

AUGUST 2026

THE HACA VOICE

From the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville

Feature Story

From Homelessness to Homeownership: One Resident's Journey of Hope and Determination

After experiencing homelessness while struggling with substance use disorder, Parthenia McAuley moved into Deaverview Apartments in 2018. Public housing gave her a stable place to live, but just as she was beginning to regain her footing, tragedy struck. Her 40-year-old son, Robert, died unexpectedly after suffering a stroke.

Rather than retreat into her grief, McAuley began surrounding herself with what she calls “positive things.” She immersed herself in church, joined Deaverview's Resident Council, volunteered with neighborhood children, and enrolled in HACA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program. Working alongside an FSS coordinator, she set goals to strengthen her finances and eventually leave public housing.

This spring, those years of determination paid off. She and her husband, Lorenzo, purchased their first home: a four-bedroom house in Boiling Springs, South Carolina, with a big backyard for their pit bull, Rocko.

“It was such a great feeling,” McAuley says of closing on the home.



Parthenia McAuley (right) celebrates with her husband, Lorenzo (left), after closing on their first home. McAuley achieved homeownership through HACA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program after years of working toward the goal.



Partner Update

Connecting Residents with Career Opportunities

More than 50 HACA residents met with 14 local employers, workforce organizations, and community partners during HACA's Transitional Career Day in July. Attendees explored job opportunities, career guidance, training resources, and employment support to help build long-term financial stability. By bringing residents and community partners together, HACA continues to create pathways to employment and economic mobility.



Representatives from NCWorks were among the 14 local employers, workforce organizations, and community partners that participated in HACA's Transitional Career Day.

Support for Survivors

HACA works with local partners to help survivors of domestic violence access safe housing, supportive services, and community resources. As a designated PorchLight haven, HACA provides a safe place where survivors can confidentially contact Helpmate, Our Voice, or 911 and wait for assistance to arrive.

HACA also partners with the Asheville-Buncombe Continuum of Care, Helpmate, Homeward Bound, and Safe Shelter to help connect eligible survivors with housing opportunities and the support they need to move toward safety and stability.

Resident Support

Panel Explores Domestic Violence, Housing, and Hope

In late July, HACA's "Safe at Home: Understanding Domestic Violence, Housing, and Hope" panel brought together residents, community partners, and advocates for an important conversation about the link between domestic violence and housing stability. Presented in partnership with Helpmate and Our Voice, the event highlighted local resources, encouraged meaningful dialogue, and reinforced the importance of collaboration in supporting survivors.



When survivors have access to safe housing and support, they can begin to rebuild their lives.





Resident Support

YouthBuild Program Offers New Opportunities for Young Adults

Are you between the ages of 16 and 24 and looking for a fresh start? YouthBuild CORE-2 is now recruiting young adults who have left high school and are ready to earn a GED, gain valuable job skills, and prepare for a career in the construction trades.

Participants receive GED preparation, hands-on construction training, leadership development, case management, supportive services, and the opportunity to earn financial incentives while learning. They'll also gain real-world experience helping build affordable housing in Buncombe County and prepare for careers with competitive starting wages. Eligible HACA residents may also be able to satisfy the agency's work requirements through the program.

The next Mental Toughness orientation will take place August 17-21 at Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College, with programming beginning August 31. To learn more or apply, visit tinyurl.com/YouthBuild-CORE-2 or call or text (419) 392-7370.

Staff Spotlight



Allison Smith
Director of Property Management

Since joining HACA in 2002, Allison Smith has dedicated her career to helping residents build stable, successful lives. Today, as Director of Property Management, she supports HACA's site management team while continuing the work she loves. A New Orleans native, she's happily made Asheville her home.



Resident Support

Learn About Habitat Homeownership

Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity will host a free Homeownership Information Session on Thursday, August 20, from 6-7 p.m. at its Administrative Office, 33 Meadow Road in Asheville. Attendees will learn about Habitat's homeownership program, qualification requirements, the application process, and what it takes to purchase an affordable Habitat home. To learn more, email apply@ashevillehabitat.org or call 828-210-9371.



Save the Date—Back-to-School Bash

HACA's annual Back-to-School Bash is expanding this year to reach more families across multiple communities, giving more children access to school supplies, community resources, and a fun kickoff to the new school year.

Current event dates include:

- Klondyke:
August 12, 2-5 p.m.
- Deaverview:
August 13, 2-5 p.m.
- Edington Center:
August 20, 2-5 p.m.

Additional locations and event dates will be announced soon.

Community News

HACA Team Attends National Housing Conference

In July, HACA CEO Ella Santos and COO Marvin Jean Jacques attended the 2026 NAHRO Summer Symposium in Nashville, where housing leaders shared best practices for expanding affordable housing and strengthening resident self-sufficiency. The conference reinforced HACA's commitment to innovation and long-term sustainability while providing new ideas that will help strengthen services for Asheville residents.

Nearly 100 Affordable Housing Units Coming to Woodfin

Construction is now underway on The Bluffs at River Bend, a new 96-unit affordable housing community in Woodfin designed to expand housing options for working families. Developed through a partnership between local nonprofit organizations and Buncombe County, the community will offer one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments for households earning between 30% and 80% of the Area Median Income. Amenities will include on-site childcare, a community garden, and direct access to the Woodfin Greenway, with leasing expected to begin in late 2026.

