

DCHA Annual Report 2010



Looking Back — Moving Forward  
*Celebrating a Decade of Positive Change*





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### **Message from Adrienne Todman, Executive Director**

2010 was a banner year for the DC Housing Authority. We marked the tenth anniversary of the end of court-ordered receivership, and the beginning of a decade of innovation. During David Gilmore's five years as Receiver, core systems were re-established and sound management of our public housing communities were, once again, a priority.

When Michael Kelly became Executive Director in 2000, he established new business systems and community development projects flourished. Private and public partnerships brought \$1.5 billion in new economic development to the District, and the Housing Choice Voucher program grew to serve 11,000 families and individuals.

Today, we are building on this solid foundation. Our ambitious agenda for the future includes the development of a more streamlined organization for efficient operation and improved access to programs and services. We are also aggressively seeking non-traditional partnerships with community organizations and for-profit businesses to help us improve the lives of our low-income residents—especially the children.

We are working to extend our workforce development programs beyond construction to other area businesses, and increase opportunities for training and long-term employment for low-income residents. This past year, we put millions of dollars in stimulus money to work renovating existing properties, including conversion of a vacant building into our first-ever assisted living/independent living facility. We will work with a local assisted living facility operator to create a program of services.

Three Board of Commissioners members moved on at the end of 2010; Fernando Lemos, Executive Director of Mi Casa, who served as Vice Chairman of the Board; and Bill Slover and LaRuby May, who served as Chairman in 2009 and 2010 respectively. I thank them both for their guidance and service.

As you read this annual report, I hope you agree that DCHA has fulfilled our leadership role well over the last 10 years. The Board of Commissioners, DCHA staff, our resident leadership and all our partners are working hard to sustain our success as we move forward.



### **Message from Pedro Alfonso, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners**

When I accepted Mayor Vincent Gray's invitation to serve as the Chairman of the DC Housing Authority, I knew I was joining a dynamic organization. In 10 years, DCHA has worked to dismantle an outmoded system of public housing and has fashioned a new physical landscape in communities across the District, from the waterfront to Capitol Hill to East of the River.

On the pages of this annual report, you can read about DCHA successes as well as the special people and organizations that joined with DCHA to touch the lives of so many District residents. I also want to thank the District agencies, local non-profits, faith-based institutions and private developers who participated in these critical partnerships. We also could not have succeeded without the support and the financial commitment of the Mayor and Council of the District of Columbia.

As we begin our next decade, I see looming challenges for DCHA and other housing authorities across the country. The great recession has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable in our community and magnified the critical affordable housing issues facing our community. We know that the Federal government's deficit-cutting actions will result in a shortfall in funding for affordable housing, although the exact figures have not been determined.

This DC Housing Authority will meet these challenges and continue to innovate and find effective ways to serve our city, and its low-income families, seniors, veterans and disabled people. As we move forward in this uncertain economy, we are committed to preserving a precious resource for District residents: a place to call home.

# Celebrating a Decade of Positive Change



The year 2000 swept into the nation's capital in a glorious rush. The new millennium began in a burst of energy and high expectation. It was the beginning of a decade of boom for the District of Columbia Housing Authority—characterized by an explosion of new ideas and fearless exploration. But before the boom there had been five years of court-ordered receivership to repair a failing system. Order and competence were restored to the agency. Discipline and strong management were put into place. “Trust was built between the authority and its constituents where suspicion had been the norm,” says DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman. “It was the huge leap forward, which prepared DCHA for its next era—an unparalleled period of growth and development.”

Financial savvy brought economic stability and prosperity. Area business and community organizations sought out DCHA expertise and partnership. Seven HOPE VI redevelopment grants were won, and innovative, mixed-income neighborhoods built where antiquated public housing warehouses once stood. DCHA's affordable housing portfolio shifted away from authority-owned properties toward a growing voucher program, offering low-income residents subsidies for rental units throughout the nation's capital.

“Now we're entering the second decade of the 21st century. We know that in many ways it will not mirror the first,” says Todman. “For all of us in this city and in

*DCHA partnered with Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington to provide annual subsidy for 50 public housing units at St. Martins in Ward 5. At the center of the picture: Adrienne Todman, DCHA Executive Director (in pearls); Councilmember Michael Brown; Cardinal Donald Wuerl; Rev. Michael Kelly; Councilmember Harry Thomas; Mayor Vincent Gray.*





the nation, moving forward requires taking advantage of lessons learned in the past. At DCHA, we're returning to—and reconfiguring—the basics. Receivership created the framework. The boom years taught us a lot about the economics of affordable housing. Today we're creating a strategy for the future that will put the best of both to work benefiting our residents.

“Job number one is to be an efficient landlord—fix things when they break, and keep the properties up-to-date, attractive, efficient and safe places to live. The decade ahead will be leaner—with fewer financial resources—and little funding growth. But we will learn to navigate it well by exploring creative collaborations to help us increase the number of available public housing units all across the city; preserve the spirit of our community's neighborhoods even as we continue to build new developments; and manage a vast housing voucher program that is home to thousands of DC families. All the while, we'll continue to invest in human development—to give residents, especially children, the tools they need to make smart choices for their lives.”

It's the beginning of what Todman calls the “millennial decade.” Focused on sustainability, efficiency and accountability. A streamlined, “greener” decade in which progress moves at a “digitally-enhanced” speed toward the future.

*Capper/Carrollburg HOPE VI property in Ward 6 includes a courtyard in the new townhouses at Capitol Quarters.*



*“In our quest for innovative solutions to affordable housing in the 21st century, I count DCHA as one of our strongest partners. In the last 10 years, DCHA has emerged from court receivership to become a national model in how to improve quality of life for low- and moderate-income citizens.*

*DCHA has doubled the number of families participating in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. In partnership with the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development and private and non-profit developers, DCHA has shown that economic development and affordable housing can co-exist. Its seven HOPE VI communities, which replaced blighted public housing with quality homes, reflect our partnership. We will continue to work with DCHA to ensure that we move forward as “One City”—an urban environment rich in cultural diversity, economic opportunity and livable, sustainable neighborhoods.”*

*— Vincent Gray, Mayor of the District of Columbia*

# Framework

**When David Gilmore arrived in the nation's capital in 1995, the city's public housing system lay in ruin. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rated it among the nation's worst. Hundreds of units were abandoned and derelict. Thousands of low income families were living in buildings in dangerous disrepair. Crime often raged in the building's hallways, and residents were frustrated by chronic mismanagement and empty promises.**



*"In three years, we renovated 5,000 units and corrected 17 years of neglect."*

— **William Knox**, DCHA  
Chief of Staff



*"[David Gilmore] would come to the property late at night when we didn't know it, and then call the next day and tell me he had been there checking to be sure everything was ok. That was a big change."*

— **Anne Clark**, President,  
Sibley Plaza Resident Council

Gilmore, a long-time public housing "turnaround" man, had been named "Receiver" of DC public and assisted housing by Judge Steffen Graae—the result of a 1992 lawsuit filed on behalf of poor families on the District's waiting list for public housing. The suit prompted the DC Superior Court to appoint a special master to review the agency. Then in 1995, the housing authority was placed into receivership.

"It was clear from the beginning that the agency needed to be restructured," says Frank Smith, former chairman of the DCHA Board of Commissioners. At the time, Smith represented Ward 1 on the DC Council and was chairman of the Housing Committee. He knew first-hand how the system had failed his constituents. "I saw how families were living—and knew it had to change."

"Frank understood it was time to get aggressive about the problems," says Patty Mullahy Fugere, of the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, which represented public housing applicants in the historic court case. "The lack of continuity in leadership at the agency and its excessive entanglement with politics had created a broken system. Then the stars aligned well to move the agency into receivership and to bring David Gilmore in to get the huge job of rebuilding done—and done well."

In five years of fierce activity, Gilmore and his hand-picked management team produced more than a turnaround for DC's public housing—they turned public housing on its head and set the stage for the decade of extraordinary change that has followed receivership.

Today DCHA is recognized as a national leader—a creative and progressive organization that is reshaping the nation's capital and the nation's notions about affordable housing.



## Forward Motion

Six months after receivership began, a recovery plan was complete and made public. “We recognized that transparency was critical,” says Gilmore, who is now running the New Orleans Housing Authority as the HUD Receiver. “The public needed to understand the plan and realize that fixing an agency that had been neglected for a decade would take time. But we developed a timeline, and expectations and we delivered.”

The Gilmore team fashioned a four-front attack: quickly repair distressed existing properties; develop new communities to replace obsolete public housing “warehouses;” develop a strong and responsive property management system; and, overhaul DCHA’s administrative structure.

DCHA became an independent agency with the ability to release millions of dollars in reserved funds that had previously been locked in a procurement bottleneck. “The agency was de-politicized,” says Gilmore. “With autonomy, we had the power we needed to get the work done.”

In a blitzkrieg of renovation, scores of units were refurbished. “In just days, crews of 50 or more people would literally renovate complete units, two or three at a time, while the families stayed on site in empty units we had restored for the project,” says William Knox, now DCHA Chief of Staff, who oversaw the project. “In three years, we renovated 5,000 units and corrected 17 years of neglect.”



*“We had to rebuild an agency that had neglected residents and put their lives in jeopardy. And because we were located in the nation’s capital, we understood that failure of the system had become a public spectacle—and rebuilding the authority into a well run agency would be a vote in favor of public housing authorities across the country.”*

— **David Gilmore**, DCHA Receiver  
1995-2000

*Michael Kelly, first DCHA Executive Director, (left, front) prepares to take the reins from Receiver David Gilmore (center, front) and Judge Steffen Graae (right, front) in 2000 as the judge approved the end of the receivership. They mark the occasion with the DCHA staff.*





*"Congratulations to the DC Housing Authority for a dynamic decade of community building. Michael Kelly's creative initiatives, which won DC unprecedented federal funding support, and Adrienne Todman's continued strong leadership of a committed team of experienced professionals have built whole new vibrant neighborhoods in our city, vastly improved the housing stock of the Authority, and, most importantly, provided expanded opportunities for residents. The DC Housing Authority is fast becoming a model for responsible, responsive urban development. Thank you for a job wonderfully well done."*

— **Sharon Ambrose**, *Former Chair of the Workforce Development and Housing Committee and Ward 6 representative, Council of the District of Columbia*



### Fixing a Broken System

The authority was divided into three regions—a management structure designed to increase oversight of DCHA properties. Skilled property managers were hired and given the authority to get the work done. Routine inspections created effective preventive maintenance. Performance standards were established—and upheld.

By 1997, DCHA's first police officers were administered the oath. Crime rates fell. For the first time, public housing residents elected their own Resident Council members. HUD moved DCHA from its list of "troubled" housing agencies—and by 1999, the authority was moving toward a top performance rating.

Sharon Ambrose, who was then the Chair of the Workforce Development and Housing Committee, shepherded legislation through the DC Council that formed the new housing authority. It established a governing body for DCHA—a nine-member Board of Commissioners to include public housing residents elected by their peers, a first for the nation.

"Gilmore was hands-on," says Anne Clark, a 42-year resident of DCHA's Sibley Plaza, and president of the property's resident council for more years than she can remember. "He was a god-send," she says. "He would come to the property late at night when we didn't know it, and then call the next day and tell me he had been there checking to be sure everything was ok. That was a big change."

Unannounced visits became routine for Gilmore, whose "take no prisoners" management style was surprising to residents. "The issue was very clear," says Gilmore. "We were paid to serve the needs of clients. If we weren't doing that, we needed to sit





down and find a way to make it work. We had to rebuild an agency that had neglected residents and put their lives in jeopardy,” he says. “And because we were located in the nation’s capital, we understood that failure of the system had become a public spectacle—and rebuilding the authority into a well run agency would be a vote in favor of public housing authorities across the country.”

Gilmore restored public confidence in DCHA, revitalized the bricks and mortar of DC’s public housing portfolio, and laid the groundwork for ambitious and precedent-setting redevelopment. The once beleaguered housing authority was now a well-oiled and well-financed organization poised for the future.

In a routine report to the court in early 1999, Gilmore wrote, “we’re in the home stretch.” In September 2000, the court-ordered receivership ended. Gilmore handed over the reins to Michael Kelly, who was named DCHA’s first “post-receivership” executive director.

“When I assumed the leadership of the authority, I had a great advantage,” says Kelly. “I actually began to work with David during the receivership and through the recovery plan. I was involved in developing the very important transition strategy. During that time, we established a protocol for working with the first board and a human resources and hiring structure—a kind of give and take that helped us move more efficiently from receivership to independence. By the end of 2000, we had already developed the authority’s very first strategic plan for the future.”

*Above: During receivership, the authority embarked on a blitzkrieg of renovation to refurbish 5,000 units*

*Opposite page: The Capitol Gateway HOPE IV community replaced one DCHA and two HUD housing projects at the District’s Easternmost border.*

# Neighborhoods



*“The private sector investors played a critical role a decade ago, and still do today. They shared our understanding that we weren’t simply building housing, but creating neighborhoods that would open doors to new economic opportunities for the city.”*

— **Michael Kelly**, former DCHA Executive Director

As DCHA emerged from receivership, thousands of empty units had been restored. Hundreds of low-income families once locked out of affordable housing in the District had homes. Occupancy rates were nearing 100 percent. In 2000 a new strategy for the next decade emerged. To truly modernize its properties, DCHA needed to create fiscal accountability, build a skilled in-house management team, and re-engineer processes to foster efficiency and high performance.

“We needed to be entrepreneurial,” says former Board of Commissioner’s Vice Chair Marcie Cohen. “Michael Kelly and his staff understood the world of real estate. They developed truly creative solutions to fill financial gaps, so that DCHA could do much more than simply keep its properties up to code—they could create a real ‘golden age’ for affordable housing in the District.”

“We took advantage of HUD’s “Moving to Work” demonstration project initiative that had been implemented in 1999,” says then-DCHA Executive Director Michael Kelly. “It deregulated financing and gave us the flexibility to use HUD funding in creative ways—to open up possibilities. We could ask ourselves how can we use these dollars in different, more innovative ways? As a result, DCHA was remodeled from the traditional caretaker model of a public housing agency into a savvy real estate developer.”

Two DCHA subsidiaries were established—one to oversee modernization and another to manage new construction. With a cadre of experts in engineering, architecture, finance, operations, community development and real estate and growing





reputations for excellence, both would attract additional public and private sector clients—and produce healthy profits to be fed back into DCHA’s affordable housing projects.

## Modernization and Greening

A multi-year strategy was developed to repair, renovate and modernize building structures inside and out, to create accessible units for mobility impaired residents and to build new communities from the ground up.

DCHA was the first public housing authority in the country granted the right to use the HUD’s annual allocation of Capital Grant funds to secure loans for modernization and re-development activities. The \$77.8 million bond program of 2005 helped jump start the authority’s modernization program—and secured DCHA’s reputation in the financial marketplace.

DCHA’s senior properties—serving a growing population of older public housing residents—were a top priority for modernization. And the authority put into motion an accelerated plan to increase the number of available units of affordable housing for people with mobility impairments. Dramatic progress was made to turn hundreds of existing housing into fully accessible units—and to ensure that new development projects set aside units that comply with federal standards of accessibility.

After Marcie Cohen’s dogged persistence, DCHA embarked on a pioneering energy efficiency program in 2007. “The ‘light went on’ and the board understood that green was a smart idea,” says Cohen. “We had a rising asthma epidemic among residents who were breathing unhealthy interior air, and our workers were being exposed to toxic materials. We also understood the cost savings of creating green properties would ultimately be enormous.”



*“Russell Simmons was named the Chairman of the DC Housing Authority Board by then-Mayor Anthony Williams when it was first established in 2000. It was important to DCHA to have a person with his experience and stature in the community as our first Chairperson. As a businessman, he understood housing from many perspectives, and DCHA soon became a serious player in community development.”*

**— Adrienne Todman, DCHA**  
Executive Director



*Opposite page: New high efficiency boilers are helping to dramatically reduce gas usage.*

*A solar heating array helps heat water at the Regency apartments in Ward 3.*

*Left: A TV news photographer gets a bird’s eye view at the Regency apartment green roof ribbon cutting.*



*"During the past ten years, DCHA has made tremendous progress. It has helped transform neighborhoods throughout the city, create economic investment opportunities in some of our most neglected neighborhoods, and increase affordable housing production and opportunities for some of our least fortunate families. I am proud of the Williams administration's support and involvement in these efforts and of the establishment of an independent housing authority, which has become a model nationwide."*

— **Anthony Williams**, Former District of Columbia Mayor

DCHA took advantage of a HUD initiative that provides financial incentives to housing authorities that institute energy efficiency programs. It borrowed against future energy savings to finance a comprehensive "Energy Capital Improvement Program" to retrofit all DCHA properties with energy conserving technology. DCHA also became the first housing authority in the country to create its own energy services company (ESCO).

Today, the ESCO provides energy services to all DCHA properties at a fraction of the cost of a private company—saving the authority millions of dollars annually. Dozens of DCHA properties are today "green," with newly installed and energy efficient heating, air conditioning and boiler systems. Non-toxic paints are now standard. And Energy Star® appliances are saving dollars—while sparing the environment. Dozens more units are targeted for renovation and retrofitting within the next year. "We are going to remain aggressive about modernization—not simply to repair units, but to be certain that DCHA properties are up-to-date and efficient homes," says DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman.

### **Building HOPE**

New redevelopment began in earnest in 1998. DCHA's first HOPE VI grant, which had been stalled for years before receivership, was fast approaching completion. By the middle of the year, residents were moving into the new Townhomes at Capitol Hill, on the site of the old Ellen Wilson Dwellings, which had been abandoned years earlier.

Since that first project, DCHA has received a total of seven Hope VI grants—the city's redevelopment program is among the largest and most successful in the nation.



*Right: John Trasviña, HUD Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (left), and then DC Council Chairman Vincent Gray (center) joined DCHA officials and residents for the grand opening of 19 new apartments that meet the most stringent federal standards for the mobility impaired at Horizon House, Ward 2.*

*Opposite page: An early DCHA HOPE VI development, Wheeler Creek in Ward 8, has become a stable community of renters and homeowners of all incomes.*



Thriving, award-winning communities have been built across the District. Brand new affordable and market-rate housing, retail space, community centers and green space are transforming the city's landscape.

In 1998, Janice Burgess joined DCHA and was charged with working closely with the communities most affected by the new developments. "There's no easy way to tell people who have spent decades living in one apartment that they need to move," Burgess says honestly. "But I've discovered that ultimately, as residents have become more involved in the process, many have seen HOPE VI as an opportunity to change their lives for the better.

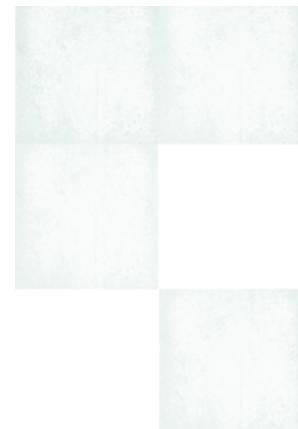
"Months of planning go into each HOPE VI project—and at each turn, a Steering Committee—made up of residents, neighborhood businesses, employers, representatives of advocacy groups—makes recommendations. Residents are always sitting at the table. We ask what do you need? And we try hard to deliver."

Since those first families crossed the threshold of their new homes in 1998, DCHA has become one of the city's top affordable housing developers—but developers with a difference.

"There is no doubt that in the last decade, DCHA became a serious player in community development, with our talented team of experts leading the way," says Todman. "But through all the growth of neighborhoods, we haven't lost sight of our ultimate goal—that's to be certain we meet the needs of the city's low and moderate income families. They are our top priority. DCHA will always be invested in their positive futures."

*"Months of planning go into each HOPE VI project—and at each turn, a Steering Committee...makes recommendations. Residents are always sitting at the table. We ask what do you need? And we try hard to deliver."*

**— Janice Burgess, Deputy Director, DCHA Office of Capital Programs and Development**



# People



*“As Chair of the Committee on Housing and Workforce Development, I am committed to ensuring that every opportunity is extended to plan, produce and preserve safe and affordable housing for the residents of the District of Columbia throughout our city. Working together with public agencies like DCHA, private organizations and community associations, we can continue to make the District of Columbia a world class city, where all residents, regardless of cultural or economic background, can thrive.”*

— **Michael A. Brown,**  
Councilmember (At-Large-I)

**Even before the end of court-ordered receivership, an important philosophy was taking shape at DCHA: human development is the critical linchpin to success. Without programs to help residents become self sufficient, neighborhoods will flounder and ultimately fail.**

From the start, hundreds of public housing residents were put to work restoring derelict housing units. “Many of the residents were on my construction crews,” recalls William Knox, then director of operations. “They were helping to build their own communities back up, and many of them turned these temporary jobs into long-term employment.”

## **Jobs are Job #1**

By 1997, a Laborers Apprenticeship Training Program was in place. Over time, workforce development grew through Section 3—the HUD program that promotes partnerships between housing authorities and local vendors, who must provide job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low- and very low-income residents. The program continues to expand—with increasing number of residents





receiving job training and permanent employment. And a growing cadre of contractors and subcontractors doing business with DCHA are either owned by low-income residents or have a substantial portion of their workforce considered low income.

“Stable employment is so important to breaking the cycle of poverty that historically has kept some families in public housing for generations,” says Frank Smith. “One of my primary objectives as chairman was to change that perception for public housing residents. They can build a better future for themselves and their families. Sometimes we just need to show them how.”

Smith became the champion for children living in public housing by making sure funds were available for the Commitment to Excellence Scholarship Program—which has given dozens of young people from low-income families the chance to get a college education.

“Our kids need role models, and we have an obligation to be sure they have them. Everyone, no matter where they live, has the right to feel prideful and hopeful—to try for their little piece of the dream.”

The late Taunya McNeil agreed. A long-time resident of DCHA public housing communities, and president of the Benning Terrace Resident Council for years, McNeil said, “Our older children want to be models for the younger kids. We all know that ‘it takes a village to raise a child.’”

*“Our older children want to be models for the younger kids. We all know that it takes a village to raise a child.”*

— **Taunya McNeil**, *President, Benning Terrace Resident Council*

*For 14 years, DCHA has served 75 young people in public housing and the Housing Choice Voucher Program annually through the Do Your B.E.S.T. Summer Employment Program (year 2008 youth pictured below). In addition to work, the program includes a teambuilding and leadership workshop, a college tour and a community service project.*





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— **Angelia Scott**, *President, City-wide Resident Advisory Board*

McNeil's daughter Tynesia is taking on the job. Three years ago while on a college break, Tynesia recruited some friends to join her mother in running a summer camp for kids at Benning Terrace. McNeil nearly single-handedly managed the year-round program for more than 50 kids, exposing them to everything from arts and crafts to sports, and taking them on outings to local museums.

McNeil's leadership skills were honed through her active participation in DCHA resident councils. Trips to housing authorities around the nation and exposure to the political workings of city government by testifying before the DC Council served as on-the-job training that has served her well.

"I wanted to be council president so I can speak for our residents," she said. "There is no question that things in our community have improved in recent years. But there is always more to be done."

### **Dreaming Big**

Today there are more than 40 resident council presidents speaking for 8,000 families living in DCHA properties across DC. The city-wide Resident Advisory Board, made up of representatives from each property and led by President Angelia Scott, is helping to shape a better future for this diverse community.

"A decade ago, we were shut out of the decision-making," Scott says. "Now we understand the power we can have when we stand together. I've witnessed some wonderful improvements in the last ten years, and it's been a blessing to help people."

Scott hopes a planned 2012 Summit for residents will be an important next step-up to full empowerment. "We will take on some critical issues facing our residents—including serious emotional and physical health issues that many of them face."







*Above: Resident Council officers spend three days at a leadership development retreat the fall after their peers elect them. The most recent group takes a break from the “boot camp” in workshops ranging from Understanding HUD Policies, and How to Operate a Non-profit to Team Building.*

Scott knows there are still challenges, but she is optimistic about the future. She “dreams big,” she says, and “talks the talk and hits the road running.”

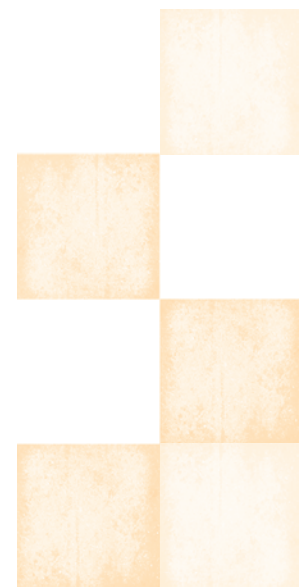
Anne Clark has been running hard for decades. She moved from Virginia with her family when Sibley Plaza first opened in 1968—and has seen bad times and better times. Today as president of the property’s resident council, Clark and her fellow council members are running a thriving enterprise—with administrative responsibility over the laundry facility and vending room, and for the development of a very busy social and educational calendar for residents that includes day trips, health lectures and exercise classes.

*Below: Anne Clark, President of the Sibley Plaza Resident Council, worked with the non-profit group A Wider Circle to get a \$350,000 grant from the TKF Foundation to build a 1500-square-foot, handicapped-accessible garden at the public housing building on North Capitol Street NW.*

“As president I’ve had a lot of opportunities for personal growth and received a great deal of management training,” says Clark. “We’ve all worked hard to make this property what it is today. We have a way to go, but we know we have a voice. When I travel and speak with council members of other cities’ public housing properties, they are amazed by the role DC residents have in shaping the future of our homes. I always say ‘if you want a nice livable place you have to part of the process.’”

*Opposite page, left: Section 3 provides training and jobs for DCHA residents including work as members of home renovation crews.*

*Opposite page, right: The Reverend Jesse Jackson met with the citywide Resident Advisory Board in 2007 to discuss resident empowerment and a voter registration initiative for public housing.*





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— **Frank Smith**, Former Chair of the DCHA Board of Commissioners



**Bill Slover**, Principal of AVCO Interests, served as Chairman of the DCHA Board in 2009.

## Building on the Legacy

Resident councils have been a critical vehicle for change and have helped give public housing residents power over their own lives. But even before the end of receivership, the stage had been set with the opening of Family Enhancement Centers at four DCHA properties. The centers became a hub for resident activity, linking families to critical services throughout the city and serving as a proving ground for resident leaders.

As resident councils grew, so did DCHA’s Office of Resident Service to oversee a host of supportive programs in partnership with residents, including administration of HUD-funded Resident Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (ROSS) Centers.

Today these centers offer job training workshops, job placement assistance, homeownership counseling, after school programs, literacy classes, fatherhood workshops, and computer training classes. The newest center, funded in 2008 by a ROSS grant, is helping DCHA’s aging population thrive. The New Beginnings Senior Wellness Center in the Judiciary Square Senior Building is helping older residents get and stay healthy with an onsite exam room, exercise center, kitchen area for cooking classes and monthly wellness brunches.

DCHA’s Do Your B.E.S.T. Summer Youth Employment Program was organized to help younger residents get the competitive edge they need to succeed. It places teens in summer jobs with local businesses and community agencies—experience that gives them a leg-up to college.

And while DCHA’s successful HOPE VI grants propelled affordable housing forward through a decade of substantial redevelopment, it also put into motion programs to help residents displaced by the process. “Every Hope VI grant allocates funds to develop strong Community Support Services,” explains Janice Burgess.

*Below: The DCHA Healthy Living Expo at the DC Armory in 2009 also doubled as a “Meet the Candidates” forum for the open spots for Resident Commissioners on the DCHA Board.*





“Residents are involved from the very beginning of each HOPE VI project long before ground is broken. We ask them what they need—job training, child care, educational programs—and we work together to put them in place in every new community.”

Burgess has managed the “soft side” of five Hope VI projects, helping relocate residents from buildings slated for demolition. “Sometimes the process can be difficult. But, over the years I’ve increasingly seen families, especially women, grow more confident. They make small steps forward to change their lives.”

DCHA’s Homeownership Assistance Program has been helping residents make substantial changes toward financial independence—self-sufficiency that can ultimately lead to homeownership. Pushed forward by DCHA’s Larry Dwyer, the program has made it possible for dozens of families to make that dream of homeownership a reality. Today dozens of residents of old public housing units have returned to their neighborhoods as first-time home owners.

“It takes more than redevelopment and modernization to make a housing authority effective,” says DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman. “Housing is one aspect of a larger, more complex picture of poverty. If we’re going to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve, we have to use our resources in concert with the talents of people already at work in the community,” Todman says.

That means “not reinventing the wheel,” she adds. “We are working in collaboration with programs already in place, particularly those focused on children such as Girl Scouts, boys and girls clubs, mentoring projects, and school-based programs. Together we can give our children safe environments in which to live and learn, and a foundation from which they can see new possibilities for their futures.”



**LaRuby May**, Executive Director for Vision of Victory Community Development Corporation (below), headed the Board in 2010.

*Below left: Adrienne Todman, DCHA Executive Director, helps a young public housing resident choose a back-pack at the annual back-to-school event.*

*Below right: When non-profit organizations donate equipment to DCHA developments, kids and parents all get involved in helping build the playgrounds.*



# Partnerships



*“Michael Kelly and his staff understood the challenge and the world of real estate. They developed truly creative solutions to fill financial gaps so that DCHA could do much more than simply keep its properties up to code—they could create a real ‘golden age’ for affordable housing in the District.”*

— **Marcie Cohen**, former Vice Chair of the DCHA Board of Commissioners

When the first DCHA Board of Commissioners was named in 2000, its members and DCHA staff were navigating uncharted waters. “But then-Mayor Anthony Williams put people on the board who understood housing from a number of perspectives,” says Former Vice Chair Marcie Cohen. “I think we had a skill set that helped build trust between the board and the staff. And we, too, saw that the DCHA staff was first rate.”

It was a partnership that was tentative at first, but that ultimately flourished during those first years, while DCHA embarked on an ambitious strategy for the future. “We were all committed to make the housing authority the best in the nation,” Cohen adds.

## Open Door, Close Collaboration

DCHA leadership has long understood the value of partnership to success. When Receiver David Gilmore first established monthly meetings with residents and the advocate community, he set the stage for open communication and collaboration for the next decade. Transparency was created. It’s a policy the current director Adrienne Todman is keeping alive.

Partnerships nurtured with the advocacy, business and public policy communities were established early on and now are key to DCHA’s future success.





“In 2000, when HUD’s ‘Moving to Work’ initiative allowed DCHA to become true real estate developers for affordable housing, we sought out partnerships,” explains Former DCHA Executive Director Michael Kelly. “Private sector investors played a critical role a decade ago, and still do today. They shared our understanding that we weren’t simply building housing, but creating neighborhoods that would open doors to new economic opportunities for the city.”

At that time, other partnerships were established with public and private agencies, as well. “We worked together with the DC Housing Finance Agency and the Department of Housing and Community Development. And we sought out partnerships with non-profit agencies in the city that were making strides in a host of issues related to housing,” Kelly explains. “We knew that public-private partnerships were the key to solving the problem of homelessness, of a lack of affordable housing and for the litany of social issues that create barriers to independence for low-income families.”

### Breaking Down Silos

Habitat for Humanity was one of the authority’s first partners in its effort to increase homeownership opportunities for low-income residents—as well as increase the number of affordable rental units in the city. In 2000, DCHA gave the organization a 4.4 acre parcel of land where public housing had been destroyed by fire years earlier. Last March, DCHA and Habitat for Humanity celebrated the completion of a 53-home development on this plot in Northeast Washington’s Deanwood neighborhood.

*Opposite page, left: The groundbreaking ceremony at Gibson Plaza, a redevelopment project located in the Shaw neighborhood, included Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton (light blue jacket) and to her left, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan; former Mayor Adrian Fenty; and Adrienne Todman, DCHA executive director. DCHA collaborated with the owner, First Rising Mount Zion Baptist Church, to provide annual funding for 73 public housing units in the building.*

*Opposite page, right: DCHA Executive Director Adrienne Todman (right) joined Williston Apartment residents to cut the ribbon on totally remodeled buildings in Ward 1.*

*Below, left: Habitat from Humanity built 53 homes in Northeast Washington’s Deanwood neighborhood. Habitat received the 4.4-acre parcel from DCHA. Nia Streater (left) joins her mom Diweena Streater in front of their new Habitat for Humanity home.*

*Below, right: Vincent Gray, then-Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, attended the grand opening of the Boxing and Youth Center at Kenilworth Courts in 2008. Participating kids in the program are required to take literacy and nutrition classes, and boxing coaches provide homework assistance.*





*“Since 2000, we have worked closely with DCHA to help foster the development of affordable housing...And I think we have proven the value of working collaboratively to keep public housing viable for District residents.”*

— **Bob Pohlman**, Executive Director,  
Coalition for Non-profit Housing  
and Economic Development



*DCHA's Office of Public Safety provides security services for residents through a grassroots approach to community policing. The office has sworn police officers who have full jurisdiction to make arrests throughout the District of Columbia, special police officers Commissioned by the Mayor, and resident monitors who screen visitors at DCHA developments.*

“Today this stable, vibrant neighborhood is a testament to the power of public-private partnerships,” Todman says. “It’s just one of dozens of partnerships that have resulted in thousands of additional safe and affordable housing units for low-income DC residents.

“We know that no one public agency can solve the affordable housing crisis alone. And we also understand that housing is just one part of an intricate puzzle of poverty in our nation’s cities,” she says. “Operating in silos simply doesn’t work. Coalitions of public and private agencies need to work together to create environments that are nurturing, stable and sustainable.”

That’s why DCHA is seeking out new collaborations with public schools and private investors, for-profit community development organizations and local government agencies. “We’re opening the door to untraditional partners to take on the complex issues facing the nation’s capital,” Todman adds.

Bob Pohlman, executive director of the Coalition for Non-profit Housing and Economic Development, agrees. “Since 2000, we have worked closely with DCHA to help foster the development of affordable housing. We are practitioners and advocates and represent a very diverse group of stakeholders. And I think we have proven the





value of working collaboratively to keep public housing viable for District residents,” Pohlman says. “We successfully advocated for local funding for the development and preservation of affordable housing and for funding of the Local Rent Supplement Program.

“There is no doubt that DCHA has produced a lot of affordable housing in the last decade,” he says. “It has the nation’s most successful HOPE VI program. Still, there are an estimated 6,000 homeless people in our city, and we need to find a way to house them. Today, we’re working with DCHA on several new initiatives, including one to promote the development of ‘supportive housing,’ a relatively new concept in housing that provides more than a roof overhead, but also the intense support services some families must have to succeed.”

“We understand that the pathology of poverty isn’t simple,” says Todman. “But we are also optimistic that if we break down barriers that can sometimes separate like-minded people who share a vision for the future, together we can be a powerful force for positive change.”

*Construction began on Sheridan Station, DCHA’s newest HOPE VI community, in 2010. The development is on track to become the premier green, transit-oriented, mixed-income housing development in the District of Columbia. It will include a solar power array, vegetative green roof, bio-retention facilities, Energy Star® appliances and sustainable building materials.*







# The DCHA Board of Commissioners

**The District of Columbia Housing Authority Board of Commissioners is a governing body made up of District community and business leaders, including three members representing the diverse constituency of DC public housing.**

The public housing community elects three resident members of the Board of Commissioners and a fourth Commissioner represents Housing Choice Voucher holders. Four commissioners are nominated by the DC Mayor and confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia. The Metropolitan Central Labor Council appoints one Labor Commissioner, a coalition of housing advocates recommends a member to the Mayor, and the DC Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development serves as an ex-officio member of the Board.



**Pedro Alfonso**, *Chairman  
Chief Executive Officer of  
Dynamic Concepts, Inc. (DCI)*



**Angie Rodgers**, *Vice Chairman  
Representative, Housing Advocates*



**Ken Grossinger**, *Executive  
Director, CrossCurrents  
Foundation*



**Victor Hoskins**, *DC Deputy  
Mayor for Planning and  
Economic Development*



**Frank Lancaster**,  
*Representative,  
Senior and Disabled Properties*



**Clarence Mobley**,  
*Retired*



**Terri Thompson**,  
*Government Relations Officer,  
Howard University Hospital*



**Bernadette Tolson**, *Retired*



**Aquarius Vann-Ghasri**,  
*Representative, Family  
Properties*



**Marie Whitfield**, *At-Large  
Resident Representative*

# Financial Highlights FY 2009

## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HOUSING AUTHORITY**

*Combined Statements of Revenues, Expenses and Change in Net Assets  
Audited for the Years Ended September 30, 2008 and 2009*

	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>Total Change</b>
Tenant Revenue	\$18,872,336	\$20,925,728	\$(2,053,392)
HUD Operating Grants	240,046,212	220,365,570	19,680,642
Other Government Grants	33,197,589	35,284,144	(2,086,555)
Other Revenues	23,390,405	21,694,534	1,695,871
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$315,506,405</b>	<b>\$298,269,976</b>	<b>\$17,236,566</b>
Administrative	75,106,398	56,006,094	19,100,304
Tenant Services	1,784,311	3,295,734	(1,511,423)
Utilities	22,549,301	27,584,983	(5,035,682)
Maintenance	29,736,383	23,109,535	6,626,848
Protective Services	6,956,046	7,097,003	(140,957)
General Expense	12,225,405	11,681,510	543,895
Extraordinary Maintenance	206,765	120,122	86,643
Casualty losses (non capitalized)	—	—	—
Housing Assistance Payments	152,354,575	138,510,520	13,844,055
Depreciation	19,525,190	19,781,707	(256,517)
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$320,444,374</b>	<b>\$287,187,208</b>	<b>\$33,257,166</b>
<b>Net (Loss) Income from Operations</b>	<b>(4,937,832)</b>	<b>11,082,768</b>	<b>(16,020,600)</b>
Investment Income	1,942,551	3,134,196	(1,191,645)
Interest Expense	(232,724)	(113,561)	(119,163)
Capital Grant Revenues	13,394,821	26,421,617	(13,026,796)
Gain (Loss) on Disposition of Fixed Assets	—	—	—
<b>Net Non-Operating Revenues</b>	<b>15,104,648</b>	<b>29,442,252</b>	<b>(14,337,604)</b>
<b>Net Income before Transfers</b>	<b>10,166,816</b>	<b>40,525,020</b>	<b>(30,358,204)</b>
Beginning Net Assets	510,498,930	488,084,554	22,414,376
Prior Period Adjustments	(64,282,452)	(18,110,644)	(46,171,808)
<b>ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$456,383,294</b>	<b>\$510,498,930</b>	<b>\$54,115,636</b>





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