Housing Matters

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Deshon II Nears Groundbreaking

As the first transitional program ever to be located on federal property, Deshon Place is a true success story. The project has been helping the homeless since 2001, and now Deshon II will be expanding the assistance available to the homeless population by adding ten additional units.

Deshon Place is a supportive housing program for homeless single adults, aged 18-62, providing shelter and supportive services essential for homeless adults to attain self-sufficiency and successful community reintegration. While it is located on the Butler Veterans Administration property, the services provided are not exclusively for veterans.

As the first program in Butler County to be funded through the HUD McKinney-Vento Grant, Deshon Place has continued to surpass benchmarks for serving the homeless. More than 75% of those entering Deshon Place over the last five years have moved on to stable, permanent housing and nearly 56% were discharged with employment.

Deshon continues to adapt to a changing environment, offering additional and improved services. One important strategy has been partnering with Butler County Commuity College to provide free financial literacy classes in addition to GED classes and other continuing education opportunities. Helping clients establish a strong financial understanding goes a long way in their success upon leaving the facility.

Groundbreaking for the ten additional units known as Deshon II will begin in April. This expansion will be an important step in meeting the increasing needs of Butler County's continuum of care.■

Authority Welcomes New Staff

The Butler County Housing and Redevelopment Authority is pleased to welcome two new staff members.

Lisa Meadows joined the Authority in mid-December, 2006, as the Family Self Sufficiency Coordinator. A resident of Pittsburgh, Lisa brings three years of experience from the Fayette County Housing Authority to her new position in Butler.

With a Master's Degree in Social Work, Lisa hopes to encourage more Housing Authority clients to take advantage of educational opportunities and to get involved with the many positive programs the Authority offers. Lisa also will be representing the Authority during the Muscular Dystrophy Lock-Up in April.

Marcy Charmley is the first AmeriCorps worker employed by the Housing Authority, and she is enjoying her work immensely. She began her one year assignment in October, 2006, and hopes that her position will be expanded into a second year.

Previously, Marcy worked at the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh with a specialty in Section 8 housing. A single mom, she and her four children recently relocated to Butler County.■

Pictured left to right, Lisa Meadows and Marcy Charmley.

Resident Makes FSA Work for Her

Jodi Laughlin is one local resident who understands the iimportance of a savings account.

Jodi recently graduated from the Family Savings Account program by saving $2,000 in a specific account and completing the Financial Literacy and Specific Asset Training. Her $2,000 savings was matched by the Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development's Family Savings Account Program. Doubling her investment allowed Jodi to purchase new windows for her home. Congratulations!■

Executive Director Perry O'Malley presents a check to Jodi Laughlin.

Housing Matters is published quarterly by the Housing Authority of the County of Butler.

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Under Our Wing Receives Prestigious Bellamy Award

Under Our Wing, the innovative apartment complex developed by the Housing Authority and the YWCA, was presented with the Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authority's Bellamy Award in December, 2006. The annual award is the highest recognition a project can receive from the Association.

Opening in October, 2005, Under Our Wing had 100 percent occupancy and has been full ever since. The goal of the project is to provide affordable housing and free assited-living services to those residents who need them. The YWCA provides the assisted living services--a home health aide, a hot lunch, laundry, and housekeeping services--while the Housing Authority served as the developer of the project, making it a win-win partnership for everyone involved.

While this is the first development of its kind, those involved hope it won't be the last. "We'd like to see this project become a model for success in other areas, and are working to make that happen," said Housing Authority Executive Director Perry O'Malley. ■

Upcoming Events

Spring and summer are always busy times of the year for the Housing Authority, and 2007 is no exception. In addition to a variety of programs for residents, the Authority will be hosting two of its largest and most popular events in the next several months.

Mark your calendar for **Wednesday, April 18,** for the Annual Homebuyer's Fair. Held at the Butler Days Inn from 3:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., the event is the best way to find out information on home buying, mortgages, lending assistance and much, much more. The event is free and open to the public.

Also coming is the annual Scholarship Luncheon on **Wednesday, June 27,** where deserving residents are awarded scholarships sponsored by area businesses and organizations. For more information on either program, contact Kevin Boozel at 724.287.6797.■

Brownfields for Housing

Celebrating Success!

When Dwayne Hightower and his girlfriend Michelle decided to buy a home in the City of Butler . . .

Before . . .

After

Penn Homes Receives Funding

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Redevelopment Authority

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