

# News & Views

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh / Winter 2018

## PUBLICLY SPEAKING

### A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is committed to developing high quality, affordable housing and strives to be a key partner in our city's solution to the affordable housing shortage. We are making rapid progress in creating new, mixed-income developments in Larimer and Allegheny Dwellings and we've made significant strides in expanding our city-wide housing portfolio through our Gap Financing Program. The HACP is engaged in long-term, community revitalization plans in the Hill District, North Side, and elsewhere throughout the city.

In addition to our new development activities, we are expanding housing options for our residents through innovations within our Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program. Recently, the HACP was awarded HUD funding to administer two unique housing and supportive service programs—the Family Unification Program and the Mainstream Voucher Program. Both opportunities afford the HACP the opportunity to extend housing opportunities to individuals and families in dire need of both stable housing and social support. We will be implementing both programs in partnership with the Allegheny County Department of Health and Human Services. We look forward to the opportunity to better house two traditionally underserved populations: youth at risk of becoming homeless and persons with disabilities.

The HACP is also pleased to report that in 2018, we were extremely successful in assisting Pittsburgh families to achieve the dream of homeownership. In all, 21 families have made the life-changing transition from rental housing to homeownership through their participation in our Homeownership Program. The HACP has been firmly committed to providing homeownership opportunities for qualified, low-income Pittsburghers for the last fifteen years; however, this year has been our best to date. We are continually working to improve upon existing programs and create new opportunities for our residents. It is the goal of the HACP to provide our residents with additional tools and support systems to achieve upward mobility, attain a higher quality of life and accomplish professional and personal goals. For many families, that means moving out of subsidized housing, for others it is achieving a higher level of education and or better employment. For others it means being able to assist a child through college or ensure that there are support systems in place to reduce incidences of inter-generational poverty.

In 2018, our Resident Employment Program helped to assist 174 individuals to attain new employment. This includes many well-paying, long-term careers in the construction, medical and customer service industries. For those residents who have yet to meet their self-sufficiency goals, we will continue to provide opportunities for vocational training and educational advancement.

The HACP will continue to invest in the families and individuals who call our communities not just houses or units, but homes.

Caster D. Binion, Executive Director

## IN THIS ISSUE

Sandstone Quarry Apartments  
Realize First Phase of Revitalized  
Allegheny Dwellings..... **2**

Resident Employment Program  
Connects Clients with Higher Wages,  
Higher Quality of Life..... **2**

Renovation of Historical Larimer School  
to be Incorporated into Choice  
Neighborhood Development..... **3**

Northview Heights Public Safety Center  
Will Strengthen Community Relations,  
Improve Quality of Life..... **4**

ABK Early Learning and Development  
Center Finds a Home in  
Bedford Dwellings ..... **5**

Interactive Art Program Celebrates  
the Cultural Diversity and Community  
Spirit of Northview Heights ..... **6**

No Strings Shop Still Going Strong  
After Two Decades of Service ..... **7**

Clean Slate E3 Awards HACP Residents  
with Scholarships of up to \$20,000..... **8**

The Creative Arts Corner Offers HACP  
Residents Unique Opportunity to Pursue  
Artistic Dreams..... **9**

ConnectHomePgh Brings Focus on  
Digital Literacy and Inclusion..... **10**

412 Food Rescue Teaches Residents  
that Cooking Matters ..... **11**

# Sandstone Quarry Apartments Realize First Phase of Revitalized Allegheny Dwellings

The new Allegheny Dwellings is taking shape, as Phase I of the community-wide development nears completion and occupancy. As construction rapidly moves along, the community has also been provided with a new sense of identity and a formal change, as decided by current residents of Allegheny Dwellings. As such, the redeveloped first phase of Allegheny Dwellings will be known as Sandstone Quarry Apartments.

Because the current buildings have outlived their life cycles and cannot be repaired effectively, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) and its development partners Trek Development Group and Allies & Ross Management and Development Corporation (ARMDC) are redeveloping the community to ensure safety and quality of life for its residents. Barracks-style units are being demolished and replaced with one, two, and three bedroom units with a variety of styles, including apartments, townhomes, and up-down detached units.

The redevelopment is primarily taking place on the site of the former Allegheny Dwellings, now Sandstone Quarry Apartments, though there are also units along Federal Street to have a greater impact on the community at large. Once completed, there will be 58 new mixed-income units on the former public housing site and seven new units on Federal Street, for a total of 65 units. Of these 65 units, 47 will be affordable as a part of the Project Based Voucher program and 18 will be market rate. The seven Federal Street units will be completed by the end of 2018.

Resident intake is underway: people are starting to move in and applications for new tenants are being accepted.

Community members played an active role in the redevelopment process; they participated in the planning process and were given options for where they want to live while construction is underway. They also decided who would move into the new units first: the first residents moving back in, as decided by the residents, are seniors and disabled residents. According to HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion, “the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh is proud to see our collective effort to replace some of the city’s most obsolete housing stock move forward successfully, and we’re excited to continue working with the community.”

HACP, ARMDC, and Trek Development expect to complete Phase I of the Allegheny Dwellings, now Sandstone Quarry Apartments, in April 2019. This is only the first phase of a multi-phase redevelopment.



## Resident Employment Program Connects Clients with Higher Wages, Higher Quality of Life

HACP’s Section 3/Resident Employment Program is committed to encouraging and empowering both HACP residents to achieve self-sufficiency. The program aims to assist HACP residents obtain the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to make it in today’s work force and improve their financial status.

This year, more than 174 HACP residents have gained new employment through participation in the program, 13 of whom have been employed as Laborers/HVAC Technicians by Mistick Construction and their subcontractors as part of the ongoing Allegheny Dwellings community-wide redevelopment initiative. As with all major development projects a key goal is to ensure that residents are provided with ample opportunity to earn quality employment opportunities.

Interested in connecting with new opportunities for employment or career training? Visit the HACP Resident Employment Program online at: [www.hacp.org/careers/resident-employment](http://www.hacp.org/careers/resident-employment). The website includes a regularly-updated listing of Section 3 employment opportunities, general employment announcements and training programs that are available to HACP residents and qualified low-income Pittsburgh residents.

For more information on the Section 3/ Resident Employment Program and/or how to participate in upcoming training and employment opportunities, contact: Lloyd C. Wilson, Jr., Resident Employment Manager/Section 3 Coordinator, at 412-456-5000, ext. 1048, or [lloyd.wilson@hacp.org](mailto:lloyd.wilson@hacp.org).





## Renovation of Historical Larimer School to be Incorporated into Choice Neighborhood Development

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh is excited to announce that its development instrumentality, Allies & Ross Management and Development Corporation, is partnering with its co-developer McCormack Baron Salazar and the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh to rehabilitate the historic Larimer School and adjacent properties, adding 35 units of mixed-income housing, as well as a seven newly constructed garden-apartments/townhomes and commercial space.

These renovations are only the latest piece in the Larimer/East Liberty Choice Neighborhood Initiative. Preserving the historic character of the Larimer School while also providing support for the affordable housing market was an important goal for community stakeholders, and this redevelopment will do just that. It was inspired by other school-to-apartment historic adaptive reuses in the city, like Schenley High School.

The Larimer School has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1986, but the red brick building has sat empty for decades. Ownership has changed multiple times as various redevelopment initiatives failed to gain traction, but the building will see a new chapter in its life thanks to the Choice Neighborhood Initiative. The Larimer School Redevelopment will be rolled in with another phase of the Larimer/East Liberty Choice Neighborhood housing

development along the Larimer Avenue corridor, which will be completed by the end of 2021.

The Choice Neighborhood Initiative is making great progress. Phase 2 is nearing completion, which will add more than 150 mixed-income units to the neighborhood. Developers completed Phase 1 in 2016, adding 85 units that are occupied by mixed-income tenants with a long waitlist. Moving forward, the development will continue to be driven in large part by community stakeholders, as they get close to reaching their goal of building 334 new units and a community park under the Choice Neighborhoods grant program.

“HACP is very happy with the progress of the Larimer Choice Neighborhood Initiative. It’s always exciting to see a community come together to make a difference, and we’re glad we can be a part of that,” says HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion.

Pittsburgh received funding from the federal government in 2014 to implement this community plan, one of only 27 Choice Neighborhood cities nationwide. The hope is to capitalize on the growth in neighboring East Liberty and Shadyside, while guaranteeing that long-term residents have a seat at the table and see benefits from a revitalization of the neighborhood.



# Northview Heights Public Safety Center Will Strengthen Community Relations, Improve Quality of Life

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, in collaboration with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and the Buhl Foundation's One Northside Initiative, hosted a grand opening of the Northview Heights Public Safety Center in early December 2018.

The new Public Safety Center—which will serve residents of Northview Heights and Allegheny Dwellings—is designed to improve quality of life for residents and to strengthen relationships between the community and the officers who serve them. The Open House provided residents and the general public with a first glimpse inside the facility, which will offer residents access to job training, arts programs, and shared community space.

"This center is a great model of many different partners coming together for a common good, one that delivers equity and quality of life for all," Mayor William Peduto said. Public Safety Director Wendell Hissrich credited the many partners who came together on this project, including the Housing Authority and Executive Director Caster D. Binion. "We worked closely on this important project, which will result in improved police-community relations, more opportunities for residents and a safer environment for all," Hissrich said.

"We fully understand the value of working hand-in-hand with residents to build a better and safer community through collaboration, mutual respect and trust," Police Chief Scott Schubert added. "This partnership in Northview Heights has the ability to make a significant difference in community-police relations, reduction of crime and disorder, and shared success in overall community wellness. It's our goal to replicate these partnerships and success stories in other communities."

The new Safety Center was made possible through a substantial investment of HACP dollars to create the state-of-the-art facility to focus on resident engagement and pro-active community safety.

"The Public Safety Center is a welcome addition to the Northview Heights community," said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. "We are proud to partner with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, the Buhl Foundation and everyone who came together to develop a plan that puts resident safety and quality of life as the utmost priority. We expect the endeavor to produce an immediate, positive impact on the lives of the hundreds of Pittsburgh senior citizens and families who call Northview Heights home."

This Safety Center is in large part the result of hard work of the Buhl Foundation, which decided several years ago to invest in Pittsburgh's Northside neighborhoods. Through a series of surveys, public meetings, and face-to-face meetings with residents, Buhl and their partners asked the public how they would change and improve their neighborhoods. In doing so, they identified several common themes, which became the pillars of their One Northside Initiative: Place, Employment, Health, Education, and Safety.

"Both Northside residents and Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Officers indicated a desire to build safer communities by working together," said Buhl Foundation President Diana Bucco. "I congratulate the Housing Authority, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the Mayor's Office for coming together in response to this need and creating a space that is responsive to the community and a demonstration model that will truly have national implications."



# ABK Early Learning and Development Center Finds a Home in Bedford Dwellings

The early learning center in the Bedford Hope Center, a partnership between the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, ABK Learning and Development Center, and the Duquesne University School of Education, opened its doors in early 2018 and almost immediately became a cornerstone program for Bedford Dwellings and the surrounding neighborhood. The innovative center aims to improve children's early childhood learning opportunities, taking community needs and input into account to provide a context-based and holistic approach to early childhood education.

ABK Learning and Development Center Director, Lesely Crawford, said the Center is "here to support families and their children, holistically. We want to partner with parents to help their children be school ready." Ms. Crawford, who grew up in the Hill District, takes great pride in being able to provide her community with a service that is very much in demand. Within six months of opening, the Center was at full capacity and has been operating on a waiting list ever since.

To give children the best opportunities possible, HACP and ABK partnered with Duquesne University's School of Education, working with Dr. Christopher Meidl. The involvement of the university provided the program strong institutional support and built the foundation for an innovative approach based on current research in early childhood development. According to Dr. Meidl, there are two findings that research is increasingly supporting: it is essential to involve community members and non-traditional hours are needed for people trying to enter or reenter the workforce. These principles guided the design of the early learning center and helped shape the model for the program.

The ABK Early Learning and Development Center operates year-round, catering to children between three-months old and school age. Their main focus is making childcare accessible to whoever needs it. They are licensed to do childcare 24/7 and Ms. Crawford says they can accommodate any kind of schedule. "At the end of the day," Dr. Meidl says, "the children are the first priority," and the center does whatever it can to provide support and enrichment.

Duquesne is actively involved in the operation of the center; Dr. Meidl and his students provide classroom support and help interacting with kids, with the goal of giving as much one-on-one attention to children as they can. Part of that classroom support includes the community projects Dr. Meidl's students work on. The most recent project entails planning an innovative curriculum and environmental design for the center's outdoor play space.

This collaboration between HACP, ABK, and Duquesne to provide non-traditional childcare is "one of the most innovative and creative partnerships for early childhood education," according to Michelle Sandidge, HACP's Chief Community Affairs Officer. "A tremendous amount of planning and preparation went into this program. HACP staff, Dr. Meidl, Lesely and her entire team have all been committed to putting forth an exceptional program, a model for other communities. I could not be more proud of the progress we've made together."

This is only beginning of the partnership, according to everyone involved. HACP, ABK, and Duquesne are all excited to continue innovating to provide children with the best opportunities possible and prepare them for success. Although the center is still relatively new to Bedford Dwellings, it's had a large impact on the community and has been warmly received. In Ms. Crawford's words, "it's been a true blessing."

The ABK Learning and Development Center is available to any HACP resident. For more information on how to apply for services, contact the Center at [abklearn@gmail.com](mailto:abklearn@gmail.com) or 412-456-5000, ext. 1033.

---

**“At the end of the day, the children are the first priority and the center does whatever it can to provide support and enrichment.”**

**— Dr. Christopher Meidl**



Children play as Lesely Crawford discusses programming with Dr. Christopher Meidl during a recent site visit.

# Interactive Art Program Celebrates the **Cultural Diversity** and **Community Spirit** of **Northview Heights**

Every week, a group of Northview Heights residents huddle together to build something for their community and to make a connection between past, present and future generations. Their room is small and packed, full of excitement and energy. They are collaborating to create what's called an "interactive documentary," an online platform that showcases interviews with residents and other engaging content.

The residents participating in the project are interviewing neighbors and collecting stories to create a profile of the community. Although it started with a focus on Northview Heights' Somali-Bantu community, the project has grown to include everyone in the diverse Northview Heights community, from long-term African American residents to other African residents from Burundi and the Congo. "Learning each other's stories is hopefully going to bridge some of the disconnects between neighbors," said resident artist Lindsey Scherloun.

The project started in the spring of 2017, when the Office of Public Art (OPA) and the Greater Pittsburgh Arts council received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as other funders, to support a two year residency for an artist. The residency is hosted by the United Somali Bantu of Greater Pittsburgh (USBGP) and managed by the OPA in collaboration with the City of Pittsburgh and Welcoming Pittsburgh.

Over the course of the first year of her residency, Ms. Scherloun collaborated with USBGP to develop and implement a community engagement strategy, building relationships in and developing an understanding of the community. She reached out to form a group of residents that would work on the project: both teenagers and adult residents, all women, applied and came together to lead the project.

Ms. Scherloun has spent the second year of her residency developing the art project with the residents involved. The group settled on producing this interactive documentary because they wanted to create something engaging and exploratory.

Literacy is often a barrier, so they wanted to make sure that the project would be accessible to everyone: community members, Pittsburgh residents, service providers, anyone. They spent the summer fine-tuning their plans and reviewing ethics rules for interviews. Through the fall of 2018, the residents involved in the project collected video, audio, and photographic content to tell the community's stories. July



Artist Lindsey Scherloun (left) convenes with participating Northview Heights residents during an interview training session.

---

“Learning each other’s stories is hopefully going to bridge some of the disconnects between neighbors.”

— Lindsey Scherloun, resident artist

---

2019 is the expected completion date, when Ms. Scherloun and the residents hope to have a release party for the website.

This unique public art project is part of a larger effort to encourage cultural understanding of marginalized populations, who often face discrimination that stems from a lack of understanding. Ms. Scherloun says that “there are more cultural similarities than people know, people have so many things in common,” and this project will highlight those similarities, while also celebrating the cultural diversity that the Northview Heights community brings to the Pittsburgh area. But this project isn’t just for outsiders looking in—it’s serving as a way for the community to preserve culture and heritage for future generations and to build and strengthen kinship ties.

Many of the residents involved with the project said they either wanted to get more in touch with their culture or wanted to help the young people in their community learn more about their heritage. People are very excited about collecting and showcasing these stories; in the words of one resident, “it’s beautiful.”



# No Strings Shop Still Going Strong After Two Decades of Service

Tucked away in the basement of 2411 Bedford Avenue Rear is the Bedford Dwellings No Strings Shop. Like any other consignment shop, it's full of donated clothes, books, and items; what makes the No Strings Shop so special is the fact that nothing has a price. Everything there is free for the taking.

Effie Williams, a long-time Bedford Dwellings resident, can't remember exactly when she started the shop, but she can "kind of tell from the age of her grandkids" and knows it was over 20 years ago. To hear Ms. Williams explain the inception of No Strings Shop, it sounds like pure inspiration. She describes how she used to see people throwing away useful things and thinking that other people could use them; one night as she was going to bed, she got the idea for a community shop where people can donate their old things and pick out new things they may need.

From the beginning, the goal of the No Strings Shop has always been to help people. It's there as a resource not only for people in the community, but also for anyone who may be in need of something. The shop itself has everything from a main room with rows of clothing racks to a "baby room" with a crib and other infant-related items. Everything in the shop has been donated, and the shop continually receives donations from all over the City of Pittsburgh, sometimes even from outside of it. Because it receives so many donations, the No Strings Shop is able to fulfill the needs of Bedford Dwellings and the surrounding neighborhood, helping families out when they need dishes or new shoes or just want something to read.

There's no official inventory, but Ms. Williams has an idea of everything that's in the shop; if someone comes in looking for something specific, she can help them find it. Most people coming to the No Strings Shop, according to Ms. Williams, are there to browse and "they always leave with something."

The No Strings Shop has thrived over the years because it's a community effort. Ms. Williams and Ann Francis Taylor, another Bedford resident, are the main volunteers running the shop, but Ms. Williams makes it clear that the entire community is involved. People will come and help out when they can, organizing clothes or carrying in new donations.

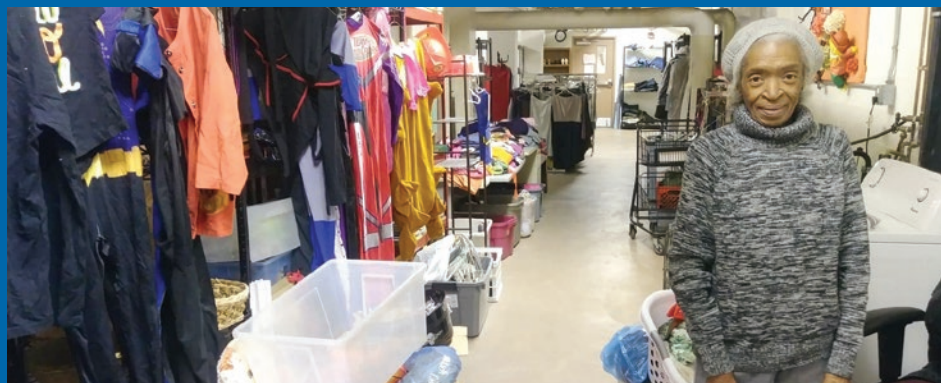
Knowing that the No Strings Shop is there means a lot to the community. According to Ms. Taylor, it's "a good thing for the community that everyone can come and get what they need, it makes you feel like you won a million dollars because you can get as much as you want." Ms. Taylor says the No Strings Shop has done great things for the community, bringing people together and helping new residents who move in with next to nothing. "A lot of time people move in and they don't have anything," she said, "and we do have emergency boxes for people like that." Everything the Shop does goes back to the ideas of community and mutual helpfulness.

Ms. Williams says that the No Strings Shop has been able to operate for so long because it's been given the opportunity to continue operating and because community members have been so engaged. She's very thankful for the HACP and community's continued support, and for all the people who have donated over the past 20 years. Everyone in the community feels invested in the shop, and everyone does what they can to help. Community members' involvement is the secret to the No Strings Shop's success—without them, she says, none of it would be possible.

The No Strings Shop is open Monday through Friday 1:00-5:00 p.m. and is located at 2411 Bedford Avenue, Rear. They're always accepting donations or there to help people when they need it. When asked what she wants people to know about the Shop, Ms. Williams says, "I want them to know it's here and they're welcome."



Ms. Williams stands in front of the new sign for the No Strings Shop, which can be seen from Bedford Avenue.



No Strings Shop manager Effie Williams shows off the store and all the items available for patrons of the store.

# Clean Slate E3 Awards HACP Residents with Scholarships of up to \$20,000

Clean Slate E3, the nonprofit affiliate of The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), proudly announced that 10 scholarships were awarded to residents of HACP housing for the 2018/ 2019 academic year—a commitment of \$200,000 over the next four years. Clean Slate E3 will administer the scholarship program in partnership with NEED, who will provide a 20 percent match on each scholarship, bringing the total amount of the annual commitment to \$50,000 per year or \$5,000 per student. Clean Slate E3 will offer annual scholarships to each of these students for up to four years, contingent upon available funding.

Students and family members were recognized for their achievement during the July 2018 HACP Board of Commissioners Meeting. “We are excited to make this award to 10 extremely well-deserving students and to offer them encouragement as they begin their post-secondary education,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “We’re expecting truly great things from them and are proud to be able to provide some financial relief as college costs continue to rise.”

HACP established Clean Slate E3 roughly 10 years ago in order to expand potential funding sources for activities that enrich the lives of HACP residents, including but not limited to: job training, educational enhancement and scholarships. Since 2009, Clean Slate E3 has provided HACP residents with scholarships for post-secondary education. During that time, Clean Slate E3 has issued more than \$190,000 in scholarship funds. The organization has managed its



The HACP Board of commissioners celebrates the recipients of the 2018 Clean Slate E3 Scholarship Award at their July 2018 meeting.

scholarship program in partnership with NEED since 2012. “Clean Slate E3 aims to assist the most deserving public housing residents to achieve self-sufficiency through educational advancement. We have hundreds of exceptional students in our communities who depend on scholarship dollars to advance their education and we are extremely pleased to be able to contribute toward their growth,” said Mr. Binion.

According to Dr. Marcia M. Sturdivant, NEED President and CEO, “Our partnership with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and Clean Slate E3 will provide unprecedented opportunities for aspiring public housing residents.

NEED values Clean Slate’s continued commitment to the students we serve. This funding will turn dreams into real opportunities for a brighter future.”



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and Clean Slate E3 continued the 20-year tradition of Educating, Encouraging and Entertaining young minds on Sept. 22, 2018, when we partnered with KDKA-TV to hold Clean Slate 2018 in conjunction with KDKA STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Fest.

Clean Slate 2018 was held in conjunction with KDKA’s STEM held at the Mall at Robinson, featuring interactive educational activities provided by a wide range of public and private institutions. The event was used as a vehicle to introduce young minds to the wide range of STEM-related activities and potential career paths.

HACP provided bus transportation to our family communities to and from Robinson and worked with the BJWL Out of School Time Program & The Center that Cares to ensure that the event was well attended. In all roughly 150 HACP youth, parents and volunteers were able to participate in the event.



# The Creative Arts Corner Offers HACP Residents **Unique Opportunity to Pursue Artistic Dreams**

The Creative Arts Corner (CAC) is a one-of-a-kind audio/video training program offered by the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) and, for many residents, a one-of-a-kind opportunity to create original music, video or graphic design. The program operates out of facilities located in both Bedford Dwellings and Northview Heights. The program offers adults and children the opportunity to learn basics of multimedia production, with an emphasis on photography, music, and film.

The CAC gives HACP residents the opportunity to explore the media field and express themselves creatively. The CAC features state-of-the-art equipment and is available to every HACP resident over the age of six. Through the years, many talented HACP residents have used the CAC facilities to express their creativity and produce their own works of art, be it through music, video, poetry or graphic design.

HACP and the instructors at the CAC are proud to regularly showcase the work of our students as part of our “student spotlight” and are pleased to introduce current student Josh Hayden. Josh is one of the CAC’s adult students, and he’s been working on multiple projects. To hear the instructors explain it, Josh’s experience with the CAC has been an exercise in self-confidence. Like many of the students there, the CAC has helped him explore his creative side and strengthen his craft. According to instructor Liz Klehm, “he was struggling and it’s amazing to see how far he’s come from when he first started recording, when he was really shy, to now where he’s become much more confident.”

Josh is a rapper and has two main projects that he works on. The first is a solo album called “KNOTTA Soul” that is inspired by his personal experience with trust and belief; it’s more raw and personal than his other work. His second album is called “Pittsburgh Positive Music,” an ode to the positive things about the city that he often collaborates on with his friend Jabril. This focus on positivity is one of the main goals of the CAC, and the instructors are proud of and impressed with the way Josh has woven that positivity into his work.



Creative Arts Corner student Josh Hayden (center) poses with his son outside their Bedford Dwellings apartment

A couple years ago, Josh says that he hit rock bottom. “I lost my mom and dad,” he says, “so I strive on that, just knowing that they would want me to keep doing what I want to do.” Making his music, along with his religion, has helped him, “slowly but surely,” become the person he is today. He says that he’s “just a single father trying to make things happen” and he hopes that his work at the Creative Arts Corner can help jumpstart his career. The CAC means a lot to him, it has helped him get back on his feet and “it’s just a very positive place to be.”

CAC instructors encourage anyone interested in the opportunity to learn about audio/video production or expressing their creative side through music, film, or photography to contact the program instructors at one of the two locations. The Bedford Dwellings and Northview Heights CAC programs typically operate on weekday afternoons. Call for hours or program details at: 412-456-5000, ext. 1118 (Northview Heights) or 412-456-5000, ext. 1083 (Bedford Dwellings). For more information about the CAC, and to see projects from students, visit: [www.hacp.org/cac](http://www.hacp.org/cac).

---

**The CAC means a lot to him, it has helped him get back on his feet and  
“it’s just a very positive place to be.”**



# ConnectHomePgh

## Brings Focus on Digital Literacy and Inclusion

In late 2017, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, the Allegheny County Housing Authority, and the City of Pittsburgh were selected as a coalition to be a part of the 2017 ConnectHomeUSA cohort. ConnectHomePGH, the name selected by the Pittsburgh coalition, seeks to remove barriers to employment caused by low digital literacy and lack of internet access; it will provide participants with the skills they need to succeed in the digital age and connect them to the internet.

ConnectHomeUSA is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the White House and the non-profit organization EveryoneOn designed to increase at-home internet access for low-income families and give these households equal access to the opportunities that internet access provides. National data shows that individuals with at-home internet access are employed 25% faster. This one advantage in employment opportunities results in more than \$5,400 in additional annual income.

In the Pittsburgh region, 22.7% of all households do not have internet access, and 27% of the HACP residents do not have internet access or computers. Because of this, the ConnectHomePGH coalition partnered with a local computer refurbisher to start a pilot digital literacy program; launched at Northview Heights in 2018. The program served more than 30 residents who were taught basic digital literacy skills, like how to create an email account or use the

Find the HACP online: [www.hacp.org](http://www.hacp.org)

*Connect with us on social media:*










internet for a job search. Participants who completed the four-class program earned a home desktop computer, as well as a Digital Literacy Certificate that can be used as a tool for job and college applications.

The goal of the pilot program and the broader goal for ConnectHomePgh is to bridge the digital divide by connecting individuals and families with internet access and essential computer skills. According to Government Relations Liaison & Special Program Coordinator, Knowledge Build A. Hudson, HACP will continue to “diligently work to help get more people connected to opportunities via the internet and digital literacy.”

For more information on the ConnectHome USA program, contact Mr. Hudson at 412-456-5000, ext. 8007.



# 412 FOOD RESCUE

## Teaches Residents that Cooking Matters

This summer, residents at Caligui Plaza spent their Thursday mornings learning about nutrition, smart shopping, and healthy cooking as part of the six-week Cooking Matters program. Cooking Matters is a national program that partners with regional and local non-profit organizations to teach parents, caregivers, families, and senior citizens to shop for and cook healthy food on a budget.

Cooking Matters was brought to Pittsburgh in 2016 by the nonprofit 412 Food Rescue and introduced to residents of Caligui Plaza through an ongoing collaboration with the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh.

Now is an especially important time to focus on how to eat well on a budget, program manager Hana Uman says, because “we’re so obsessed with health and wellness and eating the right thing and being the right person, but it can be so hard to find verified information.” In a time with so many sensational and misleading narratives on diet, receiving verified nutrition information is important. That’s what this program aims to do—to provide information on nutrition in a manner that is healthy, fun and accessible to all. Cooking Matters is offered to classes of 10-12 residents, who are provided instruction on how to create chef-prepared recipes based on FDA guidelines and taught how to better read nutritional labels and shop healthy on a budget.

By the end of the program, participants gain essential cooking and consumer skills. Many of the participants already know how to cook, but the program still gives them new information and new ideas, like adding dried basil when you boil water for pasta. The experience also helps strengthen a sense of community; as one resident told Ms. Uman, “it’s great to have a community where you can share that with people, it’s great to feel comfortable with people.”

The best part about the program, according to Ms. Uman, is how easily participants can pass on the skills they’ve learned. As she explains, “over 95% of people share information they learn with others, which expands the impact. I hope that people can continue to benefit from the program long term.”

412 Food Rescue is working to expand the Cooking Matters program to maximize the impact on HACP communities and Pittsburgh as a whole. Right now, 412 Food Rescue is focusing on making their operations sustainable, whether



“The best part about the program, according to Ms. Uman, is how easily participants can pass on the skills they’ve learned. Over 95% of people share information they learn with others, which expands the impact. I hope that people can continue to benefit from the program long term.”

— Hana Uman, program manager, 412 Food Rescue

it’s training Cooking Matters instructors or engaging community volunteers. Ms. Uman says they always need volunteers, and “there’s always a place to plug in. Either do a rescue, volunteer for Cooking Matters, anything.”

Looking for recipes? Here’s a fan-favorite recommended by 412 Food Rescue. More recipes can be found at <http://cookingmatters.org/recipes>.

# Turkey Chili with Vegetables (serves 6, 1-1/4 cups per serving)

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium onion
- 2 medium carrots
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 large green bell pepper
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) red or white kidney beans, no salt added
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) diced tomatoes, no salt added
- 1 cup water
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 medium lime (optional)
- 1/2 cup low-fat plain yogurt (optional)

## MATERIALS:

- Can opener
- Colander
- Cutting board
- Large pot
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Sharp knife
- Vegetable peeler



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Rinse and peel onion and carrots. Peel garlic
2. Rinse bell pepper. Remove core and seeds
3. Dice onion, carrots, and bell pepper. Mince garlic
4. Rinse lime and cut into wedges (optional)
5. In a colander, drain and rinse beans
6. In a large pot over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add and brown turkey
7. Add onion, carrots, bell pepper, and garlic to pot. Cook until onions are soft and carrots are somewhat tender, about 5 minutes
8. Add beans, tomatoes, water, chili powder, and cumin to pot. Season with salt
9. Lower heat to medium. Cook until all flavors have blended, about 15 minutes
10. Squeeze juice from lime wedges and top each serving with 1 tablespoon of yogurt (optional)

This dish is best served with cornbread, brown rice, whole wheat noodles, or on top of baked potatoes. Black beans or chickpeas can be used in place of kidney beans. Freeze in batches in airtight containers to have leftovers that will last up to 2 weeks.

Follow HACF on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/HACF1>



Published by the Community Affairs Department  
2018 Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh

Caster D. Binion

**Executive Director**

News & Views is published by the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh. Check us out on our website at [www.hacp.org](http://www.hacp.org) for information on the latest HACF events, employment postings and more.

**Winter 2018**

200 Ross Street  
8th Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

