

AHC Resident Services Report Card

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No. 1

Building Affordable Homes and Strong Futures Since 1975

Summer 2010

The 2009/2010 school year was a big success for students in AHC's Resident Services program. By the end of the year, 83 elementary children were reading at or above their reading level or had improved by at least one grade level. Among the teens, 36 had maintained or exceeded an overall GPA of 3.0 – setting them on a strong path to college.

This year's graduation rate was awesome. All of AHC's seniors successfully finished high school and made positive plans for the future. An impressive 10 out of 12 are continuing their education, and one is heading into the Marines. Nine of these students are the first in their families to achieve this milestone.

AHC's strategy of combining a push for academic excellence with stability and support is one of the secrets to the children's success. Our program is an integral part of their lives from elementary through high school, combining a consistent learning environment with nurturing, one-on-one support every step of the way.

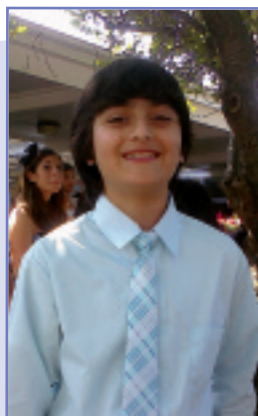
Congratulations to the families, AHC volunteers and staff, and the students themselves for a job well done!



Abdul Abdulmoniem with family at his graduation from Virginia Commonwealth University this spring. His sister, Gigi (far right) is currently attending Mary Washington University. Both, along with other members of their family, have grown up in AHC's Resident Services programs. (see inside for their story)



Mary Zambrano, AHC Resident Services Manager, celebrates Heidi Branez's high school graduation.



Asad Khan is all smiles after the 8th grade Promotion Ceremony at Williamsburg Middle School.



2009/2010 Report Card

Teens

- 11 teens (6th – 12th graders) maintained or exceeded an overall GPA of 3.5 or higher
- 25 teens maintained or exceeded an overall GPA of 3.0
- 4 teens maintained or exceeded an overall GPA of 2.5
- 8 teens (not already included above) achieved an improvement of 30% or more in their GPA from last year

Elementary

- 17 students are reading at grade level
- 25 students are reading above grade level
- 41 students improved their reading by at least one grade level

AHC Inc. is a private, nonprofit developer of low- and moderate-income housing. Founded in 1975, AHC produces and preserves affordable rental housing; provides homeownership services; and offers on-site educational services to improve the quality of residents' lives.



Hannah Sklar, a social work intern from George Mason University, works with after-school students at The Berkeley.

Milestones*

A few examples of the many ways AHC's Resident Services helped children overcome educational or social challenges this year.

Building literacy skills

Jose and Franklin, two eight-year-old boys, were very reluctant to read and often disrupted story time during AHC's after-school program. After working one-on-one with a reading tutor once a week, their whole attitude changed. They started bringing books in to share, and began writing more in their journals. By the end of the year, both boys had improved at least one year's reading level and their participation improved dramatically.

Overcoming language barriers

Amina, a 9th grader, arrived about nine months ago from Pakistan. When she started coming to AHC's tutoring program, she was very shy and refused to speak any English. Even so, she attended teen tutoring four nights a week. As the year went on, the consistent support and encouragement helped her come out of her shell. By the time the teens went on a group service trip to Walter Reed Community Center this spring, she was dancing, smiling and singing along with her friends to the radio.

Her grades improved, too – jumping from 1.42 in the first quarter to 2.43 in the third quarter.

Encouraging self-esteem

Oscar is a smart, but overweight, teen who struggles with low self-esteem. This year he worked with his big brother from the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program to do a mini-triathlon for Multiple Sclerosis. Participating in the event, and the steady encouragement he received from AHC staff, transformed him. With greater confidence, and a dedicated and patient AHC tutor, he raised his GPA from 1.86 in the fall to a 2.14 by the third semester.

Developing learning readiness

Brandon, a kindergartener whose primary guardian is his great grandmother, was rambunctious, hard to reach, and had a tough time paying attention. He was registered for school after much help with paperwork from AHC staff. After his first year of school and steady encouragement in AHC's after-school program, his behavior has improved dramatically. He is now able to show affection appropriately, has tons of friends and is **READING!**

** Names have been changed.*

Why Resident Services makes a difference...

AHC's programs for elementary and teenage children are extremely valuable – not just for the academic help, but also for the social and emotional support. Many of these children struggle with so many issues on a daily basis – from learning disabilities, to trying to fit in, to figuring out who they are, to abuse.

AHC's community centers provide them with a place that is safe. We offer children unconditional love and support. We are these kids #2 and sometimes #1 advocates, after loving relatives.



Kate Wiley, Resident Services Manager, with students on a field trip.

Another important part of the program is that we allow them to have fun and let go. They carry so many burdens with them every day.

My favorite moments are when I see them smile or laugh, or have a chance to really talk and listen to a child, and get to know him or her. We work every day to help children learn and embrace the skills they need to succeed: socially and academically.

– Kate Wiley,
AHC Resident Services Manager

A Journey from Sudan to Success

Eleven years ago, the Abdulmoniem family moved to Arlington from Sudan. Abdul, 10, Gigi, 7, and Mahmood, 5, did not speak any English and were bewildered by the completely different culture.

With parents who were “always working,” the children found the community center at Harvey Hall to be a lifeline. Thanks to the support of the after-school program, Abdul moved quickly out of the classes for second language learners at school and into classes for academic achievers. “Joy [AHC’s Senior Resident Services Manager] and my tutors were like a second family and supported me every step,” says Abdul.

The consistent encouragement paid off. Abdul graduated from Washington-Lee High School with a full International Baccalaureate (IB) degree and 13 college credits. “I had tutors who were very involved and gave me a lot of their time,” explains Abdul. “They helped go over applications for schools and scholarships. It was also their goal



Gigi (center) with long-time tutors Joanna and Roger Moore.

**“Joy and my tutors
were like a second
family and supported
me every step.”**

– Abdul

to see me succeed.” Abdul graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University in May. Abdul’s next goal: To work for a while and then go to graduate school to study cell biology or immunology.

Gigi, a rising sophomore at Mary Washington University, also believes AHC’s Resident Services programs can make a big difference to students’ success. “If children come to AHC’s programs, they’ll receive the motivation and help they need to succeed,” says Gigi. “There’s too much support here for you to go home discouraged.”

Last spring, Gigi had a chance to pass along some inspiration of her own when she toured a group of AHC teens around Mary Washington University. “I was happy to tell them college is a great experience.” Her younger brother, Mahmood, was already convinced. Next fall he starts school at Mary Washington.



*Joy Rambert, AHC Senior Resident Services Manager,
with Abdul.*

Life Lessons

Teen Tutoring – More than Just Academics

All our volunteers bring their own perspective to tutoring teens. Some want to give something back, some want to set a good example for others, and some simply enjoy the sheer pleasure of feeling connected to the community. No matter what the reasons, tutoring teens is a rewarding series of life lessons for both teachers and students.



Henok Zecharias, right, has fun with tutor Chris Cable.

Bill Arvidson, a teen tutor for more than 15 years, believes tutoring is much more than just helping with homework. “My objective is to help provide some resources, a warm and friendly place,” explains Arvidson. “Often times we don’t even talk about class work.” Having worked with more than a dozen students over the years, Arvidson loves watching the children’s confidence grow. “Getting them to be motivated can be a challenge,” he says. “But when you see the process work, it’s a rush. It’s wonderful to see them feel proud of themselves.”

Carlos Cardenas, a middle school math teacher, believes strongly in students making the most of their opportunities. As a minority, he understands some of the challenges facing young immigrants. When he started tutoring Emily Hernandez, she had just arrived in the United States and did



Christine Donahue enjoys tutoring the Khan sisters.

not speak English. Now going into 11th grade, Emily is fluent in both English and Spanish. “Emily is quick to comprehend, has strong leadership qualities and shows great success when she applies herself. She is becoming an avid reader who was able to read the entire four-book Twilight series last summer,” says Cardenas proudly. Mary Zambrano, AHC Resident Services Manager, credits Cardenas for much of Emily’s growth. “He works hard to keep pushing her to seek out as much as she can and not settle for anything less.”

Report Card

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Seila Santiago, tutor Lora Woellhaf, and Lizbeth Taveras celebrated the fun they had working together and their academic achievements at the Woodbury Park/Frederick end-of-the-year gathering.

Bringing Literacy to Life

AHC works hard to build students' literacy skills through a variety of tools and activities.

ACTIVITIES



Creative word building with Educational Theatre Company. Children learned about pairing words together like "pop" and "corn" to create compound words while participating in a skit.

PROJECTS



Having fun with letter tiles.



Stringing up words to actively reinforce spelling combinations.



Building sentence skills with journals.

RECOGNITION



Students at Harvey Hall received individual achievement awards for a variety of accomplishments, including the M&M Award for being best able to work in different age/mixed groups and the Sherlock Holmes Award for being the most inquisitive student.



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Teens who completed a variety of requirements, including performing community service, maintaining grade point averages and attending teen tutoring regularly were rewarded with a trip to Six Flags.



Many families attended the end-of-the-year celebration at Fort Henry.

End-of-year celebrations