



Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority

SPRING 2022

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Resident Involvement Key to ARHA's Development



Members of the Ladrey Resident Engagement Committee

ARHA CEO Keith Pettigrew has said from the time he arrived in 2017 that it would be critically important that residents participate as ARHA rebuilds its old sites. The next two properties on the list are Ladrey Highrise and Samuel Madden Homes. Resident committees at both locations have already begun meeting with ARHA's development team. Those meetings recently transitioned from virtual to in-person as these initiatives pick up steam.

We talked to six committee members, two from Ladrey and four from Madden, to get their perspectives on the planned changes. Most have two main thoughts: the current buildings are out of date and must be replaced, and they are excited about the future of these properties. Here is a sample of those opinions.

Kenneth Burton, Ladrey

A 20-year resident of Ladrey, Kenneth Burton said he is excited about the plans to redevelop his home.

"We have been told Ladrey would be renovated and upgraded many times before, but it hasn't happened yet. But now this time, with Mr. Pettigrew as the CEO, I believe it will happen. He is so excited about it; you can hear the genuine excitement in his voice when he talks about the plans to renovate Ladrey. That makes me excited, too."

Burton, who uses a power wheelchair, said the current building is not equipped for him to easily get around. He looks forward to the renovated apartments and hopes they will be accessible for people like him. Burton appreciates that there is resident involvement in reaching a final plan.

"As Mr. Pettigrew said, we are the ones who are going to live here, who will utilize the building day in day out. It's good to have a voice in the process," Burton said. (Continued on Page 4)



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As we ease, cautiously optimistic I might add, into the second quarter of 2022, it is with a heavy heart, that this newsletter is created. The ARHA family is still mourning the sudden loss of our Chief Financial Officer, Derek McDaniel. Derek's tenure at ARHA spanned more than 18 years. He was the foundation of an organization that has grown and diversified over his tenure.

He was a loving and dedicated father, an incredible colleague and co-worker, and a loyal friend. For me personally, he was not only a Brother in the Bond of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated, but he was a friend.

As you can imagine, he will be sorely missed but his spirit will be with us all!

With that, I am happy to announce that ARHA's repositioning, and redevelopment plans are being implemented. We have completed 75% of our Section 18 renovations at Saxony Square and Park Place. We are on the verge of completing the RAD transition for three of the six recommended properties, and having just negotiated an approved Master Development Agreement, and initiated the community engagement process, we are well on our way toward the redevelopment of Samuel Madden.

Needless to say, while we mourn the loss of our brother, we are excited about the progress we are making as an agency to better serve the residents we are charged with serving.

Until next time, please stay safe.

Keith Pettigrew



IN MEMORIAM



ARHA loss one of its own on February 1. Our long time Director of Finance and Administration, Derek McDaniel, died suddenly. He will be remembered as a skilled accountant and manager who oversaw ARHA's finances for almost 19 years. With his guidance, the agency's financial systems were updated, the website improved, and the procurement process shored up for many years to come.

Born in Seattle, Washington, Derek spent most of his life on the East Coast. A graduate of Bowie State University (BS) and Johns Hopkins University (MS), he began his career in the private sector and subsequently worked in a variety of positions at the state and local levels in Maryland before he came to Virginia. Derek was "stingy" with the funds but always "declined" your request with a smile!

Derek's fingers were all over the ARHA pie! He will be sorely missed by everyone. Residents may remember him as "the Grinch" during Santa's Winter Wonderland – a role he relished playing every year. Derek is survived by his son DJ (Derek Scott McDaniel, Jr.) and a host of other relatives.

We Did Not See You Close Your Eyes

We did not see you close your eyes; we did not see you die,
All we knew was that you were gone, without a last goodbye.

It was sudden parting, too bitter to forget, only those who
Loved you, are the ones who will never forget.

The happy hours we once enjoyed, how sweet their memories
Still, but death has left a vacant place, this world can never fill.

Your life was one of kindly deeds, a helping hand for others' needs
Sincere and true in heart and mind, beautiful memories left behind.

- Author Unknown



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT KEY TO ARHA'S DEVELOPMENT

(Continued from the front page)

Tonye Huston-Sims, Madden

Tonye Huston-Sims is one of the Madden residents who have been meeting on Zoom. She and her husband have lived there for about four years. “We have a lot of issues here that need to be taken care of,” she said. “These houses were built in the 1940s and everything is old and out of date.”

She said she likes what she has seen of the plans so far. “The property is an eyesore right now and it needs to be gone. I’m looking forward to having modern buildings.”

She wonders how the developers will deal with Montgomery Street, which separates one side of the community from the other. “How are they going to deal with that,” she asked. That is still to be determined.

“I appreciate being involved in the process because we live here and know what we need. You want to feel like you played a part in this plan. We may not like devoting this much time to it, but we need to do it.”

Huston-Sims grew up traveling around the world as part of a military family. Her favorite place was Guam where she lived for five years. She has lived in all kinds of housing styles and is not happy with the current Madden conditions. But she also says the new development is going to be nice. “I think it’s time,” she said.

“Madden is the first thing people see when they come to Alexandria, so it needs to be beautiful.”

Relocation is months away, but Huston-Sims says she has already started looking at places to move. In the meantime, she is looking forward to the next meeting.



Members of the Samuel Madden Resident Engagement Committee

Cerrina Robinson, Madden

Cerrina Robinson grew up on ARHA properties and has lived at Madden for the past five years. She said she knows the redevelopment is all for the best, but when the buildings come down, she will miss them.

“I like the idea of new buildings because these are so old, and it’s good to upgrade, but at the same time you have memories in these houses, and that’s always sad to see those memories go away,” she said. “As much as I want a new place, right now we have a house, and with the new plan we will be in an apartment. That’s the way the community is going so you want to support that.”

Robinson feels it is especially important that residents have input on how the rebuilt property will look. “We have a say, and they can see how we want it, so we’re not just being given whatever they decide.”

Robinson has two daughters who share a bedroom, so she is hoping the bedroom size in the new apartments is larger, giving her children more space. But the most important thing to Robinson is that she believes the community will be safer.



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT KEY TO ARHA'S DEVELOPMENT

“Having a mixed-income community will make it safer but also, we’ll have a lot more people on the property to be aware of what’s going on. The people who live here now have similar backgrounds and are comfortable with that. But I like the idea of meeting new people. There will be more eyes on the community, hopefully with the same idea about safety,” she said.

As for amenities that get her excited, she said the community center, play area for the kids, and the possibility of a pool are at the top of the list. She noted that right now the wait to get in the pool at the rec center can be long.

“This plan is really a much better use for the space than we have now, Robinson said. “It means a lot more people can have affordable homes, and that’s a good thing with rents in Alexandria going up the way they are.”

Stella Amponsah, Ladrey

Stella Amponsah was quickly welcomed into the Ladrey community after moving in last June.

“I really like it here. I’m grateful how everyone welcomed me since I’m new here,” Amponsah said.

While she enjoys living at Ladrey, she admits more can be done to make it better for all residents.

“I am so excited for the updates. I’m disabled. I’m blind in one eye and use a walker. I need help crossing the street, so I would love to see a gym and a pool added to Ladrey, if possible. But I’m just excited for nicer units.” Amponsah said.

Amponsah also commented how great it is that ARHA is taking residents’ feedback into account for the plans at Ladrey.

“I was overwhelmed when I was asked to give feedback. It means a lot to me, “Amponsah said. “We are the ones who live here, we know what’s really going on. Since we experience what it’s like to live here, I’m glad our input is being taken seriously.”

Her one wish is for construction to start as soon as possible: “I say if the money and equipment and supplies are all there, let’s get started!”

Jerusalem Brown, Madden

Jerusalem Brown and her four children have lived at Madden for the past two years, and they are getting ready to move again when the planned redevelopment gets underway. She lived at another ARHA site, but when her family grew, she moved to Madden for a larger home.

She says the community center, park, and shops will be excellent features. As it stands now, there is space going unused, no parks or playgrounds, just vacant land.

“Home is what you make it, and we’re doing fine here, but the property could really use a makeover,” she said. “I like that the community will be diversified. I also think ARHA needs to consider the residents they allow to return. The ones who ARHA has had issues with probably should not be allowed back.”

Brown says Madden sits right between very nice buildings on one side and very old, decaying buildings on the other. She thinks the new Madden can look more like those nice buildings, maybe even nicer.

Brown participates in ARHA’s Family Self-Sufficiency program, which helps promote personal and economic self-sufficiency, and she hopes that when it comes time to relocate, she can find a townhouse. She said if she finds a place that she likes she might stay there and not return when the new property is built.

Brown also said she thinks it is great that so many of her fellow residents are involved in the planning. “I think it’s good that ARHA wants to get more than just one person’s opinion and we can work together to come up with something that works for everybody,” she said. “And if they want to include some townhouses in the mix, I’d be OK with that!”





Members of the Ladrey RFP Review Panel

Christine Walker, Ladrey

Christine Walker is anxiously awaiting the updates to Ladrey. The five-year resident is excited and ready for construction to begin.

“We need them to get started. We are ready!” Walker said.

When asked what updates she hopes are included, Walker stressed the importance of layout and functionality.

“For me, I hope they ensure the pull cords work and the doorways are set up wide enough for wheelchair and walker access. Right now, in this older building they are not an adequate size,” Walker said. “We also need dedicated spaces for senior citizen residents to congregate.”

Walker agrees with ARHA’s plan to involve residents in laying out what Ladrey needs most.

“Since we live here, we know best what our building needs.”

Sharee Talbert, Madden Resident

Sharee Talbert has lived at Madden for 10 years. She has five children, four of whom still live at home. She said this planned rebuild is long overdue.

“An upgrade is desperately beyond needed,” she said. “Many of the parts, like the pipes, are just so old and sometimes they are not reliable. I call maintenance a lot. They come out and fix the problem, but they’re just trying to keep these houses together until they can rebuild.”

She is very excited about the redevelopment plan but after hearing about the possibility for so long, she says she has to see it to believe it.

“When I moved in in 2012, I was told they were going to rebuild in 2014. This time it feels more real,” she said. “The most important issue to me is security, a playground with lights so the kids can play at night, and a buzzer system so people have to be let into the building by a resident, the same as you have at other apartment buildings.”

Like other residents, Talbert is especially interested in how large the bedrooms will be. She said she knows ARHA wants to put a lot of units on the site to make the best use of the land, but she is hoping that does not come at the expense of space in units.

She also said CEO Keith Pettigrew has told the resident committee that as long as he is in that chair, he will continue to focus on completing this rebuild. She is looking forward to seeing that promise fulfilled.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



ARHA's Employee of the Year, Denise Kafka, is the Senior Quality Control Specialist in Asset Management. Denise grew up as an Air Force "brat" and moved around a lot. She graduated from the University of Texas, Austin with a degree in philosophy. Denise came to ARHA 19 years ago as a temp in Asset Management. She always worked in Quality Control, but gradually assumed more responsibilities as she proved her skill set.

As Senior Quality Control Specialist, Denise is responsible for ensuring that ARHA is following all HUD regulations and guidelines for public housing and HCVP programs. She reviews all Asset Management files, including resident eligibility, move-in documents, calculations, inspections, and prepares files for audits. Denise prepares the Annual Plan, the Agency Plan, and the ACOP documents, and provides detailed demographic data that is used for determining needed services for ARHA residents.

Denise Kafka is the ultimate team player. She is always ready to help with any project and the first to volunteer for any ARHA community event. Denise gives 150% on every task and will work from dawn to dusk to get each element correct. She has a strong work ethic and expects nothing less from those around her. Most importantly, Denise is passionate about ARHA's mission and not only understands the importance of providing safe and affordable housing, but also the impact we have on our residents' self-sufficiency and quality of life.

Congratulations, Denise!!



RESIDENTS OF THE YEAR

SADE AFINNI

MIDDLE SCHOOL/ELEMENTARY YOUTH RESIDENT OF THE YEAR

Sade Afinni is a model straight A student, who attends Jefferson Houston K-8 School. She has always excelled academically and displayed a love for learning and helping others. At Jefferson Houston, she is an active member of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), a college and career readiness program, that provides students with an opportunity to participate in seminars and activities that teach about the college application process and career options. She is also enrolled in all Honors Classes and currently has a 3.975 GPA. As a part of the LINK Club program at Jefferson Houston, she demonstrates leadership by assisting other students with their work and tutoring them in areas where they may be struggling. Her peers and teachers describe her as someone who is responsible, always engaged, and always willing to participate and help with anything that is asked of her. Sade has a lot of interests and is still contemplating her future career endeavors, but right now is leaning toward the engineering field or becoming a lawyer. There is no doubt that whichever path she chooses, she has a bright future ahead of her, and is destined for success. For all of these reasons, Sade Afinni is the perfect choice for our Middle School/Elementary Youth Resident of the Year.



ABDELRAHMAN ABDELSADIG

HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH RESIDENT OF THE YEAR



Abdelrahman Abdelsadig is a senior at Alexandria City High School, who has come a long way since his family immigrated to the US from Saudi Arabia in 2007. Abdelrahman was a first grader, whose first language was Arabic, and he depended on his teachers and friends to help him learn English. Now, not only is he fluent in both languages, but he is an all-star in the classroom and in the wrestling ring. Abdelrahman joins an elite few students who have earned a QuestBridge National College Match Scholarship. This scholarship will allow him to attend the school of his choice with a full four-year scholarship. Abdelrahman has decided to attend Colby College in Maine, and pursue a career in the fields of science, technology, and math. In addition, he is in the top 10% of his class and is an active member of the “We the People” debate team. Abdelrahman sees himself as a leader and tries to be a role model for others. He realizes that it is motivational and inspirational for others around him to see someone that looks like him earn such a great honor. For these reasons, Abdelrahman Abdelsadig is the perfect choice for our High School Youth Resident of the Year.



RESIDENTS OF THE YEAR

KIA TERRY

RUBY TUCKER RESIDENT OF THE YEAR



Kia Terry has overcome a few challenges throughout her lifetime, including domestic violence, and battling breast cancer while in the midst of a pandemic, but she has remained resilient and not let those barriers deter her from her goals. She completed the Together We Bake Program – which is a 16-week empowerment and employment program. Additionally, she completed her GED, and a number of other trainings to get her on the road to self-sufficiency. She was selected for the Suited for Change program which in addition to acquiring a new wardrobe, she was allowed opportunities to expand her workforce and interview skills that led to her current full-time employment. Her friends describe her as a warm and loving person, with a positive spirit and a willingness to help others. She always looks out for her neighbors in their time of need and ensures everyone is taken care of – whether it is food baskets or coats for their children. Kia has also been an active member of the ARHA Resident Association and served as an Officer. Her good nature also extends across state lines, where she also earned a Kindness Award from the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia. Kia is a natural born leader and an individual with a heart of gold and a desire to change the trajectory of her life and her children’s lives. She is an exemplary ARHA resident and for these reasons, Kia Terry is the perfect choice for our Ruby Tucker Resident of the Year Award.

STEVEN HINES

MELVIN MILLER SENIOR RESIDENT OF THE YEAR

Steven Hines has been a valued and committed resident at Ladrey High rise for over 9 years. Ever since he moved into the building he has served and assisted his Ladrey peers, ARHA staff, and the community. If you ever need anything, he is always there to assist and lend a helping hand. He assists with distributing information to residents and making sure they have access to things they need. Mr. Hines is a member of the Ladrey Mobile Market Food Committee, where he helps with sorting, prepping, and distributing perishable and non-perishable items donated by the Capital Area Food Bank and other food establishments and churches. He also currently serves as the 2020-2022 President of the Ladrey Advisory Board, where he leads a variety events, activities, and resident meetings at Ladrey – many of which had to be modified or limited due to the pandemic. He continuously looks out for the seniors and adults with disabilities on a daily basis. In addition, Mr. Hines serves as a floor captain conducting safety checks on peers and updates staff on the health and well-being of residents when the offices are closed. He is a great asset to the Ladrey community, and ARHA is lucky to have him as a resident. For these reasons, Steven Hines is the perfect choice for our Melvin Miller Senior Resident of the Year Award.



RESIDENTS OF THE YEAR



BEVERLY ANDERSON, ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH COMMUNITY CHAMPION OF THE YEAR AWARD

ARHA's mission is to provide safe and affordable housing, but often it is not just about the housing. Our residents have a lot of other needs at various times, and we are fortunate to have wonderful community partners that often go above and beyond to make sure those needs are met. One of those individuals is Mrs. Beverly Anderson, the Business Manager and Director for the outreach programs, at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Ms. Anderson was instrumental in setting up a system with ARHA staff to provide financial assistance for individuals who may be facing eviction. We can always contact her, and she will not only pledge money from St. Joseph, but work with us to identify other churches or organizations that may be able to help. St. Joseph also sponsors a yearly coat drive and maintains a clothing closet.

She supports the existing coat drive that ARHA sponsors with Firefighters and Friends and will assist in getting clothing and other household items for families in need throughout the year. St. Joseph's has provided food baskets at Thanksgiving and gift cards for food. Ms. Anderson has even aided with non-traditional items such as paying for a single mother to get her car back after it was towed, or for a resident to take a licensing exam to become a nurse or CNA. She has made it her mission to serve and be of service to others, which ultimately helps us in our mission to serve our residents. In recognition of your dedication to others, we are proud to recognize you as our Community Champion of the Year.





HEY ALEXANDRIA!!!

JOIN US FOR A FREE COMMUNITY COOKOUT AND RESOURCE FAIR

- TUES. 4/19 SOUTHERN TOWERS, 4901 SEMINARY RD.
- THUR. 4/21 449 N. ARMISTEAD ST. (PARK)
- TUES. 4/26 RUBY TUCKER, 322 TANCIL CT.
- THUR. 4/28 269 S. WHITING ST. (PARKING LOT)
- TUES. 5/3 CHARLES HOUSTON, 901 WYTHE ST.
- THUR. 5/5 3963 OLD DOMINION BLVD (PARKING LOT)
- TUES. 5/10 MASON AT VAN DORN, 140 S. VAN DORN



TIME: 5:30P.M. - 7:30P.M.



RAIN DATE FOR EACH COOKOUT IS THE FOLLOWING DAY

Questions? Contact:
 Michael Johnson @ 703.746.5571 or
 Faith Spillman @ 703.746.6284

- Learn about City services.
- Info on programs for youth and families.
- Free food, giveaways, and vaccinations available.

Partners:

