

Direct to You

Friday
6/13/22

Patricia Wells, OHA Executive Director



Good Afternoon OHA Family

I use **Direct To You** as a way to share information with the entire OHA Family that I think is important for you to know. In addition to the message from me, this digital newsletter highlights the work being done by each of us every day that we show up ready to serve our clients. This platform allows us to elevate the accomplishments of our staff in ways that inspire, educate, and keep us all moving forward together.

Over the last few weeks, I attended the grand opening **Coliseum Place**, a new family home apartment community, just a one-minute walk from the Coliseum BART station, where 37 Project-Based Vouchers have been invested with a value of more than \$23M over the next 20 years; I've visited regional NAHRO meetings where I am learning from our industry colleagues about creative ways to tackle some of the challenges we all face regardless of our geographical location; and I've met with local and national leaders working on issues such as closing the digital divide, and addressing the urgent needs of the unhoused population here in Oakland, and also as part of a larger national effort. Through this work, OHA realizes additional funding, stronger partnerships and greater program successes.

I am always excited to hear from each of you, and am especially sensitive to your calls for regular updates on what's going on around the agency. I have found, however, that with my schedule my communication with the OHA staff sometimes gets delayed. I will make every effort to get **Direct To You** out more timely so the stories you read reflect our most current work.

Below are some of the stories that didn't make it to you in May, and I also expect to get another edition to you in time for our first official recognition of Juneteenth next week. But I especially wanted to make sure to share a story about the incredible gift of life that one of our employees gave to a co-worker. I challenge everyone to not be moved by the quick thinking and selflessness exhibited during what could have had a very different, and tragic, outcome.

Thank you all for being part of our team. Have a wonderful week.

Patricia

*"One person can stop a great injustice. One person can be a voice for truth.
One person's kindness can save a life."*

Nicky Gumbel

REMEMBER: if you have reasonable suspicion that you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or if you are experiencing symptoms of fever (100.4 Fahrenheit or higher), coughing, or shortness of breath, do not report to work. Immediately contact your primary care provider and then your supervisor for instructions on what you need to do next. If you have any questions regarding your schedule, please contact your supervisor or Director. If you have questions in regards to pay or leave time, please contact Human Resources at (510) 874-1575.

All past issues of Direct To You are available on the OHA website for 24/7 access. In addition to the messages sent directly from the OHA executive director, you can also find links to other resources, articles, and up-to-date information about OHA operations and the ways we are addressing the current health crisis.





WE ARE ALL
IN THIS

Together

Living To Serve

At OHA we talk a lot about being a family and working together as a team to serve our clients and to help one another. That spirit of service and helping with an open heart has NEVER been more real than during a life-and-death emergency just a few days ago.

Leased Housing employees **Kathleen Chavez** and **Kim Boyd** were working when Kathleen became distressed. Recognizing that she was choking, Kim sprang to action and performed the Heimlich Maneuver to clear her airway, preventing her from possibly choking to death. Fortunately for Kathleen, Kim was nearby and had years of experience knowing the signs and knowing what to do as a result of his previous US military service. He remained calm and put his experience to work.

Following the incident, Kathleen stated, "I will certainly be forever thankful that [Kim] was there when I was in an emergent situation... [otherwise] I wouldn't be here to appreciate him."

It is fortunate that Kim has extensive training in CPR, but you don't have to have years of military training to be able to help a person in distress. OHA offers CPR and emergency response training, giving all OHA employees the ability to step up as Kim did should the need ever arise. However, in addition to the skill, his calmness and quick thinking served Kim well when he was called to action.

We salute Kim Boyd for this selfless act and for always being a reliable partner at OHA. He reflected, "Our coworkers are compassionate about their work and helping our clients and it shows each and every day. This is where I was meant to be." I think we can all attest to the fact that he was certainly where he was meant to be on that day.

Thank you Kim and Kathleen for being willing to share your story with your OHA work family.



5 Step CPR Guidelines



1. Call Emergency Number



2. Tap and Shout



3. Check for Breathing



4. Perform CPR



5. Continue CPR Steps
Until Help Arrives



Excellence in Financial Reporting at OHA

At the April 25, Board of Commissioners meeting, OHA Executive Director, Patricia Wells, recognized and praised the OHA Finance team, led by Victor Madamba for once again receiving the GFAO Award of Excellence for financial reporting.

OHA first implemented the CIPFA-GFOA model of financial management in 2012 and since then has received this award annually. Our internal process of gathering and reporting the details of OHA's financial activities has remained of

the highest caliber even through the pandemic when new sources of revenue and expenditures needed to be accounted for as a result of emergency federal programming and funding sources such as the CARES Act and the American Recovery Act.

As one of only a handful of Public Housing Agencies across the country to achieve this award, the OHA Finance department continues to stand above the pack as a model of excellence in the work they do on behalf of all of us and the clients we serve.

Along with Chief Officer of Programs and Finance Administration, Duane Hopkins, we all express our thanks to Victor and all the finance staff.

Fostering Our Youth

OHA's **FYI** program is not just 'for your information,' it is a critical component of what we do. **The Foster Youth to Independence Initiative**, is a voucher program funded by HUD that permits OHA to join partners in support of this vulnerable population, Each year thousands of formerly foster youth turn 18 and age out of the foster care program. This program seeks to make that transition positive and successful.

Unfortunately for many, the transition to adulthood comes abruptly and without the preparation that many of their peers in more traditional households receive. The experience of far to many foster youth involves moving from home to home throughout their childhoods and never really having a stable home environment. That might translate into not having the type of guidance and support as other kids turning 18, and it also means that they are unlikely to be prepared to get their first "adult home" which requires a job, money for deposits, furniture, utilities, food and more. The FYI program provides the kind of support they need to start "adulting" on their 18th birthday.

OHA proudly partners with Alameda County and other agencies to assist these kids as they launch into adulthood. By helping with moving costs, rent subsidy and household expenses, in addition to job training, and other life skills these kids are better equipped to manage their own affairs.

More information about the FYI program and the OHA teams working on it will be featured in upcoming **Direct To You** electronic newsletters.



Have an idea to save time or money? Figured out a way to make work a little easier and more efficient? Or perhaps you want to share your team's success with the entire agency? Well, now it's easier than ever to share you ideas! No matter what's on your mind... **Direct From Me** is the easy way to have your ideas delivered to OHA's Executive Director, Patricia Wells.



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