

The HOME Edition

Volume 3, Issue 1
First Quarter 2010

Timothy Seckinger Appointed Interim President & CEO



Tim Seckinger, HHA board member since 2006 and a former board chair, was appointed Interim President & CEO by the Board of Commissioners on May 17.

Seckinger is president of Colliers Property Management Services. He has more than 25 years of commercial real estate experience, including asset/portfolio management, property and facility management, leasing, investment and land sales, acquisitions, development, redevelopment and property disposition. Regarded as a leader in the real estate industry, Seckinger steered the formation of a third-party management company, which in only a few years has grown to one of the Top 20 largest private management companies in Houston.

“Serving on the Housing Authority’s Board of Commissioners and getting a chance to help serve so many families is truly an honor,” Seckinger said. “I will work hard as the interim leader of the Houston Housing Authority to fulfill the board’s confidence in me and make sure our community continues to receive excellent support and services. Public service is a privilege and a responsibility. I will bring that understanding to work with me every day.”

Ernie Etuk Announces Retirement



After a long and distinguished career in public service, Ernie Etuk, President & CEO of the Houston Housing Authority, retired on May 7. He served the Housing Authority for almost 30 years, joining the Agency as a staff member and serving in several management positions before being named President & CEO in 1999.

“I have been fortunate to work with some of the most dedicated groups of individuals at the Houston Housing Authority over the years,” Etuk said. “Their hard work and passion for service have made it possible to lead this dynamic organization.”

The board has begun a nationwide search for a new President & CEO. The search will be conducted “within the agency and throughout the nation to find the most knowledgeable, capable leader for this vitally important agency” said David Mincberg, chair of Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners. The search is expected to take 120-180 days.

“HHA is serving more families than ever before, providing quality, affordable housing and services to more than 60,000 Houstonians. Mr. Etuk has brought a practical business approach to the operations of the Agency, as well as a long-term vision to the organization. The board has enjoyed working with him and will miss his leadership. We wish him well in his future endeavors,” Mincberg said.

Inside this issue:

2 Moving More + Eating Better = Better, Healthier Lives

4 Around the HHA

7 Community Champions
Jonee and Julianna Longoria

Our Mission:
To improve lives by providing quality, affordable housing options and promoting education and economic self-sufficiency.

Moving More + Eating Better = Better, Healthier Lives

Now, more than ever, it's impossible not to hear about healthcare, healthy eating, getting more exercise – and the current state of Americans' weight and health, especially that of children. Nearly one-third of American children are considered overweight or obese, creating health problems not only when they're young but also affecting their health in their adult years. Obesity-related conditions cost us an estimated \$150 billion each year in healthcare costs – and that number is growing!

It's been reported that today's children are expected to have a shorter life span than their parents despite all the advances in the medical field. Why? Primarily because of getting much less exercise than children did previously and the wide availability of fast food and overly processed foods.

This health crisis has an indirect impact on the major

Eating Healthier on the Cheap!

It's fast and easy – and often cheaper – to just grab that high-calorie snack or dinner from the corner store or fast-food restaurants than to prepare something healthier at home or choose a healthier selection at the store. But eating less fried, processed and sugary foods, and more fruits, vegetables and lower fat meats (baked, grilled) has a big impact on reducing obesity and the risk of developing diabetes and heart disease.

When you do go to the grocery store for items to prepare healthier meals at home, there are several steps that can help you save money when you shop.

- Plan your meals for the next week and make a list of what you will need so you won't buy unnecessary items or more than you need.
- Don't shop hungry! Eat a small snack before you go so



piece of legislation passed by Congress this year – the healthcare reform plan, which is projected to cost \$900 billion over 10 years. Healthcare experts say the largest single factor in reducing that huge cost over the years is for Americans to practice healthy lifestyles – reducing calories, getting more exercise, not smoking and moderate alcohol consumption.

So here's some help to get us moving more, eating healthier foods and not having to spend a lot of money doing it!



- you won't be tempted to buy items not on your list.
- Check the sale and specials ad at the store and use coupons if you have them. (Many stores include coupons with their store ads, or you can find them online.)
- Compare prices – store brands are often cheaper at the same quality. Also check the “per unit” cost that is usually provided on the shelf label below the product. It tells you the price of that item per ounce or pound, so you'll know which brand or size is the best buy.
- Consider buying frozen fruits and vegetables. They are often cheaper than canned or fresh ones, and have the same – or more – nutritional value.
- Use your food dollars wisely – for the price of a large bag of chips, a box of cookies and some candy, you can buy a lot of apples, bananas, carrots and other healthier foods.

Share Your Ideas, Suggestions for Healthy, Affordable Eating!

How do you and your family try to eat healthier meals and snacks on limited budgets? We want to hear from residents and share those suggestions and ideas with other residents. Please contact Gilda Jackson (713-260-0732; gjackson@housingforhouston.com) in HHA's Client

Services Department to let us know what you're doing to help keep your family healthy, and we'll include them in the next issues of the newsletter. You can also share your tips at the monthly Community Meetings.



First Lady Michelle Obama's **Let's Move** initiative has an important goal: to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity within a generation. **Let's Move** will give parents the support they need, provide healthier food in schools, help our kids be more physically active, and make healthy, affordable food available in every part of our country.

Children need 60 minutes of active, vigorous play every day to grow up to a healthy weight. Only a third of high school students get this level of physical activity, while the 8- to 18-year-olds devote an average 7.5 hours a day to using TV, computers, video, cell phones and movies!

Schools are becoming more involved by participating in the "Presidential Active Lifestyle Award," which will double the number of children in the 2010-2011 school year who earn this award.

In addition to creating more opportunities for and encouraging more physical activity, the **Let's Move** program also is focusing on healthier eating and better access to affordable healthy foods, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. **Let's Move** is building communities by bringing together families, schools, private industry and government to make healthy living easier. With better understanding and opportunities for good nutrition and physical activity, parents can take simple steps so families can live healthier lives.

To learn more about the initiative, visit the website at www.letsmove.gov

NEWS FOR SENIORS

Health Reform Affects Medicare "Doughnut Hole"

Almost everyone loves doughnut holes...glazed, buttermilk and chocolate are particularly tempting as treats every once in awhile. But when it comes to Medicare, few things are less tasteful.

Medicare's "doughnut hole," or coverage gap in its prescription drug program, leaves Medicare recipients holding the bag for 100% of their own drug costs and affects more than 3 million older Americans. In Texas, 28% of people in Medicare Part D fall into the gap each year. Fortunately, thanks to health reform, help is on the way!

If you enter the coverage gap this year, you'll receive a one-time check for \$250 to help with your drug costs. Starting in 2011, you'll get a 50 percent discount on all brand-name and biologic drugs you buy in the gap. Over the next 10 years, you'll gradually receive more discounts for generic and brand-name drugs until the gap closes completely in 2020.

In the meantime, there's something you can do today to ease the cost of prescription drugs. The AARP Doughnut Hole Calculator (available on the Internet at www.aarp.org/doughnuthole) will guide you through your prescription drug options and help you figure out if or when you will fall into the coverage gap. With the calculator, you'll be able to see a graph of your monthly spending, research lower cost drugs for certain conditions, and create a medication record for your doctor.

So try out the AARP Doughnut Hole Calculator (also in Spanish at www.aarp.org/calculadoramedicare) to learn more about your options. You have nothing to lose and money to save.

This article was provided by AARP Texas.

Kennedy Place Construction Continues on Schedule

As of late April, all building pad foundations had been completed and paving for the roads was nearing completion. Framing of the individual buildings is scheduled to begin in late May. You can follow the construction progress with other photos on the HHA website – www.housingforhouston.com – by clicking on the link in the "Spotlight" section.

The Houston Housing Authority is revitalizing Kennedy Place with \$7.8 million in federal stimulus funds and other funds. It will include 108 units and is expected to

be completed in December 2010. Information about applying to live at Kennedy Place should be available in October and will be on the HHA website.



Around the Houston Housing Authority

Telephone Road Residents Welcome Pink and Green Spring Affair

Members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. brought lunch, bingo fun and, most important, healthcare screenings and information to residents of Telephone Road Senior Apartments on March 6.

Linda Kinchen, sorority member and organizer of the event, said: “We’ve been doing this twice a year for 14 years, and we continue to see an increase in the number of people attending.” The spring event has focused on healthcare screenings and information, while the holiday event features musical performances – by both residents and outside groups – small gift bags and breakfast.

Melva Parker, who now works with the Harris County Guardianship Program, started the Telephone Road program when she was a social worker with the Texas Department of Aging & Disability and saw the need for these types of services.

Anne Davison, HHA Service Coordinator for Telephone Road, said the residents appreciate the Alpha Kappa Alpha Pink and Green tradition. “When you care, it shows,” she said.

“We love the Pink and Green Affair, and thank God for them. They really do bring us cheer,” said Norvella Kellam, Resident Council Vice President.



Residents Receive Free Health Screenings, Information

Several community partners provided residents at Lincoln Park, Kelly Village and Telephone Road, among other locations, valuable health screenings and information during the first few months of the year. The University of Houston College of Optometry provided free vision screenings in February to residents, including these at Lincoln Park (top). Ninety-five Kelly Village residents attended an HIV/AIDS testing clinic hosted by Change Happens and coordinated by Amana Turner, HIV Program Coordinator (middle), in April. Fifteen partners participated in a health and wellness expo – “Spring into a New You” – for senior residents at Telephone Road in April (bottom).



“Braiding Mission” Comes to Kelly Village; Featured on Oprah’s Angel Network Website

Twenty-five girls at Kelly Village community were treated to free braiding from Kreshon Smith during Spring Break in March, and the story was featured on Oprah’s Angel Network website (www.angelnetwork.com). Kreshon is a full-time student pursuing a doctorate in chiropractic and established “BrAiDs N BeAdS” in July 2009 as an opportunity to help others. She contacted the Client Services Department about her interest in serving youth at Kelly Village by helping to improve their self-esteem.



Take Advantage of Neighborhood Network Resources!

The HHA manages a Neighborhood Network program to increase public housing residents' access to technology. Network labs are established at Clayton Homes, Irvinton Village, Lincoln Park, Kelly Village and the Neighborhood Resource Center (NRC). The program helps residents to achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency by offering the following resources, among many others:

- Computer training classes
- Online job training classes
- GED and ESL classes
- Job searches
- Business development
- Tutorials
- Community resources



All public housing residents (all ages) are encouraged to enroll in the program. Participation is an eligible activity for residents who are required to perform community service. Please call Hector Garcia, Economic Development Coordinator, at 713-260-0721, for more information.

Fulton Village Residents Enjoy Read Across America Activities



Children at Fulton Village (left) participated in the annual Read Across America event on March 2 – but they also

have a fun reading session at least once a month. In April, the group marked Earth Day by reading “The Lorax” from “Cat in the Hat,” by Dr. Seuss. Among those participating were Norma Basurto and her daughter Guadalupe. “I like to read ‘Cat in the Hat’ books because they are easy and fun to read,” Guadalupe said. Mom Norma also likes the program: “The reading program is great because it encourages her to read and at the same time helps better her English.”

The National Education Association’s Read Across America is an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on March 2, the birthday of Dr. Seuss. The program also provides NEA members, parents, caregivers, and children the resources and activities they need to keep reading on the calendar 365 days a year.

Job Fairs Held at NRC, Several Communities

The Houston Housing Authority sponsored job fairs at several communities, including a Section 3 job fair at Kelly Village (right photo) for residents and the Fifth Ward community on February 11. Houston Works sponsored a Neighborhood Network job preparation rally at four developments and a job fair at the NRC in March. Tanja Conerly (left photo, center), with Houston Works, coordinated the event with HHA Client Services Department. The U.S. Census Bureau also participated at the NRC job fair, offering testing for census taker openings.



We Need Your Help!

The Houston Housing Authority is searching for residents to provide input for the quarterly resident newsletter. Residents can volunteer as Resident Reporters to take photos and either write articles or provide information for articles from your community. All interested residents should contact Gilda Jackson, Resident Service Coordinator, at 713-260-0732.

Easter Hats Showcased at Cuney Homes



Several “fashionable” ladies showed off their Easter finery at the first “Gospel Hat & Style Show,” sponsored by the Cuney Homes Resident Council on April 3. Norma Jefferson (left), Eula Williams (middle) and Willie Lockett (right) all were declared winners!

Housing Authority Begins To Develop 2011 Annual Plan

Families and businesses have both learned the value of planning ahead. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires housing authorities to plan for the Low Rent Public Housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs and related activities. At the end of this planning process, the Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners will consider and approve its Comprehensive Five-Year Agency Plan and 2011 Annual Plan, which will then be sent to HUD for review.

In April, HHA staff began to develop a draft plan that will be presented for public comment before it is finalized. The staff will seek input and comments from all residents through their Resident Council officers who participate on the Resident Advisory Board. The residents will review the draft plan at a meeting to be held in June. If necessary, revisions will be made to the draft plan and released for public comment in mid-July for 45 days.

Public information meetings are scheduled for these locations and dates:

- Bellerive – July 27, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- HOAPV Senior Center – July 20, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Lyerly – August 10, 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Telephone Road – August 3, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

The public comment period is scheduled to end on or about August 25, 2010. The Comprehensive Five-Year Agency Plan and 2011 Annual Plan will be presented to the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners at its regularly scheduled meeting in September and will be submitted to HUD for review before the deadline of October 19, 2010. If you have questions regarding the Plan or the development timeline, please call Pat Lodder, 713-260-0512.

New Towing Policy Approved

The Board of Commissioners approved the new towing policy for all HHA multifamily properties at the April board meeting. The new policy updates the previous towing policy to incorporate recent changes in state law, which principally address the notification of residents and guests about parking and towing rules.

The Public Housing Operations staff began explaining the towing requirements to residents in June 2009. Full implementation of the new policy began May 1, which will continue to help improve the safety and security of residents. The requirements include:

- Designated tenant-only parking and resident visitor parking
- Automatic tows in several areas, including handicap spots without proper credentials, parking in fire lanes, parking in front of dumpsters and other “standard” no-parking areas.
- Notices to residents every 90 days to update their parking permit log. All residents should have the proper parking decals on their vehicles and should review the parking rules that are attached to their leases.

The new parking requirements were explained at the monthly community meetings, beginning in February this year, and the Housing Authority began preparing in early March for full implementation. All “No Parking Tow Away Zones” have been clearly identified at all developments.

For information on the new towing and parking rules, please speak with your property manager.

National Census Day Promoted at Three Communities

The Houston Housing Authority partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to host Census Day on April 1. Volunteers, HHA staff and residents conducted community outreach at Clayton Homes, Cuney Homes and Kelly Village. In left photo, census workers, including Angelica Flores (left), answered questions and helped residents, including Christall Norman, complete the census form. At Clayton Homes, several local news media were on hand to report the story and interviewed Elizabeth Fourné (left).





COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS:

JONEE AND JULIANNA LONGORIA

If Julianna Longoria needs a role model for her future, she need look no further than to her mother, Jonee. Residents of Ewing Apartments, mom and daughter are both active

in volunteer activities at Planned Parenthood and both have their sights clearly set on education as a path to self-sufficiency.

Jonee earned her associate's degree from Houston Community College in 1999, then decided to return to school in August 2005 to complete her degree in General Studies with a minor in social work. "I decided to pursue my bachelor's because I was not able to find work with an associate's degree," she said. "Employers would either coin me as under- or over-qualified. I was blessed with part-time employment that enabled me to attend Texas Southern University full-time." Jonee also had been volunteering part-time at Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas, Inc.

After graduation in May, Jonee hopes to work in the HIV/AIDS research field, a nonprofit that empowers and assists women, or possibly full-time with Planned Parenthood. "I decided to enter the social work field because I really enjoyed doing community outreach with Planned Parenthood," she said. And she plans to continue her education by seeking her master's degree.

Daughter Julianna is completing her sophomore year at Lamar High School, where she has been a member of the

track team and Future Farmers of America. This is in addition to her volunteer activities with teenREACH, the Planned Parenthood advocacy group that works to prevent teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS and focuses on healthy relationships. At Lamar's FFA this past year, Julianna raised a lamb, which won reserve grand champion at the school's livestock show; they also won Best Showmanship. Next year, she says, she's planning on raising a heifer. An A-B student, Julianna also participates in the Rodeo Run and AIDS Walk.

Asked why she volunteers with teenREACH, Julianna says, "I have seen too many teens in my community get pregnant and not do much with their lives after becoming parents during their youth. I want better than that for me and my community."

It's Julianna's activities with teenREACH that have her focused on her future. She's attended three national Young Leader Summits with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, including in Washington D.C., where she met U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, among other officials and celebrities. And she wants to major in political science and government. But her livestock interest is also directing her, since she wants to attend Texas A&M where there are agricultural programs.

"I truly believe that the sky is the limit to achieving your goals," Jonee said. "I wanted to show my daughter that she can be an independent, educated woman."

John Hurt Joins HHA as Vice President, Housing Operations



John Hurt joined the Houston Housing Authority as Vice President, Housing Operations, on March 29. He brings with him more than 30 years of public and private sector property management experience.

Hurt's public housing experience includes Director of Housing Management at the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority; Deputy Executive Director of the Detroit Housing Commission; and Director of Special Programs, Housing Choice Voucher Operations at the Atlanta Housing Authority. He also served as a housing

continued on page 8

Hurt Joins HHA as VP, continued from page 7

consultant, working with both large and small housing authorities on HUD-related issues, and with troubled housing programs. As a private-sector regional property manager, he has managed portfolios in multiple states and served as a site manager.

“I am proud to join the team at the Houston Housing Authority,” he said. “In my 25 years of experience in the public housing industry, I am most satisfied with my contributions to improving the quality of life for our residents through providing quality affordable housing and development of resident-owned businesses and resident employment opportunities. I look forward to meeting many of you and working with you.”

Keep in Mind

- Rent is due before the 5th of every month to avoid late fee.
- Eligible public housing residents are required to perform 8 hours of community service each month.
- You are responsible for all guests.

Wanted — Community Leaders!

Are you looking to make a difference in your community? The Resident Council elections are being held at communities in May and June, including those still to be held, listed below, to fill various leadership positions. All residents who are at least 18 years old are eligible to participate as a candidate (must be in good standing) and a voter. Get involved in your community and participate in your community's election!

- Bellerive – June 9, 4:00 p.m.
- Clayton Homes – June 22, 5:00 p.m.
- Cuney Homes – June 23, 5:30 p.m.
- Ewing – June 16, 4:00 p.m.
- Forest Green – June 14, 6:00 p.m.
- Fulton Village – June 17, 6:00 p.m.
- HOAPV – June 17, 6:00 p.m.
- Irvinton Village – June 26, 11:00 a.m.
- Kelly Village – June 10, 5:00 p.m.
- Long Drive – June 24, 6:00 p.m.
- Lyerly – June 23, 3:00 p.m.
- Oxford Place – June 9, 7:00 p.m.
- Telephone Road – June 16, 4:00 p.m.

Board of Commissioners

David M. Minberg, *Chair*
Rev. Myron Cloyd, *Vice Chair*
Rueben C. Casarez, *Commissioner*
Timothy J. Seckinger,
Interim President & CEO

Important Telephone Numbers

HHA Administration:
713-260-0500

Public Housing Operations:
713-260-0701

**Section 8 Housing Choice
Voucher Program Call Center:**
713-260-0999

Customer Service Hotline:
713-260-0377

Neighborhood Resource Center:
713-655-1940

City of Houston Service Helpline:
311

United Way Helpline: 211

Fraud Hotline: 713-260-0724

JUNE

National Flag Month

National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month

6/14 Flag Day

6/17 Resident Council Leadership Quarterly Meeting (tentative)

6/20 Father's Day

JULY

Recreation and Parks Month

National Ice Cream Month

National Hot Dog Month

7/4 Independence Day

7/5 Independence Day Observed
(HHA offices are closed)

The Home Edition is produced by the Office of External Affairs of the Houston Housing Authority

Dennis Spellman

Vice President, External Affairs

Susie McMichael

Director of Communications

Comments, articles and photographs are welcomed for *The Home Edition* newsletter. All submissions must have a name and a phone number to be considered. Due to space limitations, the editor reserves the right to reject or edit copy as necessary.

Email submissions to smcmichael@housingforhouston.com

Houston Housing Authority

2640 Fountain View Drive • Suite 400 • Houston, TX 77057 • 713-260-0500

Visit us online at www.housingforhouston.com

HHA is a Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity Agency