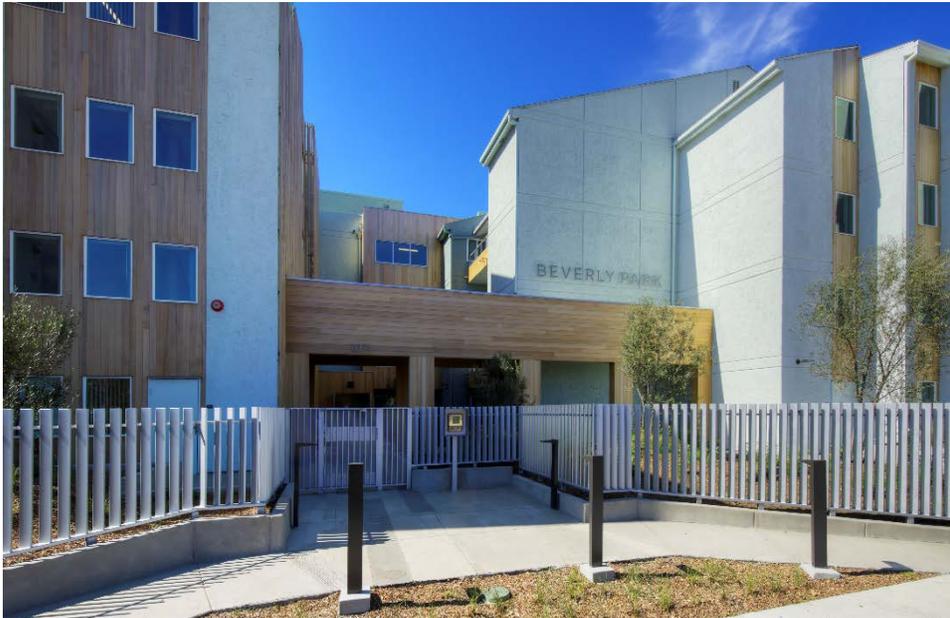


Helping to
welcome you



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Dear Friends of Housing on Merit,

Over the past several months, the affordable housing industry has experienced significant changes.

Nationally, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 was signed into law in March. The legislation included a \$4.7 billion annual budget increase for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It also increased the low-income housing tax credit volume cap by 12.5 percent over the next four years and created a new occupancy set-aside option known as income averaging.

In California, Governor Brown signed AB 1193, which extends the property tax exemption to over-income tenants earning up to 140% of area median income. This allows over-income families to remain in affordable units and keeps affordable housing projects financially stable, by providing long-term reassurance to lenders and equity investors involved in refinancing and/or re-syndicating affordable projects.

Overall, the new provisions could increase affordable rental housing production and preservation in California by more than 28,400 homes. However, the state continues to have an affordable rental home deficit of 235,000 due to recent tax reform.

Housing on Merit ("HOM") remains at the forefront of innovative discussions about how to build more affordable housing, but we also understand the importance of retaining the affordable housing units that exist today. We are encouraged by these new initiatives that help us to continue to build and preserve affordable homes that benefit low income families and seniors.

With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick Luke".

Patrick Luke
President

Housing on Merit Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Litwak".

Jennifer Litwak, Esq.

Executive Director
Housing on Merit

At HOM

Housing on Merit's Resident Services Programming

Resident services planning and programming is off to a great start in 2018! Housing on Merit recently developed an enhanced resident services assessment tool that helps us to better identify areas of focus for each of our Learning Centers. Below are a few highlights of resident services programming successes throughout the first quarter of 2018.

Center for Academic Excellence: *Promotes academic achievement for residents of all ages.*

Living Library and Documentary Project

Last quarter we shared with our readers the success of the new photography program at Fort Chaplin Park Apartments, in partnership with Enjoy Your Life 365 ("EYL 365"). Due to ongoing program successes and the overall learning experience for youth participants the community's Tenant Association decided to sponsor the culminating *Living Library and Documentary Project*.

This project is designed to connect participants with older residents and prominent local figures in the Fort Chaplin neighborhood and greater Ward 7 community, and to document the history of the area from the viewpoint of its' most senior residents. One of the project highlights for some of the participants was having the opportunity to sit down for an insightful interview with Ward 7 Councilmember Vincent Gray.



Our youth are all smiles after their interview with Councilmember Vincent Gray.

Candice Napper, Founder of EYL 365, summarized the impact of this project on our youth as follows:

"Through the use of photography, creative writing and mixed media, youth from Fort Chaplin not only explored their environment but also had an outlet to express themselves, their stories and feelings. The project taught youth tangible skills, exposed them to new means of expression, and empowered them to impact their lives and environment through photojournalism. Within the past month, photography has been an outlet for participants to communicate with their families and friends about their passion for photography, to help to build their identity, and to remember their history."

Future Coders Club

Housing on Merit's partnership with the national nonprofit Girls Who Code is off to a great start at our coding clubs in our Washington, D.C. and San Diego, CA communities. The mission at Girls Who Code is "to close the gender gap in technology."

To maximize inclusivity and participation, HOM invited all of our young residents to participate in what we call the Future Coders Club. In addition to learning how to code, participants are also challenged to use the skills they acquire to solve a social problem.

Future Coders Club members at Vista La Rosa Apartments identified that bullying and body image are major concerns for their peer group. To tackle these issues within their community, participants have been working hard to develop an anti-bullying and body-positivity smartphone application. They will continue to build the application using their newly acquired coding skills over the next several weeks.

Be sure to follow us on social media to keep up with all the activity at our Learning Centers!



A few of our future coders with volunteer instructor, Carol Spartz.

Center for Employment and Financial Stability: *Tackles issues of unemployment, under employment, and financial instability.*

Last quarter we shared with our readers our efforts to equip young residents with the tools to successfully enter the workforce. This remains a key area of focus for Housing on Merit, and we continued to connect our youth with job readiness education and financial planning opportunities throughout the first quarter of 2018.

Center for Growth and Empowerment: *Mobilizes residents to create a vibrant community reflective of their communal and personal goals.*

HOM works diligently to help empower residents within their community. In 2018 we continue to create opportunities for resident leadership by encouraging civic engagement and community networking.

Center for Health and Wellness: *Addresses restrictions of access to quality health and wellness services.*

Many HOM communities are located within neighborhoods that are classified as “food deserts,” because there is little to no access to nutritious foods. In 2018 we will be expanding our community garden program as well as offer innovative programs that provide viable solutions to food insecurity, such as the after-school meals program.

Beyond HOM

Washington D.C.’s FY19 Affordable Housing Budget

Washington, D.C.’s fiscal commitment to affordable housing remains higher than any other city per capita in the Country. In March, Mayor Bowser presented “A Fair Shot,” her FY 2019 proposed budget and financial plan, in which she maintains a \$100 million investment in the Housing Production Trust Fund, as well as the \$10 million allocation toward the Housing Preservation Trust Fund to help maximize the District’s production and preservation of affordable units. The Mayor’s budget proposal also includes a \$10 million increase for the Home Purchase Assistance Program and Employer Assistance Housing Program, aimed to help D.C. residents and government employees purchase their own homes. The budget also includes \$1.6 million for 50 new Permanent Supportive Housing units with services for families and \$2 million for 100 new Targeted Affordable Housing units for families.



DHCD Director, Polly Donaldson, presents Mayor Bowser’s “A Fair Shot” at the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development’s monthly meeting.

Mayor Bowser has vowed that affordable and equitable housing for all D.C. residents will remain a high priority. Her administration’s “Roots to Roof’s” campaign promises to use every possible funding source and tool to ensure residents can continue to call the District their home.

Bisnow’s Word on the Beach: San Diego State of the Market

Housing on Merit is committed to fostering dialogue that will lead to innovative housing solutions. Jennifer Litwak, Executive Director of HOM, recently spoke at [Bisnow’s Word on the Beach: San Diego’s State of the Market](#) to highlight the rising housing crisis in the San Diego area and the critical need for a multi-faceted approach to affordability. HOM’s goal is to create a permanent space to showcase low cost and rapidly-built structures that are modular, ecological and energy efficient.

Welcoming Our Heroes HOM

HOM's Continued Commitment to Veteran Housing

Each year, Housing on Merit renews its commitment to our Awards of Merit for Housing Assistance program, which supports women veterans in San Diego transition from homelessness to permanent housing. Since the program's inception in 2015, HOM has worked closely with veteran organizations to identify women veterans in immediate need of housing assistance. Our continued partnership with Courage to Call ensures the continued success of the program and helps further the City of San Diego's goal of ending veteran homelessness.

In addition, HOM continues to support our veterans through our membership in the San Diego Women Veterans Network. The purpose of the Network is to raise awareness about the needs of San Diego's women veterans, improve the coordination of service providers to specifically address issues facing women veterans, and to create a network of support for this veteran population. Housing on Merit is one of over 30 organizations represented at the Network's monthly community partner meetings. Through our membership, HOM is able to provide our veterans with access to a comprehensive network of resources and peer support.

We look forward to introducing our readers to the most recent Awards of Merit for Housing Assistance recipients in our next newsletter!



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Your donations go a long way! Consider supporting our work by making a monetary or in-kind donation. See the various ways to give below.

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Los Angeles, CA 90067

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