

Robert Pierre Johnson Housing Development Corporation of the National Capital Area

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**Get Ready for Monte Carlo Night on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007: Your invitation is attached to this newsletter!**

## A "Brief Glimpse" of Longview Terrace

The local real estate market may be cooling, but RPJ Housing is turning up the heat on property acquisitions! The latest property slated to join the RPJ Housing multifamily affordable rental portfolio is Longview Terrace, a 41 unit project located at 2900-2906 Seay Street in the City of Alexandria. Just minutes from the Telegraph Road exit to the Beltway and in the shadow of the George Washington Masonic Memorial, the building has 32 two bedroom units and 9 one bedroom units plus on-site parking. All of the apartments have balconies, and nearly half of the apartments have been renovated over the past several years.

RPJ Housing intends to purchase Longview Terrace using an acquisition loan from Mercantile Potomac Bank, and will seek a \$2 million second trust loan from the City of Alexandria's Housing Opportunities Fund for the balance of the acquisition price.



We will then pursue an application for non-competitive, 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits to generate the equity to support the rehabilitation of the

remaining unrenovated apartment units. Renovation plans will include new kitchen and bathroom appliances, fixtures, and floor coverings; new paint; a new boiler system; and upgraded electrical service. Current rents are affordable to households earning between 50% and 60% of the area's median income (\$94,500). Through the use of City housing funds, tax credits, and permanent financing with below-market interest rates, RPJ Housing will be able to preserve the affordability of these apartments for the current residents and improve their living conditions at the same time. Now that is what we call a hot deal!

## More Supportive Housing on the Horizon in Fairfax Co.

Adults with serious mental illness in Fairfax County are living at the edge of a precipice: they have not been prioritized for existing supportive housing because they currently live with family and are not considered "homeless." In the absence of supportive housing alternatives, however, they stand to become homeless as their aging family members become increasingly unable to care for them.

This past January, the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority approved a \$312,610 deferred principal and interest loan to RPJ Housing for the purpose of purchasing and

renovating a single family home which could be used as a group supported living residence for adults with mental illness. By combining this and other local funding, RPJ Housing can minimize the mortgage needed for the home. In addition, we will seek a real estate tax exemption, so the only operating costs are for property management and maintenance. Since RPJ Housing's rents reflect our expenses, the rents for this home will be able to serve individuals with mental illness who earn about 30% of the area median income, or between \$17,000 and \$19,850 per person. At this level, we can serve

some individuals who earn Social Security Disability Income. Should residents get access to a Section 8 voucher, we will be able to serve those on Supplemental Security Incomes as well.

RPJ Housing's partner on this project, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, Inc. (PRS), will coordinate intensive, individualized home-based supports to these clients, including community living skills training, counseling, and case management. Together, we will bring five adults with mental illness back from the precipice and into a new home with new possibilities for life in the community.

## RPJ Housing Welcomes Three New Board Members

RPJ Housing bids a fond farewell to board member Lyman "Jug" Harbottle, who served this organization faithfully for nearly three decades. We also welcome Gray Mitchell, a real estate attorney with Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP; Martha Paschal, a senior asset manager with Fannie Mae and former director of real estate and finance for Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing; and Marc Cooper, Director of Change Communication for Capital One. Each one brings a valued skill set to RPJ Housing which we look forward to tapping!

# Spring Has Sprung for Rebuilding Together

Nearly 70 volunteer team leaders attended the March 8th House Captain's meeting and received their "marching orders," including their work assignment of a home owned by a low income homeowner or non-profit agency. Teams were matched to homes based on their skill levels and group sizes. Team leaders are now meeting homeowners to assess the work scope for each project, determine material needs and organize their volunteer teams. An occupational therapist will also visit many homes to assess how the residents interact with their home environment and suggest different home modifications team captains can incorporate into their work to improve the residents' safety and independence, including the installation grab bars, raised commode seats and stair lifts. These dedicated leaders will each spend 60 – 90 hours pulling together these projects so everything runs smoothly on Rebuilding Day.

This year, Rebuilding Together is launching a new energy efficiency initiative. Teams will weatherstrip doors, change out traditional lightbulbs and install fluorescent lightbulbs that will last 10 times as long as incandescent bulbs and use less energy. In addition, we refer our clients to Community Housing Partners, which has a free weatherization program that was designed to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills. Services include performing diagnostic tests to evaluate areas of heat loss.

Rebuilding Together's 2000+ volunteers will work on approximately 55 homes on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> this year. If you are a skilled plumber, electrician or tradesperson interested in being a "rover" on Rebuilding Day to consult on problems that arise on worksites throughout the day, or if you would like to volunteer for Supply Separation Day on April 26<sup>th</sup>, Supply Pick Up Day on April 27<sup>th</sup>, or Supply Return Day on April 30<sup>th</sup>, contact Patti Dennis at 703-528-5606 x16 or [pattid@rpjhousing.org](mailto:pattid@rpjhousing.org).



## Tenant Spotlight:

*(names have been changed to protect privacy)*

Joseph Allen has lived at RPJ Housing's Belvoir Plaza for 2 years. A 54 year-old man who has been HIV+ for 27 years, Joseph knows that a home is perhaps the most important component of medical care for a person with this condition. After being diagnosed, Joseph sat on waiting lists for over four years in search of affordable housing. The lack of stable housing took a toll on his health: the stress and mental anguish exacerbated his immune problems and sent back and forth to the hospital. Fortunately, Northern Virginia Community Services referred him to RPJ Housing, which participates in the Housing

Opportunities for Persons with Aids (HOPWA) program. The HOPWA program provides housing subsidies similar to the Section 8 Voucher specifically for persons who have HIV/AIDS. Joseph moved into a one bedroom apartment at Belvoir Plaza, and has lived there since 2005. Throughout that time, he not only improved his health but now works full time, volunteers for an HIV+ support group and is involved in educating the public about HIV/AIDS. The future looks bright, too: he is returning to school to get a college degree. Joseph's story just proves that sometimes a house is more than a place to live: it is a place that helps us heal, grow, learn and love.

## RPJ Housing Classifieds

**Wanted:** Volunteers to assist with large mailings, event preparation, and other administrative tasks. Contact Amy at (703) 528-5606 x10 or [amym@rpjhousing.org](mailto:amym@rpjhousing.org) for more information.





**Wanted:** Volunteers to help at Monte Carlo Night with setup, cleanup, the silent auction, raffle prize drawings, registration, game tables, and more. Contact Jeannie at x18 or [jeanniec@rpjhousing.org](mailto:jeanniec@rpjhousing.org) for more information.

**Wanted:** Volunteers with trucks who can help haul trash and appliances to the I-95 or I-66 Transfer Station on Rebuilding Together Days, April 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup>. Contact Patti if you can assist: (703) 528-5606 x16 or [pattid@rpjhousing.org](mailto:pattid@rpjhousing.org).

**Wanted:** Volunteers to help at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fairfax Yard Sale set up on May 2, 3 and 4 and the sale itself on May 5. Part of the proceeds will benefit RPJ Housing's programs. Contact [amym@rpjhousing.org](mailto:amym@rpjhousing.org) for details.

## Did You Know?

Rebuilding Together and the American Petroleum Institute have created the Energy Efficient Homes Initiative to help increase energy efficiency in low-income homes. Here are some of their energy saving tips:

-  One of the most effective ways to increase a home's energy efficiency is to insulate unconditioned areas: areas that are not part of the heating or air conditioning service.
-  Heating accounts for 49% of utility costs in an average home and a typical home can lose up to 60% of its heated air before it reaches the vent.
-  Air infiltrating floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, and plumbing penetrations account for 59% of air leakage in a typical home. Most of these leaks are easily addressed by caulking penetrations to the outdoors or unconditioned spaces, having a professional seal the seams in the ductwork, and insulating electrical outlets.
-  If done correctly, caulking and weather stripping can save a typical homeowner more than 10% on energy bills.

**Count me in!** I want to help RPJ Housing support people like Joseph Allen. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Or, go to [www.rpjhousing.org](http://www.rpjhousing.org) to donate online through Paypal or the Network for Good on our Home Page.