

Leveraging community and volunteer services helps fill budget gaps

Lee Felgar, President, Preservation Housing Management, LLC

Accelerating demographics and budgetary constraints at the federal, state and local levels inspired the team at POAH's Narragansett, RI properties to think creatively about how to strategically leverage community services. It has resulted in a pool of countless volunteers from agencies that have given a year's worth of services to residents in these POAH apartments.

PHM Senior Senior Property Manager, **Jeanne Donnelly Taylor** and her team at the four developments (Beachwood, South Winds, and Water's Edge & Fieldstone) went looking for community resources and in the process created a life-changing workplace.

With a resident population that is 50% elderly, 29% disabled, and 21% family, the need for supportive services is outpacing most communities' ability to help residents with life skills, job preparation/search, education, nutrition, healthcare, and "aging in place" even in this beachside resort community along the Atlantic Ocean.



Greg Beck, Chair of the Inez Sprague Foundation, a local endowment that assists residents facing financial hardship with rent payments and Jeanne Donnelly Taylor, Senior Property Manager, Preservation Housing Management

Donnelly Taylor drew on her experience as a former Multifamily Compliance Supervisor at **Rhode Island Housing**, the state housing agency, and her personal initiative to assemble social support programs at the four POAH communities she manages to fill the gap. She and her staff, **Marlene Ahern, Elizabeth Clouart, Manuel Furtado, David Greene** assisted by part time Resident Services Coordinator **Nicole Reddy**, recruited a wide array of social service agencies, government programs, and community groups to provide these and other services:

- The **Inez Sprague Foundation** – a local endowment that was originally intended to provide for the children of Narragansett in the early 1900's. When Inez passed away in 1938, she left a trust to continue her legacy and the foundation confidentially assists all residents of Narragansett in need. These available funds are generated from the interest on the established trust. The foundation has assisted our POAH residents with financial hardships by making rent payments on their behalf exceeding \$4,000 avoiding eviction proceedings.
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service- Summer Food Service Program** provides healthy lunches - "Food That's in When School is Out!" There are approximately 300 children in the Narragansett School System that are eligible for free lunches during the school year and 27 are POAH residents.
- **Women's Resource Center of South County** provides services to abused women and their children
- **Washington County Adult Learning Center** provides computer instruction to help residents learn technical skills that will help them with education, job training and job searches
- **Thundermist Health Center** is a non-profit community health agency providing health care regardless of ability to pay.
- **South County Mental Health Center (SCMHC)** is a private, non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Florida in 1974. Since its creation in 1974, SCMHC has brought quality mental health and substance abuse care to our communities in a manner which enhances and preserves human dignity. Through local support, guidance and cooperation, the Center has been able to achieve its primary purpose of serving people of all ages and incomes.

- **Visiting Nurse Association** provides medical advice for residents including wellness training, homemaker service, transportation, and companionship and administers an annual flu clinic to immunize residents at the POAH properties at a cost of \$5 if not covered by their medical insurance.
- **RI Attorney General's Office** offers fraud prevention education for elderly residents so they can avoid financial scams that prey on seniors.
- **Narragansett Police & Fire Departments** – provides safety training in the event of a fire, emergencies, and security.
- **Dept. of Emergency Management/Dept. of Elderly Affairs** provides emergency management training to help residents deal with crises such as hurricanes and have a registration network for the disabled residents needing assistance to safety during a disaster.
- **Meals on Wheels** provides low-cost meals to our residents delivered to their door.
- **Seniors Helping Others** a local volunteer group that helps residents pack when they move or during a rehab when residents need to be relocated off site.
- **RIPTA/FISH/South County Integrated Rural Transit Service** provides free weekly transportation to local supermarkets and/or doctor's appointments when reserved in advance.
- **Habitat for Humanity** will assist with the removal of furniture/items left behind in vacated units and resells items in their store at a low cost for people in need.
- **Johnny Cake Center of Peacedale** emergency food assistance, clothing and bedding.
- **Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts** organizes holiday programs for the residents.

Jeanne and her colleagues have made these POAH properties “platforms for success” where elderly residents can safely age in place, or where families can focus on life skills to help them advance in careers and education.

We saw a great need among our resident populations and the agencies, programs and professional expertise that our pool of volunteers offers our residents is making the POAH communities valuable assets for their personal achievement and well being.

Almost all of the programs are delivered free of cost only requiring a nominal budget per property for expenses related to the services. Jeanne and her team consistently receive exceptionally high marks on management reviews, file audits, REAC HUD inspections, and investor/lender inspections not surprising given the level of commitment of each team member. **Donnelly Taylor** and her team are quickly turning POAH's Narragansett apartment into a supportive community that links residents to services and networks that will help them succeed regardless their circumstance. It's truly a model to emulate.

The cumulative benefit of all these efforts by all these agencies and individuals is incalculable.