

St. Paul Public Housing Agency

RESIDENT INITIATIVES

Opening a Window to Opportunity



The PHA's Resident Initiatives Department works to strengthen the Agency's role and participation in all contracts, grants, partnerships and programs that promote supportive services, and resident economic development and self-sufficiency. The department is also charged with evaluating the PHA's participation in current supportive services programming, and determining where programming might be expanded based on need and available resources.

Mission Statement

"The PHA helps families and individuals with low incomes achieve greater stability and self reliance by providing safe, affordable, quality housing, and links to community services."



"Thanks to the walking group, I've been able to do more with my grandkids and I feel more energized and healthier than I have in a very long time" ~ Drusilla Garrett~ Dunedin Hi-Rise~

Resident Councils

Each resident council works to increase resident involvement in their public housing communities, and empower residents to take action to achieve personal goals of self-sufficiency. Through a partnership with the PHA, the Presidents Council and the City Wide Residents Council are currently in the third year of a three-year \$724,500 federal grant focused on Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS). These federal funds have allowed the PHA and the resident leadership councils the opportunity to work with ROSS Grant Service Coordinators who provide digital literacy courses, hands-on employment skills preparation, and career fairs for residents. Between June 2015 and February 2017, the ROSS Grant Service Coordinators have helped 144 residents find employment.



~Mt. Airy Job Fair ~September 2016



~Walk with a Doc Walking Event at Neil Hi-Rise~ October 2016~

Allina Health - Walk with a Doc

In 2015, the PHA and Allina Health partnered together to implement Walk with a Doc events for public housing residents. Walk with a Doc is a nationwide program that encourages people of all abilities to engage in physical activity through regular group walks. A guest healthcare provider joins the walking group and leads a discussion on a health-related topic as participants walk and roll through their neighborhood. Whether they rely on feet, strollers, canes, wheelchairs, or other walking aids; all are welcome to join and move more! Since October 2015, 118 public housing residents have participated in a total of seven (7) walking events.

Public Entity Innovation Grant (PEIG) for Recycling

In 2016, Saint Paul-Ramsey County's Department of Environmental Health awarded the PHA \$96,500 in PEIG funding to revitalize resident recycling efforts over the next two years. PEIG funding has made it possible for PHA staff to provide residents with increased education on waste management, reenergize resident participation in community recycling initiatives, increase youth engagement in recycling, and pilot an organics collection program at Dunedin Terrace.



~New Recycling Bins at all PHA Sites~

Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

A multi-year grant from Minnesota's Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) provides funds for activities and services for Saint Paul PHA residents, through a partnership between the PHA and the Saint Paul-Ramsey County Department of Public Health. The PHA's Hi-Rise Presidents Council and City Wide Residents Council help plan and carry out these initiatives which focus on policy, systems and environment change. SHIP encourages and supports residents who want to improve their health through opportunities for healthy eating, more active lifestyles, and reduced tobacco use.



~SHIP Activities Support Healthy Living~

African Economic Development Solutions (AEDS)

Beginning in 2016, AEDS partnered with the PHA to offer two small business training programs for public housing residents. Twelve (12) public housing residents, including an 11 year-old currently developing a company to spread love through unique merchandising, have successfully completed the program. Participants developed key business management skills, crafted their business model, completed business and financial plans, and learned strategies for survival and profitability.



~One on One Training with AEDS~ January 2017~

University of Minnesota Extension Programs: SNAP-Ed Pilot Project


In March 2016, the PHA and University of Minnesota Extension Programs (UMN Extension) began a SNAP-Ed Pilot Project to increase resident access to healthy foods and physical activity at Dunedin Terrace and Hi-Rise. In July 2016, the partnership led to the creation of a Dunedin Health Action Team (DHAT) comprised of Dunedin residents, PHA staff, and UMN Extension staff. The DHAT members are successfully working together to identify and implement healthy living options for Dunedin residents. In January 2017, the DHAT team learned that they were chosen to be a recipient of a University of Minnesota: Healthy Eating and Activity across the Lifespan (HEAL) Grant. HEAL Grant funds will be used to continue the DHAT team's work for an additional eighteen (18) months.



~Dunedin Health Action Team (DHAT) at the Growing Westside Farmers Market~ October 2016~

University of Minnesota Extension Programs: Ramsey County Master Gardeners Program: RCMG

RCMG has provided direct support and leadership to the public housing resident community gardens since 2012. Over four Master Gardeners have volunteered numerous hours to assist in building the resident gardening program. Over the years, RCMG has provided several on site basic gardening lectures at the hi-rises, as well as hands on training and support to resident gardeners. Over 206 raised garden beds have been established in the hi-rises and family development.



“When gardening I feel free. I feel like I’m growing with the seeds, it relaxes me and makes me feel important to the earth”
~ Wabasha Resident~

“What I enjoy about gardening is I get exercise, fresh foods, I save money, and I can choose all kinds of good varieties to grow. It’s convenient (I don’t have to go to the market), I can work with friends, and it also brings me happiness!” ~McDonough Resident~

“Gardening is calming, relaxing, I enjoy planting the seeds and watching them grow! Dad grew gardens, I picked green beans, squash and all. To me, growing vegetables equals life, how it starts to the whole stage! It brings back memories of my dad, I can hear him say “Don’t plant that here, too early to pick”” ~Mt. Airy Resident~

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