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HAP Board of Commissioners

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Commissioner

Geraldine Harvey

Commissioner

Jeanette M. Edghill

Commissioner

Board meetings are held every 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. View the full [2023 board meeting schedule here](#).

Richmond Towers Management Offices

Message from the Executive Director

As one of the most steadfast housing authorities in New Jersey, we are proud to present our latest newsletter to provide updates on the positive initiatives in

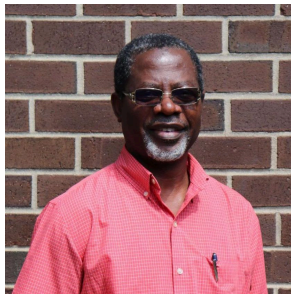


our community. Although the COVID-19 public health emergency and the national state of emergency have now ended, as the virus continues to evolve the Housing Authority of Plainfield (HAP) has been maintaining operations by following all safety protocols.

I hope you all have been having a safe and successful year. We have a lot of exciting updates to share, so read on to learn about our newest board member and chairwoman, Bridget Rivers, our resident association boards, our in-house doctor's office at Richmond Towers, how the Community Resource Center at Joanne Hollis Gardens has been helping the



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community, our thriving community gardens, low-income senior housing services, our Family Self-Sufficiency & Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency programs, Premier Community Development Corporation, and the range of health and wellness programs and events we offer.

I'd like to sincerely thank the entire HAP team, our resident association board members, and the surrounding community for their ongoing support and making these initiatives possible.

As always, we at HAP are dedicated to our people, proactive in our plans, and focused on our future.

Thank you so much for being part of our community.

Randall "Randy" Wood

HAP Commissioner Spotlight: Chairwoman Bridget Rivers



HAP is proud to welcome the newest board member and chairwoman, Bridget Rivers. A former Plainfield Councilwoman and lifelong citizen of Plainfield, Chairwoman Rivers is actively involved in the Plainfield community and truly cares about our residents.

Bridget Rivers has a significant connection to the HAP community as well. In fact, Joanne Hollis Gardens was named after her sister! **The Joanne Hollis Gardens** was originally known as the West End Gardens. It opened in August 1954 as Plainfield's first public housing development. Joanne Hollis was a lifelong resident of the Queen City. She lived in the West End Gardens for

more than 30 years. As a devoted activist, Joanne worked as a Plainfield Housing Resident Commissioner and served as councilwoman for the Fourth Ward. Joanne Hollis was a faithful woman who not only devoted

her life to her family but also to her extended family at the Plainfield Housing Authority. One of her main priorities in life was to provide quality housing and resources for a generation of families to come. HAP Board of Commissioners Chairwoman Bridget Rivers has carried on Joanne's legacy by assisting residents in any way that she can. One way Rivers does so is **through the non-profit Sisters of Solomon.**

One of the first initiatives Chairwoman Rivers has carried out was our Back to School event on September 3rd, which took place across from Joanne Hollis Gardens at Hannah Atkins Playground, and was open to residents of the City of Plainfield. Boys and girls received haircuts and backpacks to prepare for a new school year.

All of us at HAP sincerely thank Commissioner Rivers for empowering residents in our community and look forward to her ongoing contributions as part of the board of commissioners.

Richmond Towers & Joanne Hollis Gardens Resident Association Boards



Housing Authority of Plainfield Food Pantry Left to Right: Manager Renada Smith, Logistical Coordinator Rose Diggs, JHG Resident Association President Avonell Bergen Phillips

Here at HAP, we have extraordinary resident association board members who have made a significant impact on the lives of our residents. Here are some recent photos of the monthly food banks that are held at both Richmond Towers and Joanne Hollis Gardens. Additionally, Mayor Mapp of the City of Plainfield provided a free turkey to every Richmond Towers resident on November 20th ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. Pictured above, Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter also joined us at the Richmond Towers Thanksgiving dinner.



This is just one of the many ways our Richmond Towers and Joanne Hollis Gardens resident association boards improve the lives of residents.

Richmond Towers: Pedro Estevez (President), Michael Robinson, Darlene Davis, Hellen Cummins, Debra Turner, Lorraine MacNamara, and Marie Cayo.



Richmond Towers Residents Association Swearing in Ceremony of new board on August 22



Richmond Towers Residents Association Annual Veterans Breakfast sponsored by HAP

Joanne Hollis Gardens: Avonell Bergen Phillips (President), Shakeelah Abdullaah, Georgia Searchwell, Rashelle Matthews, Wendy Green, and Samuel Campbell.

On behalf of HAP and all of our residents, we thank all of the resident association board members for their dedication!

In-House Doctor's Office at Richmond Towers

The Housing Authority of Plainfield is fortunate to offer an in-house doctor's office to residents at Richmond Towers that provides chiropractic and podiatry services in addition to vaccine administration. General practitioner Dr. Oji and podiatrist Dr. Borrelli extend a high level of care to patients here at this convenient location, especially for those who have difficulty traveling for medical purposes.



Joanne Hollis Gardens' First Annual Information and Referral Health Fair

The Housing Authority of Plainfield welcomed residents and the Plainfield community at the first annual Information and Referral Health Fair at Joanne Hollis Gardens. This event brought together a number of organizations and the event included information regarding community churches, funeral home services, child care, cancer care, LGBTQ workforce development, community services, and public safety as well as senior citizen, youth, disability, health, and mental health services for families and children.



JHG resident Christine Taylor attended the event to discover resources available for senior citizens, “We need events like this because in the past they had a lot of events and because of COVID it’s been harder to hold events, this helps the residents get a better understanding of what’s available as far as resources for different things.”

Director of Community Programs Eric Graham, PHM notes, “This virus has caused so much pushback for all us of in terms of the mental health piece and now events like these help people come out of their shell.” Graham leads the Joanne Hollis Gardens Community Resource Center located at 535 West Third Street and possesses over 40 years of experience working within housing authorities across the country. “Someone asked me, ‘Why invite a funeral parlor to this event?’ It’s because so many families can’t understand the process and they will go through everything with them, and let them know the support that is available after the fact. We have to prepare people for the inevitable because we all need help.”



**Housing Authority of Plainfield
The Community Resource Center at Joanne Hollis Gardens
Wheel Of Opportunity**



Graham explained the wraparound services that are available in the community, “As for mental health components, there are supportive services around the family dynamic, meaning children who lost a parent, and the surviving parent doesn’t know how to deal with the

crises in the family.” The community resource center is putting together a consortium group that will wrap around Graham so when, for instance, he has a crisis with a little boy or girl he has the consortium team there to help. HAP’s Joanne Hollis Gardens Community Resource Center also refers to these wraparound services as their Wheel of Opportunity for residents.

"We want to ensure that all residents' needs are met," **stated HAP Board of Commissioners Chairwoman Bridget Rivers.** "Events such as these help motivate individuals to take steps to learn what is available to them and develop that momentum to continue seeking services within the community."

HAP Executive Director **Randall M. Wood** remarked, "We are excited to offer this event to the community, working from the inside out, to spread the word about these organizations that are ready and willing to help. We know how important it was to bring this event to the greater community."



The Joanne Hollis Gardens Community Resource Center offers workforce development, referral services, youth services, and educational, health, and wellness resources, and is open Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call 908-769-6335 ext. 607.

Read more about JHG's First Annual Information & Referral Health Fair.

Summer Youth Employment Program

In August, HAP awarded Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) certificates of completion to ten residents. Mayor Mapp and the Plainfield City Council offered this employment program through the Mayor's Task Force on Youth to children 14 to 17 years old as well as young adults 18 to 21 years old. SYEP participants were required to work for six weeks, from July 10th through August 18th.



HAP congratulates all participants for their eagerness to join the workforce beginning at a young age!

Joanne Hollis Gardens' Community Garden & Reverend Samuel Campbell's Award-Winning Community Garden



Community gardens at Joanne Hollis Gardens and Richmond Towers are made possible by the Union County Means Green Community Garden Grant Program and support from Groundwork Elizabeth. Residents have enjoyed partaking in gardening activities and reaping the fruits of their labor.

Joanne Hollis Gardens' chaplain, Reverend Samuel Campbell, has a magnificent garden that was awarded **Best Garden in the 2023 Plainfield Garden & Landscaping Competition**. Take a look at Reverend Campbell's wide array of produce that he shares with the JHG community.



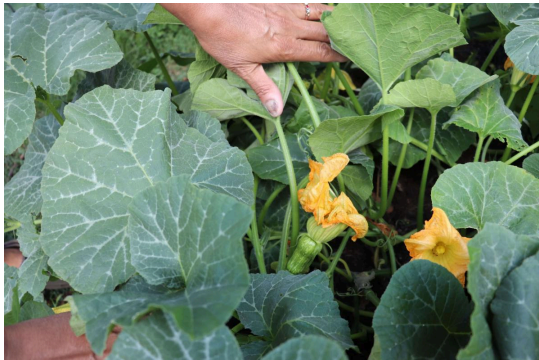
Richmond Towers Hydroponic Garden & Garden Club



Groundwork Elizabeth Director of Urban Agriculture Jackie Park Albaum provided start-up plants and instructed residents on how to start community gardens. Richmond Towers' Garden Club has been hard at work cultivating a hydroponic garden and

transferring plants to the community garden and greenhouse this summer.

When it's harvest time, residents celebrate with a Harvest Party and partake in a wide array of foods grown right in the garden, hosted by the Richmond Towers Resident Association and Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency program. The garden club enjoyed showcasing the community garden to **Union County Commissioner Rebecca Williams**, pictured below, and others this year.





Great work to all involved with our community gardens!

HAP's Low-Income Senior Housing Services, Family Self-Sufficiency Program, & Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency Program

HAP was awarded funding through FY 2023 Service Coordinator in Multifamily Housing and Congregate Housing Services programs. HAP received \$35,000 in funds to promote residents' health and wellness as they age in place in an independent housing setting. **Learn more about the Service Coordinator Program on the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development website.**

HAP's Family Self-Sufficiency program (FSS) is a unique opportunity established by the federal government to allow those who experience financial hardship to elevate themselves and their families to a level of self-sufficiency where they no longer need subsidies to live above the poverty level. HAP has had a number of successful graduates from the program who have gone on to become productive members of society. They stand as proof that a program such as FSS can work with the help of outside partners willing to invest time and effort in an idea that may benefit the entire community as a whole. **HAP's FSS**



Coordinator, Clyde Hare, leads the program, available to residents of Plainfield with Section 8 vouchers. HAP looks forward to each new family that decides to participate in the program and applauds each family that graduates.



The Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is designed to provide opportunities for resident self-sufficiency and wellness through partnerships with agencies, businesses, government, and individuals. Community partners play a central role. HAP's ROSS Coordinator Darryl Clark ensures residents are afforded numerous activities and opportunities to learn and grow, including monthly nutrition workshops, visits from the U.S. Social Security Administration, money management and security workshops, senior fraud protection workshops, Zumba classes, indoor hydroponic gardening classes, senior insurance workshops, Medicare/Medicaid information, and mental/physical health and wellness presentations hosted by local health professionals.

Premier Community Development Corporation

PCDC Commissioners

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Executive Director
Randall M. Wood
Chairman
Peter Briggs
Vice Chairman
Barry Person
Commissioner
George Gore
Commissioner
Hattie Williams
Commissioner
Kim Montford
Commissioner
Louise A. Colodne
Commissioner

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The Housing Authority of Plainfield offers food banks to residents at Richmond

Towers every third Thursday of the month and at Joanne Hollis Gardens every third Saturday. These food banks are made possible by HAP's 501c3 non-profit organization, Premier Community Development Corporation. PCDC works in conjunction with the City of Plainfield to improve neighborhoods for local residents and focuses on the development and rehabilitation of quality housing for the improvement of family lives in urban communities. Established in 2007, PCDC serves primarily Union County but also has strong ties in Middlesex, Monmouth, and Somerset counties in New Jersey. The food distributions offered at HAP are only one example of the social service programs

info@pcdc-nj.com

www.pcdc-nj.com

PCDC provides to the community. For more information about PCDC, visit www.pcdc-nj.com.

Events

Exercise Class – December 7th, 14th, 21st, & 28th

Exercise classes are held at Richmond Towers every Thursday from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Food Banks – December 16th & 28th

Food banks are held at Richmond Towers every fourth Thursday of the month and at Joanne Hollis Gardens every third Saturday.

Joanne Hollis Gardens Community Resource Center Holiday Health Screening NJ Mobile Unit & Community Services Providers Event – December 14th from 2–5 p.m.

Thank you for joining us at our Holiday Health Screening NJ Mobile Unit and Community Services Providers event at the Joanne Hollis Gardens HAP Center located at 543 West 3rd Street. Residents were able to partake in raffle tickets and coat giveaways as well. Thank you to all of our sponsors, including Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Equal Opportunity Support Services, HOPES CAP Inc., Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey, Neighborhood Health Services Corporation, Partnership for Maternal & Child Health of Northern New Jersey, Prevention Links, Proceed Inc, ScreenNJ, and Urban League of Union County.

Board Meeting Schedule

December 18
Richmond Towers

*The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Monday of each month unless otherwise noted. In the case of a holiday, the meeting is held the next day.

Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are held at alternate locations; Richmond Towers Community Room located at 510 East Front

Street and Joanne Hollis Gardens HAP Center located at 543 West 3rd Street in Plainfield, New Jersey. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the alternate locations are TBD. Meetings shall be via ZOOM until further notice.

About The Housing Authority of Plainfield

HAP will collaborate with residents and public, non-profit, and private entities to create viable, healthy communities and to empower residents to achieve financial independence. We will achieve the above while maintaining strong internal controls, and developing and maintaining a strong culture of mutual respect, fiscal responsibility, and ethical behavior by our employees, residents, and other key stakeholders.



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The Plainfield Housing Authority | Richmond Towers Senior Citizen Bldg, 510 East Front Street, Plainfield, NJ 07060 www.hapnj.org

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