



Robert Pierre Johnson
Housing Development
Corporation

E-News & Notes

August 2007



Hearts and
Hammers

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1. August Program Highlights: A “Hi-Energy” Initiative for Energy Efficiency



With the hot summer months upon us, most homeowners cringe as they open their utility bills and think, “there must be a way to reduce these costs!” **Rebuilding Together** and the **American Petroleum Institute (API)**, the primary trade association for the oil and natural gas industry, have teamed up to create the Energy Efficient Homes Initiative to help increase energy efficiency in low-income homes. This initiative helps low-income homeowners and group homes operated by non-profit agencies save money by reducing their energy usage while also providing materials and information to help them use energy wisely in the future.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates simple investments and behavioral changes can result in a 20 percent increase in energy efficiency, with savings approaching \$19 billion. The Energy Efficient Homes Initiative affords residents a chance to receive energy-efficient renovations to their homes, reducing energy use up to 30 percent.

On July 14th RPJ Housing’s Rebuilding Together program worked in partnership with more than 20 volunteers from API and **Edelman**, a global public relations firm, to rehab a group home in Arlington. The 1920’s house, a home to seven men and women, is operated by **Community Residences, Inc.** a non-profit organization that provides quality services that enable individuals with a wide range of disabilities live as independently as possible.

The team of volunteers spent the day painting four upstairs bedrooms using colors specifically chosen by the residents, installing ceiling fans in those bedrooms, screening, replacing standard light bulbs with compact-fluorescent light bulbs (provided by Arlington County), installing foam gaskets behind receptacle and switch plate covers on exterior walls, scrubbing and cleaning the large front porch, and planting an herb and flower garden. Prior to the workday, **Walsh Electric** installed ceiling fan boxes in all four bedrooms for which they generously donated their services. In a couple of weeks 20 windows will be replaced with double hung windows throughout the house by **Thompson Creek Window Company** at a reduced cost. To learn more about the Energy Efficient Home Initiative go to www.rebuildingtogether.org.

2. Events and Announcements

The eighth annual **ESSI Golf Classic** benefiting RPJ Housing’s Rebuilding Together and Hearts and Hammers programs will be held on Monday, September 24th at the Reston National Golf Course. Enjoy this popular Northern Virginia course designed by the legendary Ed Ault and managed by Virginia-based Billy Casper Golf. Golfing fees are \$125 per player or \$500 for a foursome. Green fees, carts, breakfast, beverages, lunch, golf shirts, golf balls, prizes and awards are included. To learn more about becoming a sponsor or participant, contact Patti Dennis at (703) 528-5606 x16 or pattid@rphousing.org



The first annual Wish Upon A Star for Affordable Housing Online Auction, benefiting RPJ Housing's Affordable Housing program, will be held from November 6th through November 20th, 2007. RPJ Housing staff and volunteers are hard at work gathering new and unique items and services for the auction including autographs from such celebrities as Samuel L. Jackson, Martin Sheen and Alexander Ovechkin. If you have an item or service you would like to donate or if you would like to learn more about becoming a sponsor or a volunteer, contact Amy Medrick at (703) 528-5606 x10 or amym@rpjhousing.org.

RPJ Housing has several 1BR & 2BR apartments available in Front Royal at our spacious Lynn D Apartments. Tenants will receive a discount on the rental of a temporary apartment for up to six months, and upon completion of renovations at the Fairfield Apartments will move to a fully renovated unit there. For more information, contact Paul Clark at (540) 635-3043 or paulc@rpjhousing.org.

3. Classified Ads

WANTED: Local companies to support the golf tournament as event sponsors. A variety of sponsorship levels are available, from \$175 to \$7,500. Each level has a corresponding benefit package. See the brochure on our website at <http://www.rpjhousing.org/golfsponsor.pdf>. Area businesses that can donate silent auction items and raffle prizes are also greatly appreciated! Volunteers are also needed on the day of the tournament to staff holes and run contests. Call Patti for details at (703) 528-5606 x16 or pattid@rpjhousing.org.

WANTED: Do you have a neighbor, friend or family member who needs home repairs and can't afford them? RPJ Housing's **Rebuilding Together and Hearts & Hammers** programs provide free home repair services to homeowners with limited incomes. Repairs vary from fixing a light switch, installing a grab bar to painting an entire house. To learn how to apply, contact Patti at (703) 528-5606 x16 or visit our website at www.rpjhousing.org/program to download an application.

WANTED: full-time maintenance worker. Must have a minimum of five years experience in all aspects of apartment maintenance. Personal set of tools and a vehicle are a must! HVAC certification is a plus. Salary starts in the low 30's. Work is located in the Alexandria, Falls Church and Arlington areas. Send your resume to terryn@rpjhousing.org or fax it to 703-351-9754 (RPJ Housing). EOE.

WANTED: Volunteer to assist with mailings, data entry & other clerical tasks. Work can be done at home or RPJ Housing's office. Contact Amy at amym@rpjhousing.org or (703) 528-5606 x10.

4. Hats Off To...

Oksana Silva and Carol Partridge of **Reed Technology and Information Services, Inc.** for contributing a full day's work folding, labeling and sealing 3,000 copies of our June/July newsletter. Thanks to their help, we were able to get out this mailing in record time!



Amy Medrick, Carol Partridge, Oksana Silva
Margarite Sparks

5. Did You Know?

The federal minimum wage was recently raised for the first time in ten years from \$5.15 per hour to \$6.55 per hour. A full time employee working 40 hours a week at the new minimum wage would earn \$13,624 annually, which would support a rent payment of approximately \$340.00 per month. Housing costs over the past ten years have risen dramatically higher than the adjustment in the minimum wage, leaving individuals at this income level with no options but to work 80 hours a week to afford a \$700 efficiency unit or to rent space in an overcrowded apartment. In many cases, an individual earning the new minimum wage could still not pay the "affordable rents" that RPJ Housing and other nonprofit affordable housing providers offer. Affordability is clearly a function of both a living wage and reasonably priced housing.

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