



HOUSINGWORKS!

An Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority Publication



Standing in the lobby of the Fowler building you will find the Angel Tree. Residents of the building were invited to write the name of a family member or friend that they wanted to remember on a Christmas ornament of their choice and then hang it on the Angel tree.

AMHA Board of Directors

- Anthony W. O'Leary, Executive Director
- John C. Fickes, Chair
- Leonard M. Foster, Vice Chair
- Roberta E. Aber
- Thomas L. Harnden
- Stephanie N. Norris

AMHA Offices Closed

- New Year's Day – January 2
- Martin Luther King Day – January 16
- Presidents' Day – February 20

AMHA Main Number

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From the Desk of Anthony W. O'Leary



Public Housing Funding Critical in 2017

A recent book titled *Evicted* by Matthew Desmond states, "We can't fix poverty in America without fixing housing." Those of us who work in housing have said for years that the lack of affordable housing makes it nearly impossible for a family to succeed.

Nationally, more people are choosing to rent, and the need for affordable housing is no longer just a "low income group" problem. Increasingly, research shows that a lack of

affordable housing adversely impacts economic development, educational achievement and basic quality of life.

Over the course of the fall political campaign, and more recently during the presidential transition, there has been almost no discussion of housing policy for any segment of the American economy. So we are very eager to see whether reform of housing programs and adequate funding will be a priority for the new administration. Congress has an even more critical role to play since it decides the budget. This entire issue goes to the very heart of whether or not the federal government chooses to support low income people, seniors and those with disabilities, including veterans and the working poor. At this point we certainly have hope for positive action and reform of many outdated rules.

Despite the tense political season we have all just been through, I am happy to share some positive accomplishments at the local level.

- Our Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake has surpassed fundraising goals for the year from private sources to support the important work centered on families.
- Spicer Village, AMHA's newest housing development opened early last summer, is fully occupied and serves young people who are at risk of homelessness and have disabilities.
- We continued to expand partnerships with other community agencies focusing on early childhood education, health, job training and services for elderly residents.
- AMHA was again recognized as a "high performing agency" by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Major capital projects that had to be spread out over several years due to less funding were completed at South Hawkins in west Akron and Colonial Hills in north Akron.

We are grateful for our many community partners, our outstanding employees and board members, and the opportunity to serve a critical community need.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Anthony W. O'Leary

AMHA Event Supporting Reach Opportunity Center a Big Success

Nearly 400 community leaders, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority collaborative partners and staff attended the Reach Higher Breakfast on October 26, 2016 at the Hilton Akron/Fairlawn. Guests learned how the efforts of AMHA and its community partners are positively impacting the lives of area residents through the Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake.

AMHA Executive Director Tony O'Leary welcomed the group. Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro, Akron Public Schools Superintendent David James and Summit Education Initiative Executive Director Derran Wimer praised the leadership of AMHA and its collaborative partners on creating this community resource that provides educational services to residents of Akron's Summit Lake neighborhood. Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan and United Way President and CEO Jim Mullen discussed

the importance of the model that was created to improve kindergarten readiness and third grade reading proficiency, and to provide adult educational services to increase employment.

Proceeds of the Breakfast went to AMHA's non-profit subsidiary Building for Tomorrow (www.amhabft.org) to benefit the Reach Opportunity Center at Summit Lake (www.reachsummitlake.org). The event raised more than \$50,000, surpassing fundraising goals for the year from private sources.

The fall-themed Breakfast included the artistic talents of children attending programs at the Reach Opportunity Center. Akron Public Schools kindergarten and preschool students, and participants of the Boys & Girls Club decorated pumpkins, which served as table centerpieces.



AMHA Executive Director Tony O'Leary addressed the Reach Higher Breakfast audience.