



Washingtonville Housing Alliance

Fall 2009
Newsletter

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Erika Liriano, *Administrative Assistant*
Rachel Spadaro, *Property Management*
Angela Torero, *Program Associate*
Robbin Weston, *Bookkeeper*

"We are very grateful for everything Washingtonville Housing Alliance has done for our family and we are very happy with the beautiful hardwood flooring they have installed in our apartment."

*A WHA tenant at our
September 22 Tenant Social.*

Our 30th Year

Washingtonville Housing Alliance enters its 30th year in 2010. This is a time to celebrate, to measure what we have accomplished, and to set the course for the next thirty years. We are entering this anniversary year with a strong and engaged board of directors, a healthy balance sheet and a clearly defined mission.

We have come a long way from our beginnings in a basement room with one staff person. We have a lot to celebrate. Our new landmark building at 726 Old White Plains Road sets a high standard for what affordable rental housing should be: attractive, elegant, convenient – a home that you can be proud to welcome guests into. It is also exciting to see WHA investing in upgrading its existing units to the same high standard: the units are beginning to shine as are our tenants' smiles.

People say to me, "we love Washingtonville: you do such great work!" This is a tremendous compliment to the work done by our organization. I am very proud of what our small staff team has accomplished: they have done far more than I ever thought would be possible. I am grateful beyond measure to our generous donors and grant funders who have provided the financial support to make this possible.

Four of our board members have been with us from the beginning. We also have new faces and new energy. The need for affordable housing and emergency rent assistance is as urgent as ever. With your support, WHA will play its part in making our community a welcoming place for all.

Beverly Brewer-Villa, Board Chair

A Proud Moment for Taryn Thomas

Taryn Thomas grew up in Mamaroneck on the street she lives on today. She learned to play the organ at the Strait Gate Church in Mamaroneck which fostered a lifelong love for music. In 1995 Taryn graduated from National University in San Diego, California with a degree in Early Childhood Education. She wanted to move back to Mamaroneck but the rents were very high.

After getting in touch with the Washingtonville Housing Alliance, she found an affordable, clean, safe apartment. Taryn has lived in her WHA apartment for 11 years. She worked as Assistant Director at a day care facility for years and then decided to go back to school.

It took Taryn three years to get her Masters in Music Therapy from NYU. She graduated in May 2009. Her thesis topic was "Gospel Music in Music Therapy with Cancer Patients." A very moving passage from her thesis reads: "Just as the songs of the civil rights movement were influenced by the music and the message of gospel, this music can extend itself as a source of comfort, strength and inner peace for those who are faced with cancer." *Continued on page 2*



A Proud Moment *Continued from page 1*

Taryn did her internship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Her work gives a sense of hope and self empowerment through music to very sick or terminally ill patients. Taryn currently does 20-30 music therapy sessions a week which translates into her seeing close to 200 people a week. She was recently offered a job at Memorial Sloane-Kettering in addition to her work in Westchester Schools and BOCES. Taryn also plays at the Redeemed Church in Mount Vernon.

Taryn has found a way to combine her love for children with her love for music. When I sat down with Taryn, she said “Washingtonville made it possible for me to live on my own.” She also said WHA has been “a godsend” making it possible for her to afford to go back to school and to fulfill her dreams. WHA is honored to have Taryn Thomas as a tenant.

Rachel Spadaro, Property Management



Stimulus Funds at Work

WHA has acted in response to the slowdown in local construction to complete major upgrades to our property portfolio, funded from stimulus funds and property reserves. We will receive CDBG and weatherization funding for a new boiler and windows at 725 Old White Plains Road as well as weatherization funds for new windows at 230 Center Avenue. Through these and other upgrade projects, WHA will have invested over \$100,000 back into our local community. This creates jobs for local businesses and beautiful homes that our residents can live in with pride.



My Family, My Community

Memories from the last 10 years

“Washingtonville Housing Alliance plays an important role in making Mamaroneck *my family, my community.*” Angela Torero first came in contact with WHA in the late 90’s when she read an ad for a volunteer in the local paper. WHA wanted a bilingual assistant to help answer the phones and assist the clients and customers. “I loved the office environment and enjoyed watching the client services coordinator help the people who walked through our door. The memories still bring tears to my eyes and make me proud to call my mentors lifelong friends. Only a few months after I started to volunteer, the staff took notice of my genuine passion and commitment for the organization and asked me to join their ranks.”

“WHA is a family friendly environment, something I am truly thankful for. When I have to participate in school activities, I never have to worry about the impact it will have on my job. They know that I still put in all the hours that are needed to get the job done. I love that my children can come to work with me. Sometimes, my son will even volunteer.”

“Throughout the years, I have met many influential people because of my involvement with WHA. I have rallied in Albany, met senators, assemblymen and people from all the different bodies that help run our state. I’ve had the privilege of getting to know our local mayors, trustees and heads of local organizations. I have enjoyed seeing them in action, but even greater, it’s really fantastic to be known in a crowd as “the Washingtonville Woman.”

“Working with local community families has been such a blessing. Many of my clients call WHA a “safe haven,” because they feel no judgment by race, color or status. All my clients feel comfortable and are truly at ease. One of the challenges of being so involved with clients and local families is that sometimes I feel that I can’t get a break, even on my day off. I am constantly being approached on the street to give advice, help out with a situation, or to fill out a form. This was a little overwhelming at first, but I’ve learned to take it all in stride.”

“The privileges of living in Westchester County my whole life and in the Washingtonville area for 27 years are endless.

Continued on page 3

My Family, My Community *Continued from page 2*

There are so many things about this community that I love: the beautiful harbors and boats, the parks, the playgrounds, and the convenience of all the shops. It was such a great area to grow up in. I am blessed that my children can also have the same experience.”

“In these ten years at WHA, I have been affected by my work as much as I have been able to assist others. I am not the same person as when I first walked in through the front door, and for that, I am thankful. Washingtonville has truly created *my family, my community.*”

Angela Torero, Client Services Coordinator

The Special Funds Story

In 2007 WHA made twenty emergency rent assistance grants averaging \$500 each, for a total of \$10,000. In that same year we assisted over 200 families through additional funding we received from the community for the March and April 2007 floods. The flood experience showed us the importance of locally raised emergency assistance funds. They give us the flexibility to meet cases of extreme need, in cases where federal funding guidelines may be too restrictive.

In 2009, the Emergency Fund, formerly administered by the Village of Mamaroneck Community Services Department, was transferred to WHA. This has enabled us to expand our

grant making to include assistance with utility shutoffs, health care costs, food and school supplies. This fund is supported by the local French community through Westchester Accueil and by the Eugenie S. Wright Foundation.

This year WHA has already made \$32,000 in emergency rent assistance and crisis assistance grants. This includes twenty-nine rent assistance grants, one foreclosure assistance grant, two senior home repair grants and twenty-one emergency grants for utility shutoffs, medicine and food. Our base level of emergency grant assistance has tripled since 2007.

This is made possible by grants from Westchester County, an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant through United Way, the support of Larchmont-Mamaroneck Summit, and the generosity of the congregations that support our Housing Crisis Fund. Local funding now makes up over 50% of our emergency assistance grant funding.

WHA’s busy client services department is now seeing 5-10 clients a week and is making ten grants a month. We have set up a Special Funds Committee of the Board to oversee this activity. Our ability to provide emergency funding greatly increases WHA’s impact on the community. My goal for the coming year is to maintain or increase our funding for these special funds.

Jeremy N. Ingpen, Executive Director

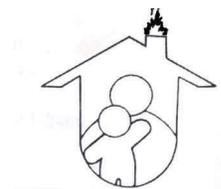
Washingtonville Fuel Corporation

WFC is now entering its second year in partnership with Castle Oil, one of Westchester County’s premier heating oil companies. We have customers from Mamaroneck, Larchmont, New Rochelle, White Plains, Rye and throughout Westchester County. WFC is able to provide a substantial discount on home heating oil by pooling our customers’ purchasing power. On average, our domestic customers are saving between \$200 to \$500 a heating season.

WFC is a registered HEAP Vendor. The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally funded program administered by the Westchester County Department of Social Services that assists eligible low-income, elderly, and disabled homeowners with their home heating costs.

Please call Angela Torero at (914) 698-4633 to fill out an application for WFC or HEAP.

136 Library Lane
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
(914)698-4633 or email
info@washingtonville.org



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Washingtonville Housing Alliance, Inc.
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Mamaroneck, New York 10543

Fall 2009 Newsletter

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WHA constructs housing for
low and moderate income residents and
undertakes other supportive activities
designed to sustain communities
that are culturally diverse,
multi-generational, and
of mixed income

E-mail: info@washingtonville.org
www.washingtonville.org
Telephone: (914) 698-4299
Facsimile: (914) 698-7158

Save The Date

Thursday, May 6, 2010

30th ANNIVERSARY GALA

Benefiting

Washingtonville Housing Alliance

If you are interested in purchasing tickets, placing a journal ad or
becoming a sponsor, please contact

Robyn Hatrak at 914-698-4299 extension 15
or e-mail events@washingtonville.org