Making Public Housing Smoke-Free

Now in the last year of the Obama administration, various new initiatives are proposed, including a regulation requiring that all public housing become smoke-free within 18 months of a final rule being published. Several years ago, AMHA banned smoking in all common areas and more recently in four properties after they were renovated or newly constructed. The new rule, when effective (likely early 2018), will ban all smoking in common areas and the actual residential units. There is a great deal of work to do to inform residents of this change and to arrange necessary support services to help smokers who will not be permitted to smoke inside their apartment.

The Obama administration just submitted the president’s 2017 budget request to the Congress. As proposed, the budget extends the funding proration that has become common in the Obama era. The ability of local housing authorities to maintain the nation’s 1.4 million public housing units and to meet increasing demand for affordable housing is very much at risk. Initial response from the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives is that they plan no action to review the Obama budget request, so in this election year it appears likely that any budgetary action will be very late in the year.

In Summit County, the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority continues to operate at a high level of efficiency and the condition of the properties remain good by federal evaluation standards. Our main concern is that major repairs of public housing cannot be deferred forever, and the high costs of renovation and repairs increase each year. You can see from the chart below that demand far outpaces supply of housing. Supply and demand are substantially unbalanced in most markets due to the low level of new housing construction activity, and more and more people choosing to rent rather than buy.

Thank you for your continued interest and support of our work to serve more than 20,000 residents in Summit County.
A Merry Christmas

Christmas Day is an extra joyful day for the Matos/Jones family as they celebrate the birth of Christ by sharing the day to make others feel special.

The residents at the William Fowler building were invited to dinner, which included all of the holiday favorites. About 70 people were served and everyone in attendance received a Christmas present, sang Christmas carols and enjoyed the fellowship. This annual event is Matos/Jones family’s ministry, and this was their third year of serving others who have no family to share Christmas. Other AMHA employees who joined Teresa and George Matos and their families were Stefanie Foley and Jonathan Lindsay. Laurie Price and Jenny Bishop donated food to the event.

Generosity of Others

Congratulations to AMHA employees who raised $30,906 for the United Way of Summit County. Of that total, $29,006 was received in employee donations and $1,900 was raised through special events including Casual Dress Fridays and Cavs Day, a Chili Cook-off and the sale of SaveAround Coupon Books. Special kudos to the campaign coordination team led by Kathy Patton and Shari Page! (See photo on front.) Also serving on this creative and hard-working team were Jon Apati, Vivian Atkinson, Michelle Balentine, Kyra Brown, Cindy Hughes and Jonathan Lindsay.