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Reopening of Courthouse Crossings Opens Doors to New Affordable Housing Ventures

Sixteen years ago, Arlington County hired APAH to be Courthouse Crossings' lease police. APAH had just incorporated, and its first job was to monitor rental leases to ensure 61 of the newly constructed apartments were occupied by low- and moderate-income residents. Last year, APAH bought the building and turned the entire 112-unit complex into an affordable housing haven.

On September 25, APAH celebrated the renovation of Courthouse Crossings with a grand opening. The moral to APAH's rags to riches story: Do what you can to preserve what's there and then do more. "APAH was there when Courthouse Crossings opened its doors for the first time standing guard over affordable units," said Nina Janopaul, APAH's executive director. "And we didn't budge. The reopening of Courthouse Crossings is proof that we could all do more to give people with lower income a chance to stay in the city they love, a chance to work hard and move up."

Arlington County approved the construction of Courthouse Crossings on the condition that the owner set aside a certain number of units for low- and moderate-income residents, and that the building

be sold to a nonprofit 15 years later. With the support of Arlington County and the Virginia Housing Development Authority, APAH secured the \$34 million necessary to purchase, renovate and preserve the building.

Courthouse Crossings has more two- and three-bedroom units than most Arlington properties, mak-

ing it an attractive choice for households with children. Prior to APAH's purchase there were only about 30 children under the age of 18 living there. Today, the housing complex is home to nearly 65 families, and nearly 120 children.

APAH expresses its appreciation to VHDA, Arlington County, Alliant Capital, Ltd., Linden Contracting, Inc.; Paradigm Management Company and Chesapeake Community Advisors, Inc. for sponsoring the Courthouse Crossings Grand Opening Event. We also thank King Street Blues and the Lebanese Taverna for providing food for the event and the dancers from the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area for performing for our guests.



APAH celebrates with past and present County Board members, founders and dancers from The Mongolian School of the National Capital Area.

president's letter

Dear Friends,

People need affordable housing for different reasons: One woman wants to go back to school but can't afford to pay rent with her meager salary as a substitute teacher. A single father with two children needed to go through job training but couldn't stay in his apartment without help with rent.

These individuals share the need to hunker down and plan their future without being afraid that when rents go up they'll lose their home. By paying lower rents, APAH residents have money left over to use to pay for night classes and save up for their children's college tuition. Maybe someday they'll be able to buy a house.

In the meantime, thousands of Arlington County residents miss out on the chance to forge ahead. Nurses, firefighters, teachers and service workers who can't afford to live where they work move further out into the suburbs to find cheaper apartment rentals. Some quit their jobs and find work locally, while others keep their jobs, putting up with longer commutes.

APAH has stepped to the plate to provide much needed apartments by moving swiftly toward acquiring and renovating properties. Efforts have intensified as APAH redevelops its own properties, starting construction from scratch in some cases and adding apartments to existing buildings.

Apartment complexes offer a mix of both affordable and market rate apartments. Most recently, APAH broke new ground by purchasing a building and reserving all units for low and moderate income households. The search for options continues. The results are impressive: Today, APAH provides 514 apartments to low and moderate income people — a number that is expected to increase to 752 by the end of 2008.

APAH's success is due to generous supporters and to the collective effort of its board members, staff and partners, who are always ready to take on bigger projects, lend their expertise and use their influence to help the organization grow.

But affordable housing is more than bricks and mortar. Leasing lower rent apartments to people provides other benefits: Affordable housing maintains diversity, reduces congestion and supports business. To meet the affordable housing needs of the nation, housing policies must change from the top.

Educating the public by connecting the need for affordable housing to broader goals will get the attention of government officials and lawmakers who can make change happen. APAH is committed to raising the issue's visibility so we can increase the affordable housing supply. People must have a roof over their heads without having to pay an arm and leg to live in Arlington County. Let's keep working together to shelter our residents.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Settles

President

APAH's New Leader Says Affordable Housing Options Within Reach

Most people who glance around the Arlington County landscape see bumper-to-bumper buildings with not a spot to spare for building additional apartments. But Nina Janopaul, APAH's new Executive Director, sees possibilities: adding a second level to a school no longer in use, converting abandoned firehouses into affordable apartments. If the numbers add up, Janopaul figures APAH can squeeze in a few more apartments within its own properties to use up excess density. And if an old apartment building goes up for sale...she'll try to outrun a private developer and work out a deal to preserve the building.

"Land is scarce and expensive," says Janopaul. "But APAH has proven that it can reach high, way beyond its own expectations

...Janopaul sees possibilities: adding a second level to a school no longer in use, converting abandoned firehouses...

to find opportunities to develop affordable apartments. I feel privileged to be here to build on the foundation of an organization with an established presence in the community."

A Harvard graduate and mother of two, Janopaul has

lived in Arlington for 24 years and knows building affordable housing here is challenging, but necessary.

Her consulting work has given her the experience she needs to tackle the challenges ahead. She conducted, for instance, 150 site visits at proposed low-income housing tax credit projects for Enterprise Community Investment, Inc. But more relevant to her job now was her experience as director of operations and development of Hostelling International where she spent twenty years raising funds and buying land. If Janopaul could develop youth hostels, she could develop affordable housing. "There are a lot of parallels between the two jobs," she said. "A lot of my career has involved me pulling together unique and disparate buildings and opportunities."



residents@home

APAH Resident Returns Home, Gets Many Lessons

Sarah Jane Reese is trying to focus on grading the tests of her 10th grade students from Washington-Lee High School, but she is preoccupied thinking about her own grades as she prepares to graduate from George Mason University with a Masters in English. Reese moved into one of APAH's properties three years ago.

Reese grew up in Arlington, and wanted to come home to be near her family and go back to school for a graduate degree.

Reese planned to work part time at the high school so she could make money for tuition and rent. But finding an affordable apartment was nearly impossible. "I grew up in Arlington and I knew this is exactly where I wanted to work," said Reese, also a member of APAH's board of directors.

The situation seemed grim. Nothing turned up. Finally, a leasing agent at a rental office suggested she check out APAH's apartments. As it happened, APAH had a vacancy. "I was thrilled," she said, "This is one of the oldest apartment buildings in Arlington, which to me is a perk not a drawback. I don't have the modern conveniences of a dishwasher but my apartment has so much character, I love it."

She also loves living five minutes away from work, "and in the same neighborhood as my students, in the heart of Arlington." Her own neighbors are friendly, considerate and come from all walks of life. "We have young and old residents, families, couples and singles. Many from different ethnicities. It's a true reflection of Arlington."

Working and going to school is stressful and money is tight, but Reese feels secure knowing she can pay rent. Affordable rentals are few and far in between. Most people aren't as lucky. Some of her students were forced to leave school half way through the year because their parents couldn't keep up with rising rents.

Watching them emptying out their lockers and waving good bye to friends, Reese worried about their future. Will those who are thriving academically continue to forge ahead if they are suddenly uprooted from their homes and thrown into a different school system? Teachers are similarly vulnerable. Educators want to stay at Washington-Lee

High School, ranked one of the top 50 best public high schools in the United States by *US News and World Report*.

Will others be as lucky? Sarah's positive experience with APAH has motivated her to give back.

When APAH's former executive director asked her to join the board, she was glad to return the favor. "I wanted to work with resident services," she said. "I could give the board insight into the need of residents. We are in the process of determining and addressing the different needs." Reese is about to earn her Masters in English. Once she has earned her Masters degree, she hopes to make enough money to move out and let someone else take over, starting the cycle all over again.

Please Support APAH

In support of safe, decent and affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals in Arlington, here's my gift of:

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Please note our new designation codes and thank you for supporting APAH!



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Happenings at APAH's Properties

Fisher House

APAH's property qualified for Federal Historic Credits. Funds raised from the sale of the credits will cover the costs of additional improvements at Fisher House, which has undergone substantial rehabilitation. Construction should be completed by the end of 2007.

Parc Rosslyn (formerly Rosslyn Ridge)

The weather has been a boon to construction. The high rise development is above ground level and rising. The three levels below ground parking garage structure are in place and the street level town home floors have been formed and poured. **Check out www.apah.com to "watch" the building construction.**

Columbia Grove

APAH is conducting due diligence activities to prepare for the rehabilitation and refinancing of the 210-unit property. A community meeting held at Columbia Grove provided excellent feedback that APAH will consider as it prepares to make the improvements.



Thank you to all our Donors
for their gifts this past year



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did you know?

- **Working family renters paying more than 50% their income for housing grew 103% between 1997 and 2005**

Source: *Housing Landscape for America's Working Families 2007* conducted by the Center for Housing Policy.

- **43% of homeless parents are employed**
- **74% of homeless adults in Arlington County families are employed**

Source: *Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and HUD.*

homeward

Homeward is a periodic publication of the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (APAH), a private, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) housing sponsor operating in Arlington County to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income people. For additional information about APAH and our housing program, call (703) 276-2657, send e-mail to apah@apah.org, or visit our web site at www.apah.org.

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