



Neighbors Helping Neighbors | Community Partners in HUD's Region III Respond to Needs Created by Pandemic **#Inthistogether**

As communities combat the coronavirus outbreak, HUD is highlighting stories of communities coming together to help their neighbors in need.

Bladensburg, Maryland –Amid the coronavirus outbreak, the Housing Initiative Partnership's (HIP) Deputy Director Stephanie Proestel recruited a group of artistic teens to create a series of cheerful greeting cards to lift the spirits of the 78 seniors residing at Birchwood at Newton Green Apartments in Bladensburg, MD. She placed the colorful cards and messages of hope inside care packages left at their doors. In addition to the cards, the care packages were filled with canned goods, cleaning supplies, word puzzles and other items to uplift the spirits of the residents. *"Our HIP team continues to check in on the residents living in the affordable multifamily properties that we manage or provide resident services programs to. As you can imagine, many of our seniors are experiencing the isolation and loneliness of being shut-in away from family and friends,"* added HIP Executive Director Maryann Dillon. *"I hope the kindness shown by these high schoolers inspires you the way it has motivated our staff!"* [Read the full story on HUD.gov](https://www.hud.gov)



[Photos courtesy of Housing Initiative Partnership, Inc.](#)

Baltimore, Maryland – Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Joe DeFelice met virtually with President and CEO Ruth Ann Norton of Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHII) to discuss their long history in breaking the link between unhealthy housing and unhealthy families, focusing on their initiatives and response to COVID-19. *"We immediately started doing virtual home visits and virtual home assessments. The engagement has been higher and more*

focused,” said Norton, explaining how the GHHI team’s response to the pandemic will boost the effectiveness of their outreach when they resume in-person visits. [Learn more from about the #MidAtlanticMeetup in Maryland](#)



[Photo courtesy of HUD #MidAtlanticMeetup](#)

North Central West Virginia – Even during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Randolph County Housing Authority’s YouthBuild program is going strong, rebuilding communities in the North Central West Virginia counties of Randolph, Barbour, Tucker and Upshur. For nearly 25 years, the program has been offering job training, GED prep and more for low-income young people aged 16 to 24. As paid crew members for six to eight months, participants acquire invaluable hands-on work experience by building affordable housing and participating in leadership development activities. Crew members are hard at work, transforming their lives and communities. [Learn more from the Randolph County Housing Authority](#)



Photos courtesy of YouthBuild North Central.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Sam Santiago works around the clock tirelessly as a homeless outreach worker for Project HOME, a local nonprofit that receives funding through HUD’s

Continuum of Care program. In May, he was recognized as a WPVI-6 ABC “Hometown Hero.” His partners at HUD have also seen firsthand his dedication to Philadelphia’s most vulnerable citizens. Each January during the Point-in-Time Count, Sam guides Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Joe DeFelice through the annual survey of the city’s sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations. The entire Project HOME team has stepped up their efforts to respond to COVID-19. [Read the full story from WPVI-6ABC](#)



[Photo courtesy of WPVI-6ABC.](#)

Wilmington, Delaware – REACH Riverside has been helping Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) residents deal with the economic realities of reduced hours and job losses by creating the Riverside Relief Fund. The goal of the Fund is to provide \$250 grants in May, June and July for up to 300 WHA households. The funds enable families to buy what they need – diapers, prescription medications, cleaning products and clothing – items that can’t be purchased with other public subsidies. *“The opportunity to have partners and volunteers positively unite around a community to provide resources – which we can sometimes take for granted – can have a lasting impact,”* stated REACH Riverside CEO Logan Herring, Sr. *“To be able to provide nearly 200 Chromebooks to help close the digital divide and learning gaps as well as provide other resources is further enhanced when you see how grateful and appreciative the families are for this support. It makes every aspect of REACH Riverside’s work so worthwhile.”* [Read the full story from Delaware Public Media](#)



[Photo courtesy of Larry Nagengast, Delaware Public Media.](#)

Newport News, Virginia – For Karen Wilds, Executive Director of the Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the World Central Kitchen’s pandemic relief program has been vital in sending food to senior citizens most vulnerable to the coronavirus, so they don’t have to expose themselves to risk at restaurants and grocery stores. Local restaurants deliver 400 meals a day to four senior centers run by her organization – in part, via Cozzy’s Comedy Clubs’ 15-seat Fun Tours party bus, which now roves around Newport News delivering food to those in need. World Central Kitchen picks out the restaurants, Wilds said, and her organization helps connect the restaurants with the people who need the food. *“I’ve personally seen handwritten notes from our senior citizens who’ve written thanking them for their dedication,”* Wilds said. *“It brightens their day, especially for senior citizens who might have some limited mobility. They’re more worried [about the coronavirus] than anybody else, because of age issues.”* [**Read the full story from The Virginian-Pilot**](#)



[Photo courtesy of Newport News Redevelopment and Housing Authority](#)

Washington, D.C. – As the nation faces challenges and uncertainty due to COVID-19, the Horning Family stepped up by making a \$100,000 contribution to provide bags of food for residents in the District of Columbia's Wards 7 and 8. Partnering with a local nonprofit, Martha's Table, Horning's team personally joined in the effort by delivering bags of groceries to each of their HUD-assisted multifamily rental communities including Riverbend, Fort Stanton, Benning Woods, Stoneridge I and II, Carver Hill and Morris Road. *"There are so many dedicated people on the front lines of this health crisis working to save lives,"* the Horning Family said in a statement. *"We're just trying to do our part to ease the burden a bit and spread some kindness."* [Read the full story at HUD.gov](#)



[Photo courtesy of The Horning Family](#)

Richmond, Virginia - As the planning and coordinating organization for homeless services in the greater Richmond region, Homeward is grateful for the successful partnership between the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care, the City of Richmond, local faith communities and concerned citizens in the collaborative efforts to move people out of large encampments and into safe shelter during the COVID-19 pandemic. Large encampments are at high-risk of a COVID-19 outbreak and many people living outdoors are older and may have medically compromised immune systems. Recently, 376 people previously experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Richmond were successfully placed in hotels and emergency shelter beds to reduce these risks and to connect them with ongoing resources.

[Read the full story at HUD.gov](#)



[Photo by Nick Seitz courtesy of Homeward.](#)

Wilmington, Delaware – As Second Chances Farm founder Ajit George was preparing for the indoor vertical farm’s first harvest, 90 percent of which was going to local restaurants, the COVID-19 State of Emergency hit Delaware and ended on-site dining. After months of methodical, detailed planning, the perishable harvest – farmed almost exclusively by formerly incarcerated individuals – had almost nowhere to go. But within days, the operation turned to farm-to-table service delivering fresh greens and herbs grown in a highly sterilized environment with strict food safety measures directly to customers’ doors. The remaining 10 percent of the harvest is feeding low-income families in one of Wilmington’s Opportunity Zones. As for the employees, *“Everybody is full-time busy,”* George said. *“We’re not only doing a service to the community, but we’re also keeping our returning citizens fully occupied and paid. For them, they would be in deep trouble if they got laid off because the opportunity to get paid by anyone else would be very low.”* [Read the full story from Technical.ly Delaware](#)



[Photo courtesy of Second Chances Farm](#)

#MidAtlanticMeetup Across the Region – During the height of the coronavirus outbreak, HUD’s Mid-Atlantic team launched a virtual meeting series called #MidAtlanticMeetup to connect with a wide range of stakeholders and partners. Traveling virtually throughout the region each week, Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Joe DeFelice led the discussions, focusing on their work, successes, and challenges in the COVID-19 environment. Watch the conversations to learn how local leaders are helping vulnerable citizens in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and West Virginia. [Learn more by visiting the HUD Mid-Atlantic YouTube Playlist](#)



[Photo courtesy of HUD #MidAtlanticMeetup.](#)

To find HUD resources related to the coronavirus, visit
www.hud.gov/coronavirus.

Read more stories of [#NeighborsHelpingNeighbors](#) by following [@HUDgov](#)
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