

HOUSING HEADLINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE BETHLEHEM HOUSING AUTHORITY

IN THE
FALL 2023
ISSUE

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 BHA is now on Facebook.
Look for us and like us!

MEET THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE BETHLEHEM HOUSING AUTHORITY IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE the appointment of our new Executive Director, John Ritter. Mr. Ritter joined BHA in 2012 as Assistant Superintendent in the Maintenance department. In 2018, he was promoted to Superintendent. More change came in 2020 when he accepted the position of Deputy Executive Director and briefly held the position of Acting Executive Director for a period of time. In May of 2023, he was appointed by the Board of Commissioners as the new Executive Director.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have had many changes since our last newsletter! With COVID thankfully behind us, we can now concentrate on rebuilding. By that, I mean, that BHA is looking into the future to improve our properties as well as build new properties. As we have seen daily, there is a housing crisis in our hometown of Bethlehem with the homeless population growing and the housing market reaching maximum capacity, we feel that BHA can help.

BHA is in partnership with the City of Bethlehem as well as consultants and other partners to create a path for additional affordable housing. With that in mind, BHA is currently working toward converting the First Tee Building in the Marvine Development into 12 new public housing units. There will be 12 one-bedroom units with two of those units being ADA accessible. Although we do not have a definite ground-breaking date, we expect the units to be completed by 2025.

While we may have challenging times, we're excited about rebuilding and creating the future of Bethlehem Housing Authority. All of us at BHA would like to see the tenants and the staff work together and build the best community possible!

I would like to thank our staff, tenants, and our dedicated board of commissioners for all their valuable input as we strive to create welcoming, safe, and beautiful developments.

In closing, for you, I hope that you are also in the process of rebuilding as well. I hope that in the coming months, you will take time to learn a new skill, take up a new hobby or make a conscious effort to get to know your neighbors.

John Ritter

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy
not on fighting the old, but building the new." –Socrates

CONSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

■ Curt Kichline

One of the many responsibilities is keeping our properties in good condition. This is done through day-to-day routine maintenance, work done in apartments during vacancy turnover and, at some point a major renovation. Some things, however, cannot be corrected even with a major renovation. Conditions such as population density, room sizes, storage and parking are very difficult, if not impossible, to remedy during a renovation. These items are typical of older housing developments, such as our Pembroke development. BHA was established in 1939 and Pembroke was built in 1942, which is over 80 years ago. The thought process and design standards for housing has changed since then, and not just with public housing, but all types of homes. In the 1940's parking was not a big concern, as 80 years not many public housing residents owned a car, whereas today a household may have more than one car.

HUD realized these problems with older properties and has introduced a program called Choice Neighborhoods, which is a program that provides funding to demolish and then develop new housing. We have partnered with the City of Bethlehem and in June submitted an application for a Choice Neighborhoods planning grant. This is a competitive grant, so our application will be scored on many categories related to the city, the Pembroke development, employment opportunities, population data, access to social/health programs and the surrounding Stefko Boulevard/Pembroke Road corridor.

We will find out in December if we are one of the agencies chosen to receive a grant. If we are, this initial grant is a 2-year grant used for planning, economic, social, environmental, and engineering studies. Once those items are completed, another application is submitted for the implementation, or construction grant.

The implementation grant is also a competitive grant and if we are successful, would be a major undertaking. A construction phasing strategy would be utilized so new apartments are constructed and ready for occupancy before residents are moved out of existing apartments. The time frame for this type of project is 5 to 8 years into the future, but when completed will be a dramatic improvement for the Pembroke development, our residents, and the surrounding community as a whole.

Over Income (OI) Implementations

EFFECTIVE JUNE 14, 2023, HUD has required public housing authorities to implement changes for over-income families regardless of rent choice (Flat or Income-Based rent). This change that is triggered by an annual or interim reexamination will entail a 24-month grace period, immediately followed by a tenancy termination period not to exceed 6 months.

What does this mean? Families who are determined to be over income during a re-examination (annual or interim) will be notified with an initial letter within 30 days of the reported change. Thereafter, residents will be notified again at the conclusion of the first 12-month grace period and at the conclusion of the 24-month grace period. Notice for both letters will also be within 30 days. Once a family is identified as over-income, they must recertify annually. Families will be provided adequate notice (initial, second and third letters) from the public housing authority as part of the over-income procedure. Reexamination (annual or interim) after the third notice does not allow for a family to remain in the public housing program beyond termination period, which is within 6 months after the third notice.

What happens if a family falls below the over-income limit within the 24-month grace period? As long as the family is NOT in the tenancy termination phase, if it is determined during a reexamination (annual or interim) that they have fallen below the over-income limit, the family status will remain unchanged, and the housing authority can return to regular income reexamination periods. In the event the family becomes over income again, the process will start over from the beginning. At any notification point (initial, second, or third) families do have the right to a grievance hearing if they dispute the determination of the public housing authority in a reasonable time.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT ■ Miriam Maldonado

THE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (FDO) is happy to introduce Arianna Marmolejos, Sandra Navedo, Marquis Wheeler, and Kathy Acevedo as the newest Clerks at the FDO. Arianna is assigned to the Pembroke development, Sandra the Marvine development, Marquis Fairmount & Parkridge developments and Kathy the Lynfield development. They are all doing a wonderful job and are here to assist the BHA families when in need.

GIVE THEM A CALL!

Miriam Maldonado	Property Manager	610-419-9612 mmaldonado@betha.com	
Jeanette Martinez	Asst. Property Manager	610-419-9486 martinezj@betha.com	Marvine, Bayard & Fairmount
Johayra Quintela	Asst. Property Manager	610-419-9615 jquintela@betha.com	Lynfield, Parkridge, Pembroke & Pfieffe
Kathy Acevedo	Clerk Typist II	610-419-3545 kacevedo@betha.com	Lynfield/Parkridge
Shiela Andrews	Clerk Typist II	610-419-3531 sandrews@betha.com	Marvine
Sandra Navedo	Clerk Typist II	610-419-3532 snavedo@betha.com	Marvine
Arianna Marmolejos	Clerk II	610-419-9605 amarmolejos@betha.com	Pembroke/Pfieffe
Marquis Wheeler	Clerk II	610-865-8354 mwheeler@betha.com	Parkridge/Fairmount

HIGHRISE HIGHLIGHTS ■ Zulma Rodriguez

A NEW MAKEOVER! BARTHOLOMEW HOUSE

Over the last couple of months, the Bartholomew House has received a new quiet room, laundry room, and community room makeover, even all the hallway floors have been stripped and waxed and the walls painted. Over time and with age these rooms and hallways were in need a makeover, to bring a sense of comfort and warmth to our residents. These pictures speak more than a thousand words!

Nevertheless, our goals are to have all our High-Rises renovated, as the Bartholomew House, by the end of the year. To promote a wonderful sense of community among our residents, BHA will now feature a flat-screen TV and a nice fireplace console in all our community rooms for our senior and elderly residents to enjoy. So, stay tuned for our next Spring Newsletter!



Welcome New Commissioners



REV. LINDSEY ALTVATER CLIFTON is the Associate Pastor for Justice & Community Impact at First Presbyterian Church, Bethlehem. She is passionate about justice-seeking and community engagement, and she leads the congregation's advocacy efforts. As a community leader, Lindsey is a member of Bethlehem Interfaith Group and the NAACP Community Advisory Board. She is honored to be serving on the Board of Commissioners for the

Bethlehem Housing Authority, and she is one of the core organizers for Yes In God's Backyard Lehigh Valley—a regional faith-based housing coalition-building project of the Lehigh Conference of Churches. Lindsey believes that housing is a human right and that everyone deserves a safe, affordable place to live so that they can experience dignity, belonging, and flourishing. She was born and raised in Greensboro, NC, and is an alum of Elon University (B.A., 2009) and Wake Forest University (M.Div., 2016). Lindsey and her wife Laura moved to Bethlehem in early 2021, and they're enjoying getting to know the Lehigh Valley with their sweet, goofy pups Maggie and Auggie.



JOHN MARC RITTLE (he/him), public speaker and advocate, has been dedicated to finding solutions to hunger and homelessness for over 30 years. Marc first moved to Bethlehem in 2002 with a master's degree from Northern Illinois University (2001) and later earned ABD status (All But Dissertation) from Loyola University Chicago, both in the field of Sociology. As an adjunct professor at Loyola (2004-2007), Marc authored and taught a course titled

Sociology of Poverty. He then entered the non-profit world at United Way Metro Chicago (2007) before returning to Bethlehem again in 2011. After 11 years at United Way and nearly two decades of getting to know the Bethlehem community, Marc moved from his role of Vice President, Impact at United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley to his present position of Executive Director at New Bethany. Marc's proudest achievement has been serving the Bethlehem and Lehigh Valley community during the Covid-19 pandemic. New Bethany has nearly tripled its capacity to serve (two soup kitchens, a food pantry, and 50 shelter units) during this time. Marc practices self-care through running and family time; he and his partner Sarah Andrew love to hike, bike, and attend local festivals. They have two teenagers and two mini-doodles, residing on the west side of Bethlehem.

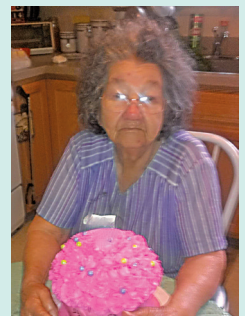
TECH TALK ■ Shawn Horn

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

The Information Systems Department of Bethlehem Housing Authority is thrilled to introduce our latest team member, Christopher Marshall! Mr. Marshall joined us as an IT Assistant on June 12, 2023, bringing with him a diverse skill set in accounting and IT-related tasks. Originally hailing from West Virginia and raised in Louisiana, he has been a valued member of the Lehigh Valley community since the early 1990s. With a strong programming background and expertise in hardware troubleshooting, Mr. Marshall's addition to our team is both exciting and an honor. We are privileged to have him on board and look forward to accomplishing great things together!

CENTENARIAN CORNER

BHA would like to recognize and honor long time Lynfield resident Ms. Angelita Rodriguez, who celebrated her 101st birthday on June 15!



RECREATION RINGERS

■ Robert Robinson

CHRISTMAS LIGHT TOUR

As we approach the holiday season, Christmas is right around the corner. BHA's annual Christmas Light Tour will be in December with each high rise and development participating separately. Information will be available closer to the tour date.

FIELD DAY 2023

Field Day was a success! Thank you to all the residents, friends, families, organizations and BHA staff who came out to support and enjoy the festivities!



Bethlehem's Finest



BHA WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE SGT. WILLIAM MARQUES, as we say our farewells to former Sgt. Moses Miller who did a wonderful job in keeping our community safe. We are confident that Sgt. Marques will provide the same measure of dedication and safety to our community as we give him a warm welcome.

Sub-Station (Non-Emergency)
1121 Marvine St.

610-865-7222
(Not 24 hours)

Emergency

911 (24 hours)

Elimination Of Earned Income Disallowance

DUE TO HUD REGULATIONS, the Earned Income Disallowance (EID) program will be eliminated effective Dec. 31, 2023. What does this mean? Families that are currently on the EID program or will qualify for the program up to Dec. 31, 2023, will still be able to participate for the duration of the end of their maximum 2 years on the program. However, new families will no longer be eligible for the EID program.



REVERENCE FOR OUR RETIREES

The Bethlehem Housing Authority would like to thank our retirees for all their hard work and dedication over the years.

James Harell; 40 years

Frederick Werner; 21 years

Mike Cody; 28 years

Patricia Handlovic; 20 years

Robert Gehringer; 23 years

Patricia Buhay; 19 years

Jay Schuster; 21 years

Norma Rodriguez; 19 years

MAINTENANCE MEMOS

■ Charles Jablonski

LEAVES ARE FALL(ING)

Please visit the City of Bethlehem website at bethlehem-pa.gov for leaf collection inquiries.

Note: If possible, please rake leaves to the street prior to the city's arrival for pick-up. In the event more leaf collection is required after the City of Bethlehem has made their pick-ups, please contact the Bethlehem Compost Center at **610-865-7082** for brown paper bags for leave storage, which should be placed curb side.

SNOW REMOVAL

In the event of inclement weather, outside contractors have **24 hours after it has stopped snowing** to begin snow removal from the sidewalks and shoveling areas. BHA asks that you please be patient during these times.



Scholarship Shoutouts

BHA WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A BIG CONGRATULATORY SHOUTOUT to Ebony Gee (Pembroke), Julius Walker (Marvine), Diana Torres (Marvine), and Shanchenka Crespo (not pictured) for an academic job well done and for being the recipients of the 2023 BHA Scholarship program! Congratulations to Ebony Gee, who was also selected to receive 1st place in the PAHRA-L. DeWitt Boosel Memorial Scholarship awarded \$3,000.

Family Self Sufficiency Program

This edition of our newsletter highlights the Bethlehem Housing Authority Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program and its re-opening June 2022.

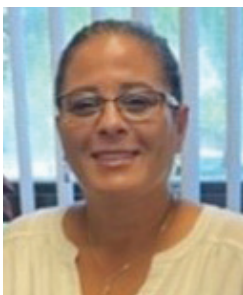
I can't believe it has been over a year. The program is running and growing. The participants of this program have grown in knowledge and in self-esteem. This volunteer program is envisioning the advancement and development of our BHA Public Housing and Section 8 residents to achieve economic independence. From promoting obtaining and maintaining employment, furthering education, education and training in money management and budgeting, to the possibility of eligible residents' completions of homeownership course and possibly purchasing a house they can call their own.

in loving memory

B. Mille Matos, Frederick Magocs, Edward Ortiz, Robert Caprioli and Rodney McDonald.

The Bethlehem Housing Authority extends our deepest condolences to the family and many friends. As they will be sorely missed, the Authority is thankful for their dedication over the years.

FSS SNAPSHOT



The Bethlehem Housing Authority is proud to introduce **MRS. ELIZABETH DICKER** at our Family Self-Sufficiency Department working in the Community Service Office.

Elizabeth is a Marine Veteran that served our country; she is a mother and grandmother looking forward to continuing serving others. She worked 12 years in the Maintenance Department in another local housing authority as a Clerk II and over a year with the BHA CHOO Department helping our seniors and disabled residents. Elizabeth is excited to continue extending her scope of reach through the Community Service Program. She will be the first friendly voice you hear when you call, a guide to help you accomplish your goal of supporting our community with needed volunteering in a vast range of areas.



GWENDOLYN FLORES joined the amazing team of the BHA in June 2022. She is blessed to be a daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother. Gwendolyn loves to read, is a fan of Marvel Entertainment, and enjoys DIY projects.

She focused her studies on Psychology and Counseling and has a passion for people. Gwendolyn loves her community and meeting people: being able to encourage and guide them to be the best person they can be is her main goal. If we can use our talents and our life to change someone's life we can transform this community, and ultimately, the world! Focusing in the areas of Housing, Employment, Education Counseling, Community Service, and resource coordination, Gwendolyn has over 22 years' experience working with DA, MH, and the homeless communities in Bethlehem and Lehigh Valley Community.



645 Main Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018-3899

PSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
LEHIGH VALLEY PA
PERMIT #121



ADMINISTRATION

John Ritter
Executive Director

Diana Moreno
*Executive Secretary/
HR Manager*

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Iris Linares
Chairperson

Valerie McLendon
Vice Chairperson

Roy Ortiz,
Resident Commissioner

J. Marc Rittle
Commissioner

Rev. Lindsey Altwater Clifton
Commissioner



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV. 10Veteran's Day, BHA Offices Closed

NOV. 13Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

NOV. 16Resident Advisory Board Meeting,
1 p.m., Monocacy Tower

NOV. 23Thanksgiving Day, BHA Offices
Closed

NOV. 24Day After Thanksgiving Day, BHA
Offices Closed

DEC. 11Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

DEC. 25Christmas Day, BHA Offices Closed

DEC. 26Day After Christmas Day,
BHA Offices Closed

JAN. 1New Year's Day, BHA Offices Closed

JAN. 8Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

JAN. 16MLK Day, BHA Offices Closed

FEB. 12Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

FEB. 20President's Day, BHA Offices Closed

MAR. 11Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

MAR. 29Good Friday, BHA Offices Closed

APR. 8Board Meeting, 4:30 p.m.*

**Board Meetings held in Monocacy Tower*

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Central Office **610-865-8300**

Central Highrise Operations Office (CHOO); Litzenberger,
Bodder, Bartholomew and Monocacy **610-865-8352** OR **610-865-8353**

Family Development Office; Pembroke, Marvine,
Fairmount, Pfeifle, Lynfield, Parkridge and Bayard Homes..... **610-865-8342** OR **610-865-8343**

Maintenance **610-865-8319**