



the Community Voice

CHARTER OAK COMMUNITIES

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR COC RESIDENTS

Vincent J. Tufo

Executive Director and CEO

Jonathan Gottlieb

Vice President, Rippowam Corp.

Lisa Reynolds

Director of Finance

Natalie Coard

Director of Property and Facilities Management

Christine Young, Editor

Board Meetings for 2016:

- June 22, 2016
- July 27, 2016
- August 24, 2016
- September 28, 2016
- October 26, 2016
- November 16, 2016
- December 14, 2016

Meetings are Wednesday evenings and begin at 6:00 p.m. at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.



Artwork representing the Vita Health and Wellness District, part of COC's commitment to the physical, financial and emotional health of our community.

COC Receives Federal “High-Performer” Rating

Charter Oak Communities (COC) has received the highest possible operations rating from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the federal branch of U.S. government that oversees public housing in American towns and cities and on Indian reservations.

Housing authorities must receive an overall score of at least 90 percent or greater to be designated in the “High Performer” category. The score is based on total available points in the HUD uniform rating system, which is called its Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS). **COC scored 95 out of 100 possible points.** This recognition reflects COC’s 2015 fiscal year performance.

PHAS scoring is based on comprehensive ratings for four key indicators, including physical condition; financial condition; management operations; and capital fund programs. The audit also reviews building exteriors, building systems, dwelling units and common areas.

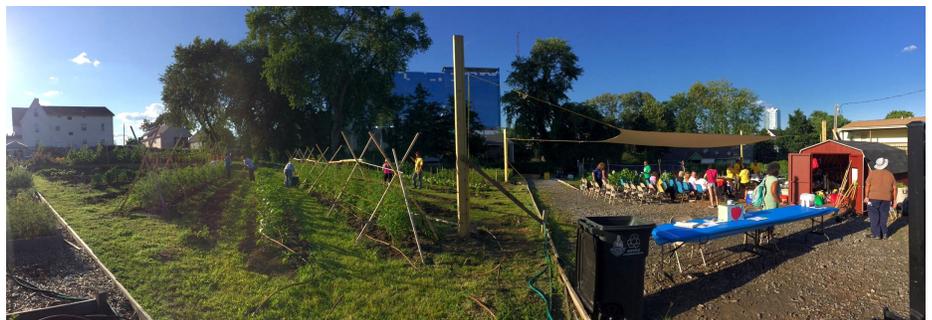
According to Vincent J. Tufo, COC executive director and CEO, “Receiving a high PHAS rating means



we’re considered among the best-operating housing authorities in the country. PHAS is an important management tool for effectively and fairly measuring critical factors that affect the day-to-day quality of life for residents of publicly assisted housing.”

The PHAS audit, Tufo explained, helps public housing authorities identify areas for improvement, and qualifies high-performing authorities for incentives such as relief from some reporting requirements and increased

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Fairgate Farm on Stillwater Avenue (photo, immediately above) was one of the many COC operations examined as part of the comprehensive HUD review, as was Post House (photo above right) and other COC residential facilities.



COC Advisory Board Member: Rich Ostuw



Richard (Rich) Ostuw joined the COC Board of Commissioners as an Advisory Board member in June 2015, and shares his vast experience and knowledge on the Human Resources Committee. Jack Penfield, a COC Board member, introduced Rich to our organization. “COC’s mission,

thoughtful leadership and well-performing organization” were the focal points on his decision to be a Board member, Rich explains.

Rich holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in math from Rutgers University in New Jersey, and a Master of Science degree in Actuarial Science from Northeastern University in Boston. He currently resides in Stamford with his wife, and has two adult children and a granddaughter.

Rich retired from his 22-year career with Towers Perrin in 2005 and then continued with Towers Perrin on a part-time basis. While there, he served in various roles including as the chief actuary and as a member of the Board of Directors. His career with Towers Perrin began in Cleveland, Ohio, and he transferred to Stamford in 1997. Rich speaks fondly

of his career. “I worked with large employers on employee benefits throughout the United States, and in internal leadership roles that provided me the opportunity to travel worldwide,” he says. “During my career, I traveled to most major cities in the United States and Canada, several cities in Europe, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sydney and Melbourne.” Previously, he worked for another global consulting firm and an insurance company.

Lucky for Rich, traveling has always been one of his passions. Over the years, he has traveled to all 50 states as well as the Galapagos Islands, China, Australia, Cuba and major cities in Europe. Most recently he visited Cartagena, Columbia. Snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef was the highlight of his trip to Australia. In his travels, Rich enjoys experiencing the people and culture of other countries.

In addition to his hobbies of golf and reading, Rich is active with other organizations in Stamford. A volunteer with the Junior Achievement organization, Rich presented programs to high school students on career skills and personal finances. He is also on the Board at the Child Guidance Center, which provides mental health services to children from birth to 18. At Neighbors Link Stamford, Rich provides his expertise on the Human Resources Committee. Rich is very proud to be part of the Stamford community!

COC Receives “Healthy Workplace” Recognition

Charter Oak Communities (COC) has been recognized by the Business Council of Fairfield County as a *Healthy Workplace*.

The 2016 Healthy Workplace Employer Recognition Program applauded the efforts of 49 area employers who, according to the Business Council, understand the competitive advantage of a healthy workforce, and who have implemented a diverse range of programs to promote a healthy workplace and assist their employees to live healthier lives. Research demonstrates that employers realize increased productivity and reduced direct healthcare costs when they offer health and wellness programs to their employees.

The Healthy Workplace Employer Recognition Program is an initiative of the Council’s Wellness Roundtable. Concentrating on the issues of health and wellness, the Roundtable

is a vehicle for best practices. They also conduct a communication and events program to raise wellness awareness and serve as a catalyst for employers to take cooperative action in meeting the health-related needs of their employees.

The mission of COC’s Wellness Program is to support the health of employees, and their families, in enhancing body and mind. The program is guided by an Employee Wellness Committee comprising five members, with additional senior-level support.



COC employees attending the recognition event, from left to right: Janice Tantimonico, Vincent Tufo, Suela Pergjoni, Donna Ball, Chris Warren, Marcia Bennett and Dan Persaud.



Resident Corner: Ricky Morales

Ricky, known as the “eyes and ears” for Stamford Manor, is grateful and happy to call this home. The residents and staff speak highly of Ricky. “We are fortunate he resides here,” states Judy Paul, property manager of Stamford Manor. She describes Ricky as “A kind, caring person and always ready to lend a helping hand. He is there to assist other residents with shopping, health concerns and doctor appointments, and he knows the guy to call to set up your TV and cable box. He has been known to sit and talk with elderly residents when they are lonely and anxious. He is a good person who we can always rely on.”

Ricky is glad to help others. He says, “I was raised by my wonderful mom to respect all people and lend a helping hand from an early age. My mother believed that by helping others the goodness would spread for others to

give back.” He admired his mother for raising seven children on her own, being a hard worker and attending Yale University.

Ricky was born in Bridgeport, and then moved to Harlem where he graduated from the Harlem Performing Arts High School. He has been blessed with raising four children of his own and three stepdaughters. In addition, he enjoys his three beautiful grandkids.

Having a passion for baseball, Ricky played for the Montreal Expos’ minor league team from 1985 to 1988 as an infielder and outfielder. Over the years Ricky has had a variety of professions, which has included being a police officer, a manager for Walgreens, and a limousine driver in New York and Stamford. But, diabetes changed his life, and he could no longer work.



Ricky is a huge fan of the NY Mets and Dallas Cowboys. He also enjoys playing basketball, will play on a softball league this summer, and has played handball from the time he was a child. Happy to keep active, Ricky can be found walking with friends in his “back yard” at Mill River Park.

Stove Safety Matters

When operating a stove or oven, safety and caution are imperative. Prevent your home and chef from kitchen fires and burns with precautions and safety procedures to ensure your family’s safety is a priority.

- ⇒ Remove leftover grease or food particles daily from the stove top. Food and grease can cause flare ups when you’re cooking.
- ⇒ Stove-top burners can increase the risk of fire if you are not careful. Oil, butter and grease can splatter to nearby surfaces, or worse - on your skin. Lay food down slowly in the pan and distance yourself as much as possible.
- ⇒ Avoid putting clothing, potholders or paper towels near the stove top since hot splatters can spark a fire.

It is essential to follow the above guidelines for safety and cleanliness. If you need assistance, you may contact your Resident Service Coordinator to locate available services.

COC Receives Federal “High-Performer” Rating

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grant funding. It is designed to help improve the overall delivery of public housing services, and enhances trust among public housing agencies, residents and the general public.

“COC is very proud HUD has recognized us as a high performer for the past six years,” Tufo added. “This honor is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff, residents and contractors. We also sincerely appreciate the support of our friends and colleagues in the City of Stamford and our community-development partners throughout Connecticut.”



Father's Day Celebrations Underway

Courtesy of Brianna Gaddy of Family Centers

Father's Day is a national holiday that originated in the United States but is celebrated in a large number of other countries as well. On this day we celebrate not only fathers, but grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, and any other person who holds a position as a father in our lives. This year **Father's Day is June 19th**. Come and celebrate your father or father figure at one of the many events happening throughout Charter Oak Communities, including:



- Clinton Manor - Thursday, June 16th at 1:00 p.m.
- Glenbrook Manor - Thursday, June 16th at 1 p.m.
- Oak Park will have a Father's Day BBQ - Sunday, June 26th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. behind 73 Dale Street
- Post House will host a community BBQ - Friday, June 24th at 12 p.m.
- Quintard Manor - Friday, June 17th at 1:00 p.m.
- Rippowam Manor - Friday, June 17th at 1 p.m.
- Stamford Manor is tentatively holding their community BBQ on Wednesday, June 15th at 12 p.m.
- Westwood will have a summer BBQ on Saturday, June 18th at 12 p.m.



For additional information on these Father's Day events, contact your Resident Service Coordinator.



Strawberry Festival: Farm Jam

Saturday, June 11 from 12 noon to 2 p.m.

Free and Open to All

Marking the official launch to the 2016 summer season, our third-annual Strawberry Jam Festival! Join us for delicious, healthy snacks – games – face-painting and kids' crafts – music, and more!



Farm-to-Table Family Series (Six weeks)

Six-week Family Nutrition/Cooking Demonstration Workshop

Wednesday evenings, July 13 through August 17

Times and topics to be announced!