

News & Views

Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh / Summer 2019

PUBLICLY SPEAKING

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is currently advancing an aggressive development schedule that will create new mixed-income housing in the City of Pittsburgh neighborhoods including Larimer, Homewood, the Hill District and the North Side to address our city's ever-growing need for affordable housing.

Additionally, the HACP has expanded upon our long-term efforts to revitalize and replace low-income public housing with mixed-income communities by developing innovative methods for producing new affordable housing units. For example, we have recently expanded our Scattered Sites portfolio by

partnering with community development groups such as East Liberty Development, Inc., producing 20 newly constructed, affordable units in East Liberty—a neighborhood that sorely needs an infusion of housing units that are within the economic reach of the residents. We have also made significant progress with the implementation of our award-winning Project-Based Voucher (PBV)/Gap Financing Program, which expands capacity for affordable housing developers including community-based development organizations, faith-based organizations and seasoned developers.

The HACP's PBV/Gap Financing Program is an innovative effort to increase the city's affordable housing stock. The program diversifies the developer pool by encouraging less experienced, non-profit organizations, such as community development corporations to invest in their communities and develop proposed housing, while simultaneously building their organizational capacity. Approximately \$9.5 million worth of affordable housing investment has been allocated for projects currently under construction. Furthermore, HACP has substantially increased its commitment to the PBV/Gap Financing program by committing an additional \$20 million for several affordable, mixed-income development projects that should commence construction activities in the year 2019 or 2020.

The HACP is proud to announce that our PBV/Gap Financing program received an affordable housing award of merit from the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO). NAHRO recognized the HACP and the successful Gap Financing Program at its annual conference earlier this summer. Additionally, the HACP recently learned that three proposed Gap Financing developments—the North Negley Residences in Garfield, City's Edge in Uptown, and New Grenada Square in the Middle Hill—have been awarded 9% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

The HACP remains firmly committed to improving and expanding our housing stock; and, the PBV/Gap Financing Program has proven to be one of the most efficient and cost effective development tools for the HACP. Be on the lookout for several exciting new housing developments to be completed through the PBV/Gap Financing Program in the coming months and years.

Caster D. Binion
Executive Director

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The newly completed Sandstone Quarry includes apartments and townhomes.

HACP & Development Team Unveil Sandstone Quarry

New Mixed-Income Housing on North Side

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) and its development partners Trek Development Group and Allies and Ross Management and Development Corporation (ARMDC) announced the completion of the first phase of redevelopment activity on the site of the former public housing community Allegheny Dwellings in early June 2019. The community has been given the name Sandstone Quarry in a nod to the site's history as a working quarry in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

A program and ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Thursday, June 13, 2019, at 2 p.m., on the Sandusky Court site (1660 Sandusky Court, Pittsburgh, PA), which is located on the lower plateau of a multi-terraced hillside in the Fineview neighborhood. Following program activities, Trek

staff hosted tours of the community center and one of the last remaining vacant units. HACP and its team were joined by both Mayor William Peduto and County Executive Rich Fitzgerald for the ceremony.

“Right now, there is great synergy between our vision for a revitalized Allegheny Dwellings and the greater North Side community,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “Our development team is working closely with Allegheny Dwellings residents and their neighbors to implement a plan that will replace some of the city’s most obsolete housing stock with high quality affordable housing.”

Phase I activities consisted of the remediation and demolition of six barracks-style buildings and the

construction of 65 new housing units, consisting of townhome, walkup, and conventional apartment units. The completed Phase I redevelopment is comprised of 58 mixed-income units which occupy the former public housing site. An additional seven units have been developed on Federal Street, producing a total of 65 units in Phase I. 47 of the 65 units have been designated affordable utilizing project based vouchers; while the remaining 18 units will be unrestricted/market rate.

The property features eight fully accessible units for individuals with physical disabilities, including two units that are fully equipped for individuals with hearing and/or vision impairments.

Development costs totaled roughly \$24.4 million. Sources include Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and loans from ARMDC (\$16.9 million), the Urban Redevelopment Authority (\$500,000) and a conventional loan.

Ms. Cheryl Gainey, HACP Commissioner & Allegheny Dwellings Tenant Council President said the community was thrilled with the new housing and looking forward to

future redevelopment. “I love what we’ve built here. I never thought this place would look like this,” she said. “But there is still work to be done and that’s why I don’t live in one of the new units. I’m going to stay in the old community (Allegheny Dwellings public housing communities) until the entire redevelopment is finished.”

“Right now, there is great synergy between our vision for a revitalized Allegheny Dwellings and the greater North Side community.”

— Caster D. Binion, HACP Executive Director



Officials and stakeholders cut the ribbon to celebrate the completion of Phase 1 of the Allegheny Dwellings redevelopment.

HACP, Community Partners, and Officials Celebrate New Affordable Housing in East Liberty

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) and its community development partner East Liberty Development Incorporated (ELDI) are excited to announce the completion and opening of the first two phases of turnkey developments in East Liberty.

An open house event was held on Thursday, June 20, 2019, at one of the newly-constructed apartment buildings in the heart of East Liberty. Mayor William Peduto joined HACP and ELDI representatives for a ceremony and tours of the new apartment units.

“The ELDI turnkey units in East Liberty were a group effort,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “It was an honor to work with community organizations and residents on such an exciting development. We are proud of the work that we’ve done together and hope that these community partnerships will strengthen moving forward.”



Since 2014, HACP has been working with ELDI, a community-based organization, to construct 20 new affordable units close to services and amenities in the revitalized East Liberty neighborhood. Seven walk-up, detached home, and duplex units were completed in Phase I. Phase II consisted of 11 additional units, most of which were walk-up units. In total, 18 units have been completed. Phase III, which is currently under development and nearing completion, will add the final two units to the cooperative development.

“By working together, you are creating a model that we can replicate throughout the city,” said Mayor Peduto.

The development costs for Phase I totaled \$2,299,456 and the development costs for Phase II totaled \$3,078,899. The estimated total development cost after Phase III is \$5,984,470. HACP fully funded the development of these units.

Mayor Bill Peduto speaks at the ELDI open house in June.

HACP Receives Three-Year Grant to Support Additional Service Coordination

The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP) is excited to announce that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development has awarded the agency a Resident Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency (ROSS) grant that will fund ROSS service coordination for the next three years. The ROSS award allows HACP to continue the work we’ve been doing to promote resident self-sufficiency.

The grant funds will fund two Service Coordinators, who will ensure that residents in Allegheny Dwellings, Arlington Heights, Bedford Dwellings, Homewood North, and Northview Heights have access and are directed to the services they need to achieve self-sufficiency. ROSS Service Coordination will work as a complement to the HACP’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program.

Participants within the ROSS Program will receive individualized coordination that addresses their specific needs, with a focus on employment, workforce re-entry,

and financial literacy. Although the ROSS Program focuses on these three areas, the ROSS Service Coordination team is committed to catering service and resource linkage to residents’ individual needs, including, but not limited to, mental health, drug & alcohol, and conflict resolution.

With ROSS Service Coordination, HACP can continue to impact communities and help residents remove any and all barriers to achieving self-sufficiency. ROSS Service Coordinators are one of the main points of contact for our Resident Engagement team, ensuring early and regular outreach and contact.

Residents of the previously mentioned communities can expect to see their ROSS Service Coordinators out and about often. However, for anyone interested in receiving immediate support from a ROSS Service Coordinator, contact TaShawna Patterson at 412-961-1247 or Serena Williams at 412-961-1038.



Comcast Cares Day was a success thanks to all the volunteers that came out for a day of community service

Comcast Cares Day Brings Grant Funding and Community Service to Northview Heights

In early May, volunteers descended on Northview Heights as part of the national Comcast Cares program. Every year, Comcast builds partnerships with local organizations to improve communities through service. Every community partnership that participates in Comcast Cares also receives a \$25,000 grant from Comcast. This year, Comcast Cares came to Northview Heights.

Grant funded activities held in association with Comcast Cares were implemented by Bethany House and Landforce – two local non-profit organizations with a reputation for improving communities and a history of collaborating with HACP. Together, HACP, Comcast, Bethany House, Landforce and the Northview Heights Tenant Council brought 200-plus volunteers to Northview Heights for a day of service and engagement.

Over the course of the sunny day, everyone came together to improve the Northview Heights community. Landforce led residents and volunteers in a tree planting activity

that planted trees on the site of a future rain garden. The planned rain garden will divert water away from the sewage system and back into the ground, a necessary improvement according to Thomas Guentner from Landforce because “a growing environmental need in our region is adaptability to a warmer and wetter climate.” Landforce will use \$10,000 of the Comcast Cares grant to implement this rain garden.

Bethany House provided more gardening activities and introduced participants to traditional indigenous African gardening techniques. Though their main initiatives in Northview Heights are a preschool program and an afterschool program, Bethany House also maintains a community garden. Volunteers and residents helped out in the community garden throughout the day, making sure the amenity could continue to provide the community with fresh vegetables. Bethany House will use \$7,500 from Comcast Cares to build a walkway through the garden, making it more accessible to residents.

HACP will use the remaining \$7,500 from Comcast Cares to continue its Clean Slate E3 scholarship program, which promotes educational opportunities for HACP residents. The money will allow Clean Slate E3 to disburse more scholarships and help more young residents reach their full potential.

HACP, Landforce, and Bethany House are all grateful for the opportunity to participate in Comcast Cares and will continue serving the community to improve the lives of HACP residents.

Residents and volunteers plant in the community garden at Northview Heights to maintain the amenity and improve the community.



HACP and DC Youth Come Together for 2-Day Excursion to Celebrate the 99th Pre-Centennial of Negro League

The 99th Pre-Centennial Negro League event, held June 28 - 29, 2019, provided young public housing residents an opportunity to convene in the nation's capital for a weekend of history, culture and baseball. The experience was made possible by a partnership between the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), the District of Columbia Housing Authority (DCHA), and the Josh Gibson Foundation.

Two teams of boys, age 9 to 12, from Washington, D.C. and Pittsburgh housing authorities were brought together to learn more about their shared American history, while having some fun on the baseball field. On day one of the event, the young players from Pittsburgh, ages 9 to 12, arrived at the Washington Nationals Youth Baseball Academy and met their DCHA counterparts.

Together they explored Howard University, highlighting the former Griffith stadium location, used by the Washington Senators, Grays, and Redskins. They toured monuments, visited the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and enjoyed dinner at Ben's Chili Bowl, which features Josh Gibson and D.C.'s Mamie 'Peanut' Johnson, a female player in the league, in its mural.

Sean Gibson, the Executive Director of the Josh Gibson Foundation, discussed his thoughts on how the event went. "The cultural experience was definitely my favorite part about the trip. It was great for our kids to have a chance to get out of the city of Pittsburgh," Gibson said.

On day two of the event, the HACP and DCHA boys played in a competitive baseball match hosted by the Washington Nationals Baseball Academy.

HACP's Homestead Grays celebrate after winning their game with DCHA's Washington DC Grays.





Young residents visited the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial and other monuments as part of their trip to Washington.

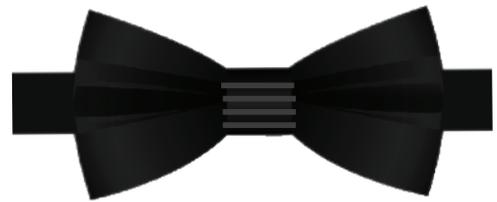
The team names were the “Homestead Grays” representing the HACP and the “Washington DC Grays” representing the DCHA. Josh Gibson’s actual team, the Homestead Grays, inspired these team names. Historically, the Homestead Grays and the Washington Grays shared a roster, traveling by bus back and forth between the cities.

HACP and the Josh Gibson Foundation sponsored the event, covering the cost of the equipment, uniforms, travel, food, and hotel. The Josh Gibson Foundation will utilize the uniforms and equipment for future events with HACP residents.

“I just would like to thank the Housing Authority for supporting the Josh Gibson Foundation and the kids. This was a lifetime experience for the kids,” said Gibson.

This time next year during the 100th anniversary celebration, Pittsburgh will host the same DCHA players as part of a larger tournament among various housing authority teams from the region, as well as visiting historic Negro League sites and museums in the area.

“The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh greatly enjoyed providing our young residents an opportunity to visit the nation’s capital and learn about African American history and culture and to compete against their peers from the D.C. Housing Authority,” said HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion. “We’re looking forward to bringing this program back again next year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Negro League.”

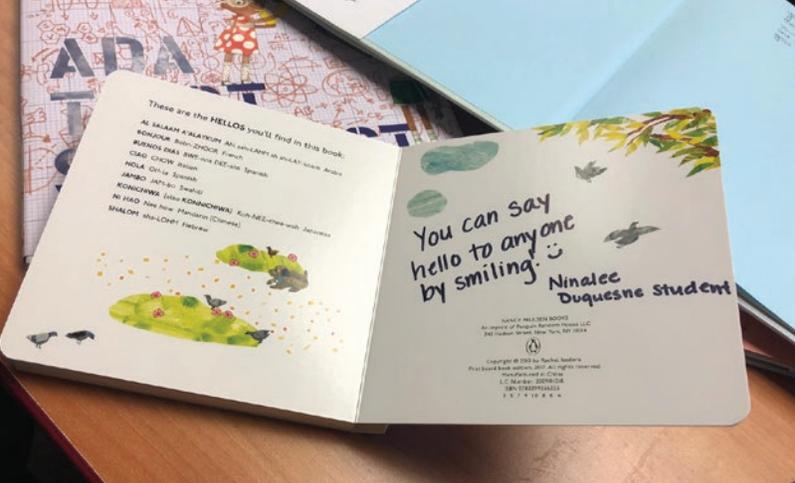


*Clean Slate E3 is celebrating 21 years of enriching HACP communities and providing opportunities for HACP residents with a **Black-Tie Dinner & Scholarship Benefit at The Pittsburgh’s Grand Hall at the Priory, 614 Pressley Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 October 30, 2019, 6:00 p.m.***

CLEAN SLATE^{E3}

We invite you to join us as a participant and/or sponsor. All proceeds will benefit the Clean Slate E3 Scholarship Program.

For information about Clean Slate E3 or the benefit dinner, reach out at 412-456-5058 or cleanslatee3@gmail.com; or find the sponsorship packet at: <https://hacp.org/programs-services/scholarship-fund>



Friendly messages greet children inside every book in the diversity library.

Duquesne students personally deliver and read books to children at the ABK Learning & Development Center.

Duquesne University and ABK Learning & Development Center Celebrate Literacy and Cultural Heritage with New Diversity Library

Students at ABK Learning & Development Center in Bedford Dwellings and Early Childhood Education students from the Duquesne University School of Education recently shared a special afternoon designed to further the ABK students' interest in reading and understanding of cultural diversity.

Students participating in Dr. Christopher Meidl's Families, Schools and Communities course researched diverse reading materials for young children and presented the books to preschool children at ABK at the end of the university's spring 2019 semester. The books were donated as a gift from Duquesne's School of Education.

"We've been working toward moments like this for two years," said Michelle Sandidge, HACP Chief Community Affairs Officer. "Dr. Meidl came to us with the idea of bringing community-engaged learning to the young minds of the Hill District and it is a joy to see everything come together."

As part of their partnership, Duquesne University School of Education students and ABK Learning & Development Center Director Lesely Crawford collaborated to create a diversity library for children at the center. The goal was to integrate research showing the importance of promoting pride in children's culture with critical early literacy skills. According to Ms. Crawford, they wanted to promote literacy and make sure students could say, "oh I can see myself in that book."

Although Bedford Dwellings is a predominantly African American community, Dr. Meidl and his students wanted to make sure they selected books that represented a wide

range of cultural backgrounds. Explaining why they selected such a variation of books, including Spanish-language and dual-language books, Dr. Meidl said, "part of creating a diversity library is making sure students can see themselves and others."

Dr. Meidl's students didn't just select books and send them to the ABK Learning & Development Center. They hand-delivered their gifts, complete with reading sessions and hand-written notes. This helped students build connections, with the Duquesne students and with the stories, making the experience more impactful. Dr. Meidl explained that they wanted to "let the kids know that we were thinking especially about them and to leave them with a voice that will remain with the children after they're gone."

In Ms. Crawford's words, the kids are "constantly going through" the books, building that essential first love of learning and marking another successful collaboration between HACP, ABK Learning & Development Center, and the Duquesne University School of Education. There's no end in sight for this partnership, and everyone is excited to move forward together.

Opened in spring 2018 as a collaboration between the HACP, ABK, and the Duquesne University School of Education, the ABK Learning & Development Center makes high-quality, research-based early childhood education and childcare available to HACP residents and working families. For more information about enrollment opportunities at ABK, contact the Center at abklearn@gmail.com or 412-456-5000, ext. 1033.

HACP and Pitt CEC Bring STEAM to Bedford Dwellings

The new University of Pittsburgh Community Engagement Center (CEC) in the Hill District is rethinking the relationship between the university and its neighbors by partnering with HACP and community leaders to make Pitt's resources available and accessible to children and teens residing in neighboring communities.

According to Kirk Holbrook, the Director of the Pitt CEC Hill District, the goal of the new CEC is to collaborate with community stakeholders to support improvements in the quality of life for Hill District residents in five key areas: enriching youth education, health and wellness, strengthening cultural arts, economic prosperity and family support, and business growth and innovation.

HACP collaborated with the Pitt CEC Hill District, Family Resource's BJWL Program, the University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information, and the School of Engineering to enrich youth education in Bedford Dwellings. Together, they created a pilot program for kids that explored STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) in a fun and exciting way.

The program took place over the course of four weeks in March and April. Students and staff from the University of Pittsburgh introduced young residents to a variety of STEAM topics, from using virtual reality to taking apart a computer to learning how computers think. The goal was to "whet their appetite for STEAM," says Mr. Holbrook. The



A young participant of the STEAM mini-camp puts on his gloves in preparation to learn about bioengineering.

program was a big success – with young Bedford residents now excited about STEAM, the question became, “what’s next?”

To encourage young residents’ newfound passion, and to continue addressing the opportunity gap in STEAM, the Pitt CEC and its partners hosted a three-day STEAM summer camp on campus at the University of Pittsburgh. This camp taught participants the basics of bioengineering with fun and engaging activities that always connected what they were learning to real world applications.

Many young Bedford residents discovered a passion and a talent for STEAM-related topics, something Mr. Holbrook hopes they can encourage and cultivate. Ultimately, he hopes programs like these two pilot programs motivate kids to pursue their passions and help them take advantage of Pitt’s resources: “we want to help kids build a dream.”

Mr. Holbrook says the two STEAM pilot programs can serve as a model for how Pitt can engage with public housing and low-income communities as the CEC works to establish a more permanent, community-owned STEAM studio. Until that studio is up and running, HACP, Mr. Holbrook, and all the partners involved look forward to continuing these pilot programs and inspiring young Bedford Dwellings residents to dream big.



Young residents participate in an activity at the Bedford Hope Center to learn about how computers think and work.

HACP Looks Back at 21 Years of Clean Slate Programming

In 1998, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), supported by federal housing funding provided through the federal Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, established the Clean Slate program as a means to mobilize young public housing residents and explore ways of eliminating drug activity in their lives and their communities. Though the program has evolved over the years, Clean Slate is still impacting young residents' lives 21 years later.

Clean Slate began as a series of outreach events conducted across the city over a three-day period. The annual program was anchored by a Town Hall Meeting, and included a rotating collection of supporting events, ranging from public school tours to concerts.

In 2002, HACP established the Clean Slate Street Team as a year-round extension of the Clean Slate program. The Street Team participants provided the youth perspective on Clean Slate planning efforts; while HACP paired the program with mentorship, employment and access to cultural and education activities.

As grant funds provided for Clean Slate expired and funding sources were depleted, the scope and focus of the event began to change. HACP refocused its efforts on improving post-secondary education outcomes for young residents as an annual multi-day event and a yearlong engagement program became unsustainable financially.

In 2009, HACP founded the Clean Slate E3 non-profit to continue improving the lives of young public housing

residents, shifting the focus of the program to expanding opportunities and enriching the lives of HACP residents by providing job training, educational enhancement, and scholarships. "Essentially, we began to take the 'E's' in E3 quite literally," said Michelle Sandidge, HACP Chief Community Affairs Officer. "Our focus was narrowed down to educating, encouraging and entertaining and our means to accomplish this goal was our scholarship program and annual STEAM event geared toward our younger residents."

Over the past ten years, Clean Slate E3's scholarship program has been a resounding success. Since 2009, Clean Slate E3 has issued more than \$225,000 in scholarship funds, expanding opportunities for young residents and helping them achieve their dreams. To increase the funds available to young residents, Clean Slate E3 partnered with NEED, a local non-profit that pledged a 20% match for every scholarship. Last year alone, 10 students received scholarships of up to \$20,000 over a four-year period, including the match from NEED.

To celebrate over two decades of successfully promoting healthy living, education, and opportunity, Clean Slate E3 is hosting a dinner and benefit later this year. The Clean Slate 21st Anniversary Benefit will commemorate 21 years of Clean Slate programming, participants, and partnerships. All proceeds will benefit the Clean Slate E3 Scholarship Program, allowing Clean Slate E3 to continue expanding educational opportunities for HACP residents.

For more information about Clean Slate E3 or the 21st Anniversary Benefit, contact the HACP Community Affairs Department at 412-456-5058 or CleanSlateE3@gmail.com.



Young residents raise their hands to participate in the 2009 Clean Slate event.



HACP Executive Director Caster D. Binion congratulates scholarship recipients in 2014.

ConnectHomePGH Expands Its Programming to Continue to Bridge the Digital Divide

Since 2017, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), the City of Pittsburgh, and the Allegheny County Housing Authority have been promoting digital literacy and expanding access to digital resources through the ConnectHomePGH program. As part of a national initiative, ConnectHomePGH seeks to remove barriers to employment caused by low digital literacy and lack of internet access by providing participants with the skills they need to succeed in the digital age and connecting them to the internet.

National data has shown that individuals with at-home internet access are employed 25 percent faster and strong digital literacy skills can result in more than \$5,400 in additional annual income. HACP and ConnectHomePGH are committed to making sure these advantages and opportunities are available to HACP residents.

In 2018, ConnectHomePGH partnered with Computer Reach, a local refurbishing company to launch a pilot digital literacy program in Northview Heights. The program served more than 30 residents who were taught computer basics and digital literacy skills, like how to identify computer parts, create an email account and use the internet for a job search. Participants who completed the four-class program earned a home desktop computer and were tested using the Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. Those that passed the test received a Northstar Digital Literacy Certificate that can be used as a tool for job and college applications.

Building on the success of its pilot program, HACP has continued to offer its digital literacy class. Participants of the current program learn the computer basics and digital literacy skills; however, upon completion of the classes each resident receives a T-Mobile tablet with one year's worth of data service. To date, HACP has distributed more than 45 tablets, and are prepared to distribute 50 more. The digital literacy class is ongoing, allowing HACP residents to sign up and gain the skills they need in the digital age.

The digital literacy class isn't ConnectHomePGH's only program that bridges the digital divide. To promote digital literacy and connectedness, ConnectHomePGH launched a second mobile lab for HACP communities. HACP already has one mobile lab that focuses on senior communities, and this new mobile lab will allow HACP and ConnectHomePGH to expand its digital services to family communities.

ConnectHomePGH is also working with EveryoneOn, a non-profit that creates social and economic opportunity by connecting everyone to the internet, and the Best Buy



A resident sets up his new tablet after completing the ConnectHome digital literacy class

Teen Tech Center to educate and provide opportunities for high school students who are interested in building a career in tech. Every Thursday, students meet at the East Liberty Phase IV learning center to gain technical skills and learn about the digital world. To maximize the opportunities available to young residents, the program includes SAT prep and enrollment in Learn & Earn, a program that helps people find jobs in the technology field.

The ConnectHomePGH coalition is doing everything they can to bridge the digital divide and provide residents with the opportunities and skills needed to succeed. "Access to digital literacy, low-cost internet ready devices, and at-home internet creates more opportunities for residents' self-sufficiency," says Government Relations Liaison & Special Program Coordinator Knowledge Build A. Hudson, "Let's use all these tools to connect to our collective success."

For more information on HACP's computer lab or mobile lab programs, contact Byron Wright, Computer Program Supervisor, at 412-456-5000, etc. 1027. For general information on ConnectHomePGH, contact Mr. Hudson at 412-456-5000, ext. 8007.



This summer, HACP extended internship opportunities to 15 college students who worked throughout the agency. With projects ranging from developing the Fleet Management Program to updating the onboarding process to modernizing Public Safety to creating a job fair, HACP's interns gained valuable career experience and provided us with critical support and fresh perspectives.



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Caster D. Binion

Executive Director

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