioner Patty Sheehan as a way to get kids at Howard Middle and Hillcrest Elementary to actually go to school.

"It was just a crazy idea, but you know sometimes crazy ideas work out," said Sheehan. "Because we've been doing this now for 12 years, the truancy rating is practically non-existent and these kids are going to school every single day. And more than 1000 bikes later, "Wheels for Kids" is still rolling.

Firefighters like Jeff Garrett are still building enthusiastically, making sure kids who might not otherwise get a bike for Christmas, can pedal their hearts out this year. "From not having anything to having a bike is just, you know, it's a phenomenal feeling I'm sure," he said. "Their eyes get big, and they just smile just, just crazy, you know? And it make you just feel good inside."

All of these bikes will be delivered to some awfully happy kids on the morning of December 22."

Article 2

Christmas came early for children who got brand new bikes from the Wheels for Kids program. Santa Claus, City Commissioner Patty Sheehan and volunteers with Orlando's police and fire departments and the community helped hand out the bikes.

The program started ten years ago after budget cuts eliminated school bus routes from Orlando's Reeves Terrace neighborhood. The bikes give children a way to get to and from school and have fun.

"This is a blessing, thanks to all the contribution from the whole community. It's a blessing for us to receive this present. It's going to help us enjoy the nature outside here around the community, so thank you," said mother Cynthia Castillo.





ORLANDO HOUSING AUTHORITY



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HUD's Mission Statement: To promote adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity and a suitable living environment free from discrimination.

Orlando Housing Authority Mission Statement: To offer a choice of safe and affordable housing options and opportunities for economic independence for residents of Orlando and Orange County.

FAIR HOUSING CORNER

HUD No. 14-142
Elena Gaona
(202) 708-0685

FOR RELEASE
Wednesday
November 12, 2014

HUD FINDS THAT PUERTO RICO CONDO ASSOCIATION DISCRIMINATED AGAINST RESIDENT WITH DISABILITIES

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced today it has ordered Castillo Condominium Association, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to pay \$20,000 in damages plus a \$16,000 civil penalty after finding that the association violated the Fair Housing Act when it refused to allow a resident with disabilities to keep his emotional support animal.

The **Fair Housing Act** makes it unlawful to refuse to make reasonable accommodations in policies or practices when such an accommodation may be necessary to afford a person with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy his or her home. This includes refusing to grant waivers to "no-pet" policies for persons who use assistance or support animals.

"Assistance animals are not pets. Persons with disabilities often depend on them in order carry out life's daily functions," said Gustavo Velasquez, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "This Order reaffirms HUD's commitment to taking appropriate action when federal fair housing law has been violated."

The case came to HUD's attention when a resident of Castillo Condominiums filed a complaint alleging that the condominium's homeowner association discriminated against him when it denied his request to keep an emotional support animal in his unit, even though he presented documentation from his healthcare provider identifying his disability and his need for the animal. Pets were allowed when the resident initially bought his unit in 1995, but the condominium association had adopted a "no-pets" policy before the resident adopted his emotional support animal. As a result of being denied the right to have a support animal, the man experienced depression and anxiety and he was forced to sell the home he had lived in for almost 20 years.

HUD's Order modifies a previous HUD Administrative Law Judge decision that ordered Castillo Condominium Association to pay only \$3,000 in emotional distress damages and a \$2,000 civil penalty. The HUD order ruled that a higher damages award and civil penalty are necessary in light of the seriousness of the violation and complainant's injuries.

Source: hud.org