

Residents Corner



The world was shocked on January 13, 2010, with news of the massive 7.0 earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince, Haiti and surrounding areas. The scope of the devastation and death toll are still being tallied. Most buildings were reduced to

rubble – including hospitals, houses, schools, and government offices. Thousands of people lost loved ones and suffer in the midst of chaos from a lack of clean water, electricity, and medical supplies. As with the disasters in recent years involving relief efforts for

EHDOC Joins Haiti Relief Funds

tsunami survivors in Indonesia and Hurricane Katrina victims, EHDOC residents and staff once again have opened their hearts and wallets to help Haiti. “It’s a tragedy that people in Haiti who have so little to begin with lost so much. EHDOC residents and staff always show their concern and generosity by being among the first to reach out to those in need,” EHDOC Executive Director Steve Protulis commented. EHDOC facilities hosted a variety of fundraisers – including raffles, luncheons, hot dog and donut sales, dinners, dances, benefit bingos, movie days, and sales of lasagna, chocolate candy, and pastries. One facility held a white elephant sale. All told, more than \$12,000 has been raised so far, with more coming every day.

Budget Eliminates Housing Funds

(Cont’d from page 1)

The justification provided with the proposed budget stated that the Administration thought it was necessary “to eliminate construction funding for new projects in order to redesign the program and institute reforms that will ensure that future projects are more cost effective and well-targeted.” Funding for new construction would be “suspended” to provide time to redesign the program.

In addition to expanding the supply of quality affordable housing for low-income older persons, the construction of Section 202 senior housing provides jobs, demand for materials and services, and stimulates local economies.

Our country is going through a difficult financial time. America’s financial woes have hit seniors the hardest of any demographic group. According to a recent AARP study, 28 percent of the homes currently in foreclosure are owned by people age 50 and older.

“We need to provide financial and housing security for all older Americans: homeowners, renters, wealthy, middle class and low-income,” Protulis urged. “We need to take actions to protect older Americans at risk of foreclosure and losing their home; as we also need to enable existing residents of federally assisted senior housing, such as EHDOC affordable senior housing communities, to have

quality affordable housing that’s linked with services to enable them to age in their home and community; and we also need to expand the supply of Section 202 senior housing to address the present critical shortage and prepare for the future aging population.”

Now that the Administration has proposed its budget, the next step is for Congress to accept, reject or modify the proposed policy and funding priorities. The FY 2011 budget begins with the fiscal year that starts October 1, 2010. The Congressional process begins with the House and Senate Budget Committees, which set the broad funding levels. The Banking Committees need to enact any changes in authorizing legislation (the actual program changes). Then the all important House and Senate Appropriation Committees pass the actual funding level (the FY 2011 appropriations).

As President Bahr urged in the previous issue of *New Dimensions*, “Funding for affordable housing for low-income seniors is an issue that must be talked about loudly and often so that we can mobilize grassroots support to enact the sort of legislation that one would expect from the wealthiest nation on this planet.”

We need to educate our Congressional members why it is important to adequately fund Section 202 for both housing operations and to expand the supply of affordable senior housing.



NEW DIMENSIONS

ELDERLY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS CORPORATION

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Proposed Budget Eliminates Affordable Housing Funds

As the job crisis and economic insecurities continue, the Obama administration was forced to present a budget with priorities that clearly neglect the most vulnerable people of this country, our senior citizens in dire need of affordable housing. Seniors in need of affordable housing spend an average of three to five years on a waiting list before an existing unit becomes available; this important fact is clearly not being addressed in the 2011 proposed budget.

On February 1st, the Obama Administration released its proposed FY 2011 budget for HUD, HHS, and other federal departments which outlines proposed national policies and budget priorities, including federal housing and community development programs. Of particular interest to EHDOC, our residents, and communities is the Section 202 senior housing program. The Section 202 program administered by HUD is the primary funding source that EHDOC uses to develop and operate

quality affordable senior housing. Overall, the proposed FY 2011 budget seeks \$274 million for Section 202 operation subsidies and to staff service coordinators at essentially the current funding level. While that’s good news since it recognizes the important work that service coordinators provide to assist our residents, it does not include any funds to develop new Section 202 communities...ZERO.

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Last year, thanks to efforts made by EHDOC residents and allied organizations such as the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging; the National Affordable Housing Management Association; the American Association of Service Coordinators; the National

Low Income Housing Coalition; the Elderly Housing Coalition; and many other state and local organizations which advocated to increase Section 202 funds, Congress provided \$582 million for new construction of Section 202 senior housing that would enable the development of over 3,500 additional units.

“For those of you who know my passion for affordable senior housing,” stated EHDOC Executive Director Steve Protulis, “you can image how shocked, disappointed, confused, and angry I was when I first learned that funding for Section 202 new developments was eliminated as one of the ‘difficult choices’ that the Administration was proposing.”

“Just last fall when I attended the 50th anniversary of the successful Section 202 program, I was encouraged when speaker after speaker praised the exceptional record and sound management of the Section 202 program,” stated Protulis.

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Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation

Mission Statement

EHD OC develops and manages safe, secure and affordable housing for senior citizens across the United States. EHD OC advocates for the highest quality of life for the seniors of today and tomorrow.

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Executive Director's Views

By Steve Protulis



Senior Housing Cannot Afford To Be Put on the Back Burner

Healthcare reform; unemployment rates and job programs; federal support for education; a game plan to jumpstart the economy and stabilize financial systems...all valid and important topics for discussion and immediate attention.

Yet, who is talking about the imminent growth of our senior population and the need to establish an action plan to address the already unmet needs for affordable housing and services for our seniors?

To put this argument in perspective, here are some statistics:

- By year 2030 the number of Americans 65 or older will increase from 35 million to 71 million.
- Studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that the life expectancy of our senior population has increased dramatically.
- In six states, more than one in every four residents will be age 65 and older in 2030.

HUD has already passed the Budget Summary for 2010 and the money allocated for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly is the same amount provided for 2009 and 2008. \$765 million has been requested for this affordable housing program to be distributed as follows: \$522 million for new activity (construction, acquisition, and initial rental assistance); \$153 million to renew existing projects; and \$90 million to support the hiring of service coordinators in developments.

Keeping in mind the fact that the senior population is growing, would it not make sense that the amount set aside for the purpose of providing housing for this segment of the population be increased as well? Currently EHD OC alone has nearly 4,000 seniors on its waiting lists nationwide. There is at least one senior waiting for each one of our existing units, and they will remain on the list for an average of three years.

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To further illustrate this crisis, consider the recent case of EHD OC's Palermo Lakes (a 109-unit project located in the heart of Miami) which opened its doors a year ago. It is now fully occupied, and has nearly 700 seniors on the waiting list.

In the meantime, HUD only authorized the construction of 131 new units for the whole state of Florida for the year 2009.

This is a call to action, a reminder that we are responsible for bringing this issue to the top of our national agenda. We owe it to the seniors whose hard work and efforts laid the foundation for this America we now enjoy. These seniors deserve to enjoy their golden years in a place they can call home.

Let the Sun Shine

Vitamin D's Benefits Improve Overall Health

We've all heard warnings about getting too much sun. It can cause painful sunburn and in some cases a deadly form of skin cancer called melanoma.

Health experts say that moderate exposure to the sun has important benefits, however. Our bodies make Vitamin D (called the "sunshine vitamin") when our skin is exposed to sun. Just 20 to 30 minutes of sun exposure can generate Vitamin D levels that are 15 times higher than what the U.S. government recommends as a daily dose for seniors (600 units). And it's impossible to overdose on Vitamin D from sunshine.

Vitamin D is needed for our immune and cardiovascular systems to work the best. It also increases

white blood cell production and supports healthy skin and bones. (Those who take calcium to prevent and treat osteoporosis may be urged by health care professionals to look for calcium that includes Vitamin D, which helps absorption.)

Experts recommend getting 15 minutes of midday sun in the summer and 20-30 minutes in spring, fall, and winter, depending on what part of the country you live in. (Be careful to not burn!) Of course, eating food that's high in Vitamin D is important too.

These foods include: cod liver oil, sockeye and Chinook salmon, sardines, mackerel, shrimp, tuna canned in water, and milk, orange juice, and yogurt that are fortified with Vitamin D.

BOOST YOUR VITAMIN D

Food is an important way to increase your amount of Vitamin D. The Dairy Council of California recommends the following:



- * Drink at least 2 cups of Vitamin-D fortified milk a day.
- * Use milk instead of water to make soup, sauces, and hot chocolate mix.
- * Choose Vitamin D-fortified yogurt and cheese when possible.
- * Check labels and select breakfast cereals fortified with Vitamin D.
- * Flake tuna on top of salad or make tuna salad sandwiches.
- * Eat salmon for a Vitamin D-rich meal once a week.

VITAMIN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SENIORS

(Adapted from Fitness Health Zone's website)

To stay healthy, senior citizens need to take special care in maintaining a balanced diet. In addition to Vitamin D, experts recommend these supplements:

- * **Calcium.** Lack of calcium and vitamin D are problems that can lead to osteoporosis. Vitamin D is required for proper calcium absorption in the body. Eat at least three servings of food sources which contain calcium per day.
- * **Vitamins A, C and E** are important vitamin supplements for seniors. Vitamin A promotes healthy skin and prevents blindness. Vitamin C helps the body to use iron and heal wounds efficiently. Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps get rid of undesirable fat and prevents breakdown of body tissues.
- * **Drink plenty of water.** Water removes toxins from your blood, and helps avoid dehydration and constipation. Experts recommend drinking eight glasses of water per day.

Students Bring Celebration to Seniors Torre Jesus Sanchez Erazo Bayamon, Puerto Rico



Torre Jesus residents participate in various activities provided by students from a local university.

University of Puerto Rico students studying social work visited the Torre Jesus community in December, bringing a variety of activities and organizing a resident talent show. The municipality of Bayamon provided residents with transportation to the “Plaza las Americas” museum in San Juan. The museum received rave reviews from the seniors.

Helping Seniors Understand Part D La Maison Acadienne, Madawaska, Maine



Agency on Aging specialist Tammy Delong and others helped seniors in Maine sort through Medicare Part D options and enrollment.

Trying to figure out which plan makes most sense under Part D – the part of Medicare that involves discounts on prescription drugs – is a confusing maze for many seniors. In Maine, the Aroostook County Agency on Aging stepped in to help residents

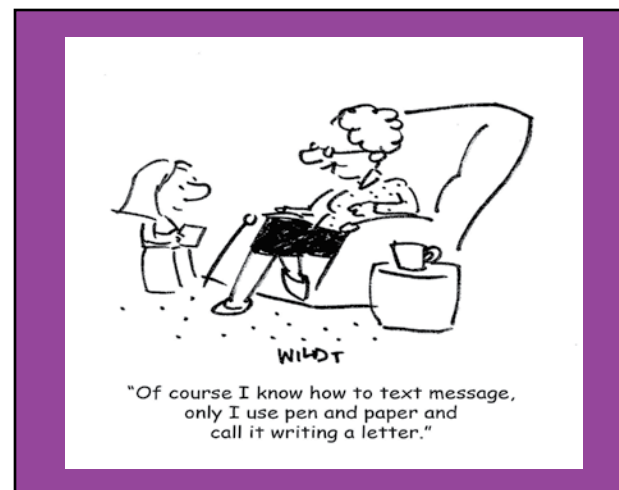
Helping Hands Senate Apartments Chicago, Ill.



Dinoretta Simpson and Evelyn Smolen crocheted exercise devices for Hines Veterans Hospital.

Dinoretta Simpson and Evelyn Smolen’s nimble fingers were flying this fall and winter. They crocheted more than 100 exercise and therapeutic devices for patients at Hines Veterans Hospital, which provides health care services to Chicago-area veterans. Service coordinators Lourdine Biedrzycki and Hilda Vasquez delivered the devices, which will be used in Hines’ rehabilitation department.

and town members sort it out. Specialist Tammy Delong organized an enrollment and check-up day at La Maison Acadienne. Tammy and her coworkers and volunteers set up shop in La Maison’s computer room and helped explain options to the more than 30 event participants.



President’s Comments By Morton Bahr

Senior Housing Crisis: The Perfect Storm

When EHDOP Executive Director Steve Protulis asked me to join the EHDOP Board more than three years ago, I knew very little about the status of senior housing in America.

My responsibilities as President of the Communications Workers of America for more than 20 years distracted me from more than a superficial understanding of senior housing needs.

While the current problem grows worse by the day, more and more Baby Boomers will move to retirement. Their sheer numbers will push the availability of affordable housing to the breaking point if Congress does not begin to act.

Our nation needs to build approximately 730,000 new units by 2020 to serve seniors with unmet housing needs. And, since that is not being done, the most vulnerable among our citizens continue to lack affordable housing. So, imagine the pressure that these millions of Baby Boomer retirees, coupled with the continuing decline in defined benefit pension plans, will put on the system.

These converging factors will create the Perfect Storm.

We need to address this crisis now – and we can. Our visits to Congress and discussions with other public officials convince me

that senior housing could be a nonpartisan issue. We believe that with information, education and the right amount of political pressure, sufficient resources to begin to deal with this enormous problem will be appropriated.

Doing nothing is not an option. Not only will the problem continue to grow, but also growing would be the suffering of countless elderly citizens.

Doing nothing is not an option. Not only will the problem continue to grow, but also growing would be the suffering of countless elderly citizens. This is hardly a reward for them after years of work only to reach those heralded Golden Years to find that it is a hoax.

The good news is that union members respond positively when they learn about the issue just as I have. We have been taking every opportunity to meet with the AFL-CIO and international, national and local union leaders to inform them about this growing crisis.

Steve and I will continue to work toward getting more people to put this matter on their front burners. Ultimately, we are convinced that the full resources

of the AFL-CIO will be behind us to push Congress into action before the Perfect Storm becomes a reality and leads to mass suffering.

In the meantime, Congress could begin to take steps toward the ultimate solution. EHDOP provides housing under Section 202 of the Housing Act. To be eligible, seniors must be at or below the poverty line. There are tens of thousands of seniors whose sole income, Social Security, puts them only about \$1,000 above the official poverty line. And, there is nothing there for them. Perhaps expanding eligibility standards should be considered.

One of several ways to address this would be for Section 202 to be amended so that those who are a little above poverty would be eligible for housing assistance. Of course, unless this action was taken by Congress accompanied by the required funds, it would only make the matter worse.

Over the long run, the only solution is a national commitment to provide the necessary affordable housing for seniors to guarantee that all Americans will realize the promise of a life with dignity in retirement. We will continue to educate, inform and, yes, agitate until that need is met. I cannot think of a better way to spend my “Golden Years.”

In the News

EHDOC Residents Staying Healthy **Chateau Cushnoc - John Marvin Towers** **Augusta, Maine** **and Robert Sharp Towers, Miami Gardens, Fla.**



Residents of Maine's EHDOC facilities took advantage of free eye examinations offered by a local eye care provider at a community health fair.

Staying healthy is especially important to seniors – never more so than during this winter's flu season. Chateau Cushnoc and John Marvin Tower residents were joined by community members to receive health information and flu shots during the area's second annual Health and Wellness Fair. In addition to the flu shots, providers displayed services, products, and sample items. Nearly 2,000 miles south, at the other end of the East Coast, residents of Robert Sharp Towers received both flu and pneumonia shots. County Commissioner Barbara Jordan lobbied the Miami-Dade County Health Department to provide the immunizations to residents and community members in Sharp Towers' community room – and received her own flu shot there.

Service Coordinators in Training

Every day is a new day with new challenges. This is why EHDOC Service Coordinators take training seriously, and participate in local networking contacts, online "webinars," and national conferences whenever they can. Last year, Service Coordinator Anna Mary Lubbert of Steelworker Tower arranged for HUD to come train Service

Honoring Our Nation's Veterans

Clyde F. Simon
Bath, N.Y.



(From left) Charlie Sommers, Commander of the Bath VFW Post 1470; James Hough, Commander of the Bath Legion and State Veteran Counselor; Representative Eric Massa; Anna Ward; resident Henry Coil; James Bacalles, N.Y. Assemblyman; and David Wallace, Mayor of Bath.

Clyde F. Simon resident Henry Coil was in the spotlight for his military service at a special veterans' reception held in Bath, N.Y. in December 2009. U.S. Representative Eric Massa (D-N.Y.), was joined by local legislators and VFW and American Legion commanders to award Mr. Coil a Bronze Star Medal and 10 other WWII- and Korean War-related medals for his service to this country. Mr. Coil served in the Army National Guard in the Pacific during WWII. He was featured in the Winter 2009 issue of *New Dimensions* after he reconnected with his teenage sweetheart after 60 years apart. He and Anna Campbell married in June 2008.

Coordinators at the property. This year, Service Coordinator Linda Duckworth arranged training for her Ohio local chapter of the American Association of Service Coordinators. EHDOC greatly appreciates the initiative and dedication of its staff members to continued education in service of our residents.

Preparing for the Future **Prete Apartments** **Chicago, Ill.**



Prete residents (from left) Rosa Walizadehe, Mary Ann Conti, Evelyn Doherty, and Ida Wicht show their living will and power-of-attorney documents. They were among the 31 seniors who were assisted by attorneys in drawing up these important papers.

Financial advisors stress the importance of preparing for the future by taking care of legal documents relating to health issues. Lawyers from the Center for Disability and Elder Law assisted 31 residents of Prete Apartments in preparing documents for designating power of attorney for living wills and for health care and property decisions. They explained the documents and had them personalized, signed, witnessed, and notarized for the residents.

Coast to Coast **Residents Celebrate the Holidays**

From Maine to Miami, Chicago to California, Louisiana to Pittsburgh – and everywhere in between – residents and staff of EHDOC facilities celebrated the holidays. Tree decorating, visits from Santa, collecting toys for needy children, and helping stock community food banks were some of the ways that seniors marked the 2009 holiday season.

For more information on our communities please visit our website:

www.ehdoc.org

or call us at (954) 835-9200

Outstanding Service in Florida **Council Towers** **Miami Beach, Fla.**



Council Towers Service Coordinator Antonio Acea was honored by the Miami Beach Commission with a certificate of recognition of his outstanding service to the elderly in the Miami Beach community. He shared his moment in the sun with Senior Community Manager Roberta Reyes-Jones and some of the Council Towers residents with whom he shares his days. Congratulations for excellent contributions to seniors in the EHDOC tradition.

Helping Hungry Neighbors **Leisure Lane - Morse Manor** **Louisiana**



Residents of Leisure Lane and Morse Manor joined forces to participate in their local food drive to help the less fortunate in their community. Pictured from left: Service Coordinator Celena Regan, residents Hervin Leger, Juanita Leger and Marjorie Weekley.