

Homeward

...in the shelter of each other the people live...

A PERIODIC NEWSLETTER OF THE ARLINGTON PARTNERSHIP FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, INC.

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Lorcom Arms Renovation Provides Much-Needed Housing

Arlington Chamber of Commerce president Richard Doud stands in the courtyard of the Lorcom Arms apartment complex, marveling at the beautiful landscape of the APAH-owned building. He has come to North Woodrow Street to celebrate the completed renovation of the building—and to show his support for increasing affordable housing in the county. “Housing is a top issue in our county,” says Doud, explaining that high rents are driving residents



Rep. Jim Moran (middle) discusses housing issues with Chris Zimmerman, then Chairman of the Arlington County Board, Rich Doud, President of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and others attending APAH's Lorcom Arms renovation celebration.

away, affecting businesses trying to recruit staff. “APAH is a big player. We have lots of cheerleading groups for affordable housing, but in terms of a gut-level, getting things done group, APAH is right in the thick of it, providing housing.”

More than 75 people attended the October 2 dedication of the newly renovated Lorcom Arms, including members of the community and local dignitaries including then Chairman of the **Arlington County Board** Chris Zimmerman and Congressman Jim Moran. Those attending the catered event toured the refurbished apartments and chatted with residents while enjoying bagels, fruit, coffee and other breakfast delicacies. A large, beautifully-decorated cake donated by **Heidelberg Pastry Shoppe** gave the event an extra sweet touch.

“The project turned out much better than I ever imagined,” said Douglas Peterson, APAH’s executive director. “Thanks to the support of the community, APAH’s board and staff, local government officials and generous investors, Lorcom Arms will be a safe affordable place to live for over thirty Arlington families.” APAH bought the building in March 2000 from an owner eager to sell the property to developers committed to keeping the rents affordable, and worked closely with the Waverly Hills Civic Association to plan the renovation.

Lorcom Arms has become a model for developing housing that is affordable, yet attractive and diverse. “We have people in our neighborhood who are well off and others who are not so well off,” says Louis Bromberg, vice-president of the **Waverly Hills Civic Association**, a group that has welcomed Lorcom Arms residents with holiday parties, food donations and other activities. “Our community wouldn’t be a great community if it didn’t have the diverse population that exists and the people from different socio-economic backgrounds.”

“LORCOM ARMS” CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Affordable Housing Key to A Healthy Economy—APAH Leads Advocacy Coalition

- **Arlington County employs 346 police officers, yet only 100 live in the county.**
- **Of the 273 firefighters the county hires, only 19 live in the county.**

Police officers and fire fighters who can’t afford to pay high rents in Arlington County are forced to live elsewhere, according to statistics from the Arlington County Public Information Office. (See box on page 6) APAH believes that people who work in Arlington should have the option of living here—and that’s why it has taken the lead in reaching out to county residents who are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing but who haven’t traditionally needed rental assistance.

“When we acquire a property,” says Douglas Peterson, APAH’s executive director, “we notify the school system, the police department, the sheriff’s department and the fire department. First time employees in all of those organizations earn

“AFFORDABLE HOUSING KEY” CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends:

The lack of affordable housing is affecting everyone. The high cost of apartments is driving many Arlington residents further out into the suburbs-making it tough for businesses to recruit workers, endangering the county's economy, and contributing to traffic congestion. APAH's goal is to preserve and increase the number of safe, decent apartments, affordable to low and moderate income persons. Our efforts to also reach out to entry level nurses, fire fighters, and people with physical and developmental disabilities have placed us in the lead as affordable housing advocates.

We started the year with ambitious plans—and have already met some of our goals!

Our purchase of the 210-unit Columbia Grove Apartments, and our plan to construct new apartments at our Rosslyn Ridge community will more than double our inventory in one fell swoop—exceeding the 600 units of affordable housing APAH set out to develop by 2005. The recent renovations of Lorcom Arms apartments, as well as the rehabilitation underway at Cameron Commons will provide additional housing to county residents.

APAH has worked hard to position itself at the helm of the affordable housing movement. We've been successful in increasing the availability of moderately-priced apartments because we forged good relationships with County



Lorcom Arms

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

County Board Chairman Chris Zimmerman praised APAH for its work throughout Arlington. "The only way to solve the affordable housing problem is one unit at a time. Just like you build a structure brick by brick, you solve the affordable housing problem building by building." Zimmerman praised the installation of two new four-bedroom apartments in the property, as well as one handicapped accessible apartment. "We don't have enough of either of those."

Jim Moran emphasized the need for affordable housing in Northern Virginia and commended APAH for "helping families reach their potential." He also stressed the importance of offering computer training for all residents - and told the group that he requested \$175,000 from Congress to support the development of a computer technical information center in the apartment. "The center would be staffed with people who would provide resume writing services, and teach job-related skills as well," says a spokesman for Rep. Moran. "We hope that the center will help multiple generations learn to use computers, from the small child to the middle age person."

officials and offered competitive bids to purchase properties. We earned the trust of financial institutions because our properties are fiscally sound and well managed. We developed excellent rapport with neighborhood groups because every one of our properties has enhanced the community, setting high standards for affordable housing everywhere.

APAH's board members and staff—a committed, energetic, and enthusiastic group—worked hard to identify properties, enhance APAH's visibility, and launch a campaign to educate the public and government officials about the need for affordable housing. I applaud their efforts. I also want to thank APAH volunteers, contributors and donors participating in the United Way/Combined Federal Campaign for helping APAH reach its goals, despite its modest budget.

Last year, APAH moved into the English basement of the Barkalow to accommodate its growing staff. Along with more people, came bigger projects—and increased recognition. *The Washington Post*, *The Arlington Sun Gazette* and other newspapers have featured stories about APAH's work, and its staff has been interviewed for various radio and television programs. We've graduated from being the small kid on the block, to being a key player in the world of non-profit housing development. The face of affordable housing is changing, and APAH is charting the course to ensure Arlington residents can afford to live where they work and make this county their home.

Sincerely,

Tom Parker, President



Homeward

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Homeward is a periodic publication of the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing, Inc. (APAH), a private, non-profit, 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@erols.com, or visit our web site at www.apah.org.

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APAH Supporters Celebrate Opening of New Offices in Barkalow

Barbara Favola, vice-chair of the Arlington County Board, is taking a tour of the English basement of The Barkalow—an APAH-owned building in the Clarendon area—where APAH just moved its office to accommodate its growing staff. She has come to the June 12 Open House to see the new office, and to congratulate APAH for its success. “APAH has done a good job accommodating the concerns of neighborhoods while still providing affordable housing,” says Favola. “APAH has a great reputation and the people who run it are well known in the community.”

Nearly 70 community leaders, business owners, real estate developers, APAH supporters and government officials gathered for the event in the Barkalow, the first multi-family property in Arlington that a nonprofit has bought and renovated without county-administered money. APAH opened its doors in 1989, with two people working out of a small office located on North 14th St.—but it has grown into a larger operation, employing five full time employees and several part-time staffers.

“APAH has made huge strides in its effort to secure affordable housing for Arlington County residents,” says Douglas Peterson, APAH’s executive director. “This office will accommodate our growing staff and keep us close to the community we serve. We feel extremely fortunate to have so many supporters who believe in the work we are doing to increase the supply of affordable housing in the county.”

APAH’s new office was filled with laughter and good cheer, as people milled around chatting and snacking on sandwiches and other treats provided by Pica Deli, through a donation from Virginia Bank. Much of the discussion centered around identifying strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing. “Whenever we’ve needed somebody to be creative and innovative,” says Favola, “APAH is

“APAH has done a good job accommodating the concerns of neighborhoods while still providing affordable housing,” says Favola.

always there. They were the first in the county, for instance, to get units set aside for folks with developmental disabilities. You can do those kind of things with organizations that are committed to the community.”

APAH’s new address: The Barkalow, 2704 North Pershing Drive, Arlington, VA 22201. You can reach APAH’s office by calling (703)276-2657.

Lorcom Arms Tenant Wakes Up to Sunshine—A Brighter Life

Jim Phippard wakes up in the morning, with the sun shining through the window, ready to brace the day. When he moved to Lorcom Arms six months ago—the latest APAH-owned renovated building—he was stunned by the beauty of his surroundings, a brand-new apartment with large closet space and lots of light, overlooking a courtyard with trimmed bushes and lush flowers. Ever since he had a nervous breakdown years ago, he has had a tough time developing friendships. But when he moved to Lorcom Arms, his social life improved.

“Lorcom is a great place to live,” says the 46-year-old APAH tenant, who takes the bus to get to work at a nearby Giant, and do errands. “I like it here because there is so much diversity, so many people from different nationalities. I’ve gotten to know people, we have each other over for coffee and talk. One tenant I became friendly with let

me go with him and his family on a shopping trip to a store in Alexandria. He knows I don’t have a car so he helps me out.”

Like many APAH tenants, Phippard had gone to college and held a steady job until he became ill in 1991—when he lost his job and his house. “I was on the street,” Phippard recalls, “and a few nights I’d stay in a motel. Then I was in a shelter for six months. Finally I got help and found an apartment.” But he was forced to move again when his landlord sent him a notice saying managers couldn’t accept any more Section 8 funding. “My option was to find an apartment that accepted Section 8 or move to North Carolina with my mother.”

He began looking for apartments through the newspaper. “I was stunned,” he said. “They wanted \$1,200 for a one bedroom plus utilities.” Someone told him about Calvert Manor, one of APAH’s buildings. He applied to see if he would qualify for the subsidies—and got the apartment. He lived in Calvert Manor for three years, then moved to Lorcom Arms. He is now considering going back to school to get a graduate degree in social work or geriatrics. The sun has come up in Phippard’s life, now that he lives in a place he loves.

ROUNDUP:

Happenings at APAH's Properties

Cameron Commons

APAH could break ground at Cameron Commons as early as spring 2003 on the construction of five new multi-family rental townhouses, and renovation of the existing 11-unit building, located at 2028 N. Cameron St. "The tenants will not have to move during the rehabilitation work," says Douglas Peterson, APAH's executive director, which will entail putting in new kitchens, new bathrooms and new roofs. "When we do the kitchen," he said, "we'll give them food vouchers so they can go out to eat and not be inconvenienced."

Project Hope

APAH plans to make available another four affordable apartments to individuals with mental disabilities as part of its Project Hope program—raising the total number of units set aside for individuals being moved from state facilities to eight by the end of the year. Douglas Peterson, APAH's executive director, received a Special Project Award from the Arlington County Department of Human Services December 13 for his work in developing Project Hope, a supervised residential program that assures access to affordable housing for people with severe mental illness for at least 15 years.

Columbia Grove Apartments

APAH is in the process of securing financing for purchasing the 210-unit Columbia Grove apartment complex. The building, constructed in the 1960s, is well maintained and won't need renovation. APAH will make one-half of the units affordable. The other half will be offered at market rates. The Columbia Forest Civic Association supports the plan. APAH hopes to close on the property in April 2003.

Rosslyn Ridge

APAH has met with the Site Plan Commission to talk about the possibility of redeveloping Rosslyn Ridge Apartments, a 22-unit garden apartment building APAH purchased six years ago, for a 20-story residential building using density from the adjacent County-owned Hillside Park. The new plan would include 291 parking spaces.



Douglas Peterson honored for Project Hope program. (From left to right: Marsha Allgeier, Dept. Of Human Services; Derek DuBard, Arlington County Community Planning & Housing Development; Martha Paschal, APAH; Matt Olson, Paradigm Management Company; Doug Peterson, APAH; Dave Leibson, Arlington County Housing Commission.)

Affordable Housing Key

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

about 55 percent or 60 percent of the area's median income, so they qualify. Since we are Arlington-based, we should do what we can to give county employees housing options in the community where they work so that way they don't have to move to another county and commute every day."

The lack of affordable housing also damages the county's economy, according to Randy Anderson, an APAH board member who works at **Virginia Commerce Bank**. "The escalating cost of housing has driven a large segment of the work force, including many young professionals and low to middle level workers, further and further out into the suburbs making it more difficult to compete with businesses outside the beltway in attracting people to work in Arlington."

Getting government support to preserve affordable housing stock is tough because of misperceptions about who benefits from such housing. Many people, for instance, think that affordable housing is an eye sore, lowers property value and serves very low-income families. The notion that affordable apartment complexes can be attractive, improve the neighborhood or serve middle-income families

is foreign. APAH has taken the lead in educating public officials about affordable housing by helping organize the Alliance for Housing Solutions (AHS)—a broad-based coalition including groups as diverse as the League of Women Voters and Chamber of Commerce.

Given the current housing crisis, Arlington County runs the risk of becoming a community for affluent families and well off singles. "Affordable housing is a more important issue than we even imagined and the whole community must be involved to solve it," says Joe Wholey, one of APAH's founders and a member of AHS's executive committee. "School districts and county governments find it hard to find high quality employees if they have no place to live. This organization is meant to reach out to a broader community, not just housing activists and developers, so you get lots of different organizations thinking the same way."

The group's goals are to educate the public, elected officials and business leaders on why affordable housing is important, promote affordable housing "best practices" from around the country, bring together a broad-based coalition of supporters and facilitate discussions between the county and nonprofit affordable housing organizations.



THANK YOU NOTES

The following individuals have generously contributed to APAH received between April 2002 and January 2003:

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American Service Center
 Arlington Presbyterian Church
 Church of the Covenant
 Citigroup Foundation
 Clarendon Presbyterian Church
 Creative Memories
 Consultant—Martha Lane
 Enterprise Social Investment Corporation
 National Security Agency
 Our Lady Queen of Peace Church
 James Bell Associates
 James Robinson, Realtor
 Kiwanis Club – Arlington
 Potomac Custom Builders
 Rock Spring Congregational
 St.Charles Borromeo Church
 United Bank
 United Way/Combined
 Federal Campaign

Get Involved!

We hope you'll consider donating your time, talents and contacts. We can use your help in everything from stuffing envelopes to forwarding announcements about APAH news and upcoming events. Business, church, community and school groups are welcome—we'll find a rewarding team project to suit your interests and time. Please contact us at 703-276-2657.

How Much Do Teachers, Nurses and Federal Workers Spend on Housing?

The average monthly rent in 2002 for a one-bedroom apartment in Arlington County is \$1,155—according to Arlington County Public Information Office—up by \$306 from the 1998 rental rates. Entry level nurses, teachers, firefighters and government workers—whose salaries are outlined below—would have to pay more than 30 percent of their salary for rent.

- GS-7 level federal employees who make \$32,370 a year, according to the Federal Register, could only afford to spend \$809 on rent.
- First year Arlington County Public School teachers making \$36,281 a year could only afford to pay \$907 for an apartment.
- An Arlington county public health nurse who makes an annual salary of \$39,854, could only afford to pay \$996 to rent an apartment.

IN THE NEWS ...

Greater Washington Starts New Century With 43,200 Fewer Housing Units

In response to concerns that the lack of affordable housing could threaten the economic growth of the Greater Washington region, the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University is conducting a study that examines past, current and projected future housing trends. The purpose of the research is to analyze regional trends in housing demand and supply so that local governments can better forecast economic growth and residential development.

The report found that the region needed more than 40,000 units in 2000 to meet housing demands. The current housing market is strong, the report states, stimulated by a healthy economy in the last half of the 1990s. Higher housing prices, however, are forcing low and moderate income families to move farther out to find affordable housing. This move is putting pressure on now-rural counties, which must, in turn, revise their planning, zoning, and environmental policies to manage the residential development. It also creates longer commutes, adding to traffic congestion.

Media Attention Focuses on APAH

Newspaper stories on the completed renovation of Lorcom Arms, awards given for Project Hope and other affordable housing topics APAH is addressing have increased the organization's visibility locally as well as nationally. The organization's accomplishments were described in the following stories:

• **Housing Project Gives Mentally Ill Hope for Independence**, *The Washington Post*, December 26, 2002

• **Tenants, County Officials Salute the Renovation of Lorcom Arms**, *The Arlington Sun Gazette*, October 17, 2002

• **True to Its Origin: Calvert Manor's Renovations Recognized for Respecting History**, *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2002



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