



# The HIGHRISE Lowdown

Published Monthly by the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council

June, 2016

Vol. 26, No. 6

## Voice of the Five Thousand

### **Ready to lead strong resident councils!**

***MHRC trains newly-elected resident council officers at two city-wide events***



MHRC Lead Organizer John Stumme leads a discussion about having successful resident council meetings through careful planning, creating a welcoming environment, and running effective meetings at the city-wide training for newly-elected officers last month at 1815 Central Ave. NE.

Residents in nearly all of MPHA's forty-two highrises elected new resident council officers in May. These officers include council presidents, vice presidents, secretaries, treasurers, as well as other positions designated by each highrise.

Over 150 of these newly-elected officers attended one of two trainings held in May at 1815 Central Ave. N.E. and 630 Cedar Ave. S. to learn the importance of good communication between officers, budgeting resident council funds, their roles and responsibilities as officers, including planning and running good resident council meetings, being tenant advocates, and much more. Attendees also practiced how to effectively handle discussions and motions at meetings, plan meeting agendas and successfully plan and organize community events.

Resident council officers are responsible for working as a team to plan and run fair and

democratic monthly council meetings, carry out activities and directives voted on by residents at council meetings, safeguard and manage resident council funds, and promote good communication between residents, MPHA and others.

Residents in each highrise in May also elected a new MHRC board member and alternate to represent them at the city-wide MHRC board meetings and report back to their councils on MHRC activities.

A healthy resident council is not just the responsibility of the officers; all residents are members of the resident council and are encouraged to show up and vote at meetings and volunteer to help with resident council activities. Look for fliers posted in your building or call the MHRC at 612-342-1331 to find out when your resident council meets.

## Residents discuss their priorities for MPHA



MHRC board members discuss their priority concerns at the their May 19 Board meeting held at the Heritage Park Health and wellness Center.

The MHRC at its board and Area meetings has been asking residents to share their priority concerns as MPHA tenants as part of the Annual resident review of MPHA's Moving to Work (MTW) Plan. The MTW/Resident Advisory Board (RAB) has incorporated these concerns into its set of priorities as they advise MPHA on the development of their MTW plan for the next year. The following is a summary of some of the concerns shared so far:

- ◆ Security, including funding for Project Lookout, restoration of the tax levy so guard hours can be increased, more security cameras, and enforcement of Drug Free Zones;
- ◆ A continued focus on pest control, especially on prevention and treatment of bed bugs in apartments and common areas;
- ◆ Rescinding the "Out of Unit" policy which disallows rent adjustments when someone is out of the country and does not receive benefits. Residents said that it is disproportionately a hardship for immigrant and refugee residents and that it doesn't measurably impact MPHA's bottom line;
- ◆ Adequate funding for maintenance needs from both federal and state government. Residents said elevators are continuing to break down a lot in some buildings, cleanliness is a concern in some buildings as is slow work order response, especially for carpentry needs. Some residents said they would like better access to recycling opportunities; and
- ◆ The need for more effort towards watching out for vulnerable and isolated residents including restarting the "I'm Ok" program.

## MHRC Board Meeting Wrap UP



MHRC Vice President Tamir Mohamud and Secretary JoAnn Montgomery demonstrate making a call to MN House Speaker Kurt Daudt during the May MHRC board meeting, urging him to support a bonding bill that includes money for public housing rehab. Many other board members then took the same action.

The MHRC Board meeting was held May 19 at 1015 4th Ave. N. Board action included:

- ◆ Review of MHRC priorities # 6 regarding promoting individual responsibility for quality environments, #7 regarding continuing and supporting the Highrise Laundry Project and #8 regarding developing resident work opportunities;
- ◆ Continued discussion about resident priorities for MPHA's FY2017 MTW Plan;
- ◆ Discussion of 2016 civic engagement plans including training for voter registration volunteers;
- ◆ Discussed resident input into the selection of a new MPHA executive director (Cora McCorvey is retiring February, 2017);
- ◆ An update on the work of the Bed Bug Advisory Committee including the promotion of a public awareness campaign to encourage residents to report infestations and following the work of MPHA in conducting sweeps of all buildings and follow-up efforts;
- ◆ Recognized the contributions of JoAnn Montgomery (below, left) to the MHRC and residents, generally. Her work through the Senior Aide program ended in May.





Residents at 1515 Park Ave. S. and Hennepin County Master Gardener Jonathon Scoll survey their handiwork after planting tomatoes, peppers, greens, onions and herbs in four Gardens-in-a-box donated by the MN State Horticultural Society. This is their second year of vegetable growing. Other gardens are being planted and tended by residents at Rainbow Terrace, Hamilton Manor, Spring Manor, Friendly Manor and Elliot Twins.



Residents at 1627 S. 6th St. (pictured right) join a Physical Therapy Program graduate student from St. Catherine's University in St. Paul (pictured left) in recording an exercise video for use in their building. Rubber stretch bands and common household items were used in the videos. St. Kate's students worked with residents from five highrises to create short videos focusing on stretching, aerobic and strength-training exercises. Exercises at various skill levels were included. The videos will be shared with other interested highrises.

## Mayor appoints Tamir Mohamud to MPHA Board



Mayor Betsy Hodges has appointed Tamir Mohamud (seated above, center between Commissioners Cara Letofsky and Honorable James Rosenbaum) to the MPHA Board of Commissioners. He attended his first board meeting last month. Mohamud said, "I'm honored to serve on the MPHA Board as a resident representative and look forward to working on behalf of residents and MPHA." The MHRC board voted last November to recommend to Mayor Hodges that she appoint Mohamud as the highrise resident commissioner on the board. Other new commissioners include Tawanna Black, Executive Director of the Northside Funders Group (a neighbor to MHRC), Mikkel Beckmen - Director of the Office to End Homelessness for Minneapolis and Hennepin County, and Abdullahi Isse, employed at the Target Corporation and Marsden and MPHA family housing representative. The MPHA Board meets the 4th Wednesday of each month.



MHRC Community Organizer Abdirizak Said leads a Somali-language resident council officer training at 2121 16th Ave. S. in May. His work in supporting resident councils and Somali-speaking resident council officers is supported by the MHRC/MPHA Joint Diversity Initiatives program.



## Happy Pride!

June is National Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) Pride month. Happy Pride from the MHRC!



## Enter the highrise garden contest!

*"The lesson I have thoroughly learnt, and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives." Gertrude Jekyll*

Unlike last year, the growing season has gotten off to an early start, giving highrise gardeners a jump on their gardening activities. Resident councils are encouraged to enter their gardens—flower and vegetable this year—into the Annual Highrise Garden Contest! First and 2nd place winners in both categories from north and south highrises will be chosen at the Annual Celebration September 29. MHRC staff will come out to take pictures of the gardens whose contest entrance forms are returned to MHRC by July 6. Contact the MHRC for an entrance form. Residents may also submit their own 4X6 pictures to the MHRC (MHRC will prepare the display boards so do not mount your photos). Show your highrise pride and enter the garden contest!



## Lots happening at this month's Area meetings!

Attend your Area Meeting this month to learn and participate in important discussions. Topics will include:

- ◆ A check-in with resident council officers
- ◆ An update on resident voter engagement work in preparation for the November 8 Presidential Election
- ◆ A Metro Transit Better Bus Stop survey
- ◆ Information about a free jobs training program through RESOURCE
- ◆ Fill-in elections for MHRC committees (see fliers posted in your highrise for more information.)

### North/Northeast residents meet

Wednesday, June 8, 1:30 p.m.  
350 Van White Mem. Blvd.

### Southeast/Southwest residents meet

Thursday, June 9, 1:30 p.m.  
2419/33 5th Ave. S.

*(check fliers posted in your highrise for bus info.)*

The *Highrise Lowdown* is a publication of the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council, 1015 4th Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55405. The Lowdown will print reader responses as space permits; we reserve the right to edit all submissions. Send submissions to the address above or to [jstumme@mplshighrise.org](mailto:jstumme@mplshighrise.org). Call 612-342-1331 for more information.



## Recognizing those who make a difference...

### MHRC seeks nominations for "Make a Difference" Awards

Is there someone in your highrise who makes your building a better place to live—maybe someone who volunteers her/his time for others or for your highrise and doesn't expect recognition, but who you think deserves it anyway? Or, is there a program or activity of your resident council that has improved the sense of community in your highrise?

Help this special person, or your resident council, get the recognition they deserve by nominating them for a "Make a Difference Award." All nominees will be recognized in the *Lowdown* and one individual and one resident council nominee from each of the four Areas will receive a "Make a Difference" Award at the Annual Highrise Celebration.

**Send us your nominations!** To request a nomination form call 612-342-1330. Or, write to us or send an email telling us who you are nominating and why you think your nominee should receive a "Make a Difference" Award. Please be specific and provide as much information as possible. Also, please provide your name and phone number. Nominations are due August 15 so don't delay! Send nominations to MHRC, 1015 4th Ave. N., Suite 203, Mpls, MN 55405 or email: [jstumme@mplshighrise.org](mailto:jstumme@mplshighrise.org)



## This Month's Events

**Thursday, June 2, 9:30 a.m.:** MHRC Executive Committee meets at 1015 4th Ave. N.

**Wednesday, June 8, 1:30 p.m.:** N/NE Area meeting at 350 Van White Mem. Blvd.

**Thursday, June 9, 1:30 p.m.:** SE/SW Area meeting at 2419 5th Ave. S.

**Monday, June 13, 2:30—4:00 p.m.:** Alive and Kickin Sing Out at 1015 4th Ave.

**Tuesday, June 14, 1:30 p.m.:** MHRC Laundry Project Committee meets at 1015 4th Ave. N.

**Tuesday, June 21, 1:30 p.m.:** MHRC Maintenance, Modernization, and Management Committee meets at 1015 4th Ave. N.

**Wednesday, June 22, 1:30 p.m.:** MPHA Board of Commissioners meets at 1001 Washington Ave. N.

**Friday, June 24, 9:30 a.m.:** Security Advisory Committee meets at 1015 4th Ave. N.

**Monday, June 27, 9:30 a.m.:** Active Living Committee meets at 1015 4th Ave. N.

**12:30—3:30 p.m.:** Community BINGO at 1015 4th Ave. N.