

# THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

News, announcements, and more from the  
Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority



The Gus Bus  
Franklin Heights - October 2019

## In this issue:

Sharing Good Books & Good Food.....	2
Executive Director's Note.....	2
Clothing & Healthcare.....	3
Supporting Lineweaver Residents.....	3
A Gift for Every Child.....	3
Contact & Board of Commissioners.....	4
Community Support.....	4

Questions? Comments?

Everett Brubaker

HRHA Communications Coordinator

ebrubaker@harrisonburgrha.com

## Community Collaboration



The Harrisonburg community has a long history of collectively supporting our lower-income and most vulnerable neighbors. We still have lots of work to do, but it is important to recognize the amazing work being done right now.

While we can't highlight every community partner we work with in one newsletter, we hope this month's issue gives you a sense of the many persons and organizations that help provide holistic care and support for all members of our community. Challenges surrounding affordable housing interact and intersect with a number of other issues including healthcare, transportation, mental and physical well-being, social support, education, and more.

This time of year invites the opportunity to express our gratitude; for the many partners who are actively working to build a Harrisonburg that serves all residents. Thank you!

# Sharing Good Books & Good Food

The Reading Road Show launched in the early 2000's to address a growing need in our community: childhood literacy. The effort culminated with the development of a beloved mobile literacy vehicle nicknamed the "Gus Bus." Since then, the Gus Bus has maintained a weekly schedule of stops at over a dozen and a half neighborhoods throughout Harrisonburg and surrounding counties. Children have the opportunity to check out books, participate in activities, and build relationships with Gus Bus volunteers. The Gus Bus stops weekly in two of our neighborhoods: Franklin and Harrison Heights.

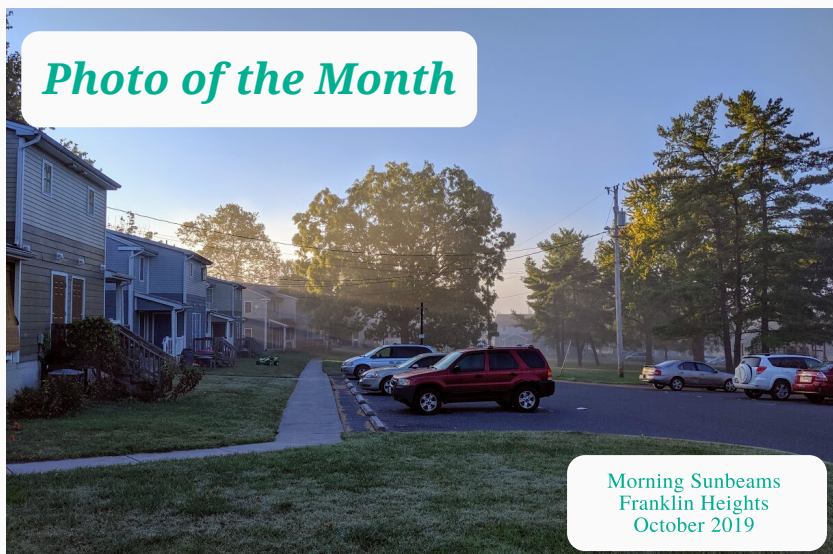
In 2017, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank (BRAFB) partnered with Gus Bus and JMU to add an additional program to the existing Gus Bus stops. The Neighborhood Produce Market traveled alongside the Gus Bus a number of times a month, bringing fresh produce to Gus Bus neighborhoods. The initiative began with two cars loaded down with produce but quickly evolved to a van (year 2) and a dedicated truck, nicknamed the Good Food Truck (year 3), a result of community donations and a grant from Food Lion.



Robin Swecker, Partner Services Coordinator for the Shenandoah Valley, recognizes that fresh food access is difficult for low income families and those with limited mobility. The Neighborhood Produce Market's mission is to help bridge this need, to "meet people where they are." Robin notes that the markets are a fun and communal space. As children raced through the Good Food Truck on a stop in Franklin Heights this past month, one child reached his hand into his newly filled bag. Biting into a small red fruit he closed his eyes and sighed, "strawberries."

We are incredibly grateful for both the Gus Bus and BRAFB.

## Photo of the Month



## Executive Director's Corner



Success for the residents and the community we serve requires working collaboratively with multiple partners. At a national level, partnerships with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and other federal programs provide rental assistance resources to permanently house over 1000 families on a nightly basis. At a state level, partnerships with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community provide resources for community partners who help prevent, shelter, and rapidly rehouse individuals experiencing homelessness. State funding was also critical in the development of Commerce Village, a housing program for individuals and veterans experiencing chronic homelessness. On a local level, our community partners provide housing through private landlords, as well as services that assist our residents with employment, health, and educational goals. These partnerships help maximize family's self-sufficiency and improve their overall quality of life.

To put it simply, empowering and supporting our local families requires collaboration across our community. On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, Authority staff and I, please accept our sincere thanks and appreciation for the work you do in supporting our community.

"Never one thing and seldom one person can make for a success. It takes a number of them, merging into one perfect whole" Maria Dressler

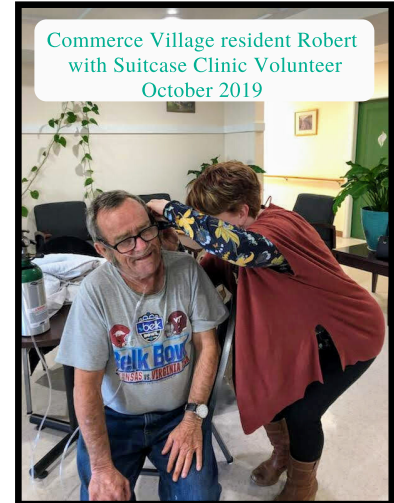
- Michael Wong



# Clothing and Healthcare at Commerce Village

Commerce Village, which provides permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and veterans, is visited monthly by both the Suitcase Clinic and the VCM Mobile Clothes Bank. The Suitcase Clinic was started officially in 2011 by a group of local nurses recognizing a need for healthcare among the homeless population. Through grants, donations, and volunteers, the Suitcase Clinic is able to travel weekly to different locations across the city, providing on-site care to community members often left out of traditional healthcare efforts.

In addition to healthcare, residents of Commerce Village have access to free, clean, quality clothing through Vertical Connection Ministries' (VCM) Mobile Clothing Bank. Each month, VCM brings donated clothing from local consignment shops as a free service to residents of Commerce and the surrounding neighborhood. Their ministry operates throughout the Shenandoah Valley. HRHA and Commerce Village residents appreciate the generosity and service of these organizations.



## Supporting Lineweaver Residents

J.R. "Polly" Lineweaver Apartments was dedicated in 1980, named in memory of former city council member James Reherd "Polly" Lineweaver. The 121 units in Lineweaver and Lineweaver Annex provide homes for elderly and disabled individuals. In addition to an onsite manager and service coordinators through the Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL), a number of local organizations help support Lineweaver residents. David and Anita Cooper, members of Church of the Incarnation, have helped organize monthly birthday celebrations for Lineweaver residents. Since 2014, church members have brought cake, as well as healthy snacks, to the Lineweaver common room every month. "Our goal is to draw residents out of their apartments, and provide a setting to meet, interact, and develop relationships", David Cooper commented over a phone call this past month. "We recognize that there is, understandably, a lot of social and psychological isolation in Lineweaver, so we wanted to help enable residents to recognize and feel that they are part of the social fabric of our city." In addition to monthly birthday celebrations, Church of the Incarnation parishioners have organized Christmas services, memorial services for residents who have passed, and other initiatives.

Inspired by the work of the Coopers and others, Associate Professor Jeanne Wenos and students in JMU's Occupational Therapy Program launched two programs at Lineweaver this year. Students are currently conducting research with Lineweaver residents, coordinating both a Movement Club and a Dinner Club. Every year HRHA residents across the city benefit from local student volunteerism, research, program coordination, and more. These opportunities are enjoyed by residents and offer meaningful out of class experiences for students.

## A Gift for Every Child



The Holiday season can be stressful on families, particularly as parents wrestle with the cost of providing gifts for their children. Since 2007, HRHA has partnered with JCPenney and the Valley Mall to provide Holiday Gift Assistance for parents in our Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Dozens of community members take a child's name each year, donating toys, clothes, and gift cards to children living in affordable housing. **You can choose a child's name (November 8 - December 13) from the Giving Tree at the Valley Mall (Santa's Workshop), The Salon at JCPenney, or by calling the FSS Office at 540-437-9545.** You can also donate directly at [www.harrisonburgrha.com/donate](http://www.harrisonburgrha.com/donate). All donations are submitted to the non-profit branch of HRHA, Shenandoah Housing Corporation (501 c3), and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Thank you for your support!



# Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

## Contact Us

### + HRHA Main Office

286 Kelley St

PO Box 1071

Harrisonburg VA, 22802

Phone: (540)-434-7386

Fax: (540)-432-1113

### + HRHA Reservoir Office

FSS Program, HMIS, COC

143 Reservoir St

Harrisonburg VA, 22802

Phone: (540)-437-9545

Fax: (540)-432-1113

### + HRHA Commerce Village

Waiting List & Applications

Phone: (540)-615-5557

Fax: (540)-615-5558

### + HRHA Lineweaver & Annex

Phone: (540)-433-0788

## HRHA Board of Commissioners

The Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners appointed by the Harrisonburg City Council. The Board establishes the Authority's policies and procedures and appoints the Executive Director.

Board of Commissioner meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00PM, at the Authority's administrative office located at 286 Kelley St., Harrisonburg, VA.

### + Timothy Smith – Chair

Term Expires: November 29, 2019

### + John Hall – Vice Chair

Term Expires: November 29, 2021

### + Scott Gallagher – Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2020

### + Benjamin Fuller – Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2022

### + Costella Forney – Commissioner

Term Expires: November 29, 2022

## Website & Facebook

This fall, HRHA launched a **redesigned website and new Facebook page**.

Our new website offers a cleaner and more engaging platform for residents, landlords, and the community. Our Facebook page provides regular updates and news for the community. Follow us on Facebook!



@harrisonburgrha

## Community Support

In addition to Holiday Gift Assistance, the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) spends much of November and December doing annual check-ins with families. The final two months of the year offer opportunity to look back at the year and reevaluate goals as we enter 2020. The FSS program provides many tools and resources to families, as well as programs to encourage participants to increase their self-sufficiency. Community donations help the FSS Coordinators and HRHA connect participants with training and certifications to increase their income, scholarships to further education, and incentive programs. You can help support the FSS program through the QR code on the right, or by visiting [www.harrisonburgrha.com/donate](http://www.harrisonburgrha.com/donate). Thank you! (All donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.)

