

THE HRHA NEWSLETTER

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



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Interested in subscribing? Questions?
 Contact Victoria Hill
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The Great Community Give

On April 19th, HRHA was just one of the many organizations within our local area that participated in the Great Community Give. The Great Community Give provides non-profit organizations a platform to raise funds for their specific causes. Through the Shenandoah Housing Corp, HRHA can participate and raise funds for student scholarships. 100% of all donations made during the giving campaign have helped to enable us to provide scholarship support for students of our housing choice voucher families.

During the day of giving, HRHA raised \$3,310 for student scholarships. HRHA would like to give a big thank you to all of our generous supporters who gave during the Great Community Give. We would also like to thank our match sponsors, Litten & Sipe and United Bank, for their continuous support.



Business Boot Camp



HRHA will collaborate with the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund in May to enroll 10 Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants in a business boot camp. This boot camp will cover pitching your idea, setting up your business, business modeling, and much more! Ten FSS participants can participate due to funding from Sentara Healthcare for our Skilled Career and Job Training initiative. These funds provide an educational and economic opportunity for our FSS participants to achieve economic mobility and enable them to follow their passion. HRHA would like to thank Sentara Healthcare for the grant funding this opportunity and the Shenandoah Community Capital Fund for being a collaborator and critical resource in the community for those with entrepreneurial aspirations.

About Sentara

Sentara Healthcare, an integrated, not-for-profit health care delivery system, celebrates more than 130 years in pursuit of its mission – “we improve health every day.” Sentara is one of the largest health systems in the U.S. Mid-Atlantic and Southeast, and among the top 20 largest not-for-profit integrated health systems in the country, with 30,000 employees, 12 hospitals in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina, and the Sentara Health Plans division which serves more than 1.2 million members in Virginia and Florida. Sentara is recognized nationally for clinical quality and safety, and is strategically focused on innovation and creating an extraordinary health care experience for our patients and members. Sentara was named to IBM Watson Health’s “Top 15 Health Systems” (2021, 2018), and was recognized by Forbes as a “Best Employer for New Grads” (2022), “Best Employer for Veterans” (2022), and “Best Employer for Women” (2020).



Executive Director's Corner



In a recent academic literature review by the Virginia Center for Housing Research identified that affordable housing creates positive academic outcomes for students as much as it *reduces* forced mobility, overcrowded conditions, health consequences of substandard housing, insufficient income, and parental/family stress.

On May 17th, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to award the Authority’s first scholarship to Grace Toto, a Harrisonburg City Public Schools senior. Ms. Toto met or exceeded all scholarship requirements exhibiting an outstanding academic achievement record. Her letters of support indicated that she is a powerful learner, enjoys writing, and is a talented dancer. Ms. Toto is planning on attending James Madison University this Fall.

The scholarship award is not possible without the support and partnership of many community members and the HRHA’s staff. Special recognition to United Bank, Litten & Sipe, and community donors for their financial contributions to the scholarship fund. We look forward to continuing this award in the future.

-Michael Wong

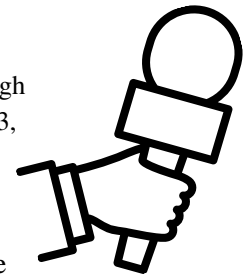
Living Wage Certified Employer



We proudly announce that Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority has received Harrisonburg-Rockingham Living Wage Certification Committee’s GOLD level certification. This is the Committee’s highest certification level available for employers to receive. This certification helps demonstrate Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority’s commitment to its employees regarding providing living wages. To learn more about living wages and Harrisonburg-Rockingham Living Wage Certification, please visit <https://www.hrlivingwage.org/>.

Staff Highlight: David Mutombo

HRHA manages a variety of programs, grants, and initiatives. We serve hundreds of families through housing vouchers, programs like Family Self-Sufficiency, and city-wide campaigns. Through 2023, we plan to highlight members of the HRHA team who make this work possible.



1. What is your role in HRHA?

I am the Western Virginia Continuum of Care Coordinator. As part of this role, I represent the Continuum of Care (CoC) within seven jurisdictions across the Shenandoah Valley, providing leadership and coordination to advance the federal and local goals of ending homelessness.

2. What is one of your favorite aspects of working with HRHA?

Collaboration; gathering people from diverse backgrounds around the shared goal of ending homelessness and strategizing solutions.

3. Do you have any goals or aspirations in your position?

I am all about efficiency and effectiveness. One of my goals since joining HRHA and the Western CoC has been focused on improving program efficiency to maximize outcomes for services beneficiaries across the CoC's region.

4. What is one unique fun fact others may not know about you?

I love languages and can speak three languages fluently. I'd like to learn Spanish or German but over three years have passed, and I still hope to get motivated and start on this project soon.

5. What do you wish more people in our community knew about affordable housing, our families, or the voucher program?

Homelessness or housing instability affects and can affect all of us! But directly or indirectly, we can all do something about it. Housing for all is the only solution to end homelessness and its effects on society. When access to safe, affordable, and sanitary housing is provided, people can build upon this platform to continue to grow and thrive in their community. Which in turn brings greater stability to the community and fosters its redevelopment and economic growth.

Welcome Christian, Natalie, Steve, and Beth!

HRHA is pleased to welcome Christian, Natalie, Steve, and Beth to our team! While not pictured, Beth Tyler will be joining HRHA as our new Accounting and Human Resources Specialist.

Christian Ali– Occupancy Specialist



Natalie Gazzara– Administrative Assistant



Steve Bradfield– Procurement and Inventory Specialist





Harrisonburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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To reach all HRHA offices, call: (540) 434-7386

Website



www.harrisonburgrha.com

Facebook



[@harrisonburgrha](https://www.facebook.com/harrisonburgrha)

HRHA Board of Commissioners

HRHA is governed by a seven-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.

Meeting location/access will be posted prior to meetings and in line with local health guidelines.

+ Michael Wong, (Not a commissioner)
Executive Director/Secretary-Treasurer

- + Kevin Coffman - Commissioner
Term Expires: November 29, 2023
- + Luciano Benjamin - Commissioner
Term Expires: November 29, 2024
- + Gil Colman - Commissioner
Term Expires: November 29, 2025
- + Shonda Green - Commissioner
Term Expires: November 29, 2025
- + Kenneth Kettler - Commissioner
Term Expires: February 1, 2024
- + Amanda Leech - Commissioner
Term Expires: October 13, 2024
- + Janet E. Harvey - Commissioner
Term Expires: April 25, 2027

Upcoming Events: The Garden Grove of Books Reading Program

HRHA will start its first reading program in June, known as "The Garden Grove of Books." Through this program, we will empower Harrisonburg youth to build basic literacy skills, expand their vocabulary, and strengthen their writing skills. They will take on fun reading challenges to win prizes while learning and practicing new skills!

Stay Tuned on HRHA Facebook to learn more!



Find us on  [@harrisonburgrha](https://www.facebook.com/harrisonburgrha)



April/ May 2023