



ASSISTING LACKAWANNA COUNTY FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS
WITH SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SINCE 1961

COMMUNITY NEWS & VIEWS

HACL Newsletter

Emergency Response Team Assembled

The overall safety of the residents living in all of the developments is the utmost concern at the Housing Authority of the County of Lackawanna.

Whether it is a fire, flood, power outage, heating or cooling issue, or water main break, keeping everyone safe, secure and with the resources they need along with notifying family are the Authority's main priorities.

To that end, the administration recently created the framework for an Emergency Response Team Plan of Action that would initiate a number of activities to help the residents and families when the need arises.

The response team is comprised of 15 staff members. They are: Gary Bewick, Judy Thiel, Patrick Padula, Johnnie Jackson, Erin Gerrity, Lenny Rossi, Melissa Mitchko, Frank DePietro, Tony Caramanno, Joe D'Arienzo, Jim Davis, John Mecca, Patrick Loughney, Jr., Steve Jones and Nancy Ikeler.

The Community Room at the Authority's Veterans Drive, Dickson City, site will serve as the shelter should people have to be moved in an emergency. The room and surrounding area were remodeled with shower facilities and bigger restrooms.

Staff has been assigned various tasks or agencies and/or utilities to contact when an emergency arises. The work to be handled involves purchases of food, water and medicine, overseeing cleanup or other details, repair work, bedding, transportation, notification of families, contacts to 911 and COLTS, recreation/entertainment, and other services to help insure everyone's safety.

The response team is a vital element in the overall operation of the Authority. It will provide everyone with a safe environment and valuable resources when emergency situations happen.

"There is no substitute for safety. The work of the response team is a small price to pay to give everyone peace of mind," said Patrick Padula, the Authority's Executive Director.

Security Upgrade At Dunmore High Rise

The security of the residents living in the developments of the Lackawanna County Housing Authority has always been the administration's utmost concern.

"We are always looking for new technology, advanced cameras, and key-less entry access system for our properties," explained John Mecca, the Authority's IT Director. "We constantly monitor and look for new equipment to incorporate to keep the residents safe and offer them a peace-of-mind."

After doing security upgrades at the the Blakely High Rise, management initiated a plan for the Dunmore High Rise. According to Pat Loughney, Jr., the Authority's IT Technician, the work entails installing additional exterior cameras, a new callbox at the main entrance, and an updated entry system at all of the entrances/exits.

The IT Department will be rolling out enhanced camera systems at more sites in the future, as well as lighting upgrades where needed.

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Half My Life With The Jermyn Housing Development

Sometimes a happen-chance meeting turns out for the best.

Irene Kaufmann is testimony to this.

Mrs. Kaufmann, 98, recently signed her 49th lease as a resident of the Housing Authority of the County of Lackawanna's Jermyn Development.

Irene credits former Jermyn Mayor Ed Callahan for introducing her to the newly constructed complex back in 1975.

The mayor fought very hard to move this project ahead. The development was originally a cemetery. After all the graves were transferred, construction work began.

At the time, Mrs. Kaufmann was a widowed mother of three young children (two girls and one boy). The Mayor invited her to the grand opening to check-out the apartments.

And, by 'happen-chance, the first spot she saw was Apartment 8C, featuring three bedrooms. Mayor Callahan submitted her application and the rest is history with her signing her first lease in November 1975.

"I have no problems, ever. The neighbors are friendly. The evenings are quiet; I am very content," said Irene. "The maintenance men are exceptional. They are good about fixing problems."

Mrs. Kaufmann has always lived in Jermyn. She is a product of Jermyn elementary and high school. She took a commercial course for two years at a church in Archbald.

Irene moved to Jersey City for five years and worked in a variety of offices. She met her husband and moved back to the borough.

Upon her return, Irene worked in Jermyn dress factories and then moved on to a 13-year career in the cafeteria at Lakeland High School and then Mayfield Elementary School, where she retired from. She is a member of the Jermyn Methodist Church and its women's group.

As her children moved on, Irene went to a two bedroom unit, an upstairs apartment, and now a place with the bedroom on the first floor for her to get around easier.

Irene has six grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren along with lots of fond memories of her stay in the development.

"Irene is a great example of the type of people that we serve," said Patrick Padula, the Authority's Executive Director. "We are thrilled to be able to provide safe, quality housing for her all these years and to watch her family grow while she remained with us. We wish her well and with God's grace, celebrate 50 years with her."

"The reason you stay is because you like the people. I have great neighbors and the services get done," Irene explained.

In a recent letter to Mr. Padula, Irene wrote "I am grateful to have been able to live in this complex stress free all these years. With God's help, I hope to see 50."

The Authority does too!



Housing Authority staff visited Mrs. Kaufmann at her apartment to thank her for 49 great years as a resident in the Jermyn development. L-r, Chickie DePietro, Assistant Maintenance Supervisor; Patrick Padula, Executive Director; Melissa Mitchko, Site Manager; Jim Davis, Maintenance Supervisor; and Joe D'Arienzo, Administrative Clerk.



Community Connections Held

On July 23, the Dunmore High Rise hosted a Community Connections program with several area organizations to alert the residents to the services and programs that are available in the community for them. Representatives from: COLTS, the Lackawanna County Area Agency on Aging, United Way of Lackawanna, Wayne & Pike Counties, Green House Project, Dunmore Senior Community Center, and St. Francis of Assisi Kitchen. Lunch was provided by St. Francis, who also had its clothing trailer on-site for the individuals to select the items that they needed.

Governor Shapiro Visits Dunmore High Rise



Governor Josh Shapiro thanked Dunmore High Rise resident Joann Rinaldi for her comments at the July 1 Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program at the facility. Ms. Rinaldi was a first-time recipient of the program. Looking on is U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright.



Pennsylvania Secretary of Revenue Pat Browne encouraged residents across the Commonwealth to apply for the rebate 'lifeline.' The deadline for the initiative has been extended to December 31, 2024. In the back are, l-r, State Senator Marty Flynn, U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright, Joann Rinaldi, Dunmore High Rise rebate recipient; Governor Josh Shapiro, and Dunmore Mayor Max Conway.



Lackawanna County Housing Authority Executive Director Patrick Padula opened the event by discussing the value of the rebate program and encouraging those who have not applied to work with their site manager to do the necessary paperwork.



Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro chatted with residents of the Dunmore High Rise after the program. Over 442,000 rebates were distributed on July 1, 2024, to eligible residents/applicants.



Governor Josh Shapiro announced at the Dunmore High Rise Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program that over 442,000 checks, totaling \$266 million, were being distributed on July 1 via mail or direct deposit to help State residents with their ongoing expenses. Over 9,400 people in Lackawanna County received the benefit. In the background are, l-r, State Senator Marty Flynn, U.S. Congressman Matt Cartwright, Dunmore High Rise resident and first time rebate recipient Joann Rinaldi, and Dunmore Mayor Max Conway.



Dunmore Mayor Max Conway welcomed Governor Josh Shapiro to Dunmore Borough for the Property Tax/Rent rebate Program.

Infrastructure Upgrades At Blakely Site; Energy Study Underway

Maintaining the overall operating condition and appearance of its properties have always been a top priority for the Lackawanna County Housing Authority.

The Blakely site is currently undergoing several upgrades to better meet the needs of its residents.

A water line was recently relocated due to the construction of a tower for a new elevator being installed at the high rise.

Lenny Rossi, Director of Capital Improvements for the Authority, explained that new gas mains and service lines to the building are also being done.

“This will provide better heat flow for everyone in the building,” Rossi explained.

The Authority is currently involved in an energy conservation and efficiency study that encompasses every unit in the network.

“This audit is a great opportunity for us to save on energy and costs for both the tenants and the Authority, and to also upgrade mechanical systems and appliances with more state-of-the-art and efficient products,” said Rossi.

Service Agencies That Offer Valuable Assistance

In our continuing series featuring social services that can assist our residents, we are featuring The Outreach Center For Community Resources.



Based in Scranton, Outreach offers individuals a variety of initiatives that promote family stability and economic self-sufficiency. Two areas that can be of benefit are: Parent-Child Programs and Workforce Development.

A few parenting offerings of special interest include: Incredible Years, Parent Cafes, Parents as Teachers, and Safe Care Augmented. Incredible Years addresses typical child behavior concerns and specialized needs. The “café” brings parents/caregivers together to talk about challenges and strategies for protecting and building strong families.

Parents as Teachers is an early childhood home visitation program for pregnant moms and families with youngsters, birth to five, emphasizing school readiness and family well-being. Safe Care focuses on parent/child interaction, health care and home safety.

As for Workforce Development, Outreach offers: GED Programming/Tutoring & Educational Support Services and the LEAD Center. These segments focus on support for GED credentials for juveniles and adults. Services are also provided for resume and cover letter writing, job searching, mock interviews, and more.

Outreach, located on 431 North 7th Avenue, is committed to “Moving Today’s Families Forward.” The telephone number is 570-348-6484, and the website address is www.OutreachWorks.org

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