Honoring and Assisting Veterans

Dear Friends:

Each November we pause on Veterans Day to thank our veterans for their extraordinary commitment to serving our country. It is the price of freedom and security in our democracy for which we are grateful.

Much like feeding those less fortunate at the holidays, we need to sometimes be reminded that services are needed throughout the year for the many veterans who face poverty, homelessness and serious health issues on a daily basis. In this issue, we highlight a veterans housing program created by the federal government that is succeeding in numerous communities throughout the country. President Obama and the Veterans Administration announced an ambitious goal in 2009 to end veteran homelessness. Recent government data indicates a reduction of more than 50% in the homeless population since 2010, due primarily to HUD-sponsored programs including Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher Program and the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program. Work remains to be done because an estimated 40,000 vets are still homeless across America and thousands more are at risk of losing housing due to economic hardship.

Health care, insufficient access to mental health services and unemployment are other major challenges facing many veterans. More resources are needed, both public and private, to address these complex problems. AMHA is proud that we are part of the solution, and we will continue in that effort.

On a separate note, I want to thank the 45 sponsors and numerous other donors who recently attended AMHA’s “Reach Higher” breakfast raising funds for our non-profit organization, Building for Tomorrow. These funds support our various early childhood educational programs and programs for adults who are increasing their education and readiness for employment. Educational success remains the best remedy for poverty, and we are deeply appreciative for the community support we receive on behalf of the residents of public housing.

Regards,

Anthony W. O’Leary
Executive Director

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AMHA Offices Closed
Veterans Day – November 11
Thanksgiving Related Days – November 24-25
Christmas Related Days – December 23, 26

AMHA Main Number
330-762-9631

Child & Family Partner, Tiffany Knox, works with a family at the Reach Opportunity Center as part of AMHA’s Early Childhood Initiative.
The HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA provides services for participating Veterans at VA medical centers and community-based outreach clinics. There is at least one site offering VASH vouchers in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

Nationally, HUD has awarded funding for approximately 10,000 HUD-VASH vouchers each year during 2008-2010 and 2012-2015. In 2011, funding was approved to serve approximately 7,000 voucher families. AMHA has collaborated with Veterans Affairs (VA), local service providers and the community to successfully manage the VASH program since 2009. AMHA has utilized 100% of the available vouchers. We currently maintain 66 VASH vouchers and recently applied for 8 project-based VASH vouchers. During the past seven years, AMHA has assisted a total of 170 veterans through the VASH program. The VA staff continues to locate and assist more veterans in need of housing and the associated case management services.

Once veterans enroll in the VASH program, our VA partners assist them in working towards self-sufficiency, including improvements in housing, basic needs, access to resources, physical health, family/social health, substance abuse, mental health and finances. When participants have achieved an appropriate level of self-sufficiency, they are reviewed for graduation from the HUD-VASH program. These participants are then given regular vouchers so that the VASH vouchers can be used for other homeless veterans. To date, 15 veterans have graduated from the VASH program.