



SUMMER 07



BRHA BEACON

Residents Help Save Burning Apartment

On Friday, July 6, 2007, there was a fire at 600 Mary Street, Apt 156. Burners on the stovetop were left on – unattended; in fact, the residents had left the apartment entirely with the burners still burning. And burn they did...The residents hadn't been gone 10 minutes when the kitchen cabinets caught on fire. In the end, the wall cabinets and countertop were burned, the window curtains caught fire and stove was destroyed.

This could have developed into a major fire – but it didn't, thanks to the intervention of neighbors. Three young men walking by the apartment noticed heavy smoke coming out of the exhaust vent for the range hood. Anthony Gross, Jack Bradley and Jose Jackson went up to the door to see what was going on and immediately saw that the kitchen was on fire. They yelled down to another neighbor to call 911 and report the fire. The door was locked, but they knew that a mother with young children lived in this apartment. They were very concerned for the safety of this family when no one answered their calls at the door, so they kicked in the door and entered the apartment.

Very quickly they determined that nobody was in the apartment. With the help of neighbors they tried to douse the flames with water carried in pitchers and bowls, but the fire was already more than these small amounts of water could handle. These young men had the good sense not to endanger their own lives any further and left the burning apartment for the professional fire fighters. The fire fighters arrived (continued on pg 4)

Inside This Issue

Neighborhood Watch	6
Resident Meetings	2
Youthbuild	3
Message From Executive Director	4
Construction of New Apartment Complex	5
Homeownership Program	5
Summer Food Program For Kids	6
Find A Way Program	8
Thanks to Departing Commissioners	9
Security Cameras	7



Resident Councils Give BRHA Residents a Chance to Speak Out

BRHA residents have an opportunity to discuss policies and share their thoughts on improving the residential community by attending monthly Resident Council meetings.

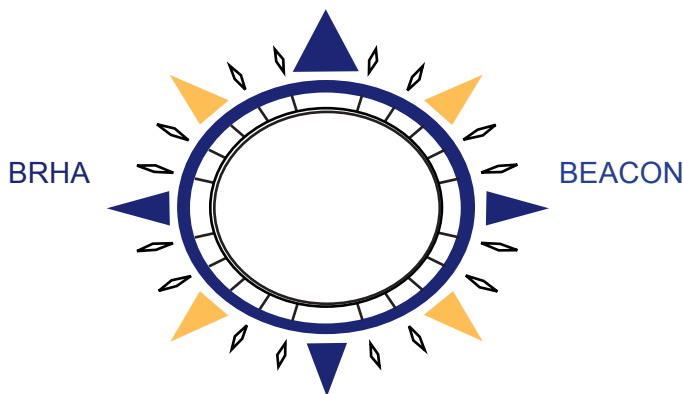
Stant Hall has maintained a Resident Council for several years, and a second council at Jones Manor was recently formed. A third council – yet to be organized – will include Rice Terrace Apartments, Johnson Court, Mosby Homes and Bonham Circle.

Over the years, Stant Hall's Resident Council has successfully planned events that include cookouts, yard sales and training sessions about organizational planning and policy development.

Resident Council Meeting Schedule

Stant Hall - second Monday of each month at 6 p.m. in the first floor lounge

Jones Manor - third Monday of each month at 5 p.m. in the first floor lounge



Crime Solvers Tip

Call the Crime Solvers Tip Line at 466-TIPS to report a crime and/or any suspicious activity or e-mail cptak@bristolva.org. All information will be kept confidential.



BRHA Accepting Applications for Upcoming YouthBuild Bristol Class

The BRHA is seeking applicants for the next YouthBuild Bristol class, which will be constructing a single-family residence on Mary Street in Bristol, Va. This class began during the first week in May, and will continue for nine months. Training is held weekly Mondays through Thursdays.

Under the supervision of a professional builder, the upcoming class will perform all construction on the Mary Street house “from the ground up,” says Diana Carter, adding that YouthBuild is “a great way for young adults to complete their GED and get outstanding on-the-job training at the same time.”

This marks the third class to enter the program, which is part of a national initiative sponsored by the Homes Builders Institute and HUD. YouthBuild Bristol’s inaugural class assisted in the renovation of 31 BRHA public housing units as part of the on-site construction training component of the program.

YouthBuild Bristol gives eligible young people opportunities to earn a GED and start a career in residential construction, while at the same time expanding the supply of affordable housing for homeless and low-income persons.

Following graduation from the program, participants continue to receive guidance and support from the BRHA for a full year.

To register for the new YouthBuild Bristol class or for more information, contact Diana Carter at 821-6256.



NEW LOOK FOR THE BRHA WEBSITE

To better serve the public housing community and keep the general public updated on the BRHA’s latest news, programs and services, the Housing Authority Web site, www.brha.com, has a new look.

The BRHA is excited about the fresh, new look to this valuable communications tool! Please take a look and let us know what you think!!

BRHA PROMOTIONS AND NEW HIRES

Congratulations to the following BRHA employees:

Glenn Griffin has transferred from the maintenance division to lead the crew in the construction division.

Scott Abston, maintenance mechanic, has been assigned supervisory duties for one of the BRHA’s two maintenance crews.

Say hello to a new maintenance employee!! Chip Gilliam has been hired as a maintenance mechanic aide and is assigned to Site 1.

Please welcome Ms. Patricia Tignor as the new Property Manager for Site 2.

Ms. Diana Farris will be moving into the position of Elderly Services Coordinator.

Diana Carter has a new title Vice-President of Operations and is responsible for public housing and Section 8.

Message From The Executive Director

It's hard to believe that summer is already in full swing. We have had such a busy winter and spring at BRHA that the first six months of 2007 have just flown by. We have finally navigated our way through the complexities of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program and the Public Housing development approval process with HUD to receive final approval for our Sapling Grove Apartments project. I know that you have all seen the construction of the Sapling Grove Apartments that has begun on our property at Oakview and Clinton. Find out more about this exciting project on page 5.

We have also begun a major upgrade of the Security Camera System in our public housing communities. Now the cameras will be able to monitor ALL of our sites. We can view activity "live" while it's happening and can review recordings of activity. Not only that; the Bristol Police Department will be able to do the same thing, both at their offices and remotely in patrol cars. In fact, by the time you read this the system will be fully operational. We have already been able to assist the police with surveillance recordings even during the installation process. See the related article on page 7.

Other initiatives that the BRHA staff has been working on include:

1. helping to establish a Neighborhood Watch Program for the Moore Street area (see pg 6),
2. expanding our YouthBuild Bristol program (see pg 3),
3. starting a Community Homeownership Program with construction of a new single-family home (see pg 5),
4. initiating new opportunities for residents through the Find A Way Program (see page 8),
5. beginning our 17th year as a sponsor of the Summer Food Program (see page 6), and, last but not least,
6. planning the annual SummerFest for public housing and Section 8 families (see page 8).

The basic purpose of the Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority is to provide safe, attractive, affordable housing for low-income families in our community. But BRHA does more than that by providing opportunities for families and others in need to achieve a higher standard of living.

We hope that you and your family find your apartment safe and comfortable; and that while staying with us you take advantage of the opportunities we provide to enhance your personal and your family's life. Remember, we come into this life with nothing and we leave it with nothing; it's how we spend the time in between that counts.

Inspire someone! Inspire yourself!!

Dave Baldwin

(Fire - continued from pg 1)

within just a few minutes and quickly had the fire under control. Our heartfelt thanks go out to the fire fighters. Their job is dangerous and so very important for the safety of our community.

We don't expect or encourage any resident to risk their own safety in emergencies such as this. But when it happens it's only right to give thanks for the unexpected courage and generosity of others. So, BRHA would also like to say thanks to Mr. Gross, Mr. Bradley and Mr. Jackson for their genuine concern for their neighbors and their neighborhood -- making sure that nobody was trapped in the burning apartment and having the good sense to quickly call in the professionals to save the building. Thanks for caring about your community, guys.

SAPLING GROVE APARTMENTS CONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN!!!

Site construction has begun on the new Sapling Grove Apartments. Sapling Grove is located at the intersection of Clinton and Oakview Avenues at the former Rice Terrace Extension site. The unique development will feature 13 new single-story duplex apartment buildings, totaling 26 individual units. The first of these patio-type units could be ready for occupancy by late 2007. Monthly rent for a one-bedroom, 800-square-foot unit will be approximately \$355. A two-bedroom, 1,000-square-foot unit will be available for an estimated \$420.



BRHA Kicks Off Community Homeownership Program with Single-Family Home

Construction started in June of a single-family home, marking the introduction of the housing authority's community homeownership program. Located at 409 West Mary St., this home represents the BRHA's new initiative to create affordable housing opportunities for public housing residents.

This 1,400 square foot, two-story, contemporary colonial home will feature three bedrooms and 1 1/2 baths, as well as a garage. YouthBuild Bristol, the BRHA's 12-month construction training program, will help construct the home. We anticipate that the home will be ready for occupancy by late 2007.

Pending a successful outcome of this home and future projects, the BRHA hopes to build two affordable homes each year. More details on the West Mary Street home, as well as financing opportunities, will be available in future newsletters.



**BRHA Sponsors Summer Food Program
for Youth**

For 16 years the BRHA’s SFSP has fed more than 300 children weekly during the summer. The meals are intended to “fill the gap” for youth who participate in National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs during the academic year.

Children may take advantage of two meals each weekday. Most locations serve a snack and lunch or a snack and supper.

To learn about menus and where meals will be served, please 821-6251.

Moore Street Residents Form Neighborhood Watch

The BRHA’s first Neighborhood Watch meeting was held in March for residents of Rice Terrace Apartments, as well as those who live in the vicinity of Moore Street. Twenty-five participants attended the session, which was led by Nicole Slagle and Sgt. Sean Carrigan of the Bristol Virginia Police Department.

The BRHA encourages all residents to attend Neighborhood Watch sessions. To have a member of your BRHA Resident Council arrange a start-up meeting, please call the Bristol Virginia Police Department at 645-7281. The next neighborhood watch meeting will be held in August (date and time to be announced).

The process of establishing a Neighborhood Watch involves identifying the watch area, selecting a program coordinator and block or road captains, and arranging a kickoff meeting for residents.

REMINDER

“Confidential Hot Spot Cards” are available at the front desk at our office. If you are aware of any drug dealers, drug houses, drug related crimes, other criminal activity, and/or any quality of life issues, please report them on this card.

You can make a difference!

New Hours For The Laundry Room Located In the “O’ building

Monday through Friday: 8:30 am to 4:45 pm

Saturday and Sunday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

RENT REMINDER

Rent payments are due on the first day of each month! After the 10th, a \$15 late fee is assessed on remaining balances. If rent has not been paid by the end of the month, residents will be issued a detainer warrant on their property. Please pay on time so that this action does not need to be taken!

Barred List Available to Residents

The BRHA maintains an updated list of individuals who have been barred from coming onto the housing authority’s grounds. Residents may pick up a copy of this list at the BRHA’s Edmond Street office

Security Cameras - 24/7

Most of you have probably seen a Dynamark Security truck in your apartment complex over the past month. And you've probably seen the guys up on the lifts installing the new security cameras throughout the various public housing complexes. Some 36 high definition "pan-tilt-zoom" (PTZ) cameras have been installed and connected through the internet to computers that have four terabytes of memory (every terabyte equals 1,000 gigabytes).

This is the most hi-tech security camera monitoring system that Dynamark has installed for any of its customers to date. It is up and running and it is recording. We can monitor it live or view activity later from the recording. We can copy videos of what the cameras see or print out still photos (some samples are on this page).



We have given the Police Department full access to the system and they have already received training on how to use it. They can look through the cameras from their own offices or on laptops that they can carry in their police cars. And they can look at the recordings, make their own videos and print out their own photos from their offices.

The cameras are recording any activity they see 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is probably the biggest single improvement in security that we have ever had in our public housing communities. We hope this will be a major new tool for crime prevention in our neighborhoods. So, spread the good news – Security Cameras 24/7.

What are PTZ Cameras?

- *PTZ means that the cameras can move from side to side, tilt up and down, and can zoom in and out for a close up or wide angle view; and they have night vision.*
- *Being connected to the computer means that every camera can be controlled easily and individually through the special monitoring software, and can be automatically set to move or stop or zoom on a programmed schedule.*
- *The internet connectivity allows users with the proper passwords to connect to the security system on a computer anywhere that has internet access.*
- *And the terabytes...well, let's just say that we can record months of activity on the computers before we have to save anything to other storage devices.*



Find A Way Helps Families Attain Better Way of Life



The BRHA wants to see all of its residents succeed. And through Find A Way, the agency is enabling families to realize an improved quality of life.

Currently, 26 families are enrolled in the voluntary program, which helps residents achieve their goals of attaining an education, improved employment opportunities, and possible home and car ownership.

People feel better about themselves when they have a sense of independence – Find A Way is the BRHA’s way of connecting residents to the people and tools they need to stand on their own.

If you are interested in participating in Find A Way, please contact Lynn Pannell, the BRHA’s Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator, at 591-1710.

Find A Way Program to Offer Get-Out-of-Debt Course

A get-out-of-debt course will soon be offered to Find A Way participants who desire to learn how to establish a budget and work toward financial independence. Financial Peace University is a 13-week course taught via video by money-management guru Dave Ramsey. In addition to watching Ramsey’s video, participants will also be provided a workbook and have an opportunity to participate in group discussions. For those who are not interested in taking part in group sessions, this course will be offered on an individual basis as well.

To sign up for this 13-week program, please contact Lynn Pannell at 591-1710.

Parenting Classes –These 14-week classes are open to all BRHA residents and are offered every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Tuesday classes are held on Piedmont Avenue at the Parent Resource Center, and Thursday classes take place in Lynn Pannell’s office at the BRHA. Please contact Lynn at 591-1710 to sign up.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Crossroads Medical Missions is at Faith in Action on the first Wednesday of each month all day.

A Regional Senior Safety Fair will be held August 9th at the Higher Education Center in Abingdon 9:00 til 2:00. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

SUMMERFEST

Summerfest is scheduled for Saturday July 28, 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. This year’s Summerfest will be held at the parking lots of Jones Manor and Stant Hall. Everyone is invited to attend. There will be fun and games for all ages.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!!!!!!!!!!!!



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DEPARTING COMMISSIONERS

On behalf of the Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority’s Board of Commissioners and staff, we want to extend our sincere appreciation and thanks to Mrs. Virginia Goodson and Mr. Sam Silcox for their years of service and dedication as Commissioners of The Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Mrs. Goodson served on the Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority for more than 20 years. She was here during the good times and the bad, and has seen many positive changes take place. Mrs. Goodson has always been an advocate for the Housing Authority community and for the residents.

Mr. Silcox served on the Board of Commissioners since 2002 and has also seen some positive changes take place. Not only was Mr. Silcox a Commissioner, he is also a resident. As a resident, Mr. Silcox was able to relay things to the BRHA administration regarding the residents and in return relay information to the residents.

A reception was held in honor of these two departing Commissioners on the afternoon of June 12. The reception was attended by several leaders of the City of Bristol, the BRHA staff and others.



WELCOME TO NEW COMMISSIONERS

Please also help us to welcome our two incoming Commissioners, Mr. Doug Fleenor and Mr. Corey Stinchcomb. Mr. Fleenor is a local Attorney and Mr. Stinchcomb is employed by the Bristol Virginia School Board.

Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor to serve a four year term. We want to welcome both new Commissioners, and feel confident that they will be an asset to the Board.

HOW TO REACH US:

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MISSION STATEMENT

The BRHA will provide safe, attractive, affordable housing and housing assistance, and the opportunity for families and others in need to achieve a higher standard of living.

DATES TO REMEMBER

BRHA Board Meetings

- ♦ Held the third Tuesday of each month at 3:30 pm

Stant Hall Resident Council meetings

- ♦ Second Monday of the month at 6pm

Jones Manor Resident Council meetings

- ♦ Third Monday of the month at 5pm

Applications

- ♦ Public Housing - every Tuesday and Thursday
- ♦ Housing Choice Vouchers - Tuesdays Only

Office Closing:

- ♦ BRHA Will be closed Monday September 3 for Labor Day



Bristol Redevelopment and Housing Authority
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