

Helping to
welcome you



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In This Issue

- Executive Director Report
- At HOM:
 - Development Portfolio Updates
 - Resident Services Programming
- Beyond HOM:
 - 31st Annual RPTE National CLE Conference
 - 22nd Annual Hunger Action Day
 - “Navigating Opportunity Zones” Event
 - 2019 LA Design Festival in LA

Dear Friends of Housing on Merit,

In quarter two, Housing on Merit was again reminded why we are grateful for our work in co-developing affordable housing throughout the nation. In April, Affordable Housing Finance released its lists of the Top 50 Affordable Housing Developers and Housing Owners of 2018. We are proud to announce that our development partner Dantes Partners was listed at #10 on the list of Affordable Housing Developers, and our development partner Standard Communities was listed at #49 of Housing Owners. Congratulations to both!

In June, Housing on Merit and Standard Communities were selected as a Tax Credit Excellence Award Winner for the preservation of the Fort Chaplin Park Apartments at the 25th Annual Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Awards in Washington, D.C. Each year the Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition honors outstanding low-income housing tax credit developments, and the Fort Chaplin Park Apartment complex was the top choice among a panel of experts in the Preservation category. The transformation of the 549-unit community included a comprehensive renovation of unit interiors and modernization of building systems, along with the addition of a 5,000 square foot Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified Community Center.

We head into quarter three energized and dedicated as ever to our mission of creating a bridge to permanent affordable housing for vulnerable populations.

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 Development Portfolio Updates

Fort Chaplin Park Apartments

Housing on Merit, in partnership with Standard Communities, recently completed an extensive preservation project at our Fort Chaplin Park Apartments in Washington, D.C. The project completion was celebrated with a ribbon cutting event attended by Mayor Muriel Bowser, Councilmember Vincent Gray and Darrell Green, who lauded the important impact the project will have in the community for decades. This redevelopment project ensures that all 549 units at Fort Chaplin Park Apartments will remain affordable to low- to moderate-income households for the next 30 years. Housing on Merit and Standard Communities were selected as development partners by the Chaplin Hope Tenant Association, and this project is the largest tax-exempt bond, preservation deal in the District's history.



Councilmember Vincent Gray, Mayor Muriel Bowser, Scott Alter, and Darrell Green cut the ribbon in celebration of the completion of the Fort Chaplin Park Apartments preservation project in Washington, D.C.

Housing on Merit is very pleased to announce that the Fort Chaplin Park Apartments project is a finalist for the Affordable Housing Finance Readers' Choice Awards in the "**Preservation**" and "**Best Overall Development Categories.**" Readers of Affordable Housing Finance are encouraged to vote before August 2, 2019: [Link to Vote for Fort Chaplin Park Apartments!](#)



Michaelmas Apartments in Toledo, Ohio.

Michaelmas Manor Apartments

Housing on Merit is proud to announce we have expanded our work to preserve affordable housing to the Midwest by acquiring Michaelmas Manor Apartments in partnership with BLVD Capital. The affordable housing complex, located in Toledo, Ohio, consists of 94 units affordable to seniors and people with disabilities at or below 50% or 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Parkside Villa & Rockwell Manor Apartments

Housing on Merit is a co-developer of the Parkside Villa Apartments and Rockwell Manor Apartments, an acquisition and substantial rehabilitation of two existing multifamily, affordable housing communities in Fairfield, California. This transaction effectively preserved 128 units for residents at or below 50%, 60% or 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).



Parkside Villa in Fairfield, California

Housing on Merit's Resident Services Programming

Housing on Merit continues to make a significant impact in the lives of residents through our resident services programming. We highlight the following successes from our Learning Centers in quarter two.

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

Throughout quarter two, Housing on Merit provided over 570 hours of after-school programming across our communities.

Volunteers from San Diego State University's College of Education developed a month-long Art Camp for youth at Rio Vista Apartments in San Diego, Calif. Camp participants were encouraged to explore different art mediums such as paint, collage, and sculpture. They then created their own masterpieces for the community art show, held at the Learning Center. The Art Camp was a success and garnered interest from residents of all ages. All participants wrote thank-you letters to the camp volunteers to express their appreciation for being able to participate in the Art Camp.



Youth at Rio Vista showing off a masterpiece.

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



Vista la Rosa's high school graduates of 2019!

Housing on Merit held a graduation event to recognize and celebrate three students who recently earned their high school diplomas. Valeria Parra, Melissa Ruiz, and Bryana Ingle have been long-time participants of the tutoring, mentoring and educational programs offered at Vista La Rosa's Learning Center. In recognition of their accomplishments, Resident Services staff provided each graduate with a card, flowers and a certificate from HOM. The students were also guided through the college class registration process and advised about the importance of building strong time management and organizational skills. Future plans for the three graduates include attending San Diego State University and joining the San Diego County Sheriff's Department Law Enforcement Explorer Program.

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

Housing on Merit has partnered with Kitchens for Good (KFG), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and social enterprise with the mission to break the cycles of food waste, hunger and poverty through innovative solutions in workforce training, healthy food production, and social enterprise. Core to its values, KFG believes that all food has power and all people have potential. In its kitchens, KFG bridges the gap between wasted food and hunger by rescuing surplus and cosmetically imperfect food from wholesalers and farmers and engaging students in a culinary apprenticeship program to transform these ingredients into nutritious meals for vulnerable populations. Thanks to this partnership, youth at Vista la Rosa Apartments in San Diego, Calif., receive free meals through the Summer Food Services Program and will continue to receive free meals during the regular school year through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Meals are served three times per week at the Learning Center, and any leftover meals are distributed to adult residents after mealtime. On average, fifteen meals are served each day. Kitchens for Good will deliver additional meals as interest for the program grows.



Residents at Vista la Rosa enjoying their free hot meals.

Resident Services Summer Programming:

Summer programming began in June across all HOM's Learning Centers. In conjunction with our community partnerships, Housing on Merit is implementing special programming designed to prevent summer learning loss. Our Resident Services Coordinators engage participants with entertaining activities such as science experiments, outdoor games, and presentations about various topics like dental hygiene, art projects and more!

At the Butterfly Grove Apartments in Fresno, Calif., new topics are highlighted each week throughout the summer. Popular themes in June were Dance and Health and Wellness, and our wonderful community partners include Fresno State University Salsa Club, Studio 55, and the Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission. During Dance Week, Learning Center attendees enjoyed hip-hop classes, salsa lessons, swing dancing, and learned about each dance's history. During Health and Wellness Week they received dental hygiene tips, practiced some yoga poses, and learned about the benefits of healthy eating.



The Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission taught youth how to properly brush their teeth

Residents at Rio Vista Apartments in San Diego, Calif., are enjoying HOM's Youth Summer Program, which focuses on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) activities and physical education. One of the most popular science activities was making lava lamps, during which youth learned how to reuse household materials to have fun. Outdoor activities are always encouraged during summer programming, and team activities like relay races keep energetic youth motivated while they build important communication skills. One of the more popular team games required participants to pour water into their teammate's empty cup without spilling. This proved difficult for players who did not work in unison with their teammate. In the end, those who communicated with their partners won.



Two teams during a Rio Vista competition



Vista la Rosa youth writing messages with invisible "ink" and learning about oxidation

Vista la Rosa's Kid Zone has youth more engaged than anticipated. With many families in this community on vacation during the summer, attendance rates were expected to plummet. However, thanks to HOM's interactive and unique programming, participation has remained steady. Activities are scheduled right after mealtime, with Tuesdays reserved for STEAM experiments such as engineering with jellybeans and ice cream in a bag, Wednesdays are for outdoor activities like chalk art and Olympic games, and Thursdays are for indoor activities such as math games and arts & crafts. One example of a popular STEAM experiment is the Invisible Message Workshop, which teaches young participants about oxidation by having them write messages using cotton swabs and lemon juice.

At Fort Chaplin Park Apartments in Washington, D.C., summer programming is off to a great start! The D.C. Public Library has fun and educational outreach programming during the summer months that include STEAM experiments and a reading challenge. Tutoring and Computer Help are both available in the clubhouse. Thanks to an exciting partnership with the Mayor's Office of African American Affairs, HOM is creating a Financial Empowerment Center in order to provide financial literacy resources to adult residents. Workshops covering a variety of finance-related topics will be available periodically throughout the year.

Housing on Merit's innovative, hands-on summer programming has increased resident participation across our portfolio.

Beyond HOM

In this section we highlight Housing on Merit's involvement in local and national discussions about innovative housing solutions and development finance, and anti-hunger legislation.

31st Annual RPTE National CLE Conference:

Housing on Merit's Executive Director, Jennifer Litwak, was a featured speaker at the 31st Annual Real Property, Trust and Estate (RPTE) National Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Conference in Boston on May 10. The event featured the nation's leading experts discussing the latest developments in real estate and trust and estate law. Ms. Litwak joined a panel of experts including Counselor to the Secretary of the Treasury, Daniel Kowalski, to discuss Opportunity Zones. They presented case studies, considered the effect of additional regulations, reviewed revenue procedures, and discussed program viability through 2026. The panel also analyzed the benefits of Opportunity Zones from a tax, economic development, lender and treasury official perspective. The RPTE is a leading national forum for lawyers consisting of 25,000 members. The Real Property Division focuses on legal aspects of property use, ownership, development, transfer, regulation, financing, taxation and disposal. The Trust and Estate Division focuses on all aspects of trusts, estate planning, employee benefits, insurance, and probate and trust litigation. The RPTE is a member group of the American Bar Association (ABA).



Enterprise Community Partners Host “Navigating Opportunity Zones” Event

Housing on Merit works diligently to support expanding funding opportunities and legislative changes to expand affordable housing. In June, Enterprise Community Partners, a nonprofit organization that works with partners nationwide to finance, build and advocate for affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families, and the Los Angeles Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti hosted a half-day seminar on Navigating Opportunity Zones. The Opportunity Zones incentive is a community investment tool established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. Opportunity Zones provide a tax incentive for investors to re-invest their unrealized capital gains into dedicated Opportunity Funds. Housing on Merit joined other affordable housing developers at this event to discuss approaches to this new potential funding source, the latest legislative updates, and developing best practices for affordable housing and community and economic development. Speakers included Lori Chatman, President, Enterprise Community Loan Fund, Inc.; Ron Frierson, Director of Economic Policy in the Mayor's Office of Economic Development; and Ben Winter, Chief Housing Officer, Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti.



9th Annual LA Design Festival As part of our ongoing support of organizations committed to innovative thinking and community collaboration, Housing on Merit attended the 9th Annual LA Design Festival’s ADU Home Tour in June. The Festival is the only citywide festival of its kind, featuring events throughout Los Angeles. The event included architects pitching their latest innovations in the prefab and modular space at the ROW DTLA, and tours of sample

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that are being built in backyards throughout Los Angeles. This event engages the public and challenges us all to think differently about new housing typologies and designs, which is an important step in addressing the housing crisis.



The 800 sq. ft OASYS House opens for tours during the 2019 LA Design Festival

22nd Annual Hunger Action Day in Sacramento, CA



San Diego advocates attend the 22nd Annual Hunger Action Day in Sacramento, CA.

Every May, advocates from across California meet at the State Capitol for legislative visits, rallies and networking all in the name of anti-hunger. Housing on Merit has been consistently involved in supporting hunger relief. Planning & Programming Coordinator, Vivian Preciado, recently attended the California Hunger Action Coalition’s (CHAC) 22nd annual Hunger Action Day in Sacramento to fight for meaningful policies and legislation to end hunger.

Organizations and advocates from across the state, including the San Diego Hunger Coalition and Feeding San Diego, took part in the event that included legislative visits, rallies and networking to support ending hunger and poverty in California. Ms. Preciado joined the San Diego Hunger Coalition to meet with staff members for Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez and Assemblymember Todd Gloria, advocating for several bills including the CalFresh Shelter Deduction (AB494), CalFresh Connect (SB285) and Hunger-Free Preschool (AB842). The report entitled “Hunger Free Kids,” developed by the San Diego Hunger Coalition, documents

that 1 in 5 children lack consistent access to adequate nutrition in San Diego County and highlights the crucial need for improved policies and new legislation.

In June, Housing on Merit’s Planning & Programming Coordinator, Vivian Preciado, was unanimously voted in as Hunger Action Network’s new Co-Chair. Ms. Preciado will be involved in annual planning, developing of monthly meeting agendas, and event planning and implementation. September is Hunger Action Month, and HOM looks forward to playing an important role in advocating against hunger.



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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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