



# HomeFront

Vol.34 No. 1

Building Affordable Homes and Strong Futures Since 1975

Spring 2008

## Affordable RentalNews

### New Ballston Project Provides Nearly Four Times As Many Affordable Homes



*AHC's proposed four-story building with 90 affordable apartments, located at the northeast corner of Wilson Boulevard and Wakefield Street, was designed by DC-based Bonstra-Haresign Architects.*

In late February, the Arlington County Board approved a multi-use project in Ballston that includes 90 affordable apartments, two office buildings, and 28 market-rate townhouses. The 4.8-acre site, which includes the Bob Peck Chevrolet and Staples buildings on Glebe Road, is one of the last land parcels in the fast-growing Ballston Metro area. Close to the Metro and shopping, the site offers one of Arlington's most desirable and convenient locations.

AHC owns and operates a 24-unit affordable apartment building, Jordan Manor, on the site. This building will be torn down and replaced

with 90 new affordable apartments. Approximately 80 percent of the new homes will have two or three bedrooms for families.

A particularly innovative aspect of the project is that AHC and The JBG Companies swapped land parcels during the planning process. The exchange enabled AHC to more than triple the number of affordable homes, and also garnered more community support for the overall project.

#### *Spacious, Convenient Living*

The new affordable homes will include updated amenities and be more energy efficient than the original

apartments. The four-story building will also offer a spacious community room, an onsite AHC Management office and underground parking. A landscaped courtyard, exclusively for residents, will provide a recreation/play area with a water feature for children, a BBQ grilling area, and room for chairs and tables.

#### *Helping Families During the Transition*

AHC is working closely with families who will be relocated during the construction phase. Our bilingual staff are helping each family find the best options for their individual situation, including finding nearby housing choices (we own 10 other affordable communities within three miles). Families will also receive ongoing services throughout the process, including a relocation package and help with moving and changing utilities. Current residents will have first choice of the new apartments when they are completed.

#### *Gates Community Center Will Open This Summer*

The Gates of Ballston's new community center is on track to open early this summer. The two-story building, with nearly 10,000 square feet of space, will provide a host of amenities for residents of the 464-unit Gates of Ballston. Features will include a spacious multi-purpose room with a fireplace and serving area, classrooms, computer room, teen center, and an office for Arlington County services.

The site will provide a pre-kindergarten program, along with AHC's Resident Services' after-school classes, teen programs, workshops for adults, and other community programs.



## AHC Now Offers Affordable Mortgages — With No Gimmicks

AHC launched a new division this spring, AHC Mortgage Services, to provide affordable mortgages in the metropolitan area. Backed by 30 years of integrity and community experience, AHC Mortgage offers stable, fixed-rate mortgage products in today's uncertain market.

"We created this program

because we saw a need in the marketplace that meshes with our mission to provide affordable housing," says Walter D. Webdale, President and CEO. "Thanks to our nonprofit status, we can offer something unique - a professional mortgage service that can help meet people's dreams - not create nightmares."

### *AHC Mortgage Services Success Story*

#### **Arlington couple thanks AHC for help in repairing, maintaining and refinancing their home**

Dear Mr. Webdale,

My wife and I wish to thank AHC and the staff of AHC for all they have done for us. Jimmie Jones in particular has done so much for us and it wouldn't be possible for us to praise him enough. Let me outline how AHC has served us, making it possible to live at a higher standard than we could have without their services.

In May 2000, we purchased our first home (and our only home). AHC lent us \$3,000 to help in the down payment, with a payment plan that included very low interest and 5 years to complete payment. Our home is in Arlington Village (built in 1940). In the summer of 2007 we were having problems with the basic infrastructure of the home due to its age, and the major appliances were over 25 years old, failing and costing a lot in inefficiency. The staff at AHC assisted us in determining what should be repaired and/or replaced. They then helped us find a contractor and a loan to have the vitally needed work done. Our electric and gas bills have dropped considerably



*John and Dyann Bishop successfully refinanced their home with Jimmie Jones and AHC Mortgage Services this spring.*

since completion of the work (decrease of about 30 - 40%).

Finally, in 2008 we needed to refinance and once again AHC helped us. Jimmie Jones was a pleasure to work with. He explained the process and took a lot of time with us, making a difficult refinancing arrangement (our income is below the average in Arlington) happen. We now feel confident we will be able to stay in our home and take a lot of pride in our home and Arlington County.

Sincerely,  
John and Dyann Bishop

*"We created this program because we saw a need in the marketplace that meshes with our mission to provide affordable housing."*

#### *Highlights include:*

- **First-time and low/moderate income homebuyers** are our specialty, but we have programs for everyone
- **Ongoing financial education** — before and after purchase
- **Flexible terms** like 100% financing, forgiveness for medical collections, and allowances for higher debt
- **Nontraditional credit history** — like cell phone bills, rent and utilities - can help qualify

For more information, contact Jimmie Jones, Manager Mortgage Services, [jjones@ahcinc.org](mailto:jjones@ahcinc.org), 703-486-0626 x 124 or Myrna Marrero Perkins, [perkins@ahcinc.org](mailto:perkins@ahcinc.org), 703-486-0626 x 171.

## Spruce Up for Spring



AHC offers several renovation and home improvement programs to help homeowners maintain and upgrade their homes, including a barrier-free service to help make homes more accessible for elderly or disabled residents. Other opportunities include renovating kitchens or bathrooms, building additions, improving energy efficiency, replacing windows and repairing exterior features.

For more information, contact Jimmie Jones, 703-486-0626 x 124, [jjones@ahcinc.org](mailto:jjones@ahcinc.org) or Brian Scott, 703-486-0626 x 168, [scott@ahcinc.org](mailto:scott@ahcinc.org).

# Community and Business Leaders Helped Celebrate the Grand Opening of AHC Mortgage Services



*AHC Mortgage Services staff (from left) Carlton Miller, Messeleth Seleshi, Myrna Marrero Perkins and Jimmie Jones are ready to help every step of the way through the financing process.*



*Carlton Miller, AHC Inc, and Fran Lunney, Arlington County Housing Division*

*Gil Scott, Hurshell Associates; Regina Macklin, Meeting House Corporation; and Walter D. Webdale, AHC Inc.*



*Chris Helmers, NeighborWorks; Linda M. Skelton, NeighborWorks; and Howard Ross, Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker, P.A.*



*Rita Gutierrez, AHOME and Odalis Barrios, Arlington County Housing Division*





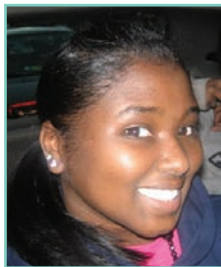
## Outstanding Teens — Building for the Future

**A**HC offers a variety of programs to help young residents successfully navigate the challenges of the teen years, and to prepare for the future. The inclusive approach includes one-on-one tutoring and mentoring, life-skills workshops, drop-out prevention initiatives and career and college planning.

The programs are making a real difference. “The teen programs instilled a sense of pride and a ‘you can do it’ attitude into everything I set my mind to, that I did not receive anywhere else,” says Hiba Elnour, an award-winning senior at Washington-Lee High School, who has participated in AHC’s teen programs since middle school. “We do everything we can to provide the self-confidence they need to be who they are,” explains Mary Seryak, Resident Services Manager. “That’s what so many teens are looking for.”

### Following Are Some of the Outstanding Teens Who Participate in AHC’s Programs:

**Hiba Elnour**, a senior at Washington-Lee High School, has participated in AHC’s teen programs since she entered high school. Hiba’s family came from the Sudan in 1990, and she was born in the U.S. that same year. Hiba’s hard work has won her a number of awards, including a prestigious four-year scholarship to Grinnell College, a highly regarded school in Iowa, through the Posse program. During the summer between her junior and senior year, Hiba participated in Leadership Arlington and also served as an International Youth Ambassador for the People to People program. Hiba continues to be an active high school student. She is the senior class treasurer, and a member of the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society.

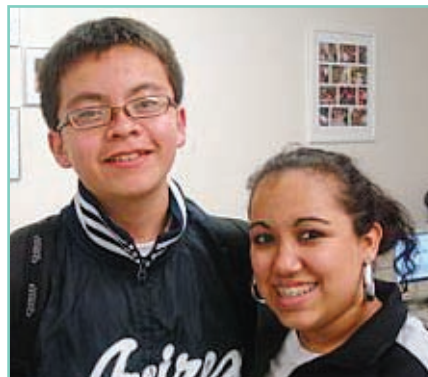


*Hiba lives in the Harvey Hall community*

*Henry and Rosemary live at Virginia Gardens*

**Henry Morales**, a freshman at Wakefield High School, not only participates in AHC’s teen programs, but also volunteers in the After-School Program where he serves as a role model for the younger children. Although he sometimes struggles academically, he works hard and recently earned a 3.4 grade point average (GPA). His motto is never give up. “His participation in the AHC programs has helped make him feel like he has a purpose here,” says Jennifer Cavaliere, Assistant Director. “He now shows a lot of self-confidence, which is wonderful.”

**Rosemary Penalva**, also a freshman at Wakefield High, is involved with AHC’s tutoring and college preparation programs — both of which have



helped motivate and guide her. She has made real strides this year. She won a role in the school play and had to maintain higher grades to stay in the cast. She also set a goal for going to the Fashion Institute of Technology, which requires a 3.5 GPA. “The combination of pushing her to find what she’s really interested in, the school offering opportunities like the play, and AHC helping her with tutoring have really helped her,” explains Mary Seryak.



**Maria Cristela Platero**, a junior in high school, recently emigrated from El Salvador. In addition to maintaining

*Cristela lives at The Berkeley*

a 4.0 GPA, she is also holding down a part-time job, and taking English classes two nights a week through an AHC program. Because she experienced first-hand the hardship of living in a small town with no nearby medical care, she is striving to become a doctor “to help people who are less fortunate.” Thanks to AHC’s college planning program, Cristela has already visited several local colleges.

**Ana Rosales**, a junior at Yorktown High School, has set her sights on attending George Mason University. She is exploring several different career paths, including engineering, physics and teaching. Ana has served as president of AHC’s Youth Alliance program at Woodbury Park, and has also worked with the After-School Program for many years — first as a volunteer and now as a paid staff member.

**Aneela Mousam**, also a junior at Yorktown High School, has been involved with AHC’s youth programs



Ana, left, and Aneela live at Woodbury Park

since 5th grade. She came to America when she was in second grade from Kashmir. She works hard in school, maintains a 3.9 GPA, and hopes to become a doctor. Her dream is to go to Brown University. She volunteers with AHC's After-School Programs during the school year, and is working with Arlington County to help plan the annual Teen Expo program.



Nabdeya lives at Fort Henry Gardens

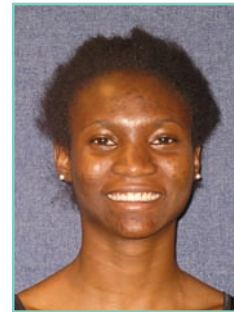
**Nahdeya Quarels**, a 7th grader at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, has found encouragement and camaraderie through AHC's teen programs. An honor roll student who plays on the school's basketball and soccer teams and works on the school's yearbook, Nahdeya also has a great deal of responsibility for her three younger siblings. Over the years, she has been involved in many of AHC's programs, from working in the Fort Henry community garden to helping younger children with their homework.



Binita lives in the Gates of Ballston community

**Binita Pant**, a freshman at Washington-Lee High School, works very hard to maintain her 3.0-plus GPA and was recently named "Student of the Semester." She's originally from Nepal and is the oldest in a family of three. "She already knows she wants to pursue a career in medicine and works incredibly hard to get the grades that will help her succeed in that field," says Rachel Livingston, Resident Services Coordinator. Binita participates in AHC's programs several times a week and also hopes to play on her school's tennis team.

**Kadijatu Turay**, also a sophomore at Washington-Lee High School, came to the U.S. as a refugee from war-torn Sierra Leone. Kadijatu maintains a 3.0 grade point average at Washington-Lee, runs track, and participates in AHC's Youth Alliance and Teen Tutoring programs. Most recently she participated in AHC's Writing Workshop at Harvey Hall. As a result, she was invited to participate in



Kadijatu lives at Harvey Hall

a weekend writing retreat in Williamsburg, and also visited the College of William & Mary.

## Greater Baltimore AHC Moves Forward on Greenhill Apartments



Baltimore City's Board of Estimates recently approved a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) agreement to support GBAHC's proposal to purchase and renovate Greenhill Apartments, a 301-unit building in Baltimore's lower Park Heights neighborhood. GBAHC plans to rehab the entire building and offer programs and services to improve the lives of residents, many of whom are elderly. Once all the necessary financing agreements are finalized, GBAHC hopes to close on the purchase later this spring.



## Resident Services News

## Get Involved! Help Build a New Playground on June 7



*The new playground will reflect residents' input; children were invited to draw their "dream playground."*

Please join us to help build a new playground at Harvey Hall on Saturday, June 7. Harvey Hall is located on South Greenbrier Street in Arlington's Columbia Heights West neighborhood.

The playground is being built thanks to the generous help of kaBOOM! (a nationwide organization devoted to making playgrounds available to all children) and Arlington-based Corporate Executive Board, which is providing the majority of the funding and 70 volunteers.

The event will include lots of activities including demonstrations from the fire and police departments, Red Cross and Book Mobile. We will provide breakfast and lunch (food donations from local restaurants are welcome). There will also be raffle prizes and other freebies.

Mark your calendar now for this fun and exciting community event.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Hannah Moore, 703-486-0626 x 117, moore@ahcinc.org



*ETC encourages children to express themselves in ways that are fun, imaginative and new.*

## Educational Theatre Company Names AHC Outstanding Arts Partner of the Year

The Educational Theatre Company (ETC) is a group of professional theater artists who encourage and inspire children through community-based drama programs. Volunteers work with the children to encourage them to use their imaginations and develop an appreciation for how much fun theater can be.

AHC has partnered with ETC for several years at several of our onsite community centers. "ETC gives the kids an opportunity to use their creativity, focus their energy, have a lot of fun, and feel proud of themselves," says Katherine Wiley, Resident Services Manager.

This year ETC has named AHC its Outstanding Arts Partner. Last year the designation went to McKinley Elementary School. The award will be given at ETC's annual fundraiser on Saturday, May 31.

For more information, visit [www.educationaltheatrecompany.org](http://www.educationaltheatrecompany.org)

## AHC Receives Funds to Build Classroom and Play Area

Thanks to an appropriation sponsored by Representative Jim Moran (D-VA), AHC will

receive a \$196,000 earmark through the FY2008 appropriations bill for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The appropriation will be used to convert a storage area into a classroom at The Berkeley, a 138-unit apartment community in South Arlington. The classroom will be used for a preschool during the day and for teen tutoring or adult education classes in the evening

Any remaining funds will be used to help improve a picnic and play area for families at Virginia Gardens, which has 76 apartments in Arlington's Douglas Park neighborhood.

"AHC's conscientious efforts continue to provide vital affordable housing to working families in Arlington," said Jim Moran. "I salute their hard work and was proud to assist by obtaining an appropriation for the refurbishment at The Berkeley and Virginia Gardens."

## HomeFront

Published by AHC Inc.  
Division of Community Relations

Catherine Bucknam, Director  
Celia Slater, Editor  
Hannah R. Moore, Contributing Editor

2230 North Fairfax Drive,  
Suite 100

Arlington, VA 22201

703-486-0626 (phone)

703-486-0653 (fax)

[www.ahcinc.org](http://www.ahcinc.org)

Design and Layout by EWM Design





## Property Management Team Works Hard to Meet Residents' Needs

AHC Management LLC was founded in 2000 to provide a responsive, creative and experienced management company to operate AHC's portfolio of owned properties. The wholly owned subsidiary of AHC Inc. currently manages more than 2,500 units in 23 properties located primarily in Arlington, but also in Fairfax and Baltimore.

AHC Management strives to make the living experience at our communities as positive and enriching as possible. To do this, the team of professionals helps residents in almost every aspect of their day-to-day lives, from undertaking maintenance repairs to providing resident services.

### Communication Is Key

Keeping in touch with residents is a top priority. Along with monthly newsletters, bilingual staff members offer one-on-one meetings, planned group gatherings, and an open-door policy to help residents feel comfortable asking questions and voicing concerns.

### Personal Attention Is Top Priority

On-site staff members work closely with residents in all kinds of situations. For instance, a new Resident Intervention Program focuses on helping residents address lease violations before they become serious. Staff members and Resident Services work one-on-one with residents to help them overcome challenges and avoid turnover. The process also contributes to building community.

### Award-winning Staff

AHC Management's staff recently won recognition for the many ways they meet residents' needs. Staff received five First Place awards and one Honorable Mention in a new award program created by the Property Management Association's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Council to recognize excellence in low-income housing and tax credit management. The winners are:

- **Compliance Property of the Year** - The Berkeley
- **Unsung Hero Award** - Audrey Johnson, Resident Manager, Gates of Ballston
- **Compliance Director of the Year, Honorable Mention** - Linda Edmundson, Compliance Manager
- **Spirit of Caring Award** - Harvey Hall Resident Services, Joy Rambert
- **Success Story** - Virginia Gardens
- **Maintenance Professional of the Year** - Richard Dickerson, Director of Maintenance, Gates of Ballston

## Relocation Services Adds Staff

Renovating and rehabilitating apartment communities is part of AHC's mission to provide improved and updated affordable homes. As a result, residents must



*Rosana M. Montequin*

sometimes temporarily move out of their homes. AHC Management works hard to make this process as stress free as possible. Bilingual staff helps residents through every step of the way, including offering financial support, finding temporary housing in the community or nearby, providing help with all moving logistics, and meeting each family's unique needs.

Earlier this year, AHC Management named Rosana M. Montequin Vice President - Relocation and Development Services. Rosana's role will be to implement and manage comprehensive relocation programs for AHC Inc. as well as other for-profit and non-profit developers. She will also offer AHC's compliance, development/construction and finance expertise to developers and property owners.

"With more than 20 years of experience," says Richard Leeds, President of AHC Management, "Rosana will help us more effectively support owners and developers of affordable housing at all levels of relocation, development, marketing/leasing, compliance and operations."



*Richard Dickerson, Director of Maintenance, and Audrey Johnson, Resident Manager, Gates of Ballston, work hard to make AHC's communities great places to live.*

## You Can Help! Check Out Our Wish List

**B**ecause AHC's resources are dedicated to building and maintaining affordable housing, our Resident Services programs are funded primarily through donations, grants and government support. If you'd like to lend a hand to the families, teens, seniors and children in our programs, here's a way.

We've put together a Wish List of items that would be a big help for some of our various programs, including the After-School Program, Summer Camp, Outdoor Activities and Book Club Program.

### *Some of these items include:*

- Gel pens and markers for After-School Programs
- Three Bean Bag chairs for reading time
- New bathing suits for boys and girls (for Summer Camp activities)
- Reusable child-size water bottles
- Flags for flag football
- 2 soccer balls
- Jump ropes
- Soccer ball hand-pump
- 8 copies of "I Know Why a Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou for the Book Club program

If you're interested in donating something, please contact Jennifer Cavaliere, 703-486-0626 x 154, cavaliere@ahcinc.org or click on the Wish List link on our home page at [www.ahcinc.org](http://www.ahcinc.org)

*AHC's annual Membership Appeal will be coming your way in May. Your generous support is most welcome!*



2230 North Fairfax Drive  
Suite 100  
Arlington, Virginia 22201

*Address Service Requested*

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Arlington, VA  
Permit No. 1653

## You can help! Please join today!

*Become a member of AHC and help us sustain affordable housing in our neighborhoods and support our Resident Services programs that give at-risk children and their families the help they need to succeed in our schools and in our community.*

- \$35 Individual      Name \_\_\_\_\_
- \$60 Family          Address \_\_\_\_\_
- \$100 Supporter      City/County \_\_\_\_\_
- \$250 Builder        State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_
- Other:                \$ \_\_\_\_\_      Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Please send me information about volunteering.
- Please sign me up to receive AHC's monthly e-newsletter.

*Your donation is tax-deductible. Please make your check payable to AHC Inc. and return to: AHC Inc., 2230 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 100, Arlington, VA 22201.*

**Or, donate online at [www.ahcinc.org](http://www.ahcinc.org)!**

*AHC Inc. is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing. Founded in 1975, AHC produces and preserves affordable rental housing; provides homeownership services; and offers social services to improve the quality of residents' lives. AHC owns and operates 28 rental properties in the Mid-Atlantic region, providing affordable housing for more than 6,000 low- and moderate-income residents.*