



# THE VOICE OF CHOICE

PSO TRANSFORMATION NEWSLETTER

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

### A MESSAGE FROM JANET ABRAHAMS

In HABC's continuing efforts to keep our Perkins Residents informed on the PSO Transformation Plan, we hosted a Resident Update Meeting on Thursday, December 12th. HABC staff, along with its development partners, provided both a project and relocation update. Items discussed included:

- **Two PSO project phases (Perkins 1 and Somerset 3)** did not receive the competitive 9% tax credits that we were anticipating in the last funding round. Therefore, their financing plans were changed to include non-competitive 4% tax credits with tax-exempt bonds. This will result in the delivery of both projects



being pushed back by several months.

- **Henson Development advised that Somerset Phase 1 is under construction** and the financing on Somerset Phase 2 would be closing in Summer of 2020 with its construction beginning thereafter.

- **Diversified is concentrating on relocating the Phase I residents** and early moves will be offered to all residents, regardless of their phase, on a first come, first serve basis.

As always, we appreciate your attendance as it allows us to address your questions and concerns on the spot. We encourage more residents to become involved with the PSO Transformation Plan because your voice matters and we want to hear from you and your family.

Please join us at our next Resident Update Meeting on March 12, 2020 at 5:00 p.m!

## CNI GRANT CONFERENCE IN NEW ORLEANS

I was accorded the wonderful opportunity to attend a conference with Choice Neighborhood Planning and Implementation Grantees from around the country. It was held in New Orleans, which had just completed their Choice Neighborhood Grant. It was a chance to talk with others that have completed or are further along in their CHOICE grant process. I

was able to tour the new CNI site in New Orleans and talk with both residents and participants at the site. I gleaned additional valuable insight into the CNI process, what is possible when we all work together and how what I learned can directly aid in our implementation of the Perkins/Somerset/Oldtown CNI grant. I was able to talk with and hear from HUD CNI representatives as to what they look for from their grantees. It was helpful to hear from other cities as to what is and is not working for them with their grant implementation and to bounce ideas/tips off one another as to how to streamline

the entire process. I look forward to continuing to work together with our Perkins Homes residents and partners to make our PSO CNI funded community the BEST in the country!

*by Kevin Gallaher*



Funding provided by:





# A NOTE FROM YOUR CN MANAGER, ARLISA W. ANDERSON

Dear Friends,  
Happy New Year to you and your family! As we look forward to the New Year and all of the opportunities that 2020 has to offer, I just wanted to remind you of a few important key items:

1. You are Perkins Homes and we want you to be a part of the newly redeveloped Perkins Somerset Oldtown (PSO) community.
2. You must stay in compliance with your lease, so please pay your rent on time.

3. USI is here to assist you with your relocation, job search, access to job training, connections to health services and many other resources.

As we begin the relocation efforts, please know that it is our goal to make relocation as smooth as possible. We need you to help us by being open to the resources that are being offered. Please stop in USI's offices and pick up a copy of the Relocation Plan Booklet so you can start planning your relocation and review all the benefits you are entitled to receive.

Again, wishing you and yours a very Happy New Year!

## NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER

### **New PSO Transformation Plan Working Groups Forming Soon!**

If you are interested in participating in any of the following PSO Transformation Plan Working Groups, we would love to have you! Please contact Jaye Matthews, our Neighborhoods Coordinator, at [Jaye.Matthews@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Jaye.Matthews@baltimorecity.gov), or at **443-984-5760**.

### **PUBLIC ART**

Public Art and the beautiful, creative elements that will brand the new community, known as Neighborhood Gateway Markers, will be vital components of the PSO Transformation Plan! Public Art and Neighborhood Gateway Markers will be woven throughout the PSO footprint. There are so many opportunities to incorporate Public Art into the concept and design of the neighborhood: Perkins, Somerset, Oldtown, North & Central Parks, City Springs School, Chick Webb Recreation Center, Bus Stops, and various other places! We will be working with MICA and Art With A Heart in this working group. Please join us!

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/OLDTOWN MALL**

Who remembers when Oldtown Mall, was a thriving and vital part of the East Baltimore Community? It remains a very important part of the neighborhood, and Oldtown Mall will be developed and revitalized as part of the overall PSO Transformation Plan! As the developer completes concepts and plans for the design of Oldtown Mall, we would love to hear from you in our Community Engagement Process! We will announce when the Working Group launches and when the 1st session will be held. We are happy to have Oldtown Mall as a part of the PSO Transformation Plan—not only will it provide new residences, but also, new economic development and retail options as well!

### **PSO NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY WALKS**

We can't wait for the Spring when we will be launching Neighborhood/Community Walks! During these walks, participants can point out areas of concern, suggest solutions for what we stumble upon during the walk, pin-point areas that could use improved lighting, more trash receptacles, or even street repairs, to name but a few. Each community walk will have a different theme. So, join us in helping to bring Public Safety awareness to the forefront, as your community unifies and take part, by standing up and showing a sign of solidarity, for the betterment of the neighborhood.

### **RESIDENT SURVEY**

We want to hear from YOU – Residents of Perkins Homes! We will be circulating a survey about what types of information you would like highlighted or shared in the Voice of Choice the PSO Transformation Plan Newsletter! Be sure to grab one at Tenant Council Meetings or the Rental Office and share your feelings, thoughts, and opinions! We want to publish information that is useful to you—your voice matters!



# USI CORNER

## “HUD CHOICE MEANS CHOICE CONFERENCE 2019–NEW ORLEANS”

Urban Strategies, Inc. (USI) hosted the national HUD Choice Means Choice Conference in New Orleans on November 13-15th, 2019. The Choice Means Choice event was an opportunity to engage in learning workshops for community leaders, choice neighborhood residents and practitioners of Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) Planning and Implementation sites from around the country. The conference consisted of a site tour of two completed CHOICE projects, question and answer session with HUD representatives, nationally renowned keynote speakers, a youth leaders tract, best practice support and opportunities to learn from new and seasoned grantees.

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City and Urban Strategies had the honor of taking two residents from Perkins to New Orleans for the conference. While there, they were able to see an actual site that was fully transformed and speak with original residents from the community who were relocated and then returned back to their home. These families had not only been relocated in New Orleans but across the country due to Hurricane Katrina. Urban Strategies Inc. assisted 90% of the New Orleans families in returning to the site after its redevelopment.

Perkins' Tenant Council Vice President, Denise Street, was one of the individuals who traveled to New Orleans and was able to speak with the families who had returned. Ms. Street described her participation as:

“My experience going to New Orleans was great. I learned a lot going to the workshops. The most exciting thing was the tour to a Choice Neighborhood Site. I got to meet people from other states, and I got to talk to some of the residents who were survivors of Hurricane Katrina. One lady, who was named Ms. Pugh, told me her story and how Urban Strategies got them back home to New Orleans. She said, “Don't be afraid to move temporarily, because Urban Strategies will work to get the residents back. The new homes were beautiful inside and out!”

Many of you may have heard of Magnolia Projects, home of rapper and business mogul, Master P. Below you will see before and after pictures of Magnolia, which are now called the Harmony Oaks Community. This is one of the sites that Ms. Street toured.



BEFORE



AFTER

## YOUTHWORKS 2020

### SUMMER JOBS LAUNCH CAREERS

Perkins Youth!!! If you are between the ages of 14 and 21, and are interested in a summer job, please apply Online at [youthworks.oedworks.com](http://youthworks.oedworks.com) OR Visit 337 S. Mason Court and ask for Subira, our Education Specialist! **You MUST Apply before March 1st, 2020.** Guess what? You may even be able to work in Perkins this summer – so you may not need to travel far!!!

### HOT JOBS HIGHLIGHT

Construction- Somerset construction is underway and USI is looking for individuals interested in working in the construction industry! Email your resume to [psojobs@habc.com](mailto:psojobs@habc.com). No experience? No worries, we can ensure enrollment in training to strengthen your skills for employment. No equipment? No worries. We will help equip you with boots, power tools, and much more!

This opportunity is open to ALL Baltimore City residents!

*\*Priority, however, is given to qualified Perkins and other public housing residents.*

### ABE & GED

How can you make more money? Make more money with education! Have you thought about returning to school? Please visit the POWER House or call **667-210-2950** for more information.

### COMPUTER TRAINING

Free computer and tech training for adults. Want to increase your computer knowledge or grow within your career? Contact Living Classrooms at **443-835-1316 x 653** for more information and to register today.

### PERKINS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

USI is looking for residents who would like to provide direction to the development team on the new homes in Perkins. These residents will give suggestions on parks, amenities, and other important expectations that the families of Perkins have with respect to what they want to see in the new development and its surrounding communities. You could earn a stipend up to \$200.00 per month. If you are interested in serving on the Perkins Development Committee, please visit USI.

Urban Strategies Inc. is co-located in Perkins Homes at 337-329 S. Mason Court and is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am.–5:00 p.m. To accommodate families that work traditional business hours, USI will also be offering evening and weekend hours by appointment only. Please call us at **443 470-8983.**

For the monthly events calendar please visit, [www.urbanstrategiesinc.org](http://www.urbanstrategiesinc.org) and/or [www.habc.org](http://www.habc.org).



## FREE TUTORING PROGRAM

Do you have a child in grades 2nd-10th? Are they struggling with math or reading? Would you like to have free tutoring services to help to improve grades and reach their full potential?

In partnership with Morgan State University, USI will be offering free tutoring services. If you are interested, please visit USI offices today!

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER IN PERKINS

Urban Strategies Inc. (USI) partners with John Hopkins University (JHU) and their School of Nursing program to provide free health resources and services to the Perkins, Somerset, Oldtown (PSO) community. The Registered Nurses (RN) are a group of nurse scholars who will be in Perkins every Tuesday starting February 2020! During clinical hours nurses will offer:

- Care Coordination
- Health Screenings
- Community health and wellness referrals
- Mindfulness based stress reduction
- Health fairs
- Health education
- Community health needs assessments
- Physical activity opportunities and more...

If you have health issues that make it hard for you to leave your home, have chronic illnesses or haven't had the chance to get to the doctor—this will be a great starting point for you. The nurses can also come to your home. Please stop by for services begin on Tuesday, February 4th (and every Tuesday thereafter) at 337 S. Mason Court from 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.



# PSO EVENT CALENDAR

## JANUARY

### Food & Nutrition Management

Monday through Thursday  
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
1731 Chase Street

### Free Legal Representation

Every Thursday  
Call 410-685-6589 ext. 20

### Free Construction Training, Project Jump Start,

Every Friday at 9:00 a.m.  
725 Fallsway Road

### Benefits Screening

Tuesday, January 28th  
9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Join USI and the CASH Campaign for FREE benefits screenings. You will have the opportunity to gain assistance with Social Security Income, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance, Medicaid, Energy

Assistance, Child Care Vouchers and more!!!  
See your USI case manager for an appointment.

## FEBRUARY

### Food & Nutrition Management

Monday through Thursday  
8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
1731 Chase Street

### Free Legal Representation

Every Thursday  
Call 410-685-6589 ext. 20

### Free Construction Training

Project Jump Start,  
Every Friday at 9:00 a.m.  
725 Fallsway Road

### Board of Commissioners Meeting

Tuesday, February 18th at 4:00 p.m.  
417 E. Fayette Street, 3rd Floor

### Perkins Homes Tenant Council Meeting

Thursday, February 20th at 5:00 p.m.  
1411 Gough Street

## MARCH

### Food & Nutrition Management

Monday through Thursday  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
1731 Chase Street

### Free Legal Representation

Every Thursday  
Call 410-685-6589 ext. 20

### Free Construction Training Project Jump Start

Every Friday at 9:00 a.m.  
725 Fallsway Road

### Expungement Fair

Wednesday, March 4th, 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.

Join USI and HPRP with for their 6th expungement fair in the Perkins Community Center. Meet with an attorney for free legal advice and free expungements.

### Perkins Healthy Smile Program

Friday, March 13th, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

While schools are closed, USI and the Healthy Smiles program will be offering FREE dental cleanings for all youth ages 3-17 in Perkins. Please see USI staff member for registration. Registration is required.

### Board of Commissioners Meeting

Tuesday, March 17th at 4:00 p.m.  
1640 Balmor Court (Gilmor Homes)

### Perkins Homes Tenant Council Meeting

Thursday, March 19th at 5:00 p.m.  
1411 Gough Street

Send story ideas and calendar events to Arlisa Anderson at [Arlisa.Anderson@habc.org](mailto:Arlisa.Anderson@habc.org)