

Patrick Bennett



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Housing Tacoma Forward

75 Years of Service: 1940 – 2015



A modern-day bird's eye-view of the old Northern Pacific building, old City Hall and downtown Tacoma.



Looking north on Broadway in Tacoma (circa 1940)

TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF SERVICE



By Michael Mirra

Executive Director, Tacoma Housing Authority

In 2015, the Tacoma Housing Authority marked its 75th birthday. Seventy-five years ago, on August 16, 1940, the City Council of Tacoma passed resolution 11049 establishing the “Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma” (THA). That resolution declared “[t]here is a shortage of safe and sanitary dwelling accommodations in the City of Tacoma, Washington available to persons of low income at rentals that they can afford.”

Seventy-one years later, in 2011, the City Council, by resolution 38264, declared that “[t]he City’s welfare requires an adequate supply of well-built and well-managed affordable housing serving the full range of incomes appearing among its residents.” The Council did that in response to a report it commissioned finding that the City faces “an affordable

housing crisis.” In between those dates, the details of the work have changed. Financing has grown more complicated. The City’s needs and that of its residents have altered in complexity and complexion. Yet the basic challenge remains the same – to meet the housing needs of our City’s low-income residents. THA’s 75th birthday is a good chance to consider how THA understands this work and what it takes to do it.

THA’s main job is to provide high-quality housing to residents of Tacoma in need, with a focus on the neediest. THA does this in three main ways. **First**, THA builds, buys and rebuilds housing that it then rents to households who need an affordable and safe home. It serves about 1,300 households that way. **Second**, THA helps other organizations develop and

finance their housing to serve low-income residents. **Third**, THA helps another 3,700 households pay the rent on housing they lease from private landlords.

All that is hard work, especially when funding is inadequate or uncertain. Yet that work is not the harder part of THA’s job. The world knows how to do that work, when it tries. The world knows how to build housing. It knows how to rebuild it. It knows how to manage and rent it. The world knows how to design and run rental-assistance programs.

The world does not know nearly as much about the next part of THA’s job. This next part seeks to spend a housing dollar, not only to house people, but also to get two other things done. **First**, if they are capable of working, we seek to help them prosper. THA helps people succeed not just as tenants but also as “parents, students, wage earners and builders of assets.” We want their time with us to be transforming in these ways, and temporary. We want this certainly for parents, but emphatically for the children,

because we do not wish them to need our housing when they grow up.

Second, we help our City prosper, equitably. We try to make neighborhoods attractive places to “live, work, attend school, shop and play” and to help our city be a place that low-income households experience that is “safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.”

The world does not quite know how to do these parts of our work. THA and its many partners try to find it out. When it works it is a very good use of a housing dollar.

Understood this way, this work puts us face to face with age-old questions about poverty, the effect of place and neighborhood on a family’s prospects to escape it, and how a housing dollar can make it happen. This entangles us in questions of economic justice, racial justice, individual responsibility, community development and the appropriate role of government. We and our partners see these questions up close, and that makes this work challenging. Sometimes we see the answers, and that

I am in desperate need of help. I am a single mother of five kids. I had problems paying my rent on the first of the month and was thrown out of the house we were renting. I believe it was because I complained about the floor being rotted away and the mold growing in the closets that he did not disclose to me prior to signing the lease. We are now homeless and I have no money to pay a first, last and deposit on a new place. Is there any way you can help or send me in the right direction to get help?
— C. [email to THA, November 11, 2010]

makes this work meaningful.

THA is a board of five community volunteers appointed by our mayor. The Board directs THA’s strategic choices. It is the repository for THA’s values. THA is also a staff of about 120 people. They include our real estate development staff of project managers, tax credit and financial

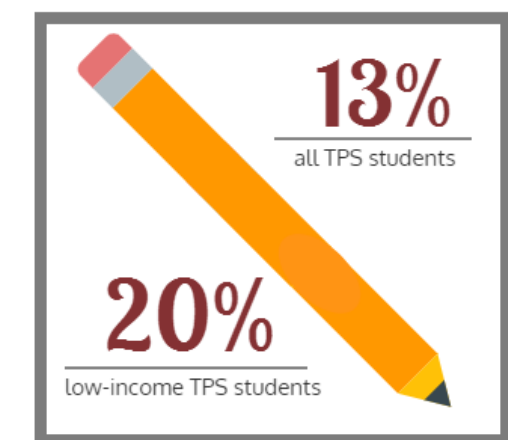
Hello, my name is M. I have just been notified that I was selected to be added to the HOP wait list. I would like to extend my thanks, appreciation and gratefulness to this good news. I do understand there is still a possibility that I may not receive a voucher when my number comes up, but all I can do is keep it in prayer and hope that my family and I are eligible. Meanwhile, I am still trying to make a stronger and more stable future for my family by furthering my education and hopefully find work. Again, thank you for the notification, as well as the opportunity to give my son a good home.
— M. [email to THA, July 16, 2013]

experts, and construction managers. Their job is to develop, build, buy and rebuild properties so they are well-built, sustainable and attractive. THA’s staff includes maintenance specialists who keep our properties in good shape. It includes property managers and leasing and occupancy specialists who manage a long wait list, screen applicants, verify income and eligibility, turn and lease units, collect rent, enforce the rules and do the hundreds of things it takes to manage a large and varied portfolio — many of whose residents come to us from very challenging circumstances. Other staff manages THA’s rental assistance programs, in partnership with thousands of local landlords. THA’s community service staff of caseworkers helps seniors and disabled persons live independently. They help families stabilize after coming to us from homelessness or domestic violence. And they help people succeed. THA also includes finance staff, accounting specialists, asset managers, risk managers, compliance officers, IT

wizards, data and policy analysts, program planners, procurement specialists, human resource experts, and clerks. Perhaps most poignantly of all, THA includes receptionists who politely and respectfully welcome needy people who come seeking help that for the most part we cannot give because our housing is full.
The work of all THA staff is governed by numerous and exquisitely detailed rules and obligations from governmental partners, funders, lenders, investors, and auditors — as well as important, if less precise, expectations from our community. And they do it in five languages.

In this book, you will hear from some of the people we helped and some we turned away. You will also hear from some of our partners. THA does not do this work alone. It takes many people who share THA’s mission and its stake in the health of our City: elected local, state and national leaders, their hardworking staff, public and private funders, lenders and investors, foundation and public program

Of students attending Tacoma Public Schools, THA serves...



officers, architects, planners, builders, suppliers, construction workers, financial advisors, auditors, attorneys, grant writers, other housers, advocates, service partners, journalists, school district staff, police officers, community groups, unions and neighborhood organizations. They made the first 75 years of this work possible. With their help, we look forward to the next 75 years. 🇺🇸



“Maybe you don’t like people from Patagonia or anybody who plays the ocarina. Friend, our advice is to smile good morning and forget about Patagonia. We’d hate to see any of our residents get taken in by the ideas of a demented European paperhanger and his two-bit propagandists in this country. A thing we all like about the United States is that this country is big enough for all races, all creeds. We want to keep our housing communities that big, too.”
— Excerpted from “Short Cuts”, a THA Salishan renter’s guide from 1945

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: CORPORATION FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT



By Andrea Levere, President

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) places their delivery of affordable housing within an ambitious and effective strategy that builds the resiliency of the surrounding community and its institutions, as it aligns programs and services to help its residents prosper in a meaningful way. This commitment to social justice and holistic development enables people to be “builders of assets” on their journey to financial security and economic

opportunity. One of THA’s newest initiatives in this strategy is the launch of Children’s Savings Accounts (CSA) program for the children of Salishan. THA undertakes this work in close partnership with Tacoma Public Schools and the elementary schools, middle school and high school that serve Salishan.

CSAs are matched savings accounts that start as early as birth and are designed to build savings and aspirations for low-income children to both attend and graduate from a post-secondary educational institution. Paired with age-appropriate financial education, research has shown that children with a savings account in their own name are three times more likely to attend college, and four times more likely to graduate from college, when compared to children without an account. In addition, knowing that “parents will do for their children what they won’t do for themselves,” CSA programs have demonstrated many benefits for parents and caregivers, by encouraging them to open a mainstream bank account and begin to build their own financial capability.

THA is the first public housing authority in the nation to operate CSA programs. Students at Salishan’s Lister Elementary School will get a savings account starting in kindergarten and receive a match for what they save through the fifth grade. Older students will enroll in the First Creek Middle School Scholar Incentive Program in the 6th grade and earn financial incentives through their high school graduation when they achieve critical milestones, such as taking the SAT or maintaining strong attendance records. In addition, these programs are designed to build upon THA’s existing initiatives, such as its Education Project and its College Bound Scholarship Enrollment Project. Both programs provide low-income students with funds for tuition at in-state public colleges as a means to enhance their chance for academic success.

My organization, the Corporation for Enterprise Development, is honored to have partnered with THA during the design of these programs, and we look forward to supporting the implementation and assessment of their impact. THA should celebrate its 75th anniversary with the confidence that it is setting the standard for effectiveness and impact for housing authorities that aim to “reinvent the meaning of home” in ways that bring economic and social justice to its residents and the communities that surround it.

Hello, my name is S. I'm 19 and my boyfriend's name is D also 19. We have a baby on the way with no income and we are going to be homeless in the next two days. I've never had any help like this except food stamps. We need help. We are both looking for work but are having a hard time. If you could please call us with more info about getting us help that would be greatly appreciated. Thank you! Are you accepting names to your waiting list?

— S. [email to THA, July 8, 2014]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: KEN MILLER, FORMER THA COMMISSIONER



In 1970 I was a community organizer in Salishan. The people I was supposed to organize shared their stories, like, “only the left rear burner works.” *You have a right to four working burners*, I’d say, indignant. “The office staff is rude,” they’d say. *You have a right to courteous treatment!* “The neighbors fight all night and wake the kids. The swing set is broken. The

trash overflows ...” I’d urge them to stand up and band together, while they made me coffee with a scoop of instant and hot water so as to preserve the left rear burner.

I remember those people. They were so courteous. They looked at me and smiled and nodded like I was harmless, a fool, inviting them to an imaginary world. Years later, I visited my Aunt Trudy in Brooklyn at her high-rise project. We went shopping. She collected a quart of milk, bread and peanut butter; and at the register she fumbled in her purse long enough for me to take the hint and pay.

Trudy’s building was one of several right next to each other, so I figured a couple of thousand people lived on the block. We hiked up six flights because the elevator was often broken, Trudy said. The technical term for Trudy’s floor plan is “efficiency unit.” This means every cubic inch is used. The stovetop had two burners, not four, but they both worked. The kitchen window looked out on a window in the neighboring building. Trudy wasn’t such a great housekeeper to begin with, but the walls were greasy; the linoleum was chipped; the sink was rust-stained. Coming upstairs, I smelled thousands of old meals. The noise was constant — hall talk; neighbors’ TVs; traffic in the street.

Trudy lived on Social Security and, for four years, mistakenly collected her late husband’s benefits, as well. Then the auditors showed her the mistake, and money was tight. Trudy wasn’t moving.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world would consider Trudy’s apartment more than adequate. Way more. I get that, in my head. But in my gut, this place was wrong. It was soul-killing. It was

like the New York Housing Authority featured Trudy in an ad campaign, and the slogan was “At Least She’s Not Homeless.”

In recent years, I’ve talked with housing officials around the country. You hear strange things, like the town where one public housing building has white people and another building has black people. Easier for everybody, the guy said. Or the housing authority waiting for a court order before fixing its mold problem. A voluntary fix would set a dangerous precedent: Everybody would expect their problems resolved. Then I come home. I don’t live in public housing, but I’ve been around the block. I’ve seen the data on fixing stoves with broken burners, and how courteously the staff treats residents — from the residents’ point of view. THA isn’t perfect, but it’s different from Salishan in 1970 or Trudy’s high-rise.

The organizing principle is different here. THA distributes vouchers and pours concrete, but everything’s built on a bedrock of respect. If my aunt were in a THA ad campaign, the slogan would be “We Believe in Trudy.” Her little accounting problem with Social Security might be an obstacle to getting a voucher or a housing unit. But Trudy — and millions of other people — would do anything to be part of THA. Imagine: to be respected; to have hope. Public housing. CPR for the soul.

Editor’s Note: *Ken Miller’s first home was in public housing in Canarsie, Brooklyn. He’s a former THA commissioner and consults with housing authorities across the U.S.*

I am a homeless single mom of a 17 year old. For 9 months we have bounced from home to home. I am having a hard time finding housing with my limited income. My income is disability and some child support. We would like Tacoma area, because my son goes to Lincoln HS. Can you help us find housing please?

— J. [email to THA, April 8, 2015]

Affordable Housing Policy Principles

Req. #12934

May 17, 2011



RESOLUTION NO. 38264

BY REQUEST OF DEPUTY MAYOR WALKER AND COUNCIL MEMBERS FEY, LONERGAN, AND MANTHOU

A RESOLUTION relating to affordable housing; authorizing the adoption of the Affordable Housing Policy Principles.

By Resolution 38264, on May 17, 2011, the Tacoma City Council adopted the following principles for the City for planning and policy purposes:

“WHEREAS ...

A. The City’s welfare requires an adequate supply of well-built and well-managed affordable housing serving the full range of incomes appearing among its residents. An adequate supply of this housing is vital to the following important civic needs and values:

- The City’s prosperity, economic development, and growth of employment opportunities
- The appropriate management of the City’s projected population growth and transportation needs
- The City’s fulfillment of its legal obligations under the Growth Management Act to make “adequate provisions for existing and projected (housing) needs of all economic segments of the community” and to

comply with the related directives of the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies

- The survival of green spaces throughout the City and Pierce County
- The success of the City’s schools
- The effectiveness of the City’s emergency services
- The City’s ability to continue its accommodation of a population that is increasingly diverse by income, race, ethnicity, ability, disability and age
- The City’s ability to accommodate a population that, in the aggregate, is getting older
- The City’s values of social justice.

B. Affordable housing developments by nonprofit developers, public and private, in the City, region and nation have been among the most attractively designed, most environmentally innovative and best managed in the market place.

C. Nonprofit developments of affordable housing will never likely be adequate to meet the City’s needs. The City also needs a companion strategy to enlist the engine of private market rate developments to include a measure of affordable units. These strategies also provide the added benefit of economic and demographic integration.

D. Affordable housing developments have spurred the revitalization of neighborhoods, encouraging both public and private investment, helping the City attain its desired density, and furthering a neighborhood’s economic development.

E. Affordable housing is an asset to be encouraged and not a detriment to be tolerated and controlled.

F. The City should promote the development of affordable housing in every city neighborhood.

G. In seeking the appropriate balance, the City should not have to compromise important neighborhood design standards in order to promote affordable housing. Instead, proper design should allow affordable housing to show the way for all developments servicing all incomes toward a greener, more sustainable urban future that accommodates the appropriate density that the City’s planning documents anticipate to be necessary for the City’s projected population allocations.

H. In a complex community like Tacoma, interests and policies often clash. Good governance is the effort to balance them appropriately. In doing so, the City should give a very high priority to the promotion of affordable housing development ...

WHEREAS the City Council wishes to include consideration of these policy principles in future updates to the city’s Comprehensive Plan, Consolidated Plan, and Human Services Strategic Plan; Now, therefore,



A bird’s eye-view of the University of Washington campus in downtown Tacoma.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TACOMA:

Section 1. That the City Council hereby adopts the policy principles set out in recommendation 3.1 of the Affordable Housing Policy Advisory Group Final Report, received on December 3, 2010.

Section 2. That the City Council requests the Planning Commission, the Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority, the Human Services Commission, and other appropriate city bodies to incorporate the policy principles into the city’s Comprehensive Plan, Consolidated Plan, the Human Services Strategic Plan, and other appropriate policy documents.

Section 3. That the City Manager is directed to make available staff from the Tacoma Community and Economic Development Department, the Human Rights and Human Services Department, and other General Government Departments, as may be necessary, to assist the appropriate boards and commissions in the incorporation of these policy principles.”



IN THEIR OWN WORDS: PARAMETRIX

By Cameron Teller, Division Manager, Project Delivery and Administration

I want to congratulate THA and its staff on 75 years of successful operation! A few years ago, I worked for Parametrix, an engineering and environmental consultant for THA's Salishan HOPE VI Redevelopment project.

During the course of the project, I was privileged to see THA staff's commitment to creating a new neighborhood that was beautiful, comfortable and functioned well for its residents. I can honestly say I haven't worked on another project in my 30-

year career that has made me more proud to be a consultant. Engineers, planners and environmental scientists strive to make their communities better places to live, and the Salishan project gave us the opportunity to do that on a large scale, in a team with extremely talented professionals from several organizations. THA had the vision, the skill and the drive to bring those organizations together in support of a common goal. THA staff at all levels were a pleasure to work with on the project, and some have become close, personal friends.

Every time I drive through the Salishan neighborhood, I feel a sense of renewed enthusiasm for what a strong agency such as THA can accomplish for its community. My heartfelt congratulations to all at THA, and my best wishes for the great things I know you'll continue to accomplish in the future!

My name is M. and I have a family of four and a baby on the way. I am currently at my mother's house and there is no room for my boyfriend, kids and I in the house. We got evicted out of our apartment and need a stable place to live. We both lost our jobs and are looking and placing applications on a daily basis. We have basic food stamps and WIC that helps us with food. Please give me a call back at (253) XXX-XXXX or you can email me back at XXX.

— M. [email to THA, September 13, 2011]

My wife and I are both disabled and she is 64 and will be 65 in May 2016. I am 58 and will be 59 in March of 2016. We currently live in our own home for the past 23 years and we have been served with Trustee sale papers. Sale is due to be in June of 2016. Our home is a 1978 mobile home that we can not get funding for due to the age of the mobile. We are needing to find affordable housing hopefully in the Pierce County area due to my wife's doctors and appointments she needs to continue going to. Here are my questions:

1) Is there state or federal funding that can help us?

2) Is there any housing available in the [Tacoma] area close to her doctors?

Otherwise I fear we will be homeless and unable to continue her treatments.

We also are raising the last one of three grandchildren after our daughter passed away in 2002. Please advise.

— B. [email to THA, February 23, 2016]



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

House of Representatives

RECOGNIZING THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF THE TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

THE HONORABLE DEREK KILMER

OF WASHINGTON STATE

“Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 75th Anniversary of the Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) and their steadfast efforts to provide high-quality, safe, and sustainable housing and supportive services to the citizens of the Puget Sound region.

THA got its start in 1940, focusing on addressing a housing shortfall in the City of Tacoma, Washington. Those needs only became more urgent as the nation entered into World War II, causing thousands of servicemembers and their families to move to the region to join the wartime effort at Fort Lewis and McChord Air Base.

One of the larger projects from that era was Salishan, the first racially integrated housing development in the city. After years of inadequate maintenance, however, in the late 90s, Salishan was in desperate need of a major overhaul.

With support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, THA has recently rebuilt the entire community, boasting new infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, and critically important community and education services.

Mr. Speaker, the Salishan re-development is just one shining example of THA's tireless and dedicated work to make the historic housing complex a new and vibrant place to call home. THA's Board and its Director, Michael Mirra, are truly dedicated to serving their community.

I recently had the honor to speak at the opening of Bay Terrace, another historic housing complex in downtown Tacoma that has been brought up to 21st century standards by THA with community and federal partners. I was struck by the amazing support that came with the opening — hundreds of people from the community joined the celebration. You could see just how much of a difference it made to them that they could now call Bay Terrace their home.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored and humbled to be able to recognize the history and achievements of the Tacoma Housing Authority on their 75th Anniversary today in the United States Congress.”

— Derek Kilmer is a U.S. Representative for Washington State's 6th Congressional District.



EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS THROUGH HOUSING



By Marilyn Strickland
Mayor, City of Tacoma

Throughout their first 75 years in existence, Tacoma Housing Authority has improved lives. Not only have they provided roofs over people's heads, they also have worked to stabilize communities so families can be safe, vibrant, prosperous and live in a just world. THA lives their values every day, helping families succeed where they live, work, play and attend school. On behalf of the 200,000 residents who live in Tacoma, I want to give a heartfelt thanks to THA for being such an asset to our city.

I would like to highlight two THA initiatives that have received national attention: the redevelopment of Salishan and the McCarver Elementary School Special Housing Program.

The revitalization and rebuilding of Salishan is a great example of how THA develops housing that beautifies Tacoma.

Families cannot flourish and do not feel respected when they live in substandard housing. THA did the hard work to transition Salishan into a diverse, thriving neighborhood where residents feel welcome and have a strong sense of community. THA's building and landscape design moved Salishan away from dated, low-rise military-style housing, to the dense mixed-income area we see today, with bus routes going through the neighborhood and a new farmers market. There is also an easily accessible health care clinic nearby to serve the neighborhood. THA knows that providing people with roofs over their heads is just one part of addressing housing needs. They understand the importance of steadying families and providing opportunities for people to live up to their full potential. The current and planned amenities in New Salishan do just that and include home design that has

McCarver Elementary School in the Hilltop Neighborhood of Tacoma.
Inset: Senator Patty Murray (middle) poses with Counselor Carol Ramm-Gramenz "RG" (left), Assistant Principal Michael Knuckles (right) and children of McCarver Elementary.

won national awards for sustainability and environmental stewardship.

THA’s work goes far beyond beautifying neighborhoods and providing services. They also prepare our youngest residents for the future through THA’s Education Project. When I took office in 2010, I challenged our city to make education a civic priority and view the responsibility as one we all share with our schools. THA rose to the challenge and delivered.

The Education Project has two primary purposes: to help low-income students succeed in school, and to help schools with high numbers of low-income students succeed. A third-party organization tracks measurable outcomes to ensure that student performance improves and benefits both families and schools.

The McCarver Elementary School’s Special Housing Program has received national attention for its groundbreaking

approach to helping young students succeed. It addresses family mobility, which shows that young students who move around often, or those who have housing insecurity, don’t perform as well as their peers who live in stable housing. THA reached out to 50 homeless families with children attending McCarver Elementary School and offered to help pay their rent, with payment rates tapering down over five years. This stability is vital to



THA staffperson Carlena Allen supervises students participating in McCarver Elementary’s Read2Me program, which pairs them with an adult tutor for 45 minutes a week. The main goal is for every child in the Read2Me program to read at or above their grade level by end of third grade.

the students’ education, and to the dynamic in the classrooms and neighborhood. Students can’t learn if their teachers and surroundings are constantly changing. In addition, participating parents are encouraged to play an active role in their children’s education, and to invest in their own education, as well. THA has stationed caseworkers at McCarver to help ensure that families in this program are able to succeed. This program revolutionizes the role of a housing authority in a community, taking it from a place of only providing shelter to one that invests in communities, neighborhoods and schools, one family at a time. In the first three years of the program, many families have seen test scores and income rise, and classroom turnover rates have fallen by nearly 35 percent.

I am proud to be the mayor of a city with an innovative and progressive housing authority that thinks big and is willing to develop programmatic and infrastructure investments to better the lives of its residents beyond the basic provision of housing. I want to congratulate the THA board, employees and executive director on 75 successful years of serving our community. I look forward to working with them well into the future as we continue to make Tacoma a place all of our residents feel welcome, because they have a place they can call home. 🇺🇸

My name is S. I am homeless due to a domestic violence situation. I have a protection order for my 7-month-old daughter and myself. I don’t have a lot of time on the computer. My phone number is (XXX) XXX-XXXX. Please contact me if you can help. Thank you.

— S. [email to THA, May 26, 2011]



New Salishan Phase 3 Ribbon Cutting in 2010. Left to right: Tacoma City Councilmember Marty Campbell; Tacoma Mayor Marilyn Strickland; former Tacoma Mayor Bill Baarsma; THA Commissioner Janis Flauding; and Bill Reid, Walsh Construction.

To whom this may concern, I am sending this in regards to the program that my grandchildren are attending at McCarver. They have been in the program for two years and I have seen a great improvement in their grades and their ability to learn so much and the counselors are great! My son has come a long way also. He has and is still learning different ideas for his girls. My sole thank you’s go out to all the teachers and social workers that take time an effort to make this program work. The real people that are the backbone of this program are in the housing area. They have patience for what they do on a daily basis.

I would love to see this program in every school. People have problems in all areas of the state and this program is beneficial for anyone who is alone or just needs a steady daily life with help. I just wanted to let you know and please continue this program for the next generation. Thank you!

— W. [email to THA, September 27, 2013]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: PIERCE COUNTY COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



By Hellen Howell, Director

Congratulations, Tacoma Housing Authority, for 75 years of service to the community. We at Pierce County Community Connections appreciate THA's deep commitment to serving the most vulnerable families and individuals. Over the years, THA has served as a safety net for low-income seniors, families and individuals — ensuring that housing is available to those who need it most.

During its long history, THA has shown innovation in stretching its precious federal dollars to serve as many people in need as possible. The redevelopment of the Salishan public housing community is an excellent example of this. THA invested federal HOPE VI dollars and leveraged millions of state, local and private funds to redevelop Salishan into a beautiful mixed-income, mixed-use community that is now a catalyst for the revitalization of Tacoma's east side.

Recently, THA has shown leadership in addressing the crisis of homelessness in Pierce County. A few examples include:

- THA has committed to investing \$5.7 million over a five-year period to help families and young adults experiencing homelessness regain permanent housing. Community

My name is L. I am attempting to find out if there are openings on the list for Section 8 housing. I am currently 7 months pregnant and homeless. I am staying with friends at this time but would really like to secure a permanent residence before my daughter is born. If you have any information please contact me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX!

— L. [email to THA, March 26, 2015]

Connections matches this rental support with funding for supportive services, and, over that five-year period, expects to assist more than 1,000 families and about 280 young adults end their crisis of homelessness.

- THA has partnered with LASA, a local nonprofit agency dedicated to addressing homelessness. THA and LASA have developed Prairie Oaks, a 15-unit housing project in Lakewood that will provide permanent supportive housing for families where a member of the household has a disability. This ensures that these families will have permanent, affordable housing, and access to the services they need, when they need them.
- THA is integral to the success of the new Nativity House, which combines an overnight shelter, a day center, and 50 units of permanent supportive housing in an attractive, new building on South Yakima Avenue in Tacoma. THA has made housing vouchers available to support the housing and allowed Nativity House to benefit from greater flexibility in tenant selection to truly serve those people most in need of this important housing resource.
- The Tacoma Public School District and THA have partnered to address homelessness and poverty among families with children enrolled at McCarver Elementary School. The pilot program is designed to help stabilize families by providing housing vouchers to 50 homeless families with children enrolled at McCarver. Families have access to supportive services and commit to keeping their children at McCarver.

Community Connections invests in all of the programs listed above, and counts THA as one of its most important partners in our mutual goal of making homelessness rare, brief and one time. We look forward to the next 75 years of working together.

Editor's note: As of 2016, Helen is the Executive Director of Building Changes, a housing advocacy group in Seattle, Wash.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: TODD CRAVEN, DIRECTOR OF THA ADMINISTRATION



I started working for Tacoma Housing Authority in 2007. When I started, I hardly knew what a housing authority was or what it did. As I learned about THA, the closest comparison I could come up with were the social housing projects I had learned about as a teen while visiting my brother who lived in the Netherlands. I was familiar with nonprofit housing programs, and my family supported Catholic Community

Services, local shelters and food banks. But for some reason, domestic, government-run social housing programs were an enigma to me. I knew they existed, but I gave them little thought other than a naïve notion that this was not work fit for the government. My idea of government work and government workers was biased, and I had strong stereotypes that caused me to question whether I wanted to join in. However, all it took to convince me that it really is possible for government to do good work, to care for those it serves, and to carry out its work efficiently and thoughtfully, was a tour of THA's properties within my first week of employment and my onboarding meeting with the executive director.

That tour and that meeting ignited a passion within me that is still alive today. At THA, I found a group of people willing to work hard and smart for a cause that they truly believe in. I found a group of visionary leaders willing to make tough choices about how they set policies and how they approach their work. As we grew as a housing authority, I witnessed the birth of an internal think tank that has fueled innovation and brought an energy I never thought I would see in a government agency.

Another thing I found at THA was a group of people as idealistic as myself about social justice issues, believing there is enough food to feed the hungry and enough beds for the world to sleep at night. While this was something I always believed intuitively — contrary to what I saw in the world around me — I never had the opportunity to be a part of the solution until I came to THA.

THA changed my perspective of what is possible within the framework of a federally funded agency. It is cool and hip to work here and be a part of this work — and that blows away the stereotypes about government work. And the really cool thing is that THA is not alone. A contingent of housing authorities exists across the country with similar mentalities and goals. I like to think THA is the coolest of them all, but it is great to see this innovation spread far beyond Tacoma. It is also great to see innovation being used to serve our clients.

I am very proud to be a part of THA and this great work. In the years to come, I look forward to what we will do with our gifts and our ideas.

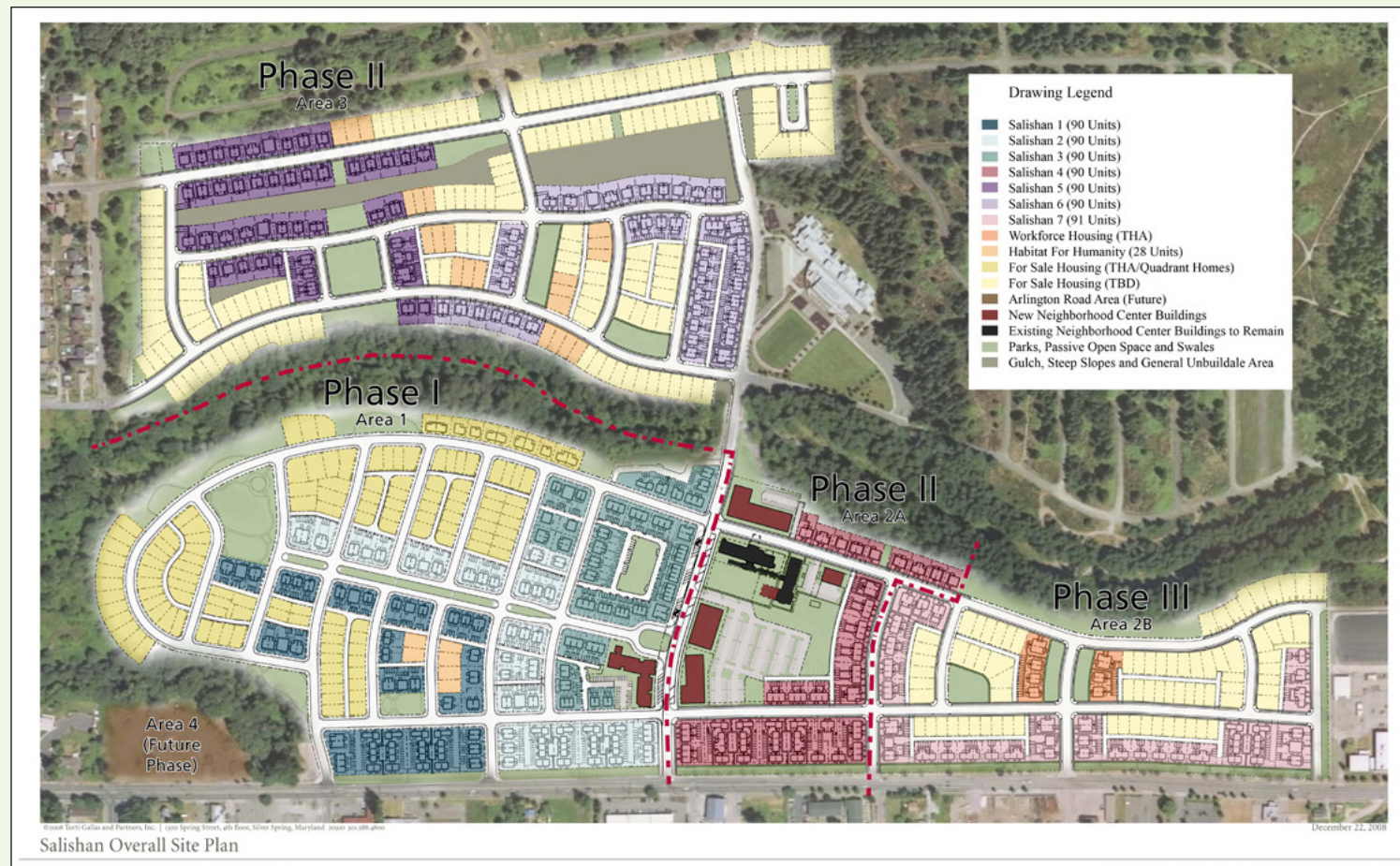
Hello my name is E. I have applied for Section 8 about 4 maybe 5 months ago as I know that it can take years before my name reaches the top of the list. I wanted to know how could I become part of the HUD program. As to which I do have a 3 yr old daughter and we currently live with a relative. I have low income. But as to the living situation I was asked how soon will I be able to be on my own... I have applied for many jobs but haven't received call backs. I recently attend school at TCC.

I'm truly trying my best to provide for me and my child, but I desperately need housing assistance. Please contact me email or phone (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

— E. [email to THA, November 10, 2013]

Salishan is a Tacoma neighborhood. It is THA's largest community, covering nearly 200 acres. It began during World War II. The federal government built Salishan to house workers of area shipyards and factories that built the ships and planes that won that war. Managing Salishan during the war was THA's first job. After the war, the federal government gave Salishan to THA. Since then, it has been an important part of Tacoma's affordable housing portfolio. It has also been one of Tacoma's most diverse neighborhoods by race, language, national origin, age, ability and disability. Yet, by the 1990s Salishan was worn out.

Beginning in 2001, in a \$300 million redevelopment that is the largest in Tacoma's history, THA demolished Old Salishan and rebuilt a brand new neighborhood of homeowners and renters, parks, schools, a regional health clinic and community facilities, all on brand new infrastructure. New Salishan has won national awards for its design and environmental innovation. It has also remained one of Tacoma's most diverse neighborhoods. Designing and building New Salishan was a chance to test and show THA's values of development, design, community building, environmental responsibility and social justice.



“TRULY TRANSFORMATIVE”



By Bill Baarsma
Mayor, City of Tacoma (2002-2009)

It was June 24, 2007, and I was attending the U.S. Conference of Mayors annual meeting in Los Angeles. As I wrapped up a panel discussion and was about to leave the conference room, a staff member tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I was the mayor of Tacoma. When I replied in the affirmative, he said: “I was asked to tell you that your city made the front page of the *New York Times*.”

Seeing the worried look on my face, he quickly added “Mayor, the news is good. In fact, it is great news. It’s about the success of your Hope VI program.”

I thought “Good news about Tacoma on the front page of the *New York Times*. This I’ve got to see.” I hurried to the hotel gift shop to buy a copy, and there it was with the headline: “In Tacoma, Recreating Public Housing.”

As I read through the article, with its accolades about the progress of the THA’s New Salishan, I couldn’t help but think back to when the project was nothing more than a conceptual design posted on a wall. I must say that those early days were a bit rocky at first. Complaints from labor and some eastside residents were coming to the mayor’s office with the claim that their voices and concerns were being ignored by THA. I also struggled with the idea of how the \$36 million Hope VI federal grant could be parlayed into a \$300 million-plus finished project.

Then good things began to happen. Greg Mowat, Ken Miller and Dr. Arthur Banks accepted my appointment to the board of commissioners, and Stan Rumbaugh agreed to stay on for another term. Greg, as a former labor representative; Ken,

a retired executive who had been a Salishan VISTA volunteer; and Dr. Banks, the beloved pastor of the Eastside Baptist Church, all brought instant credibility to the board. Stan’s institutional understanding of the project and its complex financing were simply unmatched. What a team they made. And added to that was the newly appointed executive director, who brought vision and incredible passion to the project, joining a high-powered staff and recruiting still others to move the project forward. (Salishan resident Janis Flauding was my last board appointment. Her optimism and track record of community leadership have been invaluable.)

The New Salishan project was to be truly transformative and, as stated in the *New York Times*, would embody the aspirations of our city. To accomplish that end, the board and director framed a sense of mission that emphasized key words: “high quality,” “stable,” “sustainable,” “safe,” “vibrant,” “prosperous,” “attractive,” and “just.” Thomas Gallas, who headed the firm that developed the project’s neighborhood plan, added another important dimension.

“We wanted to weave the homeowner with the rental community, to create an inextricable relationship between people that rent and people who own.”

How successful has New Salishan been? Over the years since its inception, the project has won a total of 12 local, regional or national awards for excellence. The American Institute for Architects, for example, recognized Salishan for promoting the “importance of good housing as a necessity of life, a sanctuary for the human spirit and a valuable national resource.” One might say that New Salishan has achieved the “gold standard” when



Children of New Salishan in 2005.



New Salishan Phase 2 Ribbon Cutting in 2009. Left to right: Ken Miller, THA Commissioner; Lyle Quasim, Chair, Tacoma-Pierce County Black Collective; Janet Rice, THA Real Estate Development Director; Debbie Regala, State Senator; Norm Dicks, U.S. Congressman; Patty Murray, U.S. Senator; Michael Mirra, THA Executive Director; Stan Rumbaugh, THA Commissioner; Lisa Miller, Salishan resident; Kimberly So, Salishan resident; Alice Carr, Citigroup; and Jennifer Long, Salishan resident.

it comes to creating “affordable, safe and nurturing homes” for everyone regardless of station. But actually, Salishan has done better than that!

In 2010 New Salishan received the highest possible “Platinum: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certification” from the U.S. Building Council for “building in a sustainable fashion with an attention to energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality and stewardship of resources”. At the time, Salishan was the only Tacoma residential project and the largest in the nation to be so recognized. In sum, New Salishan has truly exceeded the gold standard.

It has been a distinct honor for me to have served as Tacoma’s mayor during the inception of New Salishan. In my view, it is one of Tacoma’s greatest and most noteworthy achievements in its modern history. 🇺🇸

Hi, my name is Y. I am in desperate need of an emergency rent voucher. I have a 5 year old daughter, I live in a complex that accepts Section 8, but I do not have Section 8 but I know I qualify. I start a new job on the 10th and will be more able to pay my rent after I start there. But right now I’m panicking about my rent that needs to be paid today before the late fee hits tomorrow.

— Y. [email to THA, May 5, 2015]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: PORCH

By Nicole Mims, PORCH Team Lead

The Permanent Options for Recovery Centered Housing (PORCH) program of Greater Lakes Mental Health Care is a permanent supported-housing program. The program serves 50 individuals in Pierce County who have a history of chronic, serious mental illness, housing instability and homelessness. The goal of the PORCH program is to increase housing stability and to encourage independent living in the community.

Housing subsidies are the greatest resource for individuals on the PORCH program. Tacoma Housing Authority has been a partner of the PORCH program since the program’s inception in 2010. There are five PORCH participants who are subsidized by THA in the Non Elderly Disabled (NED) program. These five individuals are able to live financially comfortable, in the home of their choice, with the support of a PORCH case manager.

“There are key elements that distinguish Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) as an evidence-based practice from other housing programs. Those differences are: choice in housing and living arrangements, functional separation of housing and services, community integration, rights of tenancy, and voluntary recovery-focused services” (SAMHSA 2010). PSH is designed to encourage progress toward mental health and substance-use disorder recovery goals, to minimize institutionalization, arrests and spells of homelessness, as well as to support employment.

Our partnership with THA is one of the key ingredients to the success of our PORCH participants. One participant who is subsidized by THA said this:

“Now that I have a safe, stable place to live, I can go to school. I have space in my apartment to do my homework and study. That place has everything I need for me to succeed in school. It has my butterfly that reminds me that change is part of life, and it is in most aspects, a good thing. This place is only possible because of the help I get from my PORCH Peer and subsidy by THA.”

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: WALSH CONSTRUCTION



By Bill Reid, President/General Manager

In 2004, Walsh Construction Company entered into its first partnership with the Tacoma Housing Authority to construct the early phases of the Salishan Hope VI redevelopment. From the beginning of this partnership THA stressed that to be deemed successful, Salishan must feature heavy involvement by the underserved in our community: THA residents, local Minority & Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) firms and other Pierce County businesses. It soon became clear that accomplishing this goal was as important to THA as building quality housing, on time and on budget. From this point on, we knew that we could not treat these measures of success merely as goals; they must be project requirements.

It was THA's commitment to community outreach on the Salishan project that propelled Walsh and our subcontractors to new levels of success. Over the seven years of building seven phases of Salishan, MWBE utilization averaged 34 percent, and we employed 197 residents. These numbers eclipsed what were deemed successful results on previous projects. With an understanding of

THA's commitment to community participation, we were able to present options that increased participation of minority businesses and residents. THA routinely invested precious budget dollars in opportunities for minority-owned and disadvantage businesses, fully delivering on their commitment to the community.

THA's desire to complete a first-class redevelopment at Salishan while employing low-income individuals and disadvantaged businesses is a clear demonstration of their commitment to the community and their clients, the residents of THA housing. Many entities provide housing for those in need, but THA is unique in that they also provide the extra care that transforms houses into homes. Considering all the potential needs of their clients — from housing, employment and tutoring to language and life skills — residents of THA's vibrant communities are enabled to transform their lives. These results prove a solid organizational commitment to clients and community, but they could not be achieved without personal commitments on the part of the staff; a clear differentiator for THA.

Our partnership with THA resulted in a redevelopment project that was successful by every measure. Goals for budget, quality and schedule were met and exceeded, but the accomplishment most important to the Tacoma community was the inclusion of disadvantaged individuals and businesses in the opportunities created by the project. This most-critical success could not have been achieved without THA.

Dear THA staff, thank you very much for the hard work you are doing in the important job of helping people reach essential goals in their lives. Without your help, we would not have been able to become financially literate and achieve financial stability, self-sufficiency and success in education. We deeply appreciate the assistance and support we have received from THA in general and IDA program in particular. Thank you very much!

— P. [letter to THA, September 6, 2013]

Hello, my name is T. & I was interested in seeing about applying for low income housing or help with rent. The lowest going rates on apartments I've been able to find within Tacoma are still about 80% of what I make a month & I have two jobs. Thank you for your time & information.

— T. [email to THA, May 28, 2015]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: GGLO DESIGN



By Pamela Trevithick, Principal

Congratulations to Tacoma Housing Authority on turning 75 years young! On behalf of GGLO, we are honored to have partnered with you, your residents, and community stakeholders over the past five years on the Bay Terrace Apartments and Community and Education Center.

From the start of our work on Bay Terrace, THA's commitment to creating affordable, safe and healthy housing was evident. A prime example of this

occurred several years ago when I arrived at THA's offices for a client meeting. As I approached the entrance of the building, I noticed that the front door was blocked by a mass of people waiting patiently to check in. Several minutes of artful crowd-parting later, I reached Steve Clair's office and asked what was happening. He replied, "we just released housing vouchers — some of those folks have been waiting five to seven years for housing." Needless to say, Steve's response had a profound effect. I left that meeting with a clarity and purpose that reinforced why we do what we do.

Both the housing and community center reflect THA's steadfast commitment to Tacoma's many communities and the vision of a future where everyone has an affordable, safe and nurturing home. Bay Terrace is a showcase example of THA's leadership in providing healthy, sustainable design and construction features that positively impact residents' well-being, the environment and the broader community.

We are constantly reminded of our purpose in our ongoing engagements with THA and their residents. Their mission to provide high-quality, stable and sustainable places to those in need goes hand-in-hand with how GGLO designs. We share the that same desire to bring out the essence of community in each project — believing that

the fundamental desire to interact and feel a part of something can be evoked through design. Collaborating with THA has provided us with the opportunity to explore and celebrate design, and how it can have the most positive impact in any context, ultimately resulting in a high-quality, safe and beautiful environment where residents can thrive, start anew and have hope.

GGLO remains committed to THA, to affordable housing, and to the creation and revitalization of sustainable communities. We look forward to building toward this vision of the future, particularly with the Phase Two expansion of the Bay Terrace Apartments.

Editor's Note: *As of 2016, Pamela is a principal at LMN Architects.*

Me and my son and my boyfriend are living in a hotel. We can't save money to move in apartment because its around \$1,250 dollars. Is there any way you can help?

— P. [email to THA, April 15, 2015]

Hello, my name is K. I am 22 years old and am looking for help. My boyfriend and I both are trying to find a place to live but we can't seem to find anything we can afford. I am 5 months pregnant and only work 20 hours a week at Safeway. He works 40 hours a week at ML. With his child support, truck payment, insurance payment and other bills, we are having a hard time finding a place for our family. I was wondering what I can do to get some assistance. We are staying with friends right now, and I would really like to have my own place for my son. If you have any questions, my number is (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

— K. [email to THA, October 13, 2014]



Nativity House residents.
Photos by Jonathan Ross.

“RESETTING OUR COLLECTIVE MORAL COMPASS”



By Stanley Rumbaugh
Chair, THA Board of Commissioners

[Editor’s note: The following are remarks from Catholic Community Service’s New Nativity House Ribbon Cutting and Commemoration in Tacoma, Wash., on June 5, 2015. The Nativity House is the largest, most comprehensive facility in Pierce County serving homeless adult men and women. The goal is to provide for their basic needs and to offer concrete pathways to permanent housing and self-sufficiency that help to finance it.]

The THA is delighted to have participated with the wide diversity of community partners who have come together to create the idea of, construct the building for, and now begin operations of New Nativity House. The blessing of this building today serves to emphasize that the work done here is

a true blessing to those who seek refuge within its walls.

THA is always pleased to merge forces with those who seek to advance the cause of social justice in our neighborhoods. Supporting outreach and providing shelter to our fellow citizens who have become disadvantaged as a consequence of mental illness is consistent with THA’s mission and policy objectives in this important respect.

THA favors the use of housing dollars in a way that accomplishes multiple purposes.

At New Nativity House, THA will furnish about \$315,000 each year to cover the cost of providing stable and secure housing for people who previously had suffered the hardship of chronic homelessness right here in our town. These same housing dollars also provide an opportunity for consistency in

mental health treatment, and treatment for the handmaiden of mental illness — substance abuse. We count this as an important leveraging of public funds.

For too long our fellow citizens have been sent away from mental health treatment facilities and structured living environments to shift for themselves on the streets. This disinvestment in mental health treatment and support was done using the justification of restoration of personal liberty. In reality, that justification was a guise by which the medical and social safety net could be unwoven and money redirected elsewhere. This, in turn, resulted in a false economy, and in reality, resulted in an inefficient cost shift to the criminal

justice system. If reasons of humanity and moral obligation are insufficient to persuade adoption of more vigorous treatment and housing outreach to those battling mental illness, consider this:

The cost of incarcerating a person whose effects of mental illness leads them to prison totals about \$60,000 per year. More than 50 people could be provided with permanent shelter through the THA – New Nativity House program model. Yet the sad fact remains that, after Western State Hospital, the single largest residential service provider for those suffering from mental illness is the Pierce County jail.

Our Pierce County Superior Court bench has, just this year, expanded its

highly successful drug court program to include a felony mental health court docket. This expansion reflects the court’s belief that better outcomes will be derived by treating those whose criminal behavior is driven by affliction of the mind through use of therapeutic programming, rather than incarceration in what is a distinctly nontherapeutic environment.

With programs and facilities like New Nativity House and mental health court, it is possible to see glimmerings of progress in addressing the long unaddressed plight of the homeless mentally ill. Hundreds of our brothers and sisters find shelter in cars or structures unfit for human habitation, or simply live on, and are victimized on, the streets. Many of these homeless are children. It is now time we acknowledge, with a degree of candor which has not yet been evident, that the fundamental needs of the homeless and mentally ill have been disregarded far too long.

Dear Section 8, I’m reaching out to you for help. I’m a single mom of 4 wonderful kids. Also I take care of my nephew and mother. But I struggle. I’m strong but can’t do it all alone. I need help. Please get back to me as soon as you can. Thanks.

— D. [email to THA, October 22, 2014]



Nativity House is the largest, most comprehensive facility in Pierce County serving low-income and homeless adult men and women.

“With programs and facilities like New Nativity House and mental health court, it is possible to see glimmerings of progress in addressing the long unaddressed plight of the homeless mentally ill.”

The answer does not lie in the myriad of laws that result in the criminalization of the effects of chronic homelessness. The answer does not lie in the construction, then destruction of tent cities.

The answer lies, my friends, in resetting our collective moral compass to a pathway of compassion, and embrace

an understanding that, in the end, social justice does not cost, it pays.

The answer lies in our steadfast support of New Nativity House and more facilities like it. Thank you all for your attendance at this celebration of New Nativity House and may you all share in its blessing. 🙏

I need to say thank you to THA for helping to transform mine and my kid’s lives. I wanted to say to the case managers not to give up on your clients. I am living for the first time in my life. My name is B. and I am 42 years old. I have 3 kids 20, 12, 8 this year. I spent the last 40 years of my life existing from a background of sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse and domestic violence. I existed on Section 8 with no hope of a future. I attempted for 20 years to complete my nursing degree. Never able as I would make too much as a Licensed Nurse, but didn’t make enough to make it without housing. I was on the FSS program and had an escrow account. My dream was to go back [home] (where I grew up) and to finish university.

I moved back in 2008 with a plan and case managers who believed in me. Without the FSS funds, I would never have got off housing and my life wouldn’t have changed. Since then I graduated with my Bachelor’s of Nursing and currently work in the ICU as a Registered Nurse. I am half way to finishing my Master’s in Nursing and hope to be a nurse practitioner.

For the first time in my children’s lives, I am self-sufficient. I have money for food, clothes and a home. I am so happy. I am living for the first time in my life. I have a joy, peace and excitement about my life and the future for my kids.

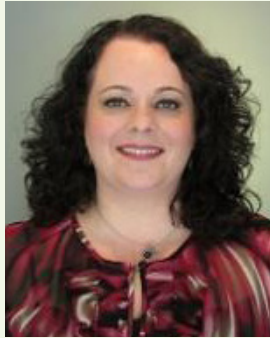
— B. [letter to THA, September 27, 2013]

Hello my name is G. I am looking to apply for Section 8 ASAP. I am a full-time student and take care of my two little sisters. I am 20 years old, and I am renting a room from a friend, but I am facing an eviction right now. I receive TANF at the moment so DSHS gave me the choice to pay my rent here or I look for a new apartment and they will pay my deposit. So I am seeing if I can get on Section 8 and be able to get a place so we can have a home.

If you would be able to call me my number is (XXX) XXX-XXXX. I am up at 8 o’clock but if you can call and leave a message and I will get back right away.

— E. [email to THA, November 10, 2013]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY GENERATIONS



By Gretchen Hansen, Health Advocate Coordinator

It's been my privilege to work in Salishan for the last 11 years. The residents hold a special place in my heart.

My introduction to the neighborhood was in 2004 when I worked at the YWCA. In the old clinic, I facilitated weekly support groups for survivors of violent relationships.

I then moved on to the Tacoma Community House and worked with an amazing group of refugees and immigrants, many of whom lived in Salishan. We worked together very closely for about four years. It was wonderful to see them again when Foundation for Healthy Generations (formerly CHEF) hired me to develop a new project in the neighborhood.

I have seen the landscape change tremendously. The old, decrepit houses were replaced by new healthier homes. Sidewalks, street lights and new parks were installed to create a more livable community. And it is beautiful here! I walk around the neighborhood as much as possible. I often take community partners on mini-tours of the gardens, parks and other properties.

Healthy Gen began working with Salishan residents in 2007 to develop programs that promote healthy active lifestyles. Our first two endeavors were a direct result of focus groups with neighbors: the community garden on "R" Street and community kitchens lead by Janis Flauding. Both projects were successful and proved to build relationships with neighbors, as well as encourage healthy eating.

Later, in 2011 the Salishan Community Health Advocate Project started. This unique pilot was launched with help from many partners: THA, Salishan Homeowners' Association and Healthy Gen. They recruited and hired residents who received training as community health workers. Once trained, the Community Health Advocates (CHAs) worked as a team to develop group identity, vision and goals then hit the ground running.

Their first activities included outreach at health fairs, supporting the community kitchen, working with their neighbors to encourage healthy eating and active living. As the program matured, the original CHAs developed the program and began building community relationships. They recruited new CHAs and trained them to run projects, provide outreach and support residents. Leadership is the key component of the CHA project. The residents are leading from within and building capacity in the neighborhood.

When the project was in its first stages of development, the partners imagined CHAs leading walking groups, smoking cessation groups and nutrition education. They also envisioned some opportunities for THA staff and the CHAs to partner. However, I don't know that they could have known just how essential their relationship would be to create a better Salishan. It became apparent pretty quickly that this team of CHAs was trained, effective and dedicated to their work with the community. It is safe to say they were — and are — a tremendous asset to Salishan and any partners fortunate to work with them.

It took a leap of faith for all sides at first. With open communication and a common objective, THA staff, CHAs, Salishan Association and residents worked together many times to achieve amazing results. Sometimes it was the CHAs who helped THA with culturally appropriate communication with residents, especially with those speaking languages other than English. Sometimes THA helped CHAs navigate issues that had negative impacts on residents. For example, it may involve THA property, such as the community garden.

In conclusion, there were high hopes for the Community Health Advocate project back in 2011. From my view today, it has not only exceeded expectations but has surprised all partners with how much it has changed the communication, interactions and relationships between THA and residents. There are big hopes for the next few years as the CHAs continue to develop and take ownership of the project. It is now holds an even closer place in my heart. I learn more from the

residents and CHAs every day than I ever dreamed possible. My work each day is an absolute joy.

A Short Case Study on How A THA Collaboration Made Its Units Healthier & Safer

Julie Peterson, Senior Director of Policy, Foundation for Healthy Generations



THA's commitment to safe and healthy housing extends beyond issues of brick and mortar. As the evidence mounted about the harmful effects of second- and third-hand smoke, THA's executive director joined forces with partners in the public health and nonprofit sectors to forge one of Washington's first smokefree housing policies.

The byproducts of tobacco use are pervasive. Secondhand smoke adversely affects the health of nonsmokers — particularly problematic for the residents of multifamily, multistory residential housing. THA's executive director saw a smoking ban as necessary. "It allows us to fulfill our fundamental responsibilities as a landlord and an employer to provide safe housing and a safe workplace."

This is particularly important for low-income households who have few affordable options for smokefree housing in the private rental market.

Early on, THA designated one of its public housing high-rises as a "no smoking" property to give at least some of its tenants the option of living free of secondhand smoke. Smoking was permitted in tenants' units in other properties, although not in common areas.

In 2011, THA concluded that a no smoking policy for all of its properties was a "win-win" for both tenants and the agency. The housing authority began a collaborative effort with the Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (now Foundation for Healthy Generations, or Healthy Gen) and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. Their joint efforts have served as a model for housing authorities across the state.

Implementing a comprehensive policy is both complex and challenging. It involves behavior change on the part of tenants, many of

whom had been allowed to smoke in their apartments for years, if not decades. The change called for an implementation plan that accounted for potential resistance from tenants and staff, and concerns about noncompliance. THA and its partners brought to the table a range of skills and resources that contributed to the eventual success.

Staff from the health department and Healthy Gen began a series of meetings and consultations with THA to map out a strategy that involved tenant surveys, meetings with tenants, and information about the hazards of tobacco smoke to both smokers and nonsmokers. Once the policy was formulated, extensive notice and information was shared with tenants. Finally, after a months-long process, the Board of Commissioners voted to adopt the no smoking policy and an effective date was set.

While THA is recognized as a leader on this issue, THA's executive director says it's important to understand the value of collaboration. "We couldn't have done it without active collaboration with our partners."

The health department brought awareness to health issues caused by tobacco smoking and the ability to do outreach to tenants with the survey, and later held meetings aimed at tobacco cessation. Healthy Gen offered testimony in support of the policy, provided guidance about best practices for policy development and policy enforcement.

THA's willingness to collaborate and share the various parts of the no smoking policy work plan eventually brought about a safer, healthier living and working environment for both tenants and staff.

I am writing to say thank you to the Tacoma Housing Authority for the many tireless appointments and resources that the staff have assisted me to now be a homeowner. No one has ever taken the time and effort to just listen to me as I try to receive clarity in my mind of all my many challenges. THA as a whole is one of the most beneficial entities that made my life rise above my circumstances and that has made me feel like a better person in my personal accomplishments and lifetime achievements.

— U. [letter to THA, August 24, 2012]



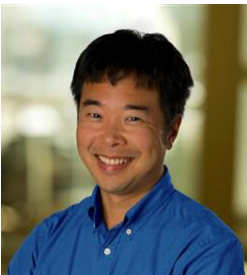
Constructed in 2014, THA's newest affordable housing development, Bay Terrace, embodies the creative spirit needed to complete a financially stable, environmentally responsible, award-winning design.

GGLO Design

TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY



“A UNIQUE HEART AND SPIRIT”



By Kollin Min
Senior Program Manager
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

It's hard to know how to adequately pay tribute to an organization with as distinguished a history as the Tacoma Housing Authority.

Over the past 75 years, THA has provided safe, affordable housing to hundreds of thousands of Tacoma residents, and to truly honor the work that has gone into providing this invaluable service for so many, one must necessarily honor all of the individual contributions of the many talented people who have dedicated their professional lives over these years to THA.

Unfortunately, I have only had the privilege of knowing a small fraction of these people over a relatively brief span of THA's history, and so am unable to personally recognize the full range of their accomplishments. What I can say, however, is that my interactions with the THA employees that I have met

and worked with over the years have convinced me that there's a unique heart and spirit within this organization that can only have been forged through the collective efforts of a very special group of people.

In particular, there's a spirit of innovation and optimism within THA that drives the agency to constantly ask questions about how their resources can be put to best use — how can housing dollars be used to better educate the children who live in public housing, to provide greater economic opportunities for the families in THA care, to move greater numbers of families up and out of poverty?

There's also a passion for partnership and collaboration that is obvious across THA, a recognition that in order to truly build vibrant, prosperous communities, the agency has an

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:
EARLY LEARNING AND
HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE



By Ruth Kagi,
State Representative
As a state policymaker, I have found the innovative and thoughtful strategies developed by THA are valuable and significant. These strategies meet the needs of families who are homeless and/or involved with child welfare

A number of years ago, THA developed a housing voucher program that is tied to a child’s attendance and success in school, and to the participation of the parent/s in the activities of the school. The positive educational outcomes for children have been impressive, and are now being duplicated in other housing authorities and school districts.

The formation of this partnership was a significant factor in the federal government’s approval of a Title IVE Child Welfare Waiver, which granted flexibility to allow Washington to better meet the needs of families involved in child welfare.

THA’s strong commitment to working in partnership with communities and state agencies has been outstanding. My congratulations to THA’s executive director and to THA for leading the way.

Tacoma Housing Authority has had a positive effect on my life in many ways. From a personal perspective, over 13 years ago, my partner and I purchased a home on the Hilltop from THA. The home was well maintained and offered at a fair price — it’s a house where I continue to live and raise my son.
From a professional perspective, THA provided me with an opportunity to participate as a consultant on the Salishan HOPE IV project. Over the course of the project, I was able to forge an outstanding business relationship with Walsh Construction and secure valuable knowledge regarding large residential construction projects.
Finally from a community perspective, being able to witness and/or participate in THA’s education and community service projects has provided me with the willingness to take ownership of efforts to improve my community
— R. [letter to THA, April 20, 2013]

important role to play in convening all of the resources necessary to serve the low-income residents of Tacoma. And the THA staffers I have met have all managed to take on this critically important work with humor and kindness, and an unwavering generosity and commitment to their communities.

Seventy five years is indeed a significant milestone for the Tacoma Housing Authority, and THA should rightly feel proud of its history and the service that it has provided to so many

families in need during these past three quarters of a century. It should also feel proud of the strong values that so clearly continue to drive the organization, for these core principles are already paving the way for many more decades of success.

It has been my pleasure, and the good fortune of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to be able to support THA’s work over the years, and we look forward to continuing to partner with you in the future. 🇺🇸

Dear Sir or Madam,
My daughter and I are currently residents of Tacoma, and need to investigate assisted housing. I’m currently drawing unemployment benefits and have only managed to stay employed for approximately 20 months out of the last 42, with 11 of those months part-time employment. As an older adult, it has become increasingly difficult to find work and support my 14-year-old daughter. Are you accepting names to your waiting list?
— H. [email to THA July 12, 2012]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: **NANCY VIGNEC,**
RETIRED DIRECTOR FOR THA COMMUNITY SERVICES



My involvement with THA spans more than 25 years, including 22 years as an employee. Throughout those years, certain fundamental characteristics of THA became more prominent. In this brief essay, I will comment on three aspects I consider particularly notable: innovation, collaboration and commitment to service.

When I became a THA employee in 1991, I assumed the housing authority would be a rather stodgy institution where things remained unchanged year after year. I quickly realized how wrong my assumption was. Change happened constantly, due to shifts in federal budget priorities, revised HUD regulations, local needs and opportunities and THA’s desire to improve its housing and related services. My first supervisor at THA, Lonell Phillip, Director of Leasing Services, was particularly adept at anticipating change and devising innovative approaches. Over the years, many other THA staff contributed to THA’s tradition of innovation. For me, constant change and the emphasis on innovation provided inspiring opportunities to explore alternative ideas and learn something new each day.

My first assignment with THA was to coordinate the Drug Elimination Program. Drug Elimination was a multifaceted, collaborative effort to eradicate drugs and gangs from THA housing, promote positive interaction among housing residents and strengthen community life. THA relied on numerous partners to plan and carry out its drug elimination strategy. Partners included the police department, the City of Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, the school district, various service provider agencies and housing residents. When the Drug Elimination Program began, THA was fortunate to have Patricia Harrington as its grant writer. Pat was expert at creating partnerships and encouraging collaboration. The Drug Elimination Program continued for about 10 years. Drug- and gang-related crime declined significantly, and resident

leadership and community cohesion increased. THA’s longstanding community partnerships and expertise in collaboration provided a foundation for many other ventures, such as the Salishan HOPE VI revitalization and the McCarver Elementary School Housing Project.

From the start, I was impressed by THA staff. When I talked with the receptionist, or a maintenance worker, or someone in finance, or a property manager, or an office worker, many times I learned the individual had a strong, personal commitment to service. These THA staff wanted to make a difference. They wanted to help people. They wanted to use their abilities to create something better for others. The emphasis on commitment to service became very prominent under the executive director’s leadership. It is one of the stated values of THA. I believe that knowing we share this commitment to service is a unifying force at THA. Staff see this commitment as part of our identity. New staff are attracted to THA because they share similar convictions about the value of service. In my experience, many participants in THA’s housing programs are also dedicated to lives of service. They are willing to attend THA planning sessions and are willing to serve as resident leaders. They speak up for themselves and for their neighbors. They want to improve their communities. It was an honor for me to serve with THA staff and housing program participants.

Congratulations, THA. May innovation, collaboration and commitment to service continue as defining features of THA!

Greetings, my family and I are in need of a home. We are currently living in my mom’s house. I am a single mom of 3 kids. My eldest son is disabled and in a wheelchair. We live in a three-bedroom house with three other adults. My boys share a room and my daughter and I sleep in the garage. Can you please lead me to the correct department if there is help available?
— P. [email to THA, July 27, 2014]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: STATE SENATOR DEBBIE REGALA, 27TH DISTRICT (1995-2013)



It has been thrilling to watch the positive changes Tacoma Housing Authority has made over the years — both in their mission and in the lives of those who have been helped.

A very bold statement about what public housing can be was made by the redevelopment of the post-World War II Salishan into the New Salishan.

It brought together a mix of homeownership units and family incomes. Designed as a walk-friendly community, New Salishan contains educational facilities, medical services, as well as welcoming community gathering places and beautiful park spaces. The beautiful design is also a statement about environmental responsibility! What a wonderful addition to Tacoma's Eastside! THA has also rebuilt many old housing complexes in Tacoma's Central Neighborhood, turning them into new beautiful housing for families and individuals. And the work and visioning and dreaming continues.

But providing housing is not the only thing that THA is involved in. While it is their primary mission, they also know that providing a helping "hand-up" can make positive changes for a person's future. The partnership with Tacoma Public Schools to provide stable housing for families with children at McCarver elementary will ensure greater success in school for those children. The work THA has done to reach out to all 8th graders living in THA facilities to help enroll them in Washington State's College Bound Scholarship program can help change the lives of those students. The long list of ways THA is working in partnership with other service providers in our community to better the lives of people demonstrates THA's commitment to improving individual lives and making Tacoma a great place to live.

Happy 75th Birthday THA! I can't wait to see what the next 25 years will bring.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: BOB FREDRICKSON, COLDWELL BANKER



I worked with THA as the listing broker for the 220 single-family lots that are currently being developed and sold in the Salishan neighborhood. I was honored to represent an organization with such a stellar history of helping people in need. I was impressed with THA's willingness to focus on what was required to achieve their end goal of

providing affordable housing for families of various socioeconomic backgrounds. This required THA to have an open mind in deciding to work with a for-profit national home builder such as DR Horton, who was able to build high-quality homes at affordable prices. In the end, THA's flexibility paid off and now hundreds of families will have a beautiful neighborhood and a place to call home in which they can be proud. Happy 75th birthday THA!

Hey my name's H. & I'm looking for help ASAP. I don't know what to do or where to turn. I have no place to stay and have no cash for a place to rent. I've tried asking everyone I know for help and I have no one... I'm 19 years old and I have a little bit of mental health with anxiety attacks. Being in a social group I get very claustrophobic. I have PTSD and I get bad flashbacks and I also have bad health... So it don't help that I have no help at all and I'm staying in a tent outside and the weather is very bad condition. I don't have very many things — no clothes or stuff to clean up and shower with. I'm in a bad state of mind with this whole homeless thing. I hope to hear from you with maybe some sort of good news.

— H. [email to THA, May 23, 2014]

Tacoma Housing Authority Celebrates 75th Birthday at the Hilltop Street Fair

On August 22nd, 2015, the Hilltop Neighborhood hosted the 2nd annual Hilltop Street Fair, and THA was there to celebrate its 75th birthday with the community. The event was a perfect summer day filled with children, laughs, reflection, food, music, theater, meeting neighbors and strengthening partnerships.

As part of the day's program, THA held its own short celebration to honor its founding in 1940. Change, challenge and creative response have been themes of THA's history. A handful of THA's partners who have helped THA steer a course through these changes briefly spoke about the evolution of affordable housing and THA's leadership over the years. These speakers included:

- Lyle Quasim, Tacoma-Pierce County Black Collective
- U.S. Senator Patty Murray (by video)
- U.S. Congressman Denny Heck
- Mayor Marilyn Strickland, City of Tacoma
- State Senator Jeannie Darneille
- Superintendent Carla Santorno, Tacoma Public Schools
- Lisa Miller (former resident of Salishan)
- Stan Rumbaugh, THA Commissioner

The event was a time to reflect on THA's work with the people who make it possible. It provided a moment to look ahead to the work to come, with ambition and confidence. It was also a chance to hear Congressman Heck lead the crowd in singing "Happy Birthday."



Lyle Quasim, event MC and
Chair of Black Collective



Stan Rumbaugh,
THA Commissioner



Carla Santorno,
TPS Superintendent



Patty Murray, U.S. Senator



Denny Heck, U.S. Congressman



Jeannie Darneille,
State Senator



Marilyn Strickland,
Tacoma Mayor



Lisa Miller,
former Salishan resident

Tacoma Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners

Washington State law directs that the Tacoma Housing Authority shall be governed by a five-person Board of Commissioners that the Mayor of Tacoma shall appoint. The Mayor appoints each Commissioner to a five-year term. Since 1998, the law also directs that the Board shall include an individual who receives assistance from THA's federal housing programs. THA has had such a person on its Board since 1990.

Commissioners are volunteers. They do not receive any financial compensation for their time or work. Their work on THA's Board is a notable instance of community service. For biographical information, go to www.tacomahousing.net/content/commissioners.



Stanley Rumbaugh
Chair



Dr. Arthur C. Banks
Vice Chair



Janis Flauding
Commissioner



Mihn-Ahn Hodge
Commissioner



Derek Young
Commissioner



Salishan



Ludwig



Hillside Terrace



Wright Street



Bay Terrace



K Street



Bay Terrace



G Street



E.B. Wilson

Vision and Mission

- *THA envisions a future where everyone has an affordable, safe and nurturing home, where neighborhoods are attractive places to live, work, attend school, shop and play, and where everyone has the support they need to succeed as parents, students, wage earners and neighbors.*
- *THA provides high-quality, stable and sustainable housing and supportive services to people in need. It does this in ways that help them prosper and help our communities become safe, vibrant, prosperous, attractive and just.*

Values

- **Service:** *Work in service to others is honorable. We will do it honorably, effectively, efficiently, with pride, compassion and respect.*
- **Integrity:** *We strive to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior.*
- **Stewardship:** *We will be careful stewards of the public and private financial and environmental resources entrusted to us.*
- **Communication:** *We value communication. We strive to be open and forthcoming with our customers, employees and colleagues, our partners, and our communities. We will listen to others.*
- **Diversity of Staff:** *We value the diversity of our staff. It makes us stronger and more effective.*
- **Collegial Support and Respect:** *The work we do is serious. We seek to create an atmosphere of teamwork, support and respect. We also value a good humor.*
- **Excellence:** *We strive for excellence. We will always seek to improve.*
- **Leadership:** *Everyone at THA, the Board, management and staff, shares the leadership it will take to extend these values throughout THA's work, to fulfill the mission and to advance the vision for our city.*



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY
Housing Tacoma Forward

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