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# The Housing Authority of Plainfield

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Commissioner

Board meetings are held every 3rd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted. View the full [2022 board meeting schedule here](#).

## Richmond Towers Management Offices

## Message from the Executive Director

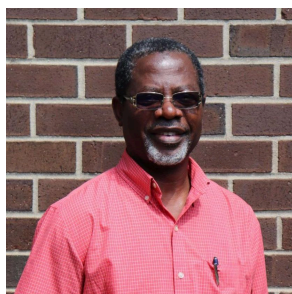
As one of the most steadfast housing authorities in New Jersey, we are elated to bring you this quarterly newsletter to provide the latest updates on



the positive initiatives in our community. We all know just how much the pandemic has affected everyone's way of life for the past two and a half years, and despite this, the Housing Authority of Plainfield (HAP) maintained operations by following all safety protocols. Our heroic staff continuously showed up with the desire to serve our residents every day. In addition to our monthly food banks, HAP also maintained the Congregate Dinner Program throughout the pandemic for seniors at Richmond Towers and the congregate housing program. I'd like to sincerely thank the entire HAP team, our resident association board members who delivered food and provided much-needed pick-me-ups on holidays during the pandemic, as well as our community for



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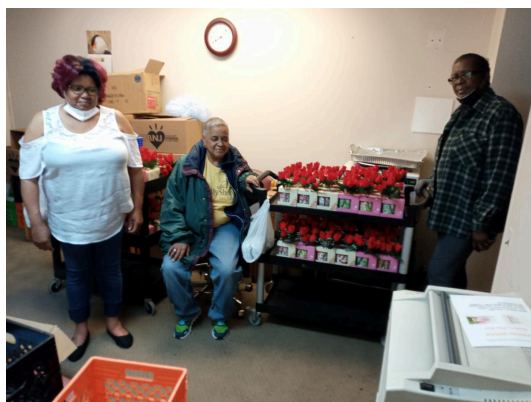
their support and their strength through this tumultuous point in time.

Now, on a lighter note, I hope you all have been having a safe and relaxing autumn. We have a lot of exciting updates to share, so read on for how we have been improving our residences and the Community Resource Center at Joanne Hollis Gardens, and the range of health and wellness programs and events we offer. 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*

## Resident Association Board Spotlight



Here at HAP, we have extraordinary resident association board members who have made a significant impact on the lives of our residents. During the height of the pandemic, they were not able to serve our residents in the same way as they had before, but they adapted to the challenge and gave their all to improve the overall quality of life for our community. In 2020 and 2021, over 4,000 pounds of donated food were delivered door-to-door to all our residents by this mere eight-member board and occasionally other volunteer

residents. They also made sure to find ways to make holidays special by delivering Valentine's Day treats, spring holiday fruit baskets, Mother's & Father's Day gifts, Fourth of July barbeque food, and Thanksgiving Day dinners & Christmas gifts during the holiday season. They also deliver a Meals on Wheels lunch program for those who are unable to leave their residences. On behalf of HAP and all of our residents, we thank all of the resident association board members, Pedro Estevez (President), Helen Cummins, Darlene Davis, Lorraine MacNamara, Cebia Morgan, Michael Robinson, Brenda Rodgers, and Lezlie Wright, for their dedication!

### State-Of-The-Art Improvements at HAP



The Housing Authority of Plainfield has been undergoing a number of advantageous upgrades here at Richmond Towers. There is a brand-new intercom system throughout the building that also acts as a security feature. Now, each resident has a tablet on the wall within their apartment so they can view the lobby to see who has stopped by to visit. Each visitor can be assigned a profile so the resident can type in someone's name and see the picture that comes up.

Another project we have underway is the upgrades to all of the kitchen units; take a look at the before and after photos! These new kitchens not only look more modern, but they are energy efficient as well.





Before



After

## Joanne Hollis Gardens Community Resource Center



HAP is proud to mark more than six months since the opening of the Community Resource Center in Joanne Hollis Gardens (JHG). The purpose of the center is to serve as a safe haven for residents in need and help restore trust through community policing. The facility features meeting spaces that will provide a wide range of services that will directly serve at-risk youth, battered women, and individuals seeking recovery from substance abuse while also increasing police visibility in the area. Police officers have been working closely together with families to promote community policing initiatives with the goal of improving the overall quality of life for the residents of Joanne Hollis Gardens and the community in which it serves.

**View the Inaugural Video of the JHG Community Resource Center.**



Plainfield Police Department's Lieutenant Jerry Plum leads the initiatives at the Community Resource Center. Lt. Plum has over 30 years of experience as a police officer and he has brought other local organizations such as **Prevention Links**, **Bridgeway Behavioral Health Services**, and **Plainfield Community Outreach** to help on the path to success. Prevention Links will now be on-site at the resource center every Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. to connect visitors with mental health resources.

Lt. Plum shared, "What we want people to know is that this resource center is here and available to you to help start the process. We are here to help people through their challenges and are committed to helping them through. Together, we can keep trying to improve your situation."



As residents have become familiar with the resource center, Lt. Plum has welcomed more people to the center and has been helping them to take the necessary steps to lead to successful outcomes. He is grateful to be part of the healing process for members of the Plainfield community. HAP acknowledges the added difficulties people have faced since the start of the pandemic and encourages community members to continue to reach out to Lt. Plum when they need help. HAP also reminds the community that Lt. Plum will continue to uphold his range of duties as a law enforcement officer.

The late Joanne Hollis would be proud to see the support the center has provided to the community so far and the expansion of resources offered through local Plainfield organizations. Joanne was a lifelong resident of Plainfield and was a devoted activist who served as a Plainfield Housing resident commissioner and as a councilwoman for the Fourth Ward. One of her main priorities in life was to provide quality housing and resources for generations of families to come. To learn more about the Community Resource Center, you can leave a message for Lt. Plum at the Plainfield Police Department at 908-753-3360.

## **Elmwood Square Apartments**

HAP's newest development, Elmwood Square Apartments, is now fully occupied nearly a year since its opening. Elmwood Square Apartments is a 58-unit, 43 2br, and 15 3br, townhouse complex on 3.68 acres. The apartment complex has individual entrances in a design which is very conscious of defensible space, new urbanism design, eyes on the street concepts, open space, passive recreation, and a free-standing community building that has a community room, office space, and



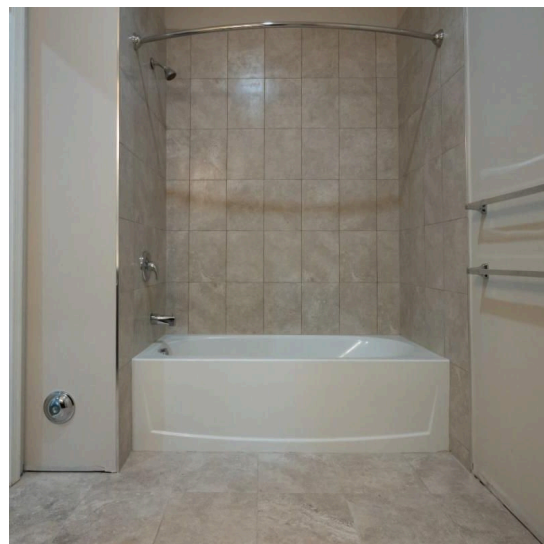
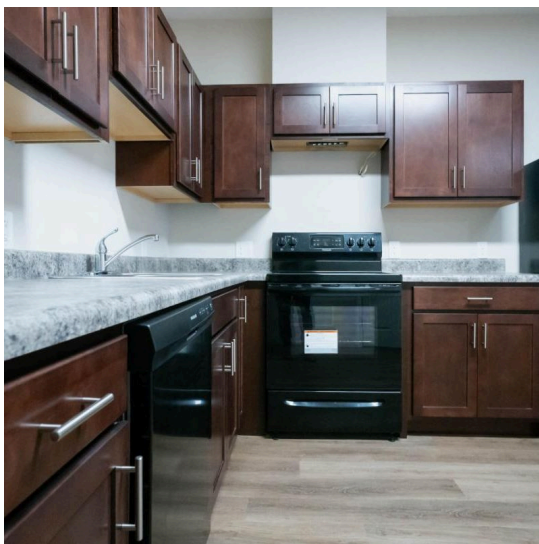
maintenance space. There is also supportive housing in the design and 5% of the units meet 504 requirements. All ground-floor units are handicap adaptable. All units have Section 8 project-based assistance.



“The Elmwood Square Apartments are yet another example of the City of Plainfield leveraging public and private partnerships to create more vibrant, equitable, and inclusive neighborhoods,” said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency board chair. “Governor Murphy and I are committed to advancing housing and economic development opportunities throughout the State to help ensure that safe, affordable, and desirable housing is available to everyone.”

Since its groundbreaking in 2020, construction on the new apartments had been underway during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and continued to stay on track with its development through 2021. This project was completed in partnership with the City of Plainfield, the Premier Community Development Corporation, the County of Union, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and The Alpert Group.

Elmwood Square Apartments Photo credits: [Brian Branch-Price](#)



## Premier Community Development Corporation

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 PCDC provides to the community. For more information about PCDC, visit [www.pcdc-nj.com](http://www.pcdc-nj.com).

Premier Community Development Corporation is always looking for partnerships that will help to continue our goal of bettering our communities and strengthening our family structure. If your agency, organization, or business would like to partner with PCDC please contact our director, Georgette Barnes, at 908-339-3829.



### Richmond Towers' Spring Concert, Community Room Soft Reopening, COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics





In April, under the planning of Richmond Towers' Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) Coordinator Darryl Clark, HAP was afforded the lovely melodies of the Plainfield Academy for the Arts and Advanced Studies' jazz concert band. Our residents sat a safe distance apart to partake in this special treat.

The ROSS 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. Stay tuned for more on this initiative in the next newsletter.

HAP also had a soft reopening of the community room once COVID-19 cases were low. One of the first events in the newly reopened community room included an arts & crafts class conducted by Kean University occupational therapist intern students.

Additionally, the Family Support Organization of Union County hosted an educational presentation about the services they can provide for our residents.



We have resumed hosting exercise and health activities in the past few months as well. Take a look at this fitness class including meditation! From 2020 through 2022, primarily through the collaboration of General Manager James Marsh, ROSS Coordinator Darryl Clark, and staff, HAP partnered with **Neighborhood Health Services Corporation**, testing labs, and **The City of Plainfield Department of Health and Social Services** to offer nine health clinics for COVID-19 testing and vaccines to our nearly 200 residents. Look closely to see HAP's Executive Director Randy Wood receiving his vaccine.

## Upcoming Events

## **Exercise Class – November 3rd, 10th, 17th, & 23rd**

Exercise classes are held at Richmond Towers every Thursday from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. The last class in November will take place on the 23rd due to the Thanksgiving holiday on the 24th.



## **Food Banks – November 19th & 22nd December 17th & 22nd**

Food banks are held at Richmond Towers every fourth Thursday of the month and at Joanne Hollis Gardens every third Saturday. The last food bank in November will take place on the 22nd due to the Thanksgiving holiday on the 24th.

## **Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution – November 21st**

Mayor Mapp of the City of Plainfield will be providing a free turkey to every Richmond Tower resident on November 21st.

## **Coming Soon**

In addition, through our ROSS Program, we will resume activities (adhering to COVID-19 guidelines) 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.

We are also preparing for the reopening of our one-of-a-kind, in-house doctor's office and health facility here at Richmond Towers. Stay tuned for more on this initiative in the next newsletter.

## **Upcoming Board Meeting Schedule**

**November 21**  
Joanne Hollis Gardens  
(Optional)

**December 19**  
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 W 3<sup>rd</sup> St., 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.



**Contact Us**

**Visit Our Website**

**The Housing Authority of Plainfield**

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