



August 2016 • Issue #4



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VISTA Volunteers assist with capacity building while USC School of Social Work Volunteers support tenants and services. "The Birthday Lady" brings a party every month [Pages 2 and 3](#)

Video: In Their Own Words

Tenants share their trials, triumphs and thanks; Donors express their commitment and passion for our mission

At A Community of Friends, we are caring and compassionate, delivering services that address the mental and physical needs of our tenants. But you don't have to take our word for it! We asked tenants and key donors to share their opinion in the video above and on our website.

For example, Matthew and Jackie B. are raising three daughters at Amistad Apartments. "They're growing up with security as opposed to anxiety. We're able to shield them and they're even talking about which college they hope to attend," said Jackie. "I feel like we won the lottery and I am so grateful."

"Every foster kid has bags they drag from house to house," said Derek C. "Because of A Community of Friends, I got to unpack my suitcase forever at the Willow Apartments and I will always love them for that."

"I got my Daddy back," said Joyce R., "I thought he was gone forever. It changed my life to know he was happy and safe." After nearly 30 years on the street, Robert J. is in his fourth year at 39West Apartments. He is eternally thankful for affordable housing and the gift of being reunited with his child.

Ardent ACOF supporters Phil and Cindy Feder shared that A Community of Friends is their charity of choice because it is an "organization that provides clean, safe housing, training, and drug and mental health rehabilitation to people who are formerly homeless and trying to make it in society."

[Click here or on the image above to hear their stories as they share their thoughts and feelings about A Community of Friends in their own words.](#)

Drawing on Experience, Building on Success

Three communities are rising while Cedar Springs opens its doors

Arlington Square –The shear wall framing is being completed at Arlington Square this month and the preliminary drywall will be going up next. Arlington Square broke ground on November 9th and Assistant Project Manager Daisy Miguel reports that construction is currently 31% complete.

Beverly Terrace – Senior Project Manager Jose Torres notes that construction at Beverly Terrace is moving at full speed. After completing the shoring and underground infrastructure, the next milestone is the placement of the podium deck and then upward we go!

Silver Star Apartments – Framing is nearly complete on Silver Star Apartments, with the next major milestone being building dry-in so that interior finishing can begin. Senior Project Manager Ryan Lehman anticipates a mid-March 2017 completion date.

Cedar Springs – SAVE THE DATE! The Cedar Springs Grand Opening will be held on Friday, October 28th. Cedar Springs was issued its Certificate of Occupancy and tenants are moving into their brand new units. The project has officially been certified LEED for Homes Platinum. We hope you join us!





Yajaira Gomez and Leslie Ortiz

USC School of Social Work student volunteers are excited to welcome tenants to the Help-Portrait event at the Avalon Apartments.

Americorps VISTA and USC Volunteers

We are pleased to introduce two exciting volunteer programs at A Community of Friends.

Assistant Director of Services James Ramirez established a partnership with the USC School of Social Work for up to seven (7) students to complete their mandatory field practicum of 1000 hours by working with tenants at our properties. The students gain valuable experience with case management, critical thinking, tenant advocacy, emergency procedures, crisis management, and teamwork. These students are a tremendous asset to A Community of Friends because of the added manpower and additional support at ACOF properties. Each volunteer will have a caseload of 5 to 10 tenants based on their capability.

Additionally, two (2) AmeriCorps VISTA members joined ACOF's team. They will be working with us for a year to help us develop new systems and programs at ACOF.

Aide Duran is our Volunteer Coordinator, working with our Fund Development Department. She will be helping set up and formalize ACOF's volunteer program, coordinating volunteers both from the



Mia Fahad and Aide Duran

VISTA Volunteers will assist ACOF with fund development and sustainability.

external community, as well as with our tenants and ACOF staff. Aide has a pet turtle named Brody that enjoys eating shrimp, banana, romaine lettuce, and likes to make a lot of noise in the mornings which makes him a really efficient alarm clock.

Raumia (Mia) Fahad is our Sustainability Coordinator. She is based within the Housing Department but her work will span Asset/Property Management and Services departments. Her focus will be on sustainable and green building operations, and she will take the lead in formalizing and standardizing our gardening program at our buildings. Originally intending to be an astrophysicist, Mia discovered in an anthropology class that she was more interested in environmental issues, security, and focusing on shaping a future for planet Earth. Thanks to all for the gift of your time and talent!

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* Former Board Chair

Grants Aid A Community of Friends

A Community of Friends' Mission Inspires Award of Several Grants

Recently, we received three grants from the Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program (FHLB AHP) for construction costs on Oasis Senior Villas (\$780,000), Liberty Lane (\$1,060,000), and Huntington Square (\$540,000). These projects will all break ground soon. Kudos to the Housing Department staff.

Not to be outdone, the Fund Development department announced grants from Bank of America Foundation (\$20,000), Weingart Foundation (\$175,000), Enterprise (\$30,000), California Community Foundation (\$125,000), NeighborWorks America (\$200,500) and an anonymous foundation (\$35,000).

Each and every dollar from all of these generous and supportive organizations is deeply appreciated. The continued contribution of each and every individual donor is what makes our work possible. Every dollar is a declaration of trust and you can count on us to maximize each contribution in our mission to end homelessness.



Message from the CEO

By Dora Leong Gallo, CEO Earlier this year, both the City and County of Los Angeles adopted plans to end homelessness in their respective jurisdictions. Filled with strategic priorities and requests for departmental cooperation, the plans gave all of us who care hope - that finally, homelessness was a priority for our elected leaders.

The plans, however, came with price tags - \$2 billion in housing production costs for the City and \$450 million in ongoing costs for services provision for the County. Although the County quickly made a down payment of \$100 million in this year's budget to fund a variety of services needs, efforts to place a bond measure on the November ballot to generate ongoing resources to end homelessness failed after several intense and long meetings, despite the County Board of Supervisors' previous declaration of a homelessness state of emergency and a continuing campaign to get the Governor to make the same declaration.



CCEO Dora Gallo and Mayor Eric Garcetti at the event supporting the City of LA's Proposition HHH on this November's ballot.

A few blocks away, the City of Los Angeles managed to put a \$1.2 billion Housing Bond on the November ballot, of which 80% will be used to build permanent supportive housing to end homelessness and the remaining 20% will be used for regular affordable housing. Called Proposition HHH, this proposal is an opportunity to finally increase the supply of permanent supportive

housing in the City of Los Angeles, where 28,000 individuals are homeless. This bond measure is critically important, because the City only has approximately \$26 million this year to develop affordable housing, and not all of it for people who are homeless. Unlike the County, the City has rarely used its own resources to build affordable housing, relying on the federal government for pass-through resources. In FY16-17, the Mayor's budget includes over \$100 million for homeless services, but much of the funding is not new funding or for new programs; in fact, \$67 million in the budget will only materialize with the adoption of a linkage fee (\$20 million) and sale of surplus city-owned property (\$47 million). As a result, Proposition HHH is critical to address homelessness in the City.

On a positive note, the CAO's office issued an RFQ/P for City-owned sites for housing development, but it is not clear how disposition of those sites will make up the \$47 million in the Mayor's budget. If developers are asked to pay for the land, the result will likely be revenue-neutral for the City (as acquisition cost then becomes a cost of the project, increasing the funds a developer will need to develop affordable housing).

ACOF is competing for these sites and hope to be awarded. We are also actively joining the campaign to pass Proposition HHH. ACOF urges anyone who cares about affordable housing and homelessness to vote this November. There are many important items on the ballot this fall. Don't lose sight of the measure that will address the tremendous shortage of supportive housing for those with the least resources to end homelessness on their own. Residents of Los Angeles have an opportunity to impact this crisis - we urge you to join us to pass Proposition HHH this fall.



Anne Marie Knott

ACOF Volunteer with a Serious Addiction to Birthday Cake

"We are so lucky," says tenant Ruby S., "Anne Marie comes here and celebrates birthdays with us every month! She brings everything herself. Look at her smile!"

Since July of 2015, Anne Marie Knott's smile has been lighting up the Community Room at the Figueroa Court Apartments for a Volunteer Program she herself created.

"I wanted to volunteer but I wanted to do something more personal," said Anne Marie, "I heard Dora Gallo speak at an event and I was blown away at the comprehensiveness of the program at A Community of Friends. It was such an elegant solution."

Anne Marie's brother inspired her to volunteer. After an unexpected stroke, her brother was unable to work to his prior capacity as an engineer. The life he had built disintegrated and he struggled with homelessness. Anne Marie honors his memory with joyful giving.

If you have an interest in volunteering with A Community of Friends, please [go to the volunteer page on our website](#) and sign up.

We  Volunteers!



"Birthday Lady" Anne Marie & Tenants

Tapping into our Key Messages

In March, the Taproot Foundation awarded A Community of Friends a Key Messaging and Brand Strategy Service Grant valued at \$70,000. With the guidance of CEO Dora Gallo, Board Member Liz Vaughn, and ACOF marketing staff, the Taproot team interviewed donors, Board members, tenants, community members, service providers and more to discover and record the community perception and industry beliefs about our core strengths. There were many validating and inspiring findings uncovered by the Taproot Team. We look forward to sharing the Key Messages with you in the next issue of this newsletter!

Dates to Look Forward to:

- October 28 – Cedar Springs Grand Opening (11 a.m.)
- November 19 – HomeWalk
- November 24 – Thanksgiving
- November 29 – Giving Tuesday
- December 3 – Help-Portrait

Find more info on our website and social media channels:

- www.acof.org
- www.facebook.com/ACommunityofFriends
- twitter.com/AComofFriends
- www.linkedin.com/company/a-community-of-friends
- 213.480.0809



Accelerating the Community Connection to ACOF Housing

Finding affordable housing can be a daunting task, but for chronically homeless individuals and families affected by mental illness, it can be virtually impossible. As an organization committed to serving this group, A Community of Friends is acutely aware of the challenge it presents.

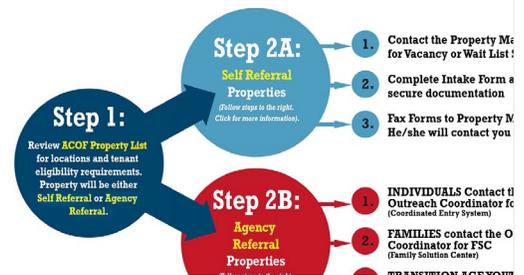
Even though the Los Angeles region is migrating to a Coordinated Entry System and Family Solution Center, many people in the community still do not know about this system.

In an effort to provide information and access faster, A Community of Friends is taking advantage of smartphones and the internet. We have developed a “getting housed” section on our website that describes our properties, provides a step-by-step process to getting into each property (or

onto the wait list), with links to necessary forms, contact information, and eligibility requirements. Potential tenants and/or their case managers now have an easy and effective tool to get connected. Click below to check it out!



How To Apply for Housing at an ACOF Property



www.acof.org/ACOFHousing/



A Community of Friends

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