



August 28, 2020



Foster Youth to Independence Initiative Announced in Wicomico County

Today, I joined Wicomico County Housing Authority Executive Director Don Bibb and local partners to announce a special new initiative, the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative, targeting vulnerable young adults who have aged-out of the foster care system. This is the first award of vouchers in Maryland and Wicomico County's first FYI voucher is unique in that it not only involved a partnership among many agencies and nonprofits, but between two Eastern Shore counties, Wicomico and Somerset. That says a lot about those involved in assisting youth who are exiting foster care—they understand the importance housing plays in getting a good start in life.

Today's announcement included a "big check" for \$7,786. What is important about this announcement is not the money, it's that the funding will provide housing assistance for one individual who is aging out of foster care and is at risk of experiencing homelessness. Amber Bass, Maryland's first FYI voucher recipient, told those on-hand for the event just how having secure housing will help her in so many ways.

Ruth Anne White, Executive Director of the National Center for Housing and Child Welfare (NCHCW), participated in the announcement and was actively involved in helping create Wicomico's initiative. She was on hand when a group of former foster youth met with Secretary Carson to present a proposal for what was to become the Foster to Youth Independence initiative four months later. Since July 2019, HUD has awarded more than \$5.4 million and 677 vouchers nationwide to assist young adults.

HUD's FYI Initiative relies on a partnership between an eligible local public housing authority and child welfare agency. Together, the agencies may identify young people in need of safe, affordable housing as well as resources to help them reach self-sufficiency by working toward their education and employment goals.

Pictured left to right: Kathi Thompson, Don Bibb, Carlene Phoenix, Amber Bell, Dewane Williams, Joe DeFelice, Ruth Anne White, Lateshia Jackson, Amanda Clark, Lori Engle and Mark Thompson. Photo courtesy of Kelly Powers.



IN THE NEWS: Mr. George Goes to Washington

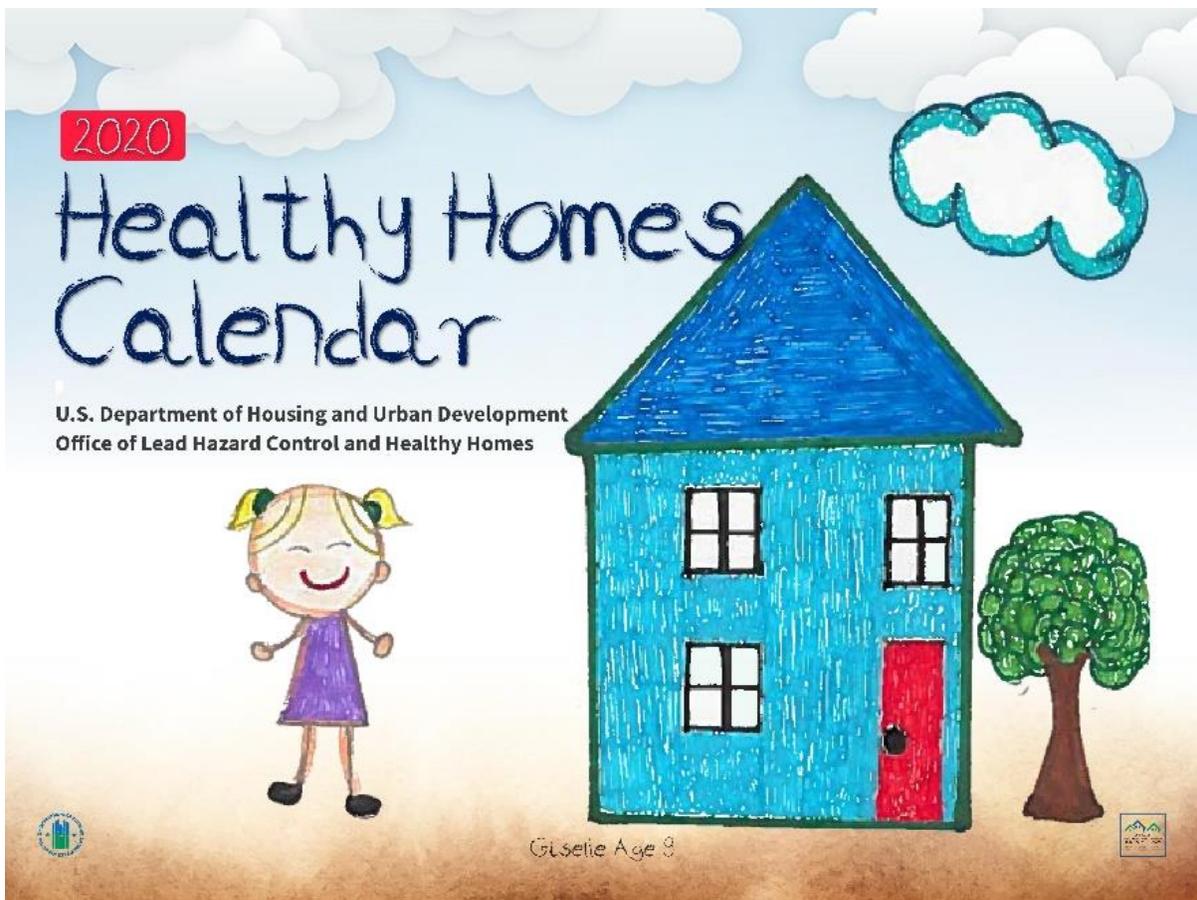
As many of you know, I have heavily promoted the benefits of the Opportunity Zones throughout the Mid-Atlantic which is why I was not surprised to hear that Ajit George, founder of Second Chances Farm in Wilmington, Del., had received an invitation to join Secretary Ben Carson, White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council Executive Scott Turner for a briefing at the White House. Turns out, the event was to unveil a study by the White House Council of Economic Advisers estimating that \$75 billion has been raised by funds set up to invest in the zones—money that would likely have been directed elsewhere without the breaks according to an article in the [Washington Examiner](#). What makes me so proud is that three out of the four concerns invited to represent the more than 9,000 Opportunity Zones nationwide, are our partners here in Region III. In addition to Mr. George, the event highlighted the work of John Persinger and Matt Wachter (pictured below) of Erie Downtown Development Corporation and The Flagship Opportunity Zone in Erie, Pa. and Susan Springsteen of H2O Connected LLC in Coatesville, Pa. Be sure to check out their stories in the [Daily Caller video](#) recorded at the conclusion of the event. Special thanks to Secretary Carson and Director Turner for recognizing their strong work.

Pictured above from left to right: Dave Martin from Intwine Connect, Chagrin Falls, Oh., Rick Stockburger from Brite Energy Innovators in Akron, Oh., Ajit George, Secretary Carson, Susan Springsteen and Scott Turner.



On the Road with Secretary Carson in Harrisburg, Pa.

Last week, I joined Secretary Carson, Congressmen Scott Perry and Congressman Fred Keller in Harrisburg, Pa., in a roundtable discussion with federal and state officials about how the private sector and government can work more closely together to address affordable housing issues. Secretary Carson explained how a brand-new rule, called Preserving Community and Neighborhood Choice, ensures communities promote housing that is affordable, safe and free from discrimination without burdening local communities with red tape. Department of Agriculture Pennsylvania State Director Curt Coccodrilli and City of New Castle Mayor Chris Frye and I had a few minutes to catch up after the roundtable concluded.



Picture Your Picture Here! Calling All Young Artists!

HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes is looking for artists around the country to participate in **the 2021 Healthy Homes Calendar**. The calendar will be a [12-month calendar](#) highlighting the "8 Principles to a Healthy Home." We invite children grades Kindergarten through Grade 6 to complete and submit a drawing or picture following one of the eight principles of a healthy home—essentially—what does a healthy home mean to them. The calendar is designed to highlight the principles and allow young people to learn and to be aware of these potential hazards in their homes, year-round. For more information and how to enter, please email Keara O'Connor at keara.a.oconnor@hud.gov. This year's deadline is September 30, 2020. So, help us get the word out now!

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY: This week, HUD announced a **Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Fiscal Year 2020 Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants**. With this publication, HUD is making available up to \$182,000,000 for Implementation Grants. Posted on www.grants.gov, applications are due on December 16, 2020. Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants support the implementation of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization plans that are expected to replace distressed public and assisted housing with high-quality mixed-income housing that is well-managed and responsive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhood; improve outcomes of households living in the target housing related to employment and income, health, and children's education, and create the conditions necessary for public and private reinvestment in distressed neighborhoods to offer the kinds of amenities and assets, including safety, good schools, and commercial activity, that are important to families' choices about their community. Since 2010, six \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants have been awarded in Region III including Baltimore, Maryland, Newport News and Norfolk in Virginia and in Philadelphia (2 awards) and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **That's a total of \$180 million invested in improving communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic.**

I look forward to the time when we can be together again, and I can thank each one of you personally. We will get through this difficult time together.

Stay safe, stay sane and be well.



Joe DeFelice, Region III Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Region III Recap, August 28, 2020

Region III Recap & HUDLines, HUD's Region III e-News Brief

We welcome your feedback and invite you to share your news with Lisa A. Wolfe at lisa.a.wolfe@hud.gov. If you know anyone who would like to receive our new Region III Recap or our quarterly HUDLines, please feel free to share. We safeguard and do not rent, sell or permit the use of our lists. To subscribe, visit [HUDLines](#). You may also [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

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