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Challenge

THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 1974

See feature on the Mustard Seed program on page 14. For more on the program, and for stories by Marna B. Williams and her son Robert G. Williams, visit <https://kidsinbirmingham1963.org/category/robert-g-williams/>



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HUD Challenge

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James T. Lynn, Secretary

William I. Greener, Jr., Assistant to the Secretary for Public Affairs

Evon H. Ervin, Editor
Anya F. Smith, Associate Editor
Carol Cameron, Art Director
Wayne Eddins, Assistant Art Director
Agnes Proctor, Production Assistant

Advisory Board: Fred W. Adams, Robert Blair, Burton Bloomburg, Roy Gast, Kenneth Holbert, Roosevelt Jones, Harold Keith, Morton Leeds, Norman L. Linton, Lawrence Rubenstein, Ronald Weber

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Statements made by authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department.

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PAGE 2: The recent signing of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 ushered in a new era of Federal assistance to local communities to solve problems historically addressed by categorical grant programs.

PAGE 8: Through a joint effort involving the District of Columbia Department of Corrections and the city's housing agency, Corrections Department inmates—earning standard wages—are refurbishing Wash., D.C.'s backlog of public housing in need of major rehabilitation.

PAGE 12: Local housing authorities, in an effort to meet expanding needs of tenants for a wide range of social, health, and recreational services, are combining traditional and innovative approaches to securing paid and volunteer services using their own resources and those of the community.

PAGE 16: HUD Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, Michael H. Moskow, delineates the sharpened focus of HUD's research activities, which will zero in on the Department's new challenges posed by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

NEXT MONTH:

The Southeast Region: A glimpse of HUD's role in community development in the South

COVER: President Ford signs into law the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Among the people who live in public housing are families who say they wish special services for tenants were not quite so obvious within the housing project—why not have them located outside, but nearby, so that they would seem to be for everybody in the neighborhood? Of course, there are some residents of housing for the elderly like the peppery

Community and Tenant Services: Some Efforts to Meet Costs

75-year old lady who complained that she didn't want somebody knocking at her door every other day to invite her to play cards or join a macramé class—she preferred to keep to herself and read a book!

These expressions, however, are the exception—not the rule. By and large, the provision of supportive services in HUD-assisted multifamily housing is regarded as a much needed and valued help by residents. Families do not have the money to pay for recreation for a clutch of young ones, and transportation costs to visit health and medical clinics, and other human services agencies elsewhere in the town eat heavily into the limited-income pocketbook.

Management of public and other HUD-assisted housing also has learned, from experience, that provision of supportive services to residents can pay off in terms of good management-tenant relations and the hard cash benefits of reducing operat-

ing costs for vandalism repair, security protection, and rent delinquency.

A primary concern of management is how to supply the needed services in the face of limited revenue for overall operations. The ways in which half a dozen local housing authorities and management firms handling Section 236 and other HUD-assisted housing are endeavoring to meet the



Cooking classes at Wheatley Courts, San Antonio, Texas

needs of their consumer-clients are worth examining. The services pertain not only to the general welfare but also to the support that affords low-income residents opportunities to find a way out of the poverty rut.

Two Kinds of Services Defined

Support resources for residents of HUD's low-income housing are of two kinds: Community Services and Tenant Services. Community services are those provided by the community at large for all residents of the city or town who are in need of, and eligible for, such services. Sponsors and management of HUD-assisted housing do not provide such services directly but seek to find and secure them from outside resources. Examples are health, welfare, education, recreation, job training and placement.

Tenant services are those services provided by management directly, or through resident organizations, which enable the individual resident to meet

his obligations as a tenant and as a member of the larger community. The thrust is to increase resources available to housing management from the community, and the provision of staff liaison for this purpose is therefore one of the "tenant services." Others include: pre-occupancy orientation, provision of information on community services that can be



Crafts at Southtown, Birmingham, Ala.

referred to for help; and support of resident organizations. Participation by resident groups in mounting these services is increasingly recognized as important, since the residents are the ones who know what they need and want. Together, community and tenant services provide the aid for consumers of HUD-assisted housing to meet their current need and, in many cases, to give them a lift upward.

Securing Needed Services

The dilemma faced by local housing authorities and managers of other HUD-assisted housing in providing the services needed by their residents is that money is short or non-existent for hiring tenant services staff yet such staff is necessary for working with tenant organizations and for fostering liaison with community resource agencies. In some cases, a per unit allocation of \$2.50 to \$2.80 per month is a possible outlay from

operating revenue for tenant services, to pay for staff and other expenses. In other cases, tenant organizations are relied on—mainly as a volunteer effort—to help pull in the needed community services. The list for programming potentials from the community can run long; but not all resources exist in every locality. It becomes necessary, therefore, to

being sought as resources, along with private welfare organizations and church social service programs. To accommodate programs supplied by community-based agencies, local housing authorities and management of other HUD-assisted housing for low-income families may utilize community space provided in the original building of the project.

wage of the work-study students is financed by the housing authority and the remainder by the U.S. Office of Education.

The six paid social work students are concerned with the needs of individual families, including home maintenance, child care, job training, and employment. Two student volunteers concentrate on community organiza-



Senior Songsters, San Antonio



Adult education class, Pecan Villa, Breaux Bridge, La.

determine availability of the services, and to apply for them.

Federal departments providing funding, usually through State agencies, for programs and services directed toward the low-income public are called upon by housing management as a matter of routine. Such resources include the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, for joint funding of social services and for adult basic education; the U.S. Department of Labor, for job training and placement; the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for homemaking, nutrition, and budget training; and the Department of Justice Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, for security-connected programs.

At the local level, service clubs are seen as potential aids for programs.

Revenue Sharing is Sought

Local revenue sharing and philanthropic foundation support are also

The public housing modernization effort has made it possible to construct needed community buildings also. Another means of accommodating programs is by conversion of residential units for a community facility, though this means a loss of rental income and a reduction in the housing stock. The "how-to-do-it" stories of efforts considered successful in providing needed services are numerous.

Seattle Housing Authority

Student manpower is a very significant ingredient in the tenant services operation of the Seattle Housing Authority, Washington. Students attend the University of Washington and other colleges in the community, pursuing studies in social work, medicine, dentistry, and psychology. Currently, six of the students are on a work-study program. Others work as volunteers and gain academic credit. Thirty percent of the \$3.50 an hour

working with resident councils. Another four focus on serving the elderly in the authority's family projects; and three graduate nursing students have set up health clinics in the elderly high-rise. Dentistry students serve in a clinic managed by resident volunteers in one of the family projects.

All students in the Seattle program are assigned to the authority's Tenant Services Coordinator who, along with the project area administrators, supervises their activities. Though the turnover of student staff is a drawback to continuity, the input by people in training for the "helping people" professions is a particular plus value. As one housing manager, evaluating a student aide, put it: "He sees the resident as a total person in whom the interrelationship of medical, psychological, employment, and educational problems requires a wide variety of social services, all contributing to ultimate improvement in

outlook, and to motivation.”

San Antonio Housing Authority

The San Antonio, Texas, Housing Authority's expenditure toward securing community-based services for its 21,000 residents includes a salary for the Director of Human Resources and the conversion of apartments to accommodate programs provided by

private rental housing.

Birmingham Housing Authority

In Birmingham, Ala., the tenant organization in Southtown public housing project—home of 455 families—for the past two years has held the keys to the community center, for which it has all program responsibility. Maintenance costs of the cen-

University of Alabama in Birmingham sponsors a theatre arts program. Residents also take advantage of the President's Council on Physical Fitness program.

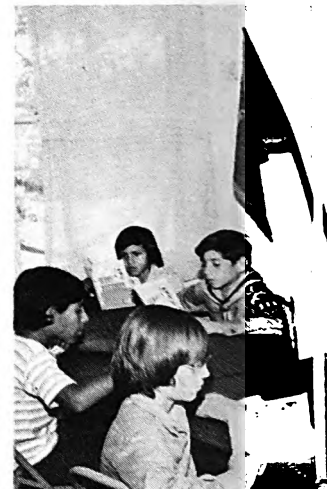
An interesting byproduct of this tenant-operated Southtown program is the “graduation” of two of its early resident volunteers to permanent jobs on the Housing Authority's



Day care center, San Antonio



Dressmaking, Victoria Courts, San Antonio



Boy Scouts, San Antonio

nearly 50 local agencies. The services provided in these on-site locations include casework or residents receiving AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), Head Start, health clinics, child care, and vocational rehabilitation.

Savings in time and transportation costs are tenant benefits in addition to the actual services. The housing authority counts it a benefit that there is virtual assurance of maximum use of the services because of their accessibility. Working mothers, of course, consider day care centers among the most valuable services. Mrs. Laura Ornealas, resident of Victoria Courts, was able to attend secretarial training under a vocational rehabilitation training program when her preschool and kindergarten-age children were enrolled for day care. Her training resulted in employment as secretary for the Texas rehabilitation program. Now she is off welfare and, in fact, has “moved up” to

ter are paid by the housing authority, and the tenants themselves raise some \$1,500 a year from fish fries and other benefits to help defray incidental expenses.

The genesis of this rather unusual tenant-operated program was “Mustard Seed,” a kindergarten initiated seven years ago by some members of the neighborhood Independent Presbyterian Church in a Roman Catholic storefront mission. The Presbyterian Church provides financing for the salary of the present Southtown program coordinator, and volunteers from the neighborhood work side by side with the residents in the center operation.

Among the programs offered are a project library of 1,000 donated volumes. The Birmingham Public Library bookmobile services the library weekly and lends films from its collection. Basketball teams are sponsored by project fathers. Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts are popular. The

management staff.

Pueblo Housing Authority

The Pueblo, Colo., Housing Authority has built up programs for its 600 families that bring in a dollar value estimated at more than \$200,000 without any outlay for operating revenue *per se*. The Tenant Services Coordinator's salary is paid out of PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) which the city of Pueblo and the School District have returned to the housing authority. The Boys' Club recreation program is financed in part from the United Givers' Fund, in part from fund raising by the local Boys' Club. For a matching Girls' Club, money will be raised from the community, including revenue-sharing.

The Senior Citizens Resource Agency conducts a meal-a-day service under the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program at one of the high rises for the elderly.

Volunteer Resources

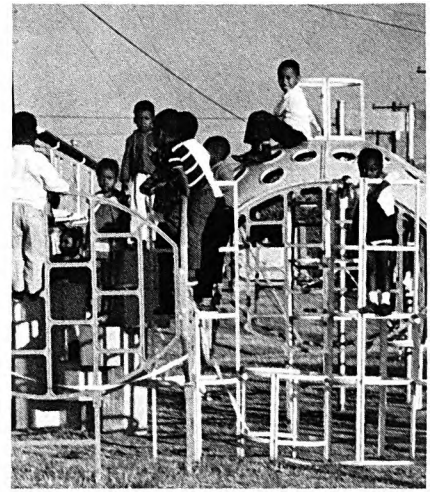
Sponsors and management firms operating Sec. 236 and other HUD-insured housing face an especially knotty problem in providing tenant services. Though in many such housing complexes for low-and moderate-income people, there is a recognized need for supportive services such as home management advice, help in

cured from volunteer doctors and dentists. The upward mobility of tenants is encouraged through practical means: one has been trained in the duties of resident manager; another—a mother of eight—who first volunteered her services to work with new tenants on home care is now a salaried employee of the Home Extension Agency.

support from bake and clothing sales or other "benefits."

Benefits from Tenant Services

According to management personnel, the alternate-funded programs described here have undeniably paid off in benefits to management and tenants. The lack of funding of some staff for tenant services—from operat-



Sewing classes, Wheatley Courts, San Antonio

Child care, Southtown, Birmingham

personnel crises, etc., for many of the tenants, the wherewithal to staff a liaison to secure the services is missing. Ingenuity in seeking resources therefore is essential.

Here is how operators of two HUD-insured housing developments are coping:

Mack's Realty Company, manager of the 100-family complex Pecan Villa in the tiny Cajun community of Breaux Bridge, La., has rounded up volunteer aid from a variety of "no-cost" sources. Adult education, to overcome the serious illiteracy among the residents, is conducted by the Louisiana Department of Education, and one-to-one tutoring of elementary, junior high, and high school students has been arranged with community volunteers. Local home economics teachers and Department of Agriculture Home Extension Agents provide home management courses. Medical and dental services are se-

In St. Paul, Minn., a HUD-insured high-rise project of 500 apartments that had had a rough beginning as the scene of muggings, narcotics, prostitution, and fires, has been turned around toward success through tenant involvement. Tenant involvement centers around the introduction of student families from nearby colleges and universities, who in their student years, fall into the low-income category and are therefore eligible to live in the subsidized housing.

One apartment of the building has been allocated as a community center, manned mainly by volunteers from the student families. Tenant committees explore community resources for services and corral them. Examples: a day care center, funded by Federal and State money; bus service once a week to the nearby shopping areas for the 100 elderly residents, paid for by local businessmen. The tenant organization gets no funds from management, gaining its

ing revenue or other source, on a dependable basis—can interfere greatly with continuity of programs; however, tenant-generated programs can suffer from ups-and-downs in dedication and enthusiasm in most cases; they flourish best with some little financial support or other contribution from management.

Appeals for participation in local revenue sharing to help finance supportive services as a preventive measure against crime, dependency and other higher costs to the city appear to be well worth a try. A city or county with a well-staffed human resources unit may be able to assign a person as tenant programs coordinator for the HUD-assisted housing complexes to help secure needed supportive services, including a referral system for families facing special problems.

—Marion Massen,
Community Services Specialist
HUD Office of Housing Management