

The RPJ Housing Express

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Robert Pierre Johnson Housing Development Corporation of the National Capital Area

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Opening Doors to Affordable Rentals in Arlington

RPJ Housing is acquiring its first affordable rental housing properties in Arlington County: 123 South Courthouse Road and 2011 4th Street South. This initiative will preserve the affordability of 22 one bedroom units (including several with dens) which are split evenly between the two properties. Both buildings are attractive brick garden apartments that feature laundry facilities and parking. Moreover, they are conveniently located to Metrobus lines, shopping, and neighborhood parks.

"As the condo conversion wave hits Arlington, rents have spiraled out of reach for thousands of working individuals and families whose incomes

cannot keep pace with the price of housing," notes Herb Cooper-Levy, RPJ Housing's executive director. "RPJ Housing will purchase existing rental properties whenever possible to prevent the disappearance of affordable rental units."

Working with the Virginia Housing Development Authority and Arlington's Department of Housing and Community Development and Department of Human Services, we are crafting a package of low interest loans and equity contributions that will enable us to offer 18 units to low and moderate income households and four units to individuals with disabilities with very low



incomes who need supportive services. Two ground floor units at the Courthouse location will be converted to accessible units for persons with disabilities.

RPJ Housing's main office is in Arlington, and we offered volunteer home repairs here since 1989. We look forward to becoming a neighbor in the Penrose community, and to expanding affordable rental opportunities in the county.



123 South Courthouse Road

Be a High Roller for Affordable Housing

Get out your lucky dice, because casino night is around the corner! Join us on Friday, June 17th at 7:00 pm for fun and games at The Christopher Companies Monte Carlo Night 2005. Support RPJ Housing's affordable housing and volunteer home repair programs, and celebrate our 10,000th day anniversary at the Top of the Town in Arlington, overlooking the spectacular view of the Washington D.C. skyline.

Whether you are a beginner or an expert, there is a seat for you at the blackjack, poker, roulette and craps tables. Peruse our silent auction collection, including a variety of themed gift

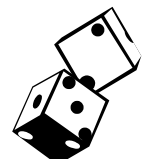
baskets, home remodeling consultations, concert and theater tickets, gift certificates to local restaurants and a boat ride on the Potomac.

Bid on the "big stuff" during our live auction with auctioneer/Congressman Jim Moran: vacation getaways, a catered dinner party, and a Persian rug are just a few of the featured items. Then, prepare to dance the night away with DJ Matt. If you play your cards right, you might even win our "high roller" or "big spender" award!

Admission is just \$50 per person, and includes hors

d'oeuvres, a complimentary beverage, and \$500 in "fun bucks" to get you started at the tables. Make donations to RPJ Housing throughout the night, and receive additional "fun bucks" and tickets worth \$5.00 each that can be used toward your silent or live auction bid. All donations are tax deductible, as is any amount you pay above the fair market value of an auction item.

Make your reservations today! Complete the form on page 2, or call 703-528-5606 x18 for more information.



Make Your Reservation Today for The Christopher Companies Monte Carlo Night 2005



Just complete this form, attach your check made payable to RPJ Housing Development Corporation, and mail it to RPJ Housing, Attention: Benefit Night, 2666 Military Rd, Arlington, VA 22207. Sorry, no credit cards accepted. Guests must be age 18 or older. The reservation deadline is June 13th. We'll send you an email confirming your reservation.

Guest #1 Name

Guest #2 Name

Guest #1 Address

Guest #3 Name

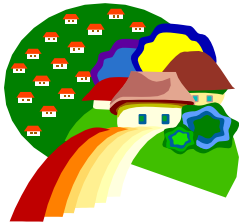
Guest #1 Phone Number

Guest #4 Name

Guest #1 Email

Guest #5 Name

Enclosed is my check for ___ guests at \$50 per person. The total payment is \$_____.
Questions? Contact Jeannie Cummins at 703.528.5606 x18 or send an email to jcummins@rpjhousing.org.



Not Just a Home: a Life

Sunlight streams through the kitchen window as Joe pours himself a coffee at RPJ Housing's Montgomery House. His housemate, Rob, settles down at the table with a plate of eggs. It is spring, and both men are reflecting on what the season has to offer. Rob looks forward to planting a garden in the spacious back yard, while Joe smiles at the thought of having his son visit and stay overnight.

The future was not always so right. Several months ago, Rob was in a homeless shelter and drifting from agency to agency searching for help to get back on his feet. Joe was in a nursing home recovering from a stroke that left him with

hemiplegia (limited use of the muscles and limbs on one side of his body). He had lost his job and his home and did not know where he would go once the nursing home discharged him.

Just as these men ran out of options, RPJ Housing and Brain Injury Services (BIS), a local nonprofit human service provider, formed a partnership to offer transitional housing and services to four men recovering from brain injuries. RPJ Housing purchased the Montgomery House and assembled a financing package including financing from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's Commonwealth Priority Fund, and a very low interest loan from the Virginia Housing Development Authority. This financing enabled RPJ Housing to lease the home to BIS for a price substantially below the market rent. RPJ Housing performed several modifications to the home to make it more accessible to individuals with physical and sensory disabilities, and now provides ongoing repairs as

needed.

BIS currently subleases the bedrooms to four adult men recovering from TBI who have very low incomes and require services such as case management, speech and physical therapy, employment support, counseling, and independent living training. BIS subsidizes the rent for the residents, links them to services and resources such as food and furniture banks, and monitors the services they receive.

In addition, BIS organizes social activities with volunteers who may cook a meal, help decorate for the holidays, or take residents to community activities. Finally, BIS helps residents manage household issues by holding monthly house meetings to develop house rules, address problems that arise, and encourage residents to have a voice in how their house runs.

The combination of safe, decent affordable housing and support services has enabled Rob to work

toward regaining his former job as a custodian at the Pentagon. Joe is building his communication skills, strength, dexterity and endurance so he can cook himself a full meal, just as he did for hundreds of customers as a chef in a local Chinese restaurant prior to his injury. Eventually, both will move on to new living situations, allowing others in similar circumstances to move in and begin the recovery process.

Montgomery House demonstrates that housing is more than just a roof and four walls. Housing has the power to facilitate recovery and offer a new start for individuals facing some of life's greatest challenges. Moreover, it is a wonderful example of what can happen when organizations with different expertise and resources work together toward a common goal. To that, we say "let the sun shine in!"

* Residents' names have been changed to protect their privacy

Rebuilding Together 2005: Singing in the Rain

The rain did not dampen the spirits nor the efforts of thousands of community members who fanned out across Arlington and Fairfax Counties the last Saturday in April to repair the homes of 65 low-income homeowners and group homes operated by non-profits through RPJ Housing's Rebuilding Together program. Without fail, these dedicated volunteers, many of whom were drenched and muddy, cheerfully went about the day painting; cleaning; repairing walls, doors and railings; building ramps and stairs; improving the safety and accessibility of the homes with grab bars, improved lighting, raised toilets and lever handles; and removing tons of trash and yard debris.

In Alexandria, DPR Construction began building a 60-foot ramp for Barbara who works full time and cares for her 85 year old mother who has Alzheimer's. The crew worked for several weeks to guarantee that Barbara could take her mother to the doctor without relying on others to carry her out of the house. In addition, Michael Curreri and Chris Gorthy lead the team as they installed new kitchen cabinets, replaced several exterior doors, rebuilt the basement ceiling, painted and created a spectacular garden in the yard.

Kol Ami and Congregation Olam Tikvah joined together with Bush Hill Presbyterian Church to work on a project that took several weekends. Jason, a young homeowner who is a wheelchair user, dreamed of making his entire home accessible for persons with physical disabilities. His home first needed many traditional repairs to improve its current conditions.

Kol Ami and Congregation Olam Tikvah began the project by painting the interior and exterior of the home, repairing rotten window trim and walls, installing a handheld shower, replacing the carpeting throughout the house and cleaning and landscaping the yard. Bush Hill Presbyterian Church returned to the home several weeks later to complete the interior and exterior painting, install shelving and a gas stove, and replace the roof. Jason helped both groups make decisions throughout the entire process, registered every volunteer and even did some of the work himself.

Since 1988, RPJ Housing's Rebuilding Together program has rehabbed nearly 1,400 homes, non-profit group homes and shelters by mobilizing 48,000 community members. Thanks to the generosity of volunteers, sponsors and vendors like Site



Jason's team gets down to business

Works, Inc, MY Plumber, Affordable Refuse

and Recycling and John Boy, Inc. homes are repaired free of charge. Recipients of the program must own and reside in the home to be repaired and earn less than 50 percent of the area median income, with priority giving to seniors, persons with disabilities and families with children. For more information about Rebuilding Together please call (703) 528-5606 ext 16 or e-mail pattid@rpjhousing.org.

Home, First Home

There is nothing like the rush you get when someone hands you the keys to your first home. That is what the Thach family learned when they went to settlement on August 31st for their new home at 8487 Aurora Court in Lorton.

Hong Thach, a beautician, was living in a small apartment with her four year-old daughter, mother and aunt when she received our letter advertising a quaint two bedroom home with \$40,000 in seller financing available to a qualified first time homebuyer. She drove by the property to get a glimpse of the home several days before the open house, and it was love at first sight. The Thach family arrived at the open house an hour and a half early, to make sure they were first in line. Hong, her mother and her aunt signed a contract while her daughter played and picked dandelions in the back yard.

The Thachs were the first family to purchase a home in RPJ Housing's first time homebuyer project. Supported by Fairfax County HOME and CDBG funds, RPJ Housing locates and purchases suitable homes, makes needed repairs, sells them to first time homebuyers with incomes below 80% of the area median income, and provides second trust forgivable loans of \$40,000 to lower the

amount of financing buyers must obtain. Purchasers must agree to own and occupy the home for fifteen years to have the loan's full principal and interest forgiven. The project will serve three families who are first time homebuyers.

"It feels great to know that every house payment we make is an investment in our future," notes Hong, as she measures her windows for curtains. That means stability and security for her octogenarian mother, and greater opportunity for her daughter who will be ready for college when their 2nd trust loan is forgiven. Homeownership is clearly the gift that keeps on giving, and RPJ Housing believes it is one gift well worth sharing with a family like the Thachs.



Count me in! I want to help RPJ Housing help people like Joe and Rob. Here is my tax-deductible contribution to support *RPJ Housing's* efforts to develop and preserve affordable housing in the Washington metropolitan area.

\$25.00 \$50.00 \$75.00 \$100.00 Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

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 (703) 528-5606 ♦ www.rpjhousing.org
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