A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Now in our 33rd year, WHCHC currently houses over 850 residents, at 17 apartment communities, in three different cities. In March, we broke ground on our 21st project. In less than three years we will add five new buildings to our portfolio and the number of residents will exceed 1,300 people. This is a pivotal moment in our history. We are excited about this tremendous growth as it furthers our mission of building homes and providing services that move community members from insecurity to stability.

I have often said, “Housing is the foundation of a person’s life.” Yet we know that housing alone is not enough. Supportive services are critical to keeping people housed. Affordable housing, housing insecurity, and homelessness are complex issues. These are regional and national crises that cannot be solved overnight or without a collective response. Recently, California Governor Gavin Newsom said, “We need to work together as a state to focus on prevention, rapid re-housing, mental health, and more permanent supportive housing, because while shelter solves sleep, only permanent housing solves homelessness.” We agree. Recent studies have found that it is more cost-effective for a community to provide housing and services than to spend resources on public safety, hospitalization, and incarceration.

WHCHC’s properties are designed for independent living. Our residents are often the most vulnerable community members, and they face special challenges to maintain their housing. WHCHC has a dedicated team of professionals tasked with facilitating the mental, emotional and physical well-being of our residents. WHCHC’s buildings house people. WHCHC’s innovative programs and coordinated services keep them housed.

WHCHC is part of the solution to housing affordability, housing insecurity, and homelessness. So are you. We invite you to join us in advancing our mission and help make our vision of vibrant and healthy communities for all a reality.

On the following page, hear more about our newest property, Blue Hibiscus, and its spectacular grand opening celebration. On pages four and five, learn about the life affirming services that keep our residents housed. On page six you’ll hear from the residents themselves. Finally, page seven offers a glimpse of what’s next!

Thank you & regards,

Jesse Slansky
President & CEO
Introducing Blue Hibiscus

When WHCHC was founded in 1986, its motto was “Doing Wonders in Small Places.” WHCHC’s latest project is a return to these roots. As one of the densest cities west of the Mississippi River, the small City of West Hollywood is almost entirely built out, with opportunities for new construction few and far between. Land is hard to come by. Lots are small and expensive. When the opportunity arose to redevelop an underutilized parcel and double the number of housing units, WHCHC leapt at the chance.

Small sites face special obstacles. With a focus on infill development and community engagement, WHCHC knew it could rise to the challenge. The original concept was for a dramatic and striking modern building, in line with WHCHC’s more recent projects like the Courtyard at La Brea and the Sierra Bonita Apartments. The community did not respond as enthusiastically as the design team had hoped. So WHCHC went back to the drawing board.

Incorporating the feedback received during their outreach, the architects re-envisioned the building in a classic Spanish Colonial style, taking cues from the surrounding neighborhood at the eastern edge of West Hollywood.

When one potential resident saw the new rendering, he remarked, “Now that feels like home.”

And today it is. Having opened its doors in October, Blue Hibiscus is home to 24 residents who will not have to worry about housing insecurity, being rent burdened or displacement. West Hollywood City Councilmembers, representatives from Los Angeles County, our architect, contractor and funders, as well as community stakeholders and area neighbors joined the residents for a grand opening that featured a breathtaking setting with a phenomenal view of the twinkling lights of the Hollywood Hills.

Always at the vanguard, Blue Hibiscus is a pilot project for WHCHC that incorporates universal design principles. Every apartment is designed to be functional and practical for people both with and without mobility impairments. Along with WHCHC’s innovative programs and coordinated services, Blue Hibiscus is a home where residents can truly age in place.
Keeping People Housed

Housing alone is not enough. WHCHC’s innovative programs and coordinated services keep people housed. WHCHC’s resident services support independent living through one-on-one meetings, in-depth assessments, and referrals to life-sustaining resources. Activity-based workshops promote engaged life-long learning and enhance residents’ social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being.

The FEAST Program (Food Education Access Support Together) promotes wellness through the power of healthy food and human connection. For 16 weeks, residents at Movietown Square in West Hollywood met for two hours each week to discuss healthy eating habits, participate in live cooking demonstrations, share in a support group, and practice meditation.

Residents at Hayworth House in West Hollywood, recently began a seven-week exercise program created by the Arthritis Foundation. The movements were specifically developed by physical therapists to address pain, fatigue, and decreased strength that often accompany chronic illness.
Joy, Happiness, and Positive Living continues to be the theme of programs for our youngest residents at both Glen Grove in Glendale and Vermont Manzanita in Los Angeles. The goal is to engage the youth in a variety of activities, goal-oriented assignments, and workshops that encourage positive thinking and provide lifelong skills for joyfully navigating activities of daily living.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

When Bethel and her two young sons fled their home due to domestic violence, they had nowhere to turn. They bounced among shelters for over a year. Then an apartment became available at Vermont Manzanita in Los Angeles and everything changed.

With the stability of a safe home, and the support of our Resident Services Coordinators, they have turned their lives around. Bethel is on the verge of becoming a certified phlebotomist. The boys are doing well in school and participate in many of the programs offered on site, including reading club and kids’ gardening club.

WHCHC’s two-generation approach helps break the cycle of poverty. Activities are designed to meet the needs of children and parents together. The stability of a home, and the support of WHCHC’s Resident Services Coordinators, create a legacy of health and economic security that passes from one generation to the next.

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Life Lessons From a Legend

Central Casting couldn’t have filled the role better: Vivacious, Senior, Aging-in-Place. John moved into the Harper Avenue Apartments in 1952, and he’s still there going strong. A dancer, choreographer, and actor, John appeared in some of Hollywood’s most iconic films, including Singing in the Rain and West Side Story. After retiring from dancing, John taught dance and theatre workshops for children, teens, and adults. John also hosted an interview show on West Hollywood’s local cable channel for nearly twenty years. In honor of his 90th birthday, and his many contributions to the community, the City of West Hollywood declared June 24, 2012, “John Angelo Day.”

In a recent interview, John was asked about his philosophy on life. He said that he looked to his Bahá’í faith for guidance. “Live as if all people in the world are one, because we are. The things that divide us are an illusion. The world would be a better place if we all did that.”

Now 97, John feels blessed to have stayed in his home, and in his community, for 67 years.

Remembering Jim Chud, “Nothing is impossible.”

Jim Chud was a force of nature. An activist for those living with disabilities and those living with HIV and AIDS right up until his final days, Jim, was an original resident at our Sierra Bonita Apartments in West Hollywood. Jim served as a member of the Los Angeles County Commission on HIV and on West Hollywood’s Disability Advisory Board. Jim documented his journey as a regular contributor to the Huffington Post. In his words,

“I am in my 40th year with HIV. After college, and a rather amazing “coming out” in San Francisco, I traveled the world, first landing in Boston. Then I was on Wall Street for a year and I realized that I didn’t want to be that rich that badly. I was in DC, first on USA Today’s start-up team, next in the first years of my chosen profession of software. After two years in the UK as Principal Technical Consultant for Thorn/EMI, I returned to California and began working in artificial intelligence. My years as an avid athlete came to a screeching halt when I became disabled. I have focused these last 20 years on helping people with HIV and all disabilities navigate this world of ours, and I launched a nonprofit, Advance Abilities, to change the lives of disabled seniors in ways previously thought impossible. I have survived 80+ operations and two comas: nothing is impossible.”

Jim’s friends and colleagues spoke of his grit, determination, and ability to find humor in even the most challenging of moments.
Westmore Linden
Construction is hammering along nicely on 92 units of affordable housing for low-income seniors, with 15 units reserved as permanent supportive housing for homeless seniors. Located in the Koreatown/Pico-Union neighborhood of Los Angeles, Westmore Linden is scheduled to open in January 2020.

Rampart Mint
23 units of permanent supportive housing for homeless and chronically homeless individuals with special needs are currently going up. Co-developed with Affordable Living for the Aging (ALA), Rampart Mint is located in the Westlake/Rampart Village neighborhood in Los Angeles and is expected to open in the spring of 2020.

Elden Elms
We broke ground on our 21st project in March. Adjacent to Westmore Linden, Elden Elms includes 92 affordable units for low-income families, with 15 units reserved for the formerly homeless. Elden Elms is scheduled to welcome residents in 2021.

WHCHC integrates resident services with affordable housing because low-income and other high risk individuals, such as the formerly homeless, face special challenges to maintain their housing.

We are grateful to have individual donors, corporate sponsors, and philanthropic foundations who support the mission of WHCHC.

Your investment of $1,200 provides one resident with supportive services for one year. Please visit www.whchc.org and donate today!
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OUR MISSION
Building homes and providing services that move community members from insecurity to stability.

WHCHC does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, disability, familial status, national origin, sexual orientation, or any other arbitrary basis.