

# COMMUNITY INSIDER

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Welcome to the premiere issue of the *Community Insider*.

Each quarter, we plan to bring you news, information from PHA management, the latest on Community Building events, and a variety of interesting and entertaining things that spotlight our varied and diverse community. We hope you'll enjoy reading it and maybe learn something new in the process.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome all new residents to PHA and to encourage them to get to know and get involved with the unique community in the hi-rise they chose to live in. There may be a few challenges, but I can guarantee you won't be sorry.

Finally, don't forget that this is **your** newsletter and we can't create it without you. Submissions of articles, artwork, photographs, recipes, etc are welcomed and encouraged. Items can be emailed to [insider@stphapresidentscouncil.org](mailto:insider@stphapresidentscouncil.org).

Mail can be sent to Insider c/o Presidents Council  
555 Wabasha St. N, Suite 400  
St. Paul, MN 55102

Cheers!

*Melissa Pappas*, Editor

*Waking up this morning, I smile. Twenty-four brand new hours are before me. I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with eyes of compassion- Thich Nhat Hanh*



## HI-RISE SPOTLIGHT

This month: Mt. Airy

Did you know that Mt. Airy High Rise is the oldest of the 16 PHA high rises in St. Paul? Mt. Airy is located west of highway 35E and situated in the Mt. Airy Family Development community.

Mt. Airy high rise was built in 1959 and was remodeled in 1985.

There are 153 units on 10 floors, consisting of 1 and

2 bedroom units. If you are walking or taking a drive this summer, you might want to go by 200 E. Arch to see the lovely patios and gardens. Don't forget, older is often better.

*Information provided by the front office of the PHA*

## NOTABLE EVENTS

By *Jimmy Mach*

Are you tired of twiddling your thumbs? Going stir crazy after our long cold winter? Oh yeah! Unfortunately, most of us cannot just hop on a jet to that exotic place we dream of.

However, do not give up! There is **A Passage to China** event for the weekend of April 5-6 at the Mall of America.

There's also **The Festival of Nations** event coming up during the first week of May at the St. Paul River Center where you can enjoy music, dance, and sampling cuisine from all over the world.

There are numerous opportunities to experience what St. Paul and the surrounding area has to offer you. Some of your representatives from the Resident Council Board of each hi-rise have been involved with the Community Builders Committee and have been brainstorming and planning an All Hi-Rise event for you as well as empowering and inspiring those who plan events for their own hi-rise. We very much wish to encourage you to check out the various activities offered and to get involved! The forthcoming events include:

### **Festival of Nations**

**May 1-4 (Thursday-Sunday)**

**10 am - 10 pm (Saturday)**

**10 am - 6 pm (Sunday)**

**Tickets for adults:**

**\$10.00 (group rate for minimum of 10)**



## THE COORDINATOR'S DESK

By *Eileen Tittle*

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the first edition of the *Insider*! I am the Resident Council Coordinator of the sixteen Resident Councils in our Hi-Rises. Spending time at each of the

Hi-Rises has given me the exceptional opportunity to get to know so many PHA residents.

In my first contribution to the *Insider* I would like to highlight two amazing projects, spearheaded by the Presidents Council and then made a reality by hard working resident volunteers. Seven to eight years ago, before my time, a few Montreal residents got together and with two old donated computers put together the first Computer Station in a Hi-Rise Community Room. Four years ago the Presidents Council eagerly accepted, from the PHA, the generously donated computers, monitors and printers that were to be recycled out of PHA's inventory.

Today each Hi-Rise has three or four computers, at least two new in the last two years and it was announced at the last Presidents Council meeting another new computer and a new WiFi printer are on way! By the end of 2014 we expect all computers at the sixteen sites to be connected to our own server. The server will give us the ability to provide translation software and Skype ability to every resident of every Hi-Rise. So much done, but always more to do! Anyone interested in joining the Computer Team please email me [eileen.tittle@stpha.org](mailto:eileen.tittle@stpha.org).

New ideas and fresh perspectives are always welcome.

The second project I must highlight is work of the treasurers and Peer Treasurers that have gone from, in some cases a box of disorganized receipts and paperwork, to monthly bank reconciliations and detailed financial reports on QuickBooks, all kept in a well organized system! We use the same system throughout the sixteen Councils believing that the uniformity has made everyone more accountable and the audits a lot faster! I cannot say enough for the resident treasures and Peer

Treasurers that stepped up and have worked so hard to learn the QuickBooks accounting program. We have a solid set of guidelines that when followed ensure that the Council's funds are properly accounted for. This year they faced a new challenge. At the direction of HUD the Councils had changes in how Federal money could be spent. So the "Quick Funds Guide" that we all knew so well was rewritten. So, as they have done in the past they dug in and learned something new. Then they implemented it ensuring we abided by the HUD guidelines.

It has been so rewarding to be part of both of these outstanding projects. These projects made the lives of all Hi-Rise residents better. I really think being the Resident Council Coordinator means I have the best job at PHA! Sincerely I am honored to work with so many resourceful, wise, funny, stubborn people.

## NUMBERS TO KNOW

### Presidents Council

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## EXPRESS YOURSELF

Editor's note: This poem was originally read at the Peace Pole dedication at Seal Hi-Rise in 2010. I thought it was fitting for this newsletter.

### We Are One

By *Melissa Pappas*

We are one

United

Many cultures

Living together

One community

A rich tapestry

Woven from many threads

Each one unique

Special

Equal

Each one beautiful

We are one

A people

United

Peaceful

No matter language or color

No matter religion or creed

We are one.

## THE LIGHTER SIDE

Submitted by *Ruby Steward*

This is a true story from an older "Reader's Digest" that requested readers to send in jokes and funny stories back in 1948.

In the hardware store, a clerk asked, "Can I help you find anything?"

"How about my misspent youth?" my husband joked as he kept looking for a specific type screw.

The clerk joked back, "Oh yes sir, we keep that in the back, between world peace and winning lottery tickets."

*"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read." - Groucho Marx*

## COMMUNITY INSIDER TEAM

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### Editorial Policy

All submissions are welcome. Items may be edited for length or clarity. Publication is subject to approval of the committee and Residents Council Coordinator. We have a policy of non-discrimination and non-censorship.

Questions and comments can be sent to

[editor@stphapresidentscouncil.org](mailto:editor@stphapresidentscouncil.org)

*It's spring says the Old Optimist.*

*That isn't snow, it is mist.*

*When you get old*

*You can live in the cold,*

*And insist that it doesn't exist. - Garrison Keillor*



Something to make you think of spring. The Sunken Garden at the Como Conservatory

## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

By *Mary Puente*

Welcome to the Commissioner's Corner.

I'm Mary Puente a resident at Front hi-rise. I moved to public housing in October 2010. Since 2007 I lost my fulltime job, my house and exhausted my 401K. I'm sure my story is similar to others in public housing.

As the Community Builder at Front hi-rise I've met many new friends from all the hi-rises in PHA. I started by attending the monthly Resident Council meetings and began to notice issues I thought were not right. I learned I could access the Resident Council Guide book from my HSC.

I then began to ask the necessary questions to begin change here at Front. The best way to make a difference is to "Get Involved" and become part of the team that is PHA. One voice added to other voices can make a difference. It's good to be involved. I challenge everyone to volunteer at least once a year at their hi-rise to plan an event or have a movie night or play cards or board games. Just get involved. You just might have a fun time.

As the hi-rise Resident Commissioner I am now a member of the RPC team and the President Council executive board. I am also a member of the Vending Fair and computer teams. In my next article I hope to introduce other Commissioners and give you a short overview of the history of public housing.

Until the next time...Mary

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