MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CEO :

As we transition from summer to fall, the change of seasons offers us an opportunity to look back at how CHA spent its summer and glance forward at what’s new and exciting.

CHA residents – from youth to seniors – had a busy summer learning, working and celebrating with neighbors and friends. From summer jobs for youth, to our annual Take Flight event for college-bound youth to the well-loved senior music festivals, residents benefitted from the many summer programs and opportunities made available to them.

You can see for yourself in this latest issue of our newsletter.

Our staff also kept busy, working on new developments that will bring more housing opportunities to communities across the city.

Modernization of a senior building in Lincoln Park with a proposed new affordable apartment building was unveiled, while most recently, CHA celebrated with its partners the opening of three new developments that support housing options for women experiencing homelessness, senior apartments that are paired with a public library and a unique mixed-use development that brings CHA and market rate apartments and a Target store, adding to the vibrancy of the Rogers Park neighborhood.

We’ve also been busy with new initiatives that build on our work to provide greater digital access to residents and proudly joined new partners to announce additional support for the Flexible Housing Pool which makes possible new supportive housing with services for individuals who have experienced homelessness.

As you can see, our work reflects the broad range of programs, initiatives, partnerships and developments that allow us to assist a diverse group of residents and communities.

On behalf of everyone at CHA, I want to extend my best wishes and thank you for your support and partnership. By working together, we will continue to help CHA residents make important strides and while we also plan and deliver new housing that benefits our neighborhoods and city.

Regards,

James L. Bebley
Acting Chief Executive Officer
CHA officials joined La Casa Norte, the City of Chicago Department of Housing, local elected officials and members of the community in September to dedicate Pierce House, which brings 25 units of supportive housing to the Humboldt Park community.

The one and two-bedroom apartments are supported by CHA project-based vouchers and will be leased to individuals and families from the CHA waiting list and Chicago's Coordinated Entry System.

Other support for the $18.5 million project came from the City of Chicago, which provided Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds and a loan. The City of Chicago's Department of Family and Support Services assisted with funding for wraparound supportive services for residents.

The 25 housing units at Pierce House are part of a larger neighborhood investment that also includes space for La Casa Norte's social, community and administrative service offices on the first and second floor, along with a nutrition center with a food pantry and teaching kitchen. The new center also has space that will enable La Case Norte to provide programs that offer clients employment readiness and life skills. The development is anchored by a newly-opened Howard Brown Health Center which operates a federally-funded, qualified health center on the ground floor of the property.

“We are pleased to join our partners to dedicate this development and know that we all share the common goal of providing permanent housing with supportive services for some of our most vulnerable residents,” said Cary Steinbuck, Deputy Chief of Property Rental Assistance and Acquisition for CHA. “For years, La Casa Norte has been at the forefront of helping Chicago youth who are experiencing homelessness by offering them a safe haven. Pierce House will continue this important work and be able to reach even more people in need.”

Chicago Department of Housing Commissioner Marisa Novara said: “Pierce House represents the impact that public-private interagency collaborations have when focused on a unifying goal to improve lives. Pierce House is not simply a place to live; it inspires, sparks hope, and helps every tenant change the trajectory of their life. It is a home.”

Vicki Hadaway, Interim Executive Director of La Casa Norte, said: “La Casa Norte dreams of a world where all people have dignity, communities thrive, and everyone belongs. With the opening of Pierce House, La Casa Norte and Chicago Housing Authority are taking one giant step in creating that reality and ending homelessness for 25 youth and youth families. This housing will allow youth to thrive and have a safe place to live, develop and grow.”
CHA joined Sarah’s Circle, the City of Chicago Department of Housing, and development partners to break ground for Sarah’s on Sheridan Apartments in the Uptown community on Sept. 10. The new apartment building will provide 38 units of permanent supportive housing to help women who are homeless and women who are at risk of becoming homeless, gain economic stability.

CHA provided 18 project-based vouchers for the project through its Property Rental Assistance (PRA) program. Additional support came from the City of Chicago, which allocated $3.5 million in TIF funds early in the building development process.

“CHA is a proud partner in Sarah’s on Sheridan, which will help women find the safety, stability and support they need as they rebuild their lives,” said Cary Steinbuck, Deputy Chief of CHA’s Property Rental Assistance Program. “Our investment in this building is an investment in people’s lives and is another example of CHA’s commitment to providing housing to some of our city’s most vulnerable residents. By working with our partners at the City of Chicago, we continue to make strides in ending homelessness in our city.”

“CHA and Sarah’s Circle have a shared vision of ending homelessness for women in Chicago. We truly value our partnership and look forward to increasing our capacity to house more, very vulnerable women,” said Kathy Ragnar, Executive Director of Sarah’s Circle.

In addition to providing safe, quality housing, Sarah’s Circle will provide on-site supportive services that include case management, clinical services, community programs and food services. Residents will be able to access educational programming and clinical services, including art therapy, through Sarah’s Circle’s Daytime Support Center.

The building is owned by Sarah’s Circle, a non-profit organization founded in 1979 in the Uptown neighborhood. Sarah’s Circle’s assists women who are homeless, especially those who have suffered from domestic violence, violence on the streets, mental illness, substance abuse and other traumatic experiences such as sexual assault.
Plans Unveiled for Rehabbed Senior Housing and New Apartments in Lincoln Park

CHA and its development partners shared plans with the community and later received initial approval from CHA’s Board of Commissioners for an exciting project in the Lincoln Park community that includes the redevelopment of Edith Spurlock Sampson Apartments and the construction of a new six-story apartment building with 80 units, including up to 50 for families from the CHA waiting list.

The project, supported by up to $16 million in CHA funds, will bring renovated apartments and new shared community space and amenities for seniors at the Edith Spurlock Sampson Apartments buildings at 2640 and 2720 N. Sheffield Avenue along with a new construction building linked to the two senior buildings at 2700 N. Sheffield Avenue that will provide affordable apartments for families in Lincoln Park. It was approved at the July 16 CHA Board meeting. The project will also require approval by the Chicago City Council.

“We are excited about this new development concept that will link two senior buildings and a family building to create a strong community anchor,” said Ann McKenzie, Chief Development Officer at CHA. “This unique project demonstrates how CHA remains committed to its current residents, as well as to finding new ways to create more opportunities for Chicago families who need affordable housing. It will also allow CHA to provide an enhanced quality of living for seniors while offering new rental housing in Lincoln Park.”

CHA, through a joint venture with PIRHL Developers, LLC will co-develop the development. PIRHL is an Ohio-based developer of affordable housing whose principals have more than four decades of affordable housing experience. The CHA Board previously approved the selection of PIRHL as co-developer for the project.

The project includes the redevelopment of the existing Spurlock Sampson towers with 405 units of senior housing and the construction of a new 80-unit, six-story apartment building with two floors of amenity spaces that will be linked to the two senior apartment towers.

The new amenity spaces for seniors will include a large dining/community room, exterior courtyard, a common “living room” and reception areas, meeting room, computer room, second floor laundry rooms, outdoor porch, coffee lounge and game room, and an exercise room. The development will also include 50 surface parking spaces, of which at least eight will be accessible. The family apartments will be a mix of one, two and three -bedroom units and separate amenity spaces will be built for residents of the family apartment building, including a community “living room,” party room, activity room, and bike storage.
This summer, CHA offered 12 different summer internship and career-building programs for youth ages 13 to 24 through the Summer Youth Employment Program, which is part of the City of Chicago’s One Summer Chicago initiative. Some 2,432 CHA youth – from both public housing and Housing Choice Voucher families - participated in paid programming at 360 worksites across the city. More than $2.4 million in total wages were earned by participants who accomplished nearly 350,000 hours worked. Some of the programs included: the Game & Design program, where students learned how to create games and explore graphic design from an award-winning game designer within DePaul’s School of Design; “Hammer, Meet Nail!”- where CHA students gained skills in construction trades, art production and community engagement; the TV and Screenwriting program, where students learned how to write original screenplays from award-winning screenwriters within DePaul University’s School of Cinematic Arts; and DePaul’s Documentary Filmmaking for Girls, where young CHA students learned the art of filmmaking.

The programs are intended to provide youth with a sense of the many different opportunities that await them while giving them valuable work experience during the summer.

Thank you to the many partners who provided these opportunities and guidance, instruction, support and even some fun to the young people this summer. The future, does indeed, look bright for them. 

Take a look at some of the experiences here
CHA Recognized for Combatting Student Homelessness

CHA and its partners celebrated the opening on Sept. 12 of an innovative mixed-use development that combines a new Target store and affordable/market-rate apartments in Rogers Park.

The result of a partnership between CHA, Three Corners Development/Iceberg Development and the Lightengale Group, the Concord at Sheridan is a transit-oriented development located near Sheridan Road and Devon Avenue steps from the CTA's Loyola Red Line Station.

The seven-story development includes 111 apartments, 30,000 square-feet of retail space and 133 below-grade indoor parking spaces. Sixty-five of the apartments are supported by CHA's Property Rental Assistance program to guarantee long-term affordability and will be leased to renters from the CHA wait list; the remaining will be market-rate rentals. A new CHA senior center and community room have also been built that include a private rooftop deck with terrace and seating that provides outdoor green space for the more than 500 residents at the adjacent Caroline Hedger Senior Apartments.

Joining CHA Chief Development Officer Ann McKenzie at the event were 49th Ward Ald. Maria Hadden; Christine Moran, Managing Director of Multifamily Financing for the Illinois Housing Development Authority; Lightengale Group President Virginia Pace; Jim Bergman, Principal of Iceberg Development; Dan Levin, founder and Chairman of the Habitat Company; and Mirko Jokanovic, Vice-President of Credit Capital LLC.

"The Concord at Sheridan reiterates CHA's commitment to providing mixed-income housing opportunities across the City of Chicago," McKenzie said. "We are excited to bring this development to Rogers Park, where residents will benefit from a thriving, vibrant community."

Pace said: "As much as we know the great need for affordable housing in our communities, we sadly know that there are just not enough funds to fill the need. Importantly, this wonderful project could never have come to fruition without the Chicago Housing Authority's vision to think more creatively and use its resources assets to leverage more affordable housing. What used to be a parking lot is, today, an underground parking lot, and above that is new retail and affordable and market rate housing - greatly benefitting and complementing the diverse community of Rogers Park."

The new building replaced a parking lot and the outdated senior center community room at Hedger, whose residents now have 25 percent more parking spaces available in the newly-constructed garage.

The project created 450 construction and related jobs, as well as 80 permanent jobs. The project estimates that more than $650,000 will be generated annually in new property and sales tax revenue. Target serves as the anchor tenant in the retail space with a 23,000-square-foot flexible format store. Target is committed to hiring locally and seeks input from the community on items it stocks.
On September 28, CHA’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program hosted the 10th annual Owner Symposium at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place where almost 1,000 real estate professionals spent the day networking and learning about topics from property taxes to fair housing, rent determination and property and business management.

The Symposium continues to be the premier event for Chicago property owners, managers and real estate investors and offers a forum to learn about and share best practices.

In welcoming attendees to the event, Chief Housing Choice Voucher Officer Cheryl Burns, said: “You are all important partners in helping to support investment in our neighborhoods, preserving affordable housing and building stronger communities, and we truly appreciate your commitment to improving your business.”

The HCV Program has expanded in recent years, providing greater access to affordable rental housing in every neighborhood in Chicago. Today there are voucher holders living in all of Chicago’s 77 community areas in properties owned by a diverse group who benefitted from the information provided at the Symposium.

CHA Acting CEO James L. Bebley said “Creating healthy, vibrant communities and an improved quality of life for all of our families is paramount to CHA. By continuing to bring together and educate real estate professionals on trends in the rental housing market and other vital issues, we are able to not only help the growth of many small businesses but also support the long-term success of our Housing Choice Voucher families.”

The day-long event attracted a diverse and engaged group of real estate professionals and was made possible with support from the following sponsors: Community Investment Corporation, BankFinancial, BMO Harris Bank, Griffin Gallery & Interiors, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, KSN and Manage Chicago, Inc.
On Sept. 23, CHA joined Evergreen Real Estate Group, the City of Chicago Department of Housing, Ald. Jim Gardiner (45th), architect John Ronan and the community to celebrate the opening of Independence Apartments, a mixed-income apartment building that brings affordable housing for seniors to the Northwest Side.

The apartment building at 4022 W. Elston Ave. provides 30 CHA apartments for renters from the CHA waiting list and 14 apartments at affordable rents and combines quality housing for seniors with a new Chicago Public Library (CPL) Independence Branch library that serves building residents and the entire community.

“It is extremely gratifying to see how our efforts to create new housing opportunities and community amenities are so well received,” said CHA Chief Development Officer Ann McKenzie. “We knew from the outset of this project that this innovative co-located development would have an important impact on not just the seniors who will benefit from the new housing but the entire community who uses the library.”

One of three co-located CHA/CPL developments built across the city, Independence Apartments features 36 one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units. Building amenities for tenants include a fitness room, laundry room, balconies in each unit, an outdoor terrace.

Designed by award-winning architecture firm John Ronan Architects and built through a partnership with CHA, Evergreen Real Estate Group, and Leopardo, the building serves as a community anchor along a vibrant stretch of Elston Avenue.

The apartment building was also supported by Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credits, allocated by the City of Chicago.

“Independence Apartments is the type of collaboration we need to increase affordable housing citywide while also expanding resources committed to homelessness prevention efforts,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “Through comprehensive investment strategies and public/private partnerships, we will not only address homelessness, we will also strengthen our communities and make neighborhoods safer for every family and resident.”

“This will be a wonderful community asset for generations to come,” Department of Housing Commissioner Marisa Novara said. “We need to continue to develop and support innovative, creative solutions like these to address not only affordable housing needs but also bolster social connections and strengthen neighborhoods throughout the city.”

The other two co-located CHA/CPL developments are located in the West Ridge community, with Northtown Apartments and Northtown Branch Library at 6800 N. Western Ave. and Taylor Street Apartments and Little Italy Branch Library at 1342 W. Taylor St., which is part of CHA’s ongoing redevelopment of the Roosevelt Square community.
A round of applause is in order! Independence Apartments and Independence Branch Library has been awarded the 2019 Readers’ Choice Award for Mixed-Use developments by Affordable Housing Finance. Developed by Evergreen Real Estate Group and unique in its design and concept, the co-located development that combines affordable senior housing and a branch library has already been a winner for the community. CHA is proud to see the housing finance community recognize this important mixed-use development. We thank everyone who voted for this well-deserved project!

This project and the two other co-located housing and branch library projects are also winners in the eyes of Chicago Tribune Architecture Critic Blair Kamin who said the projects show “how public housing and libraries can coexist and be visually stunning.”

Read his full critique
Closing the digital divide for low-income residents in Chicago is an important effort with CHA and the City of Chicago working on a number of initiatives and partnerships in recent years that expand digital access. These efforts will be supported further now that CHA has been designated as a ConnectHomeUSA participant for 2019-2020. CHA will work closely with ConnectHomeUSA program partner EveryoneOn to bolster CHA’s existing digital initiatives. ConnectHomeUSA is a public-private collaboration to narrow the digital divide for families with school-age children who live in federally subsidized housing. ConnectHomeUSA creates a platform for community leaders, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private industry to join together and produce locally-tailored solutions for narrowing the digital divide by supporting free or low-cost broadband access, devices, and digital literacy training, working to ensure that high-speed internet follows children from their classrooms to their homes. Find more here.

CHA proudly joined its partners in the City of Chicago and Cook County Flexible Housing Pool (FHP) for the announcement on August 22 that $1.8 million in new private and public investments are being made to the pool, doubling the funding available to support efforts to reduce homelessness.

The new funding includes the first private investments in the program, with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois and Advocate Aurora Health investing a combined $1.5 million over the next three years to support the City and its partners’ collaborative efforts to align housing, tenancy and wraparound support services for those most at-risk for homelessness. Also, UI Health has pledged a $281,000 contribution this year and $350,000 for FY 2020 for the FHP.

CHA provided $800,000 to support the FHP when it was created in 2018, with other $500,000 in funding coming from the City of Chicago’s Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund (AHOF) and $500,000 in 2018 City corporate funds.

Read the news release here
PRESERVATION PAYS OFF: LOFTS ON ARTHINGTON AWARDED THE 2019 LANDMARKS ILLINOIS RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS FOUNDATION PRESERVATION AWARD FOR REHABILITATION

One of the most significant preservation projects in which CHA has invested in recent years has been recognized by Landmarks Illinois with a preservation award. Lofts on Arthington transformed the historic Sears, Roebuck & Co's catalog printing building on Chicago's West Side into 181 units of affordable housing. CHA's investment in the project helped bring new life to the building and provide homes for low-income families.

Read more about the award
In August, the CHA Investment Division visited Austin Grown – a West Side gardening project for troubled youth made possible through a $5,000 Chicago Housing Consulting Services (CHCS) grant - to experience all of the benefits that the project offers.

Austin Grown - part of BUILD, INC., which has helped thousands of young people transform their lives over the past 50 years - serves 15 youth ages 13-24 who exhibit poor academic performance, truancy, or behavioral problems in school. They may be gang-affiliated and live in an unstable or unsafe family situation. The program looks to build on the success of a BUILD, INC. community garden at the Austin campus.

BUILD, INC., was awarded the competitive grant by CHCS, CHA's 501c4 affiliate, which provides competitive grants to small Chicago community groups.

The Investment team interacted with the youth, painted the vegetable garden signage, and participated in a hand-holding reflection on the experiences shared over the day.

“It was very impactful as the team was able to experience the outcomes of the grant awards and meet the people that it touches,” said Chief Investment Officer Michael Gurgone.

Judith Hill, Senior Manager of Grant Administration, said: “BUILD, INC., has an amazing community space, The Iris Garden that is open to the community and volunteers. Visiting The Iris Garden was peaceful, full of a variety of fruits and vegetables, vibrant and fun! This example of a community-led and built meeting space is so vitally important to encourage neighborly meet-ups and for knowing each other better. After harvest, the community receives the grown food for no charge. What a great way to bring together and unify neighbors!”

For photos, click here
Acclaimed filmmaker Jordan Peele’s “Candyman” remake began filming on location at the Cabrini-Green Rowhomes in August. And CHA students participating in the DePaul Documentary Filmmaking for Girls program were able to shadow the crew from MGM Pictures and Peele’s Monkeypaw Productions.

The original Candyman, a horror movie released in 1992, was filmed at the former Cabrini-Green development. The sequel returns to the Cabrini neighborhood and is the brainchild of Peele, the actor, comedian and filmmaker who won an Academy Award last year for Best Original Screenplay. A dozen students from the DePaul filmmaking class, which is exclusively for young women who are CHA residents, watched and observed the production of the eagerly-anticipated motion picture, due out June 12, 2020.

“I don’t have the words to properly express how grateful I am for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the young women in our program,” said Liliane Calfee, DePaul’s Program Director for Documentary Filmmaking for Girls. “It was hands-down the most enriching film industry experience they’ve ever had. We’re all still blown away that we got face-time with lead actor Yahya Abdul-Mateen; director Nia DaCosta; producing partner Ian Cooper, as well as so many other vital roles including second assistant director, make-up and hair, props, special effects, set design, transportation and set photographer.”

Calfee said one of the most poignant conversations the girls had was with the woman who runs craft services.

“She started her career years back as a single mom, running a catering business, and is now the first black woman foreman in the union,” Calfee said. “Not only did she feel so relatable, it really helped them to understand that there are many different ‘ins’ into the film industry.”
They got their groove on! Hundreds of seniors danced the day away at the 10th Annual Senior Music Festivals in August.

The always-popular events drew more than 500 seniors to each of the three summertime musical celebrations, this year held at Major Lawrence Apartments in Englewood; Edith Spurlock Apartments in Lincoln Park and Wicker Park Apartments in Wicker Park. As they have over the last decade, seniors enjoyed food, dancing and an afternoon of fun. Bus transportation, as always, was also provided.

“The senior fests have been among our most well-attended and popular events throughout the last 10 years,” said Venis Frazier, Director of Senior Services. “The seniors can relax on a beautiful summer day, enjoy the music and celebrate life. We hope to keep it going for another 10 years.”

You can watch the fun here!
LONGTIME DEARBORN RESIDENT GETS BUILDING DEDICATION

The social room of the Dearborn Homes public housing development was dedicated to former resident Irene Hughes on Aug. 12 – her 103rd birthday.

"Mother Hughes" lived at the CHA development for 55 years, from March 1, 1959 to July 30, 2014. She now lives with her daughter in Bolingbrook.

“She is a very nice person and has cared about her community from the beginning,” said Venis Frazier, CHA’s Director of Senior Services. "If she saw that kids weren’t doing what they were supposed to, she’d let them know. And she is as lively as ever. It’s a beautiful thing.”

Hughes was born on Aug. 12, 1915. Besides her influence on young people, she was quite a walker in her prime – able to do so quickly and for long distances. Residents Monday talked about struggling to keep up with her.

The plaque read: “Mother Hughes was not only a profound difference-maker in her community, but she also called on her fellow residents to actively participate in the well-being and habitability of their community. Her unselfish, positive and influential impact on her immediate neighborhood and surrounding community has allowed her to be bestowed with the title, ‘Agent of Change.’ Her contributions will never be forgotten.”

IT’S ALL HAPPENING AT THE ZOO!

More than 400 CHA children headed back to school but not before a trip to Brookfield Zoo where they enjoyed a full day of fun and received backpacks filled with essential school supplies.

The annual event, sponsored by Pangea Real Estate, ensures that the children have one last summer outing and are ready to return to the classroom with the supplies they need.

Take a look at the fun here