



RRHA

# nFocus

A newsletter for the employees of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority

February 2008

## A Message from the Executive Director



Anthony Scott, Executive Director

**H**ow do you feel about "time?" Some say it "flies when you're having fun." Others say that it "waits for no one." Bottom line is that no matter how you see it, "time" is a commodity that, spent wisely or wasted, is gone when it's gone. With that said, we at RRHA have to be mindful of the time we have to make a difference in the lives of our residents, our stakeholders, this city and others and we must remain committed and focused on our work so that our time is well spent.

Certainly we were all very busy in 2007 setting and striving to achieve our performance standards, crafting business and financial plans for our real estate

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## Mayor Tours Site of New Hilton Hotel in Downtown Richmond

**Richmond Mayor L. Douglas Wilder** recently toured the redevelopment site of the former Miller & Rhoads department store, which is being transformed into a Hilton Hotel and condominium complex in downtown Richmond.

Mayor Wilder, Chief Administrative Officer Sheila Hill-Christian and the development partners were joined by RRHA Executive Director Anthony Scott and Deputy Executive Director for Community Revitalization Rodney Forte as they got a first-hand look at the progress underway which will bring a beautiful 250 –room hotel and 133 attractively designed condominiums to 5th and Broad Streets.

The development is projected to be completed by December 2008. **RF**



## RRHA's New Capacity Building Office New Office Creates a Central Location for Learning...and more!

Grace Lewis, Manager, Workforce Development and Capacity Building

**W**hen residents are relocated because of RRHA's revitalization efforts or when a resident seeks job training assistance, these services will be handled by RRHA's new Capacity Building Office. Skills enhancement services for RRHA's staff are also coordinated through the office. Formerly a division of Human Resources, the new office is now a separate entity ready and eager to tackle a wide range of services.

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*Capacity Building Office continued from page 1*

The Capacity Building Office represents an important part of the agency's Strategic Plan. This office is designed to assist residents in seeking "economic opportunity through self-sufficiency," as well as address the importance of providing a qualified, skilled workforce among RRHA's staff members.

Grace Lewis will oversee the office and has a new title of Manager of Workforce Development and Capacity Building. "Our capacity building activities, especially in the area of resident relocation, were scattered. The Capacity Building Office will consolidate resident self-sufficiency services." Lewis said. "The creation of this department flows from RRHA's Strategic Plan. This is our Strategic Plan in action. The concept is to create centralized services and a learning culture for residents and staff members."

Lewis said the goals include moving residents toward economic self-sufficiency, which will include offering education referrals, tuition reimbursement as well as providing information on other community resources and counseling services. Having five dedicated staff members, Lewis said, will increase the success rate of RRHA's programs. The office just welcomed Terrie Caldwell-Ward, a new Relocation Specialist to the Capacity Building Office.

The office will work to expand residents' options, Lewis said. When residents are relocated, they can call on the office to learn of homeownership opportunities or other options. "Having everything in one location will increase our success rate and enable us to provide excellence in customer service," Lewis said.

The office will bring together residents and the agency so that they may be active partners in the Strategic Plan and building new housing options.

"For us to continue to grow and achieve, we need to have an in-house resource for residents and staff members that will provide all training as we seek new opportunities," said RRHA executive director Anthony Scott. "As our Strategic Plan states, we as an agency must constantly learn and improve. Just as we expect our residents to better themselves, we must set the example. The new Capacity Building Office allows that continuous education in one location."



*Terrie Caldwell-Ward and Grace Lewis*

The Capacity Building Office will serve as a central location that will allow RRHA to consolidate these efforts in one locale. This will more efficiently use human and financial resources, provide continuity of capacity building efforts, allow for prioritization of related activities, consolidate tracking and reporting, and improve communication and service delivery to internal and external stakeholders.

The Capacity Building Office combines and consolidates some services that were previously handled in different areas of RRHA. Now, residents and staff members can come to this one office for a variety of services that were once scattered across different areas at the agency.

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## Your Capacity Building Office Team

**Grace Lewis**, Manager of Workforce Development and Capacity Building

**Terrie Caldwell-Ward**, Relocation Specialist

**Dionne Woody**, Training Coordinator

**Angelique Gurley**, Receptionist/  
Office Support Specialist

**Aisha Hunter-Casey**, Senior Office  
Support Specialist

*For more information on the Capacity Building Office call 780-4835 or visit the office at 200 Hospital Street*

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development, public housing and Housing Choice Voucher Program improvements, among other efforts. Moving ahead throughout this year and next, as we also detailed in our Strategic Plan Phase I initiatives, we must continue to effectively use our time, remaining focused on our Asset Management implementation and the completion of our new Enterprise Business System, all while moving ahead with our revitalization efforts in Dove Court, Stovall Apartments, and more!

"Building vibrant communities and developing dynamic partnerships" is more than just a catch phrase. It is real work that requires real effort in real time. In terms of time, we have invested many hours along with people's energy, hearts and souls into developing our Strategic Plan. Our time is now to breathe life and vitality into our Plan and to show this city the progress that has been talked about and planned for.

For all of us at RRHA, we realize that this year, like others, will come with ongoing challenges. Our experience has taught us we may be faced with responding to the changing needs of our community along with any regulations or requirements set by our authorizing agencies. Through all of our challenges, however, your work must continue to reflect the consistency to achieve excellence and provide quality customer service.

As you know, we do much more than provide clean, safe affordable housing and manage neighborhood revitalization efforts throughout this city. We:

- provide positive experience for our youth through the Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy;
- work with families and collaborate with various partners to revitalize communities;
- help people become first-time homebuyers;
- remain focused on ensuring the integrity of this agency through fiscal responsibility;
- help families attain the all-important goal of self-sufficiency; and
- strive to improve our response time for maintenance requests while we set out to make customer satisfaction among our highest priorities.

In order for "things to be great in 2008" we must continue to focus, use our time wisely, and set our sights even higher and deliver the best in public service to the city of Richmond.

Thank you,  
Anthony Scott



## FAREWELL FRIENDS!

Congratulatory phrases and well-wishes filled the air as the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority recently said farewell to three fond friends..... Lee Householder, Joseph McGreal and Joseph Sarver.

**Lee Householder** (top photo) recently closed one chapter of his career and prepared for the next exciting opportunity, as he announced his departure and appointment as the new executive director of Elder Homes in Richmond. As the deputy director for Community Revitalization, and service as interim co-deputy executive director of the department, his contributions to RRHA's success in revitalizing neighborhoods were greatly appreciated!

**Joseph McGreal** (center photo) retired from his most recent position as Program Manager in the Technology, Planning and Research department. His interest in and commitment to our residents, this agency and our mission were evident through his works and accomplishments.

**Joseph Sarver** (bottom photo) has departed RRHA to begin an exciting leadership opportunity in the private sector. Joseph's many years of service to RRHA along with his leadership and dedication to the advancement of our maintenance and technical operations, our improvements in and development of emergency response initiatives and his love of music were greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to all and we wish you the very best!



## A Story of Caring: RRHA's Theresa Henley Gave of Herself - Won Honors for Donating Kidney to Son

**A** small three-inch scar is the only physical evidence Theresa Henley has of the greatest gift she's ever given.

Theresa, who has worked at RRHA since last August as Executive Administrative Assistant to John Hill, changed her life and that of her son with her generosity.

The saga started seven years ago, when Theresa's son Dwayne went to the doctor because he couldn't see out of his right eye. To their surprise, the doctor didn't focus on treating the eye. Instead, the doctor called an ambulance to take Dwayne, who was 21 at the time, to the emergency room. Dwayne's blood pressure had soared so high it impaired his vision. Later that night at the hospital they learned that the severe hypertension had destroyed both kidneys. He had end-stage renal failure because the elevated blood pressure shut down the organs. Before the problems with his eyesight, Theresa said Dwayne was healthy and had no other symptoms of the hypertension. "I just thank God," she said. "The child could have had a stroke or anything."

The doctor told Theresa that Dwayne needed to undergo

dialysis and sign up for the transplant waiting list and hope for a donor kidney. Instead of breaking down, she immediately said "he can have one of my kidneys." "She didn't even hesitate, was ready to begin all of the necessary testing and quickly discovered they were a match."

In August of 1999, Theresa gave the "Gift of Life" to her son Dwayne. The operation kept her out of commission for a little more than two months, she didn't complain about the pain. "I was more concerned about my son than anything else," she said. In fact, the last thing Theresa said before surgery and the first thing she said after surgery was "is my son ok."

After four years, Dwayne's body rejected the organ. (Because the human body sees an implanted organ as a foreign invader, the body fights off the new organ just as it fights off an infection. Implant recipients are given drugs to quiet down, or suppress the immune system so that the body won't attack the new organ. However, sometimes the body's reaction is too strong and the body rejects the organ despite the treatments.) Now Theresa jokes that Dwayne has three kidneys that don't work, while she has one. Dwayne, now 29, is on home dialysis. "He has been wonderfully healthy since then," Theresa said. "It's a miracle!"

In June 2000, Virginia's former Governor Jim Gilmore at the time, honored Theresa with the Virginia Medal of Life for being a living donor. Theresa has advocated for people to learn more about organ donation. "People think the only way to donate is to die," she said. "There are lots of things we can do to help people now."

Since the transplant, Theresa has also been healthy. "I've been doing just fine," she said, adding that she has regular, yearly check ups to make sure her single kidney continues to function well.

Last October, Theresa won further recognition for her donation to her son. Monumental Life Insurance Co. awarded her third place and \$250 in the company's "Celebrating Extraordinary Milestones" contest. Theresa's story won out of hundreds of entrants and will be viewed all over the Country, since their picture made the January page on the Monumental Life 2008 Yearly Calendar. In line with her giving nature, Theresa donated her winnings to J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, where Dwayne plans to further his studies in his Music after attending Southern University in Baton Rouge, LA and VCU. Currently Dwayne is also giving back within the community, by working part time at an organization created to offer Medical Insurance to recipients who are dependant upon Supplement Income to substantiate their livelihood. **IF**



## James "Turk" Sties Appointed to RRHA Board of Commissioners

**R**HA welcomes James "Turk" Sties (rhymes with cease) to the agency's board of commissioners. The Richmond City Council appointed Mr. Sties to a term that ends November 2010. Sties succeeds Sheila Hill-Christian who resigned from the board after she recently accepted a new position as the city's chief administrative officer.

Sties, a Richmond native who grew up in Highland Park, said he will "bring an open mind and some knowledge of the dynamics of Richmond" to the board.

Upon Sites' confirmation as commissioner, Brian K. Jackson, Chairman of RRHA's Board of Commissioners remarked, "On behalf of the RRHA board of commissioners, I am very pleased to welcome Mr. Sties to our Board. I look forward to working with him to further implement the agency's Strategic Plan."

Sties, who is retired, formerly worked as an electrician before moving into building management, procurement and contract administration at the Federal Reserve Bank where he was employed for 25 years. "My work history is broad," Sties said. He has also been active in his neighborhood,

serving as chairman of the Near West Neighborhood Team for several years. Sties, a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, is now vice-chairman of the city's Monroe Park Advisory Council and the 2nd District representative to the Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable.

RRHA faces several important issues according to Sties, including its plans for the future of the city's public housing developments and creating plans for the vacant buildings around Richmond. A great amount of responsibility lies with RRHA, he said, and individuals can really make a difference.

"You have the city, which is made up of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are made up of blocks and blocks are made up of houses," Sties said. "Therefore every citizen has a duty to make their block a good block—a good place to raise children with good schools, which in turn will make their neighborhood a clean community. If the city succeeds then they succeed. RRHA has the greatest opportunity to change and effect the quality of life for many of Richmond's citizens, that's something we should all be looking to support." **IF**

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### *Capacity Building Office continued from page 2*

For example, all services related to relocating residents affected by community revitalization efforts will be found in the new office. Also found in the Capacity Building Office: all resident support services needed for targeted self-sufficiency opportunities such as workforce development and pre-employment services, basic skills and career assessment, tuition assistance, financial literacy, computer literary development and maintenance of critical partnerships that assist in delivery of these services.

The Capacity Building Office also provides services for RRHA staff members. The office will manage and coordinate all aspects of staff and agency training. The goal of staff training is to formalize RRHA's skills training and leadership development. This will provide an established continuing education program for agency staff, which will be critical as we move forward with the implementation the strategic plan. **IF**



## The RRHA family says "goodbye" to 2007 with the holiday spirit

As 2007 ended, the RRHA team celebrated its accomplishments and planned for 2008 with a year-end celebration. Belinda Hawkins, chair of the event, provided leadership for a fantastic committee which coordinated all of the event details such as the food, music and fun for the staff!

Team members mingled with colleagues in different departments, heard of each other's accomplishments and made plans for a successful new year.

RRHA is able to accomplish its goals because of our dedicated employees. This event was designed to say thank to everyone who gives 100% as we serve our community and revitalize Richmond. Keep up the excellent work and thanks to everyone for making our Strategic Plan a reality!

*More photos from the celebration on page 7*



*We salute the Technology, Planning and Research Department for their contributions!*

### RRHA 2007 Employee Appreciation Celebration





Oscar E. Stovall Apartments - today



Architect's Rendering of the new Oscar E. Stovall Apartments

## RRHA Public Housing Revitalization Efforts Underway!

**T**he revitalization of Dove Court and the complete modernization of Stovall Apartments are underway. This activity represents another significant step forward in our progress with our Strategic Plan Phase I initiatives. Staff teams comprised of representatives from Community Revitalization, Affordable Housing, the Capacity Building office, and Public Safety are working diligently with our Resident Leaders as we prepare our families for their transition as a result of our revitalization activities. These are exciting times for RRHA and everyone is focused on providing quality customer service....and the success of these projects!

**Below is a brief summary of each project:**

### Dove Court Revitalization:

The Dove Street Revitalization Plan will include a comprehensive redevelopment of the Dove Court, Carrington Gardens,



Dove Court Apartments - today

Northridge Apartments area. Our efforts will result in the construction of 270 mixed-income rental, elderly and homeownership townhouse-style units. The Resident relocation process for the families is underway and our schedule is projecting June 2008 for demolition of the vacant Dove Court, Carrington Gardens and Northridge Apartments. Construction is projected to begin in October 2008 and the first phase of the new townhouse-style units will be completed in December 2009. Desi Wynter, of the Community Revitalization department is the project manager for the Dove Court revitalization, and is coordinating efforts for the team composed of Gloria Rogers, senior property manager, Grace Lewis, manager, Capacity Building Office, Terri Caldwell-Ward, relocation specialist, Denise Vice, real estate and relocation officer, Sherrie Williams, application analyst, and Joan Seldon, resident services manager.

### Oscar E. Stovall Apartments Renovations:

Oscar E. Stovall Apartments, located at 24th and Bainbridge Streets will undergo a complete modernization. These 30 units will have completely new exteriors and interiors along with many other improvements: new windows, doors and siding; new porches, rear patios, central air conditioning, site improvements, landscaping, appliances to achieve 'Earthcraft' energy certification, and more, representing a \$2.5 million improvement effort. The team is currently working with the families to prepare for relocation. The project schedule estimates that construction activities will begin in April and families will be able to return to Stovall Apartments in February 2009. The Stovall Apartments team, led by Desi Wynter, project manager, is composed of Poinsetta Cowles-Oliver, property manager, Grace Lewis, manager, Capacity Building office, Terri Caldwell-Ward, relocation specialist.

For more information contact Desi Wynter, Project Manager, Community Revitalization at 780-4741. 

## Congratulations to the RRHA Police Force!

The RRHA Police force was recently recognized for their outstanding efforts and contributions to the effective work of the Richmond Police Department (RPD).

Chief Rodney Monroe recently awarded our team at an RPD Awards Ceremony. RPD Chief Monroe and RRHA Police Chief Hal Hazelton offered sincere thanks to our officers for their tireless work, dedication and fearlessness in making RRHA communities safer and their service to the city of Richmond. The teamwork, skill and experience



demonstrated by the RRHA Police Force represent a significant contribution to the city of Richmond's improvements in crime reduction and community policing.

## New Hires & 2008 Holidays

### Welcome to RRHA!

RRHA continues to redevelop and revitalize its most important asset, our team. Please join us as we welcome new teammates:

**Demetria Artist-Ponton** joins us as a program eligibility technician in tenant selection.

**Pamela Bland** comes to RRHA as a customer service specialist in assisted housing.

**Shelia Booker** joins us as an executive administrative assistant in administration.

**Tonya Henderson** has joined RRHA as an office support specialist for the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

In maintenance and grounds, we're pleased to announce the following new groundskeepers who have joined our team:

**Samuel Briggs, Chaney Carter, Bryon Lambert, James Wake and Ronald White.**

We'd also like to congratulate two employees for their recent promotions. **Pamela Davis Kearney** is now a senior office support specialist in the Creighton management team.

**Helarie Grimes** is now an information specialist in assisted housing.

### RRHA Holidays

The Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority will observe the following holidays:

**President's Day** February 18, 2008

**Easter Monday** March 24, 2008

**Memorial Day** May 26, 2008

**Independence Day** July 4, 2008

**Labor Day** September 1, 2008

**Thanksgiving Day** November 27, 2008

**Thanksgiving Friday** November 28, 2008

**Christmas Eve** December 24, 2008

**Christmas Day** December 25, 2008



Richmond Redevelopment & Housing Authority

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