

# Neighborhood UPDATE



MARCH 2022

## THE MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR THE CITY OF YONKERS

### A Letter from Wilson Kimball



Ah, February...

“Today is the first of February, snowy, brilliant, but dripping with the sound of spring wherever the sun lies warm, and calling with the heart of spring yonder where the crows are assembling. There is spring

in the talk of the chickadees outside my window, and in the cheerful bluster of a red squirrel in the hickory.” — Dallas Lore Sharp

February is African American History Month. February 4th is World Cancer Day. And February 14th is Valentine’s Day. It’s also the first full month when, as of now, the New York State eviction moratorium has ended.

This is important because MHACY is no longer traditional public housing. We converted our properties through the Rental Assistance Demonstration (“RAD”) Program into private Limited Liability Corporations. What does that mean on a practical level? It means MHACY and private investors put \$750 million into our entire portfolio of buildings to do capital improvements like new kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, floors, common areas and elevators. In return the investors were given Low Income Housing Tax Credits (“LIHTC”). The investors have a right to expect, under the legal arrangements they made with MHACY management, that a minimum of 95% of tenants would pay their rent.

Unfortunately, we are not meeting that threshold.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### Black History Month: Famous African Americans You Might Not Know

February is Black History month when we celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans. There are many well-known African Americans who we celebrate such as Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Barrack Obama, Muhammad Ali and Harriet Tubman, but there are many others whose accomplishments we had heard little of until recently. Here are just a few:

#### Robert Sengstacke Abbott (1870 - 1940)



Without Robert Abbott’s creative vision, many of the Black publications of today—such as Ebony, Essence, Black Enterprise, and Upscale—wouldn’t exist. In 1905, Abbott founded the Chicago Defender weekly newspaper. Abbott and his newspaper played an integral part in encouraging African Americans to migrate from the South for better economic opportunities.

#### Gwendolyn Brooks (1917 - 2000)



Brooks is considered to be one of the most revered poets of the 20th century. She was the first Black author to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1950 for Annie Allen, and she served as poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, becoming the first Black woman to hold that position.

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**Shirley Chisholm** (1924 - 2005)



During the racially contentious period in the late '60s, Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to Congress. She represented New York's 12th District from 1969 to 1983, and in 1972, she became the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. Her

campaign slogan: "Unbought and Unbossed" rings even louder today. Senator Kamala Harris recently paid tribute to Chisholm in her presidential campaign announcement by using a similar logo to Chisholm's.

**Alice Coachman** (1923 - 2014)



Growing up in Albany, Georgia, Alice Coachman became the first African American woman from any country to win an Olympic Gold Medal at the 1948 Summer Olympics in London. She set the record for the high jump at the Games. Throughout her athletic career, she won 34 national titles and

was inducted into the National Track-and-Field Hall of Fame in 1975 and the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 2004.

**Bessie Coleman** (1892 -1926)



Despite being the first licensed Black pilot in the world, Bessie Coleman wasn't recognized as a pioneer in aviation until after her death. Though history has favored Amelia Earhart or the Wright brothers, Coleman—who went to flight school in France in 1919—paved the way for a new

generation of diverse fliers like the Tuskegee airmen, Blackbirds, and Flying Hobos.

**John Henry Hale** (1878 - 1944)



John Hale was a prominent surgeon, professor, and philanthropist who played a prominent role in establishing the black medical community. Hailed as the "dean of American Negro surgeons," Hale conducted over 30,000 surgeries. He practiced medicine and taught for 29 years, mentoring

a plethora of black surgeons. He was a president of National Medical Association in 1935. He is a recipient of a Distinguished Service Medal.

**Dorothy Height** (1912 - 2010)



Hailed the "godmother of the women's movement," Dorothy Height used her background in education and social work to advance women's rights. She was a leader in the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the president of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) for

more than 40 years.

**Mae Jemison** (1956 - )



Mae Jemison wasn't just the first African American woman who orbited into space aboard the shuttle Endeavour. She's also a physician, teacher, a Peace Corps volunteer, and president of tech company, the Jemison Group. She continues to work towards the advancement of young

women of color getting more involved in technology, engineering, and math careers.

**Jesse Owens** (1913 - 1980)



Jesse Owens was a track-and-field athlete who set a world record in the long jump at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin—and went unrivaled for 25 years. He won four gold medals at the Olympics that year. In 1976, Owens received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and was posthumously

awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1990.

**Gordon Parks** (1912-2006)



Parks was the first African American on the staff of LIFE magazine, and later he would be responsible for some of the most beautiful imagery in the pages of Vogue. He also was the first Black director of a major film, Shaft, helping to shape the blaxploitation era in the '70s. Parks was a longtime resident of

Greenburgh in Westchester County.

# MHACY Poster Contest Winners

Congratulations to all of the Fire Safety Poster Contest winners. The contest was sponsored by HAI Insurance Group. First place winners received \$50 Amazon gift cards; 2nd place received \$30 Amazon Gift cards and 3rd place received \$20 Amazon gift cards from HAI. All participants received \$25 Target gift cards from MHACY.



**1st Place**, 6–9 Years Old  
**Aleissa Espinal**  
*Hall Homes*



**1st Place**, 10–14 Years Old  
**Wilenny Reguillo**  
*Hall Homes*



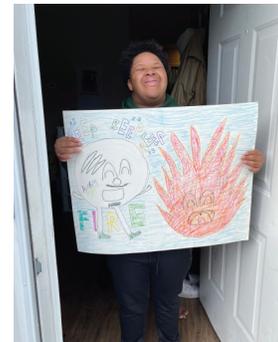
**1st Place**, 15–18 Years Old  
**Kaylee Andrade**  
*Hall Homes*



**2nd Place**, 10–14 Years Old  
**William Gonzalez, Jr.**  
*Hall Homes*



**2nd Place**, 10–14 Years Old  
**Tianna Cedesma**  
*Doran Townhouses*



**2nd Place**, 15–18 Years Old  
**Elijah Ray-McKay**  
*Reagan Townhouses*



**3rd Place**, 6–9 Years Old  
**Alysha Ramos**  
*Schroeder Street*



**3rd Place**, 10–14 Years Old  
**Tyler Riggins**  
*Reagan Townhouses*

## Participants

- Ka'vernay Riggins
- Joel Gomez
- Noah Velazquez
- Taloni Williams
- Michael Medina Morales

## A Letter from Wilson Kimball

(Continued from page 1)

When there was an eviction moratorium here in New York landlords could not evict tenants for non-payment of rent, which we have pointed out to the investors. But that moratorium expired January 15, 2022, which means MHACY is required to consider evictions for tenants who offer no justification for withholding rents.

The moratorium was put in place to protect renters who may have lost their job or income due to the COVID pandemic. During the pandemic MHACY reached out to every tenant to ask if the tenants needed rent adjustments, a repayment plan, or encourage them to apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”) through the City of Yonkers. We wanted to be sure that every tenant with a legitimate reason why they couldn’t pay rent got financial assistance, a rent adjustment, or both.

Yet some tenants did not respond to our outreach, and just simply did not pay.

There are 53 tenants in Calcagno Homes who owe \$127,198, 63 tenants in the Seven Town Homes property that owe \$110,402, 214 tenants at Yonkers Preservation Properties that owe \$478,100 and 59 residents in Yonkers Senior properties that owe \$79,720.

So now, to meet our legal obligations under the RAD program, we must undertake measures to collect rent, including potential eviction for those who won’t work with us.

There are many ways to work with MHACY to pay your rent. So, if you are among those in arrears, contact your case worker, property manager or resident coordinator to get back on track. Don’t leave us with no choice but to send you an eviction notice.

### Wilson Kimball

*President & CEO*

Municipal Housing Authority for  
the City of Yonkers

## Kudos to John Griffin for a Job Well Done

MHACY President and CEO Wilson Kimball recently shared this letter from a grateful resident, praising maintenance worker John Griffin for outstanding service.

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John cares about the buildings he is responsible for and shows it in so many ways. I always observe him in making certain our floors are clean and polished: the sitting area is clean and no debris are left on the counter areas. Our garbage bins on the main floor are left cleaned out every night and any large boxes are broken down and put out for pick up. Even when garbage is scheduled to be picked up, John makes certain that the garbage is closed and stacked in front of the building. I know that this is his job and responsibility, but it has not always been the case. There is a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of Building 4 where I live. Guests have remarked to me that the entrance area is so much cleaner and does not smell as it has in the past from garbage left overnight. In addition, he is an extremely polite and courteous individual.

A grateful tenant who is appreciate of the difference in the care of our building. Kudos to John!

—*Maria Pimentel*

