

NEWS & VIEWS



Several residents of Ostrow Apartments spent their spring planting a beautiful Flower Garden for all the residents to enjoy. The Gardening Team included Brenda Hess, Pam Martin, Larry Diver, Gail Yost, and Nada Spahic. They were all treated to a lunch at Ricardo's with Ostrow Manager Cynthia Grayson, Resident Initiatives Coordinator Cherie Kinem and Executive Director Michael Fraley.

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Executive Director Commentary

By Michael R. Fraley, Executive Director

The HACE motto is that “It’s About People.” We strive to put our motto into action everyday by providing safe and quality housing programs that are beneficial to our residents’ self-sufficiency efforts, on-site partnerships with social service agencies, and safe neighborhoods through a community policing partnership that HACE provides with the City of Erie.

HACE staff strives to be professional, friendly, and helpful when assisting residents especially in these times of stress and uncertainty.

It has been a busy and productive summer providing resident activities at the Housing Authority. Our resident, senior and family programming is back providing HACE communities with a multitude of fun and educational summer activities and programs. Over 1,350 residents attended the 25th Annual Family Picnic on July 15 as just one example.

The majority of our social service partners are back on-site and providing much-needed services including youth recreation, dental services, licensed childcare, adult education and job development, senior support services, family self-sufficiency programs, health education, and COVID-19 support services including testing and vaccinations.

HACE neighborhoods are some of the safest in the City of Erie providing a positive community environment for families, seniors, and individuals in need of special services. This is accomplished by HACE community policing efforts as outlined above, residents taking care of their property, planting vegetable gardens and flowers, participating in community activities and having a positive relationship with their neighbors.

Summer and fall are busy times for construction and maintenance projects throughout HACE communities. Doors and windows are being replaced in several HACE neighborhoods. Roofs are scheduled to be replaced beginning in September at Harbor Homes Annex, Harbor Homes, Erie Heights, and the John E. Horan Garden Apartments. Roofs and gutters are scheduled to be replaced at Dombrowski Apartments. In addition, HACE has made ready for rental to new residents over 100 units, sample photos of which can be viewed at www.hace.org.

Between HACE Public Housing, Better Housing, and the Housing Choice Voucher Programs, we provide safe, quality, and affordable housing and rental support for approximately 8,000 individuals. These include low-income families, seniors, immigrants and refugees and persons with disabilities. The importance of what the Housing Authority of the City of Erie provides along with the over 3,000 other Housing Authorities across the United States cannot be stated strongly enough. Everyone deserves a safe home and neighborhood to live in and raise a family!

As we move through these challenging times, it is important to remember that kindness and caring are qualities that cost nothing and provide benefits to people of all ages and walks of life. Let’s all make a commitment to do the little things that make our friends and neighbors have a good experience and a happy day. A smile, an act of kindness, a recognition of a person’s efforts or worth are the small things we can all do to make a difference in someone’s day. Let’s all make a commitment to be that person who makes a difference.

25th Annual Family Picnic

HACE held its 25th Annual Family Picnic at Waldameer Amusement Park on July 15. Over 1,350 residents attended the picnic which included ride-a-rama tickets for all family members 3 and over, a special gold 25th Anniversary Family Picnic T-shirt designed by Rimas Obeidi, a picnic lunch and a social services areas featuring over 20 vendors.

Special thanks to the over 100 volunteers and social service provider agencies who helped make the 25th Annual Picnic a success.



Poster and T-Shirt Contest Winners

Executive Director Michael Fraley and the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners want to recognize and congratulate two young artists for their recent local and regional awards. On the left is Rimas Obeidi who was selected from an Authority-wide contest for her design of the 25th Annual Family Picnic T-shirt. Hundreds of HACE residents were proudly wearing their 25th Anniversary shirt at Waldameer on the day of the HACE family picnic.

On the right is Za'Nyiah Kirkland whose "What Home Means To Me" poster advanced from a state-wide Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (PAHRA) contest to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference (MARC) National Association of Housing and Development Officials (NAHRO) contest. Za'Nyiah was selected as the MARC-NAHRO submission to the nationwide NAHRO contest where if selected her artwork will appear on their 2023 NAHRO Calendar. This is Za'Nyiah's second year as a regional winner and first submission to the National NAHRO contest. Congratulations to both of our talented artists!



More than Just a Place to Live

A Summer Full of Fun Activities

HACE Resident Initiatives Program Coordinator Cherie Kinem and her partners from the HACE Inter-Agency Team and C.O.P.P.S. Community Policing Program have sponsored events and activities throughout the summer in several HACE communities. Events have included Meet Your Neighbor Days at Eastbrook, Better Housing, and the John E. Horan Garden Apartments and a National Night Out event at Erie Heights attended by over 300 residents. Activities included pony rides, a petting zoo, a hoop demonstration, a water slide, new children's book giveaways, a disc jockey, over 15 social service tables along with a grab-and-go picnic dinner.

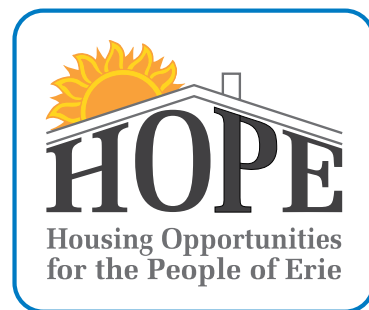
HACE also sponsored several special week-long events including Bidy Ball, Nature Camp, Learn to Fish, Reading Camp and a Learn to Golf Program which finished with a Mentor/Youth Golf Tournament at J. C. Martin Golf Course. Eighteen youth golfers and over twenty mentors participated in the event.





2022 Housing Authority Resident Survey

The Keystone Research Center is conducting a Resident Satisfaction and Safety Survey that is sent to Housing Authority of the City of Erie (HACE) residents every two years. The goal of the survey is to measure residents' satisfaction with the services HACE provides, their interaction with HACE offices and maintenance staff and how safe they feel in their neighborhood. Head of Households who have lived in HACE communities for more than six months are asked to complete the survey. Executive Director Michael Fraley states that the survey is an important tool that HACE staff and the HACE Board of Commissioners use to evaluate the services we provide to HACE residents. All responses are confidential. Mr. Fraley encourages residents to complete the survey when they receive it. Residents who complete the survey will be entered into a drawing to win one of six \$50 gift cards.



One Call Now

The Housing Authority of the City of Erie (HACE) is now using the One Call Now messaging system to send alerts and notifications to our residents advising them of upcoming activities, inspections, and emergency situations. The One Call system gives us the ability to notify residents via voice message, text message and email.

All residents of the Housing Authority are encouraged to keep their contact information up to date with their management office.

Annual Garden Contest

The Housing Authority (HACE) held its Annual Garden Contest that recognizes residents for their efforts in beautifying their neighborhoods with flower gardens and planting productive vegetable gardens. Special recognition goes to Pam Martin, Larry Diver, Gail Yost, Nada Spahic and Brenda Hess from Ostrow Apartments (cover photo) who planted the beautiful community flower garden for all of their fellow residents to enjoy.

The 1st place winner in the flower garden contest was Pineview resident Irina Veretnova who planted beautiful flowering gardens in the front and side yard of her home.

The 2nd place flower garden winners were Harbor Homes residents Ivan and Nina Otroda.

The 1st place vegetable garden winners were Ganga and Bishnu Chauwan from the John E. Horan Garden Apartments.

The 2nd place vegetable garden winner was Nduwayo Protais from Pineview.

HACE would like to thank everyone who had a flower or vegetable garden at their home. Your efforts to beautify your neighborhood is greatly appreciated and brings beauty to our communities. The four winners will receive a \$50 Visa gift card.



1st Place Flower Garden
Irina Veretnova



2nd Place Flower Garden
Ivan and Nina Otroda



1st Place Vegetable Garden
Ganga and Bishnu Chauwan



2nd Place Vegetable Garden
Nduwayo Protais

Summer Jobs Program

Youth in the Urban Erie Community Development Corps (UECDC) Summer Jobs program have much in common, besides being 14- to 18-year-old teenagers. Many are new Americans, from Afghanistan, Nepal, Iraq and other countries. Approximately 80% of the 135-member group, live in Housing Authority of the City of Erie residences. Most are working at their first job.

“*Having a job is one of the first steps to success.*”

Gary Horton
President,
Urban Erie Community Development Corps

“Having a job is one of the first steps to success,” said Gary Horton, UECDC president. Youth earn \$10 an hour for mowing, weeding, helping in children’s activity programs, doing office work and performing a variety of tasks assigned by employers. “They earn much more, however,” said Horton, “including increased self-esteem.”



“Participants also learn invaluable life skills,” says Akram Bhatti, co-director of Elevate Success, an after-school tutoring program connected to Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School. “They’re working in a structured program where you must perform. They learn workplace protocols, the importance of being on time, being away from cellphones.”



“Guest professionals teach other practical skills, such as how to open a checking account,” says Tom Weber, an Erie School District Literacy Lab coordinator. “Subjects taught have included OnTrak college prep, video and film production, and even basic coding using the Python platform.”

“I’d like to thank the City of Erie and the Erie School District for funding this program,” added Horton. “And I challenge them to do more. Our Summer Jobs program provides hope. It’s a missing ingredient in many families, and an acronym used and provided by the Housing Authority of the City of Erie – Housing Opportunities for the People of Erie.”

FSS First Time Home Buyer

On August 24 Tyleshia Williams, a HACE Housing Choice Voucher/Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency participant became a proud homeowner. She graduated from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) on August 1, 2022. She is a mother of two daughters Mikayla Williams age 17 and Patience Williams age 12. Tyleshia is currently working at the Summit YMCA as a full-time teacher’s assistant and loves her work. Tyleshia came into the program on November 1, 2021 and had the drive to accomplish her FSS program goals in a short time. She completed the credit and budgeting, as well as the home ownership workshops and began working on her credit.

Tyleshia was referred to Sonja Thompson through the program. Sonja is a realtor at Keller Williams and her drive and focus, along with Tyleshia’s desire to succeed were a powerhouse team to success. Sonja Thompson has worked with the Family Self-Sufficiency Program in the past by leading an online workshop during COVID-19 for participants and being a team member on the FSS Coordinating Committee. Tyleshia received a plaque for her accomplishments and used her escrow to assist her in purchasing her home. Tyleshia also worked with Veronica Fields, the grant administrator for the City of Erie’s Economic and Community Development Program who assisted her with the purchase of her home. The Family Self-Sufficiency Program is very proud of Tyleshia’s hard work and wish her all success in her future.

In the picture are Sonja Thompson, realtor at Keller Williams Realty, Tyleshia Williams, Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency graduate and Sabrina Ferguson, Family Self-Sufficiency case manager.



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"It's About People!"

Visit us at hace.org

HACE Board Members

The Housing Authority of the City of Erie (HACE) said goodbye to retiring board member James Martin (right) and welcomed incoming board member Donald J. Fuhrmann (left) at the HACE August Board meeting. Commissioner Fuhrmann who is a life-long Erie resident, a graduate of Mercyhurst University and the school's current Chief of Police will complete the remainder of Commissioner Martin's term, which runs until April of 2026. Commissioner Martin, who has served on the HACE Board since June of 2016, is retiring to North Carolina where his family resides. Executive Director Michael Fraley thanked Commissioner Martin for his caring, enthusiasm and commitment to HACE residents. Jim's positive outlook and obvious concern for our residents will be missed. Commissioner Fuhrmann knows our communities, was instrumental in the success of the C.O.P.P.S. Program and has a strong commitment to the Erie community.

