Homelessness – Let’s Talk About It!

The County of San Diego created a training program to provide frontline staff with the tools and techniques needed to improve engagement and interactions with homeless people. Homeless people often gather in public spaces such as libraries, parks and public buildings, which can result in conflicts with general users of these facilities. Historically, the typical approach was to work with law enforcement to rouse the homeless and encourage them to move on to another location. This new training program seeks to broaden the understanding of homelessness and aid in connecting the homeless to community resources.

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Referral Voucher Program

To combat the overwhelming odds of leasing a rental for participants, the Spokane Housing Authority (SHA) created the Referral Voucher Program (RVP). Typically, after waiting years for a voucher, only 37% of voucher recipients were successful leasing a rental. In addition, it took about seven months from call-up to lease-up because of the complexity of verification requirements and area vacancy rates of 1.6%. RVP targets assistance to vulnerable households and pairs it with services aimed at securing and stabilizing housing for part call-up to lease-up participants. The results are an 84% lease-up success rate, taking an average of just 41 days from call-up to lease-up.

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Speakers of the House: An Investment in Employees

The most valuable asset any governmental agency has is its employees. As a large segment of the workforce prepares for retirement, King County Housing Authority (KCHA) recognized that a critical determinant of their organizational future is the degree to which they can retain, train, and advance their emerging leaders. Through their agency supported Toastmasters club called Speakers of the House, they created a space for staff to enhance their communication and leadership skills while building an organization where employees at all stages of their careers are encouraged to thrive and grow.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Golden Inn and Village – Family and Senior

The Golden Inn and Village provides affordable housing to families and seniors in a campus-like setting that promote outdoor recreational use and social interaction. The grounds are designed with walking trails, lush drought resistive landscape and preserved, historic oak trees. The senior development has an onsite activities director, beauty shop, card room, commercial kitchen, medical and dental services, and TV/movie parlor. Ongoing activities and services are provided free of charge by members of the community through The Rona Barrett Foundation fundraising and volunteer efforts.

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Valencia Vista in San Bernardino, California

Valencia Vista is the first phase of the Arrowhead Grove Neighborhood Revitalization and a bold step forward in the transformation of one of America's troubled cities, San Bernardino, CA. Surrounded by the most crime-riddled neighborhoods in the city, Valencia Vista reflects the hopes and dreams of residents, businesses, students, educators, nonprofits and government leaders who seek a brighter tomorrow. The development at large replaces a decaying public housing project with high-quality affordable and workforce housing, an educational village, and millions of dollars in related investment that will serve as a catalyst for economic growth and community transformation.

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Project Renovate

Project Renovate is the first Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion of public housing in the state of Colorado, enabling Boulder Housing Partners (BHP) to convert 279 public housing units into a tax credit partnership. The public housing program historically underfunded these properties creating extensive deferred capital needs. Project Renovate ensures that the sites are physically and financially sound so affordability is maintained in perpetuity. Project Renovate improved livability through renovations that included modern amenities, energy efficiency improvements, and new community centers. The properties are now financially viable and continue to serve very low-income residents.

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The Palm Tree Apartments

The Palm Tree Apartments were originally constructed in 1955. Through the years, the property fell into neglect and disrepair including code violations for bed bug infestation and failure to repair. In parallel, the neighborhood and community that surrounded it also lost residents and became depressed. In 2016 Fort Worth Housing Solutions (FWHS) partnered with a local
foundation to rehabilitate the property and its 24 units into a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) community. The rehabilitation effort was to help facilitate a reduction to chronic homelessness in an area that is experiencing a rebirth of arts, culture, and entertainment.

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COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

TGE-ERC Revitalizes Carmelitos Public Housing

The Growing Experience Environmental Resource Center (TGE-ERC) maximizes the use of formerly blighted urban land to serve as a replicable model of environmental sustainability and food production for low-income communities. TGE-ERC's initiatives include an Aquaponics and Vertical Growing Towers System capable of high-volume production of leafy greens; a demonstration Community Food Forest featuring drought-tolerant edible plants; a Food Waste Composting Program diverting garbage from landfill; and a Renewable Solar Energy System offsetting the site's electrical usage. TGE's energy and resource conservation initiatives result in a healthier physical environment and lifestyle for underserved public housing residents.

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The New Dr. Davis Center

The project features 121, one-and two-bedroom units that serve as a hub of community services for seniors and persons with disabilities. It is the first phase of a $30.5M HUD Choice Neighborhood Initiatives Grant awarded to the San Francisco Housing Authority and McCormack Baron Salazar, for revitalization of the aged Alice Griffith public housing development built in 1962. The project addressed the need for affordable housing for seniors ages 62 and older. 67 units are occupied by low-income seniors whose income is no more than 30% of the area median and 23 units are occupied by former, chronically homeless seniors.
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**Proactive Panel Discussion on Race in the Suburbs**

Lake County Housing Authority hosted “A Proactive Discussion on Race in the Suburbs: What Unites Us is Far Greater than What Divides Us” on July 20, 2016. This was the first of three panel meetings, where key figures from the Lake County area came together to discuss the issues relating to race in the community - from law enforcement/community interaction to diversity in the educational system.

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**Creating a Consortium to Provide Superior Service**

In most communities, there may be several service providing agencies that offer assistance to low-income individuals; however, in larger cities that number could increase exponentially. In turn, this could create a disconnect between these individual agencies regarding knowledge of services offered simply due to the size of the community itself. The Housing Authority of the City of Fort Wayne recognized some of the issues that were being faced by the service providers in Fort Wayne, IN and took it upon themselves to create a consortium of individual representatives of these agencies to help bridge the gap of services.

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PROJECT DESIGN

Golden Inn and Village – Family and Senior

The Golden Inn and Village provides affordable housing to families and seniors in a campus-like setting that promotes outdoor recreational use and social interaction. The grounds are designed with walking trails, lush drought resistive landscape and preserved, historic oak trees. The senior development has an onsite activities director, beauty shop, card room, commercial kitchen, medical and dental services, and TV/movie parlor. Ongoing activities and services are provided free of charge by members of the community through The Rona Barrett Foundation fundraising and volunteer efforts.

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AvéVista

The Oakland Housing Authority partnered with BRIDGE Housing Corporation to build a 68-unit mixed-use family development on a .68 acre underutilized vacant site in one of Oakland’s most desirable neighborhoods. This Mediterranean-style project, AvéVista, is five-stories and includes two levels of parking and four levels of wood construction. The ground floor adds 3,300 SF of neighborhood-serving retail to the community. With sweeping views of Lake Merritt, “The Jewel of Oakland,” AvéVista provides low- and moderate-income families the opportunity to enjoy a safe and scenic neighborhood that is not generally affordable to all.

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Valencia Grove Affordable Housing Community

In 2013, the Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino (HACSB) and its’ affiliate non-profit developer, Housing Partners I, Inc. began the revitalization of its first public housing site in Redlands. In April 2016, the 85-units from the first phase were occupied and the community center was opened. Three innovative approaches took place in the re-construction: 1. Partial
demolition of the 70-year old housing site through a deconstruction project that recycled the building materials while training low-income residents in construction. 2. Installed modular factory built units. 3. Transitioned away from the traditional public housing model towards a mixed income community.

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**CityScape at Belmar**

Until CityScape at Belmar was built, Belmar, Lakewood's thriving downtown, had no affordable housing options for older adults. When Metro West Housing Solutions announced its plans to develop a mixed-income senior housing community, Belmar welcomed and encouraged the development into realization. In the past year, CityScape at Belmar has become a friend to the neighborhood as the colorful building is easily recognizable and provides a gateway to Belmar's recreational path. The residents love the modern building and are enjoying the nearby amenities and entertainment options that Belmar offers.

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**Solar Installation w/STEM Resident Platform**

The Rockford Housing Authority (RHA) installed three solar installations as part of its EPC program. The program came in on time and under budget leaving contingency to add a fourth installation, coupled with another grant award. The fourth installation is an on the ground solar farm that not only saves RHA money, but also serves as a community building and educational asset. Leveraging the Better Buildings Challenge and Department of Energy curriculum, students and residents of the RHA tour the facility to learn about energy, energy conservation, and STEM job opportunities in the community.
Blue Springs Crossing Apartments

This project started with a land donation in what was thought to be the "perfect location" for low income families to live. The problem was the lot is a small triangle formally used as a watering pond for livestock, so how could it be converted into a jewel of a project nestled up against a high end single family home development? This would be the only apartment complex this community would have and a low income one to boot. The project had to fit in its place, look high end and prove everybody wrong who opposed it. In order to do this, a courtyard design was used and the siding, roof, and color schemes were all chosen to fit into the existing community's look and feel.

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RESIDENT AND CLIENT SERVICES

Comprehensive Health Services at Star Apartments

In an effort to address chronic homelessness in the Skid Row neighborhood of Los Angeles, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) collaborated with state and local agencies and a local non-profit to provide comprehensive healthcare and assisted living services for homeless individuals with special needs at Star Apartments. As a result of leveraged funding from city, county, and state programs, special needs tenants have access to an in-house clinic, comprehensive health services, and options for full-time Assisted Living care, for eligible seniors or persons with disabilities.

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Oakwood Senior Apartments

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Paula (SPHA) assists low-income families with safe, decent, and affordable housing opportunities as they strive to achieve self-sufficiency and improve the quality of their lives. In a small city of approximately 30,000 people, it becomes increasingly difficult to develop affordable housing due to lower tax revenues, high city fee costs, availability of funding, and simply being able to find a location economical and suitable enough to build senior housing. Through Oakwood Senior Apartments, SPHA set out to expand the supply of assisted housing by building eight new independent living apartments for seniors.

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Tackling Mental Health through Patient Navigators

Senior and disabled public housing residents often possess characteristics that put them at greater risk for behavioral health conditions. Many of the Denver Housing Authority's (DHA) residents have inadequate health care coverage in regards to seeking mental health treatment. With the overwhelming majority being on Medicare or Medicaid, scheduling mental health visits is difficult due to the large amount of mental health practitioners that only serve private insurance. DHA’s Health Navigator program provides services that include behavioral health education and resources that enable DHA residents to get the proper medication and care they need instead of seeking emergency services.

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A Book for Every Child Initiative

Recognizing that the key to breaking the cycle of poverty is education, the Housing Authority of the City of Pocatello (HACP) has taken a first step in its education plan by working to get books into the hands of the children they serve. The Book for Every Child Initiative insures every child that comes into the office or is listed on a form, is given an age appropriate book. Additionally, Free Little Libraries have been stocked with books at the HACP properties making book access easier for the children served.

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Affordable Grocery Delivery Program

The Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) and the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (Wilder) have partnered to provide affordable grocery delivery service to public housing residents through Wilder's Twin Cities Mobile Market (TCMM) Program. The TCMM, a mobile grocery store on wheels, brings affordable, healthy food to seven PHA locations each week. Residents with limited mobility or transportation options, or who live in neighborhoods with limited food access, can step out their front door and onto the bus to find a variety of quality, low-cost nutritional options.

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Building for the Future

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) is starting a contractor educational and support initiative for small, minority (MBE) and women (WBE) owned as well as Section 3 and resident owned businesses to prepare them for HUD’s RAD implementation. This initiative is called Building for the Future. The program is designed to partner with community resources to help smaller contractors compete for subcontracts with the large construction firms who win the
RAD project contracts. It is crucial in today’s ever changing construction field to teach people and companies the skills they need to compete.

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