

# Tales of TAHRA



News and information for members and friends  
of the Tennessee Association of Housing and  
Redevelopment Authorities

Informing TAHRA Members and Friends Since 1984

Summer 2012

## Fair Housing & Reasonable Accommodation Training May 30–31, 2012 in Murfreesboro TN

This training is a comprehensive overview of all essential federal fair housing laws relevant to public housing and HCV program operations. You will gain a better understanding of fair housing law, HUD regulations, and fair housing resources. You will also gain the ability to apply the laws and regulations to PHA policies, procedures, and practices, assuring best efforts with compliance. Case study activities are developed from current, real life fair housing legal actions against PHAS and through review of recent HUD VCA agreements and PHA fair housing audits.

### Training Topics will include:

- \* How are reasonable accommodation requests handled at your PHA?
- \* Is your PHA prepared for upcoming HUD and FHEO civil rights monitoring fair housing reviews?
- \* Has your agency thought through possible VAWA situations and best practices?
- \* How fair housing laws apply to PHA admission, occupancy and termination policies, procedures, and decision making processes, including what discrimination means in application.
- \* A discussion of customer service, language use, and disability related communication etiquette.
- \* Recognizing the difference between HUD's definition of "disability" as it relates to PHA eligibility, rent calculation, PIC reporting, and the Fair Housing Act's broader definition of "disability".
- \* A working knowledge through discussion and assessment of HUD's factors for compliance assessment under HUD's Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Guidance as well as options for Language Assistance Plans.
- \* Awareness of PHA issues regarding hate crimes, race, sexual harassment, disability, and familial status discrimination and fair housing PHA best practice models and common PHA errors that have resulted in lawsuits, voluntary compliance agreements and PHA monetary loss by discussing and reading real life legal actions brought by HUD, DOJ, and legal aid groups.
- \* How to locate and use critical fair housing resources.

Details and registration information available at TAHRA's web site: [www.tahranet.org](http://www.tahranet.org)

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## Upcoming Events 2012

Fair Housing Training (see left)  
May 30-31 Murfreesboro, TN

Executive Director Symposium  
July 15-17—Memphis, TN

2012 TAHRA Annual Meeting  
Sept. 23 - 25—Gatlinburg, TN

## TAHRA Spring Workshop Helpful and Well Attended



**Foundations for  
a Secure Future!**

"Foundations for a Secure Future" was the theme for this year's spring workshop. We strived to give attendees the knowledge and the energy to return to their agency even better equipped to keep the "foundation secure". Over 300 persons attended our workshop and all comments we received rated the workshop as excellent.

With thanks to Marcia Lewis, Hub Director, HUD, Memphis, and our committees, we were able to have HUD personnel from Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville and Bruce D. Rieder, Greg Byrne, Lindsey Reames and Stephanie Stone from Washington, DC share their information with us. We also were fortunate to have Jim Armstrong, Policy Analyst with PHADA to share his insight on current Washington goings-on. We also thank our other session speakers, Brian Alten, *Public Housing and Section 8 Accounting & PHAS III Update*, Walt Smith, *Principles of Maintenance Supervision and Preventive Maintenance Management*, Gregory Perry, *Tenant/Landlord Issues*, Danny Vickous, *Survival Fundamentals for Today's World*, Sgt. Burk Murray, *Operation "Prescription Drugs" Busted*, Jeff Jones, *Commissioners Training*, , Samantha Prater, *EIV Training*, Kim Kelley-Tunis, *Bed Bugs and Beyond*, Catherine Lemaire Lozier, *Money Follows the Person: Rebalancing Demonstration Grant*, Ron Steinquest, (Continued on Page 2)

# NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

**Donna Baumgartner, TAHRA Executive Director**

We have just completed another successful spring workshop with outstanding evaluations ~ thanks to all. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> year that we have put the program together with each committee securing their educational track and it worked beautifully! Thanks to committee chairs, Don Alexander, Sherrie Samples, Jo Alred, Ott McGill, Joyce Baker, and Andrew Taylor and their committee members for their hard and dedicated work. I also want to thank our exhibit committee, our scholarship committee, our hospitality committee, and registration committee for their work. I also appreciate Rhonda Casey and Trenton Housing Authority for volunteering their time to produce the registration materials and spring workshop program – thank you. And of course, thank you to all of our members who participated and supported our most popular workshop.

Now we are getting ready for more training – Fair Housing and Accommodation in May, Executive Director's Symposium in July, Occupancy for Public Housing and Section 8 in August and our Annual Meeting in September. Check out our “new and improved” website for more information.

You may notice that this issue is missing “TAHRA Memories” which is written by Bo Pierce. Bo has taken early retirement from KCDC effective March 31. Most of you know that Bo has been an integral part and a valuable member to TAHRA. He has willingly served and chaired committees, mentored many of you, led workshops, trainings, certifications, served as President, and on and on. We hope to have the opportunity to honor Bo at our annual meeting. But for now, on behalf of all, I want to thank Bo for the “beyond the call of duty” time he gave to TAHRA ~ you will be missed.

## **Chattanooga Housing Authority Executive Director Selected As 2012 Woman of Distinction**

Chattanooga Housing Authority Executive Director Elizabeth F. McCright is among 10 recipients of the 2012 Women of Distinction Award presented by the American Lung Association in Tennessee. The Tennessee Women of Distinction honorees represent the Chattanooga area's "most accomplished women who have distinguished themselves within their family, career and community," according to officials with the Lung Association.

Ms. McCright and the other honorees were recognized at the 27<sup>th</sup> annual Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon held on April 27 at the Chattanooga Convention Center. Several lung cancer survivors were also honored at the event, which raises funds to support the American Lung Association with medical research, advocacy and education.

Joining the CHA staff in 2007, Ms. McCright served as the agency's Chief Operating Officer and was named Executive Director the following year. Some of her other professional accomplishments include service in the Naval Reserves as a Judge Advocate General's Corps Commander for six years; nearly a decade-long tenure with the Worcester (Mass.) Housing Authority; and co-founder of Choo Choo Challenge, a non-profit that once raised funds for Chattanooga-area cancer centers offering free services to patients.

Ms. McCright earned a bachelor's degree in English literature from Smith College in Northampton, Mass., and has a law degree from Suffolk University Law School in Boston.



**(Spring Workshop—Continued from Page 1)** *How to Use and Apply Non-Toxic Products for Bed Bugs and other Pests*, and Tim Matheson, *Fair Housing*. Sessions led by HUD personnel were *Updates and Discussion with HUD Staff*, *Physical Needs Assessment and Energy Audit*, “New” *Executive Director Training....Again*, *Occupancy for Public Housing and Section 8*, *Is HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration Program Right for You?*, *Public Housing Agency Recovery and Sustainability*, *Roundtable with HUD*, and *Rent Reasonableness*,

A special thanks to our **sponsors** – Barge Cauthen & Associates, Michael Brady, Inc., Housing Benefits Plan, Ledford Engineering & Planning, LLC, and Arthur J. Gallagher. Your support is greatly appreciated. We were fortunate to have these **exhibitors** with us: Barge Cauthen & Assoc., Inc., Michael Brady, Inc., Brown Stove Works, Inc., Graham Windows and Screens, Honeywell International, Inc., Lansing Housing Products, Inc., Marketing Associates Plus, Inc., Marvin Windows and Doors, Miracle of KY & TN, SACS Software, TCAC, Total Maintenance Solutions South. Please thank these companies for their time and support of TAHRA.

Attendees also enjoyed time to network with each other at evening activities which included receptions, a trip to downtown Nashville, and an evening of music and dancing where we were “rockin’ the foundation”!

Thanks to all who participated in the “Pop for Scholarship”. The scholarship committee was able to raise \$1685. Another successful workshop – thanks to all!

# Cooperative Purchasing *by Terry Mckee*



## Bid Openings

The proper handling of received bids and the bid opening “ceremony” are critical to instilling confidence in your procedures. HUD provides guidance on the handling of bid openings and their guidance is in line with good procurement practices in general. The details are in the Procurement Handbook but some of the more critical points include:

**Time and Place Certainty.** A bid must have a specific due date and time. Received bids should be stored in a locked bid box, cabinet, or safe to ensure that they are not opened nor mishandled prior to the bid opening. A PHA should consider date and time-stamping received bids. Bids received in the mail after the due date and time should be recorded as “received late”, the official’s signature provided and kept unopened in the contract file. Late bids delivered in person should be refused. Your bid document should clearly indicate what constitutes “official time” for your agency. It could be a bid clock or the wall clock or the time on your phone.

**Public Bid Opening Process.** To ensure fairness in the award process, anyone may attend the bid opening. Bids must be publicly opened on the scheduled date and time shown in the solicitation. The bid opening official reads aloud the bidders’ names and the bid prices. This information is recorded and may be made available for public inspection. No commitment or statement regarding contract award should be made to any bidder at the bid opening. It is helpful to indicate to those in attendance that the information read aloud is subject to review and verification. Do not allow the bid opening session to become a debating arena about the bids. This is not the time to entertain questions or to let bidders pick apart bids. This session is a simple reading of what is submitted and you will perform the evaluation later.

**Recording the Bids.** As bids are publicly opened and read aloud, an abstract or tabulation of all bids is prepared showing the name of each bidder and their bid prices including alternates, if any. This abstract becomes part of the official contract file. The abstract is public information and a copy may be sent to interested parties when requested.

If I can be of help to you, feel free to contact me:  
[tmckee@kcdc.org](mailto:tmckee@kcdc.org)

A good deed is never lost: he who sows courtesy reaps friendship; and he who plants kindness gathers love.

~Basil

## “Tales of TAHRA” Back Issues Available Online!

You can now access electronic archives of the *Tales of TAHRA* issues back to November 2004 online. All these issues are available as .PDF files so you will need the free Adobe Acrobat Reader program to open them. Go to:  
<http://talesoftahra.googlepages.com>  
(Please note: there is no “www” in this address.)



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Frank Denney, Engineer  
O: 205-822-3949, F: 205-822-3905  
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## TCAC Seeking VISTA Concept Papers Summer VISTA Available Too

"TCAC Community VISTA is happy to announce that we are accepting requests from public housing authorities for Concept Papers, subject to availability of resources, to develop new AmeriCorps VISTA assignments. The Concept Paper process is open to new and current PHAs. Please share this notice with your networks and contact Evonne Surber-Green at the TCAC office at [tcacommcares@bellsouth.net](mailto:tcacommcares@bellsouth.net)

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a full-time, national service program for individuals interested in developing lasting solutions to poverty-related problems affecting residents living in public housing here in Tennessee. AmeriCorps VISTA service is designed to develop and expand service and programs that alleviate or end the cycle of poverty.

TCAC is soliciting Concept Papers that propose to build local service capacity in the following priority areas for 2012-2015.:

1. Education – with a focus on improving school readiness and/or grade level performance for at-risk children (including improving attendance, behavior and access to college); increasing high school graduation rates; and building sustainable community support structures for persistently low-performing schools.
2. Veterans and Military families – with a focus on engaging Veterans in community service; and/or providing community services to at-risk Veterans and military families.
3. Economic Opportunity and Healthy Futures – with a focus on employment access and training; financial literacy; and/or access to safe/affordable housing (including access to independent living support service for the elderly and disabled).
4. Small, grassroots and rural proposals that do not fit under 1,2 or 3 but can make a case to lead with a sustainable plan, and collaborative resources will be considered.

Deadline for proposals and selection of a VISTA applicant to fill the position is July 1, 2012. Please contact Evonne Surber-Green at TCAC for a blank Concept Paper and instructions. 423.586.7636 x 14

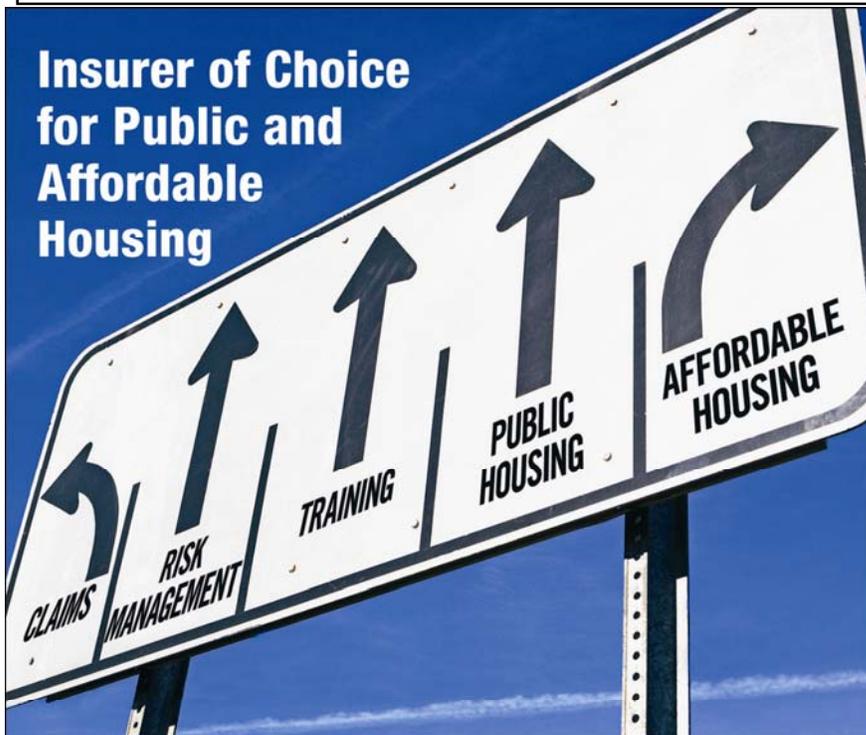
Would you like to try out VISTA without making a 365 day commitment at your PHA? If so check out our Summer Associate program. You do not have to have a full-time VISTA in place to have a summer associate during 2012. Contact TCAC for more information.

## New TAHRAScholarship Winners Announced

The TAHRAScholarship Committee is pleased to announce the winners of our scholarship for the 2012-2013 term: Dalecia Shareese Borum, Monica La'Dominique Jackson, Brandy Santana Hudson, and James Raymond Fields.

Dalecia lives in Covington Housing Authority and plans to attend the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and pursue a degree in nursing. Monica lives in Brownsville Housing Authority and plans to continue your business administration degree at Jackson State Community College, Brandy lives in Martin Housing Authority and plans to continue her education in business and organizational leadership at Bethel University, and James lives in Covington Housing Authority and plans to attend Austin Peay State University to obtain his degree in aeronautics.

Congratulations!



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# ***TAHRA RESIDENT NEWSLETTER CONTEST 2012***

TAHRA is sponsoring the Sixth newsletter contest for its members and is requesting your participation to make this contest a success. Newsletters are a valuable tool enabling us to communicate and provide important information to our residents. It also allows us to recognize programs and activities through pictures and articles.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this contest is to recognize TAHRA members for superior achievement in preparation and compilation of resident newsletters and for recognition in the field of communication for their encouragement to those we serve and the public through the successful use of newsletters to disseminate information.

## **RULES**

Each participating TAHRA member must submit 4 (four) copies of one of the agency's **resident** newsletters from the period. Members should submit newsletters for consideration from the period of July 2011 through July 2012.

Submissions may be mailed to Donna Baumgartner, TAHRA, 9050 Carothers Parkway, Suite 104, Franklin, TN 37067

All submissions must be **received by September 28, 2012 by the close of the business day**. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered for evaluation.

## **CATEGORIES**

Due to the various sizes of the TAHRA membership, this competition will be divided into three size categories as follows:

Small - Up to 250 total units

Medium - 251-599 total units

Large - 600-1000 total units

Large - Over 1000 total units

Each category will have a 1<sup>st</sup> Place winner and a cash prize of \$75. In addition, 2 entrants will be drawn at random to receive a \$25 award to encourage entrants! Based on the submissions Honorable Mentions will also be selected. Winners will be announced in the November issue of the Tales of TAHRA.

## **EVALUATION**

Submissions will be evaluated on a five-point scale based on three criteria:

Design – Color, graphics, layout, and overall appearance.

Content – Relevance, significance and newsworthiness.

Readability – Cohesive easily understood and interest.

The entries will be judged by one or more professional journalists or journalism instructors at a Nashville area school.

## **QUESTIONS**

Any questions may be directed to Jim Young at 931 484-2990, Donna Baumgartner at 615 776-1562 or any member of the Public Relations committee.

# Upper Cumberland HA Teens Learn Many New Skills!



Action Heating and Cooling recently donated a director's chair and clapperboard to the Crossville Housing Authority TNT students and staff of Gateway Productions. The students run camera, sound and direct the production of short form programs that air on the Crossville cable TV system including those produced by the local Chamber of Commerce. On the days the kids are not filming they are participating in life skills activities. The objective is to teach the kids how to write checks, balance checkbooks, pay bills on time and the importance of saving money for the future.

During school spring break, 17 youth and 2 adults with Cookeville Housing Authority's Teens Need Training program were able to become certified in CPR, AED & Heimlich maneuver. The class was organized by Shaquawana Wester, CHA AmeriCorps Youth Services Coordinator through the Carmen Burnette CPR Education Fund. The teens had a great time by asking lots of questions and practicing on the mannequins.

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### **Keeping Current:**

- Congratulations to Betsy McCright, executive director, **Chattanooga Housing Authority**, for being named a 2012 Woman of Distinction by the American Lung Association in Tennessee.
- Congratulations to Ronald Robinson, executive director, **Lewisburg Housing Authority**, for being elected by his city councilmen as a member of the Industrial Development Board.
- Congratulations to Ed Zimbicki, **Johnson City Housing Authority**, on his retirement as executive director.
- **Crossville Housing Authority** has partnered with The Cumberland Adult Reading Council (CARC) which forms the building block of adult and child development.
- Our sympathy to **Lawrenceburg Housing Authority** on the death of Uday Shah, co-chair of the board. Uday also served as co-chair of the TAHRA legislative committee and was a great supporter of TAHRA. He died February 25, 2012 after an eight month battle with cancer. LHA also lost a retired former employee, James A. Brown who died in January.
- In addition, two former **East Tennessee HUD Office** employees passed away in April. Shelly Day died April 25 and Ben Bueglar died April 27

### **TALES OF TAHRA Welcomes Your Comments and Article Submissions!**

Comments can be sent to Donna Baumgartner, TAHRA Executive Director or any member of the TAHRA Board. Article submissions should be emailed to Tales Editor, Jim Young at [talesofTAHRA@gmail.com](mailto:talesofTAHRA@gmail.com) - mailed to Jim at Crossville Housing Authority, P.O. Box 425, Crossville TN 38557 or faxed to Jim's attention at (931) 456-1513. We are looking for articles of interest to HA's across Tennessee concerning interesting problem solutions and new programs that could be replicated at other HA's. Previous issues can be found online at <http://talesoftahra.googlepages.com>

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE July 27, 2012 for Publication August 2012.**