Annual Report
Executive Summary
2018
Program Summary

Park Heights is a 1,500-acre community of 12 neighborhoods with approximately 30,000 residents, over 80 places of worship, and seven schools. Park Heights Renaissance (PHR), with 29 full-time and three part-time contract staff, is making Park Heights a community of opportunity – one that attracts private investment, which will generate economic opportunity and advancement for all residents and businesses. Our comprehensive community development programs are based on four pillars of community revitalization: Safety, Education, Beautification, and Responsible (Inclusionary Housing Development) Real Estate Development. Over this past year we accomplished the following:

- **Safety**: Safe streets, schools and homes are critical to making a community vibrant by encouraging, homeownership, resident participation and economic investment.

  **Safe Streets** is a community mobilization and outreach program of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice designed to combat shootings and homicides. The intervention focused on high-risk youth aged 14 to 25 and operated in four sites in Baltimore City: McElderry Park, Cherry Hill, Mondawmin, and Park Heights, the last being under our supervision. Safe Streets Park Heights celebrated more than a year without a homicide. One of the best prevention measures is to connect youth to services that promote growth and development. To this end, Safe Streets made more than 1272 referrals to organizations providing employment, mental and behavioral health and housing services.

- **Education**: PHR endeavors to inspire Park Heights to become a “learning community,” one that seeks transformative learning through academic and community processes that develop students socially, culturally and ethically. With the entire community, PHR works to improve the academic performance of our children to ensure they have the attitudes, skills, and proficiencies needed to succeed in school and compete in a 21st century global workforce.

  Stronger schools make stronger communities, and stronger communities make stronger schools. PHR combines strategies for inclusionary housing, educational programming, and advocacy with strategic efforts to create pathways to educational success along a “cradle to career” continuum, beginning with early childhood education. Our efforts include working to expand the number of early learning programs in the community and to integrate HIPPY (see below) into the action plans of all our community schools.

**Home Instruction of Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)**: PHR operates HIPPY in the Park Heights community. This three-year, 30-week per year home-based early childhood development program is for families with children ages three through five. Parents receive supplies and weekly individualized lessons from Home Visitors, HIPPY paraprofessionals we hire from the neighborhoods and train to help parents with the curriculum.

During the 2017-18 academic year, HIPPY recruited 48 families and served 51 children. This decrease in the number of families and children from previous years was due to a shortage of Home Visitors, due to both funding and personnel issues. We continue working to develop new sources to diversify and strengthen our funding. Given our objective to reach and increase the Hispanic population in Park Heights, we are actively seeking Spanish speaking applicants to serve as Home Visitors.
PHR evaluates HIPPY through a variety of measures; the following are representative of the program’s success even during a difficult year.

- 35% of HIPPY parents volunteered, far exceeding our goal of 20%.
- 90% of parents demonstrated growth in positive parenting behavior (goal: 85%)
- 90% of HIPPY Students scored within or above the age-specific developmentally appropriate range on Brigance Assessment Screening (goal: 80%)
- HIPPY USA conducted a two-day accreditation visit and provided mostly positive feedback. We anticipate final results by this month’s end.

**Community Schools:** As Community School Lead Agency at Arlington Elementary/Middle, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle, and Pimlico Elementary/Middle Schools, PHR focuses on five integral components of success: Family Engagement, Health and Social Supports, Enhanced Academics and Enrichment, Community Development, and Youth Development/College and Career Readiness. We are working with the Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) Office of New Initiatives to create a transition plan for students of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle in the event of that school closing.

**PHR Trauma-Responsive Schools (TRS):** In conjunction with social work students from Morgan State University (MSU), PHR has initiated Park Heights Oasis, a TRS program onsite at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle. The program addresses needs of children impacted by violence and other stressors experienced in underserved communities. The before- and after-school programming connects students with caring adult mentors and provides academic support and counseling services to help students develop healthy responses to personal, family-related, and social stressors.

**Girl Scouts of Central Maryland (GSCM):** PHR is partnering with GSCM in their “Girls Rise in Park Heights” program that provides academic and social supports to approximately 500 girls at Arlington and Pimlico E/M Schools and Creative City Public Charter School. GCSM funds are covering costs of program supplies, such as video recording equipment and software, outdoor safety lighting, and other much-needed items for the three schools, as well as a staffer who will work with the girls’ parents.

**Morgan State University (MSU):** PHR and MSU have developed a project-based education partnership that is very beneficial for both organizations. Our community gets the assistance of MSU students while the students gain valuable experience in their fields of study that will help them in their job search when they graduate.

PHR and MSU hosted a land planning workshop focused on the built environment and community views on how to improve it. As a result of the workshop, MSU architecture students have identified land planning and development projects across the world to be considered in the redevelopment of Park Heights. Student projects include: 1) studying the feasibility of developing a shuttle service for seniors and other residents without transportation to mitigate the “food desert” that exists in Park Heights, and 2) developing horticultural architecture designs for vacant parcels and engineering drawings to support façade improvements for derelict properties in Park Heights.

Education students have initiated a service learning program working with Pimlico E/M school students on literacy and STEM lessons. The University’s technology and business departments are developing the systems architecture for a “Virtual Village” decision-support system that will connect current and future residents to programs, services, and activities that can improve family outcomes in education, health, workforce, economic development, etc. It also will help PHR coordinate efforts with other community organizations to measure and track programming effectiveness on individual progress from “cradle to
career.” Lastly, Community Health students are helping PHR to address issues of violence prevention and lead paint abatement.

- **Beautification:** Litter drives down property values, reduces business revenue, and attracts crime. No single community redevelopment effort is as effective in improving the overall quality of life as cleaning up the trash.

**Clean & Green:** At its core, the Clean and Green Team serves as a pipeline through which unemployed residents can hone their skills to be competitive in the job market. PHR joined with the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development to hire Park Heights residents to form the Clean & Green Team, which has removed literally tons of trash. They began collecting data on illegal dumping in the area, and reported 62 such incidents over a three-month period. Considering the extent of dumping and the presumed inability of the Department of Public Works to keep pace with illegal dumping, PHR will propose expanding the team to support the clean-up of this dumping and to rent heavy equipment to remove debris. The Clean & Green Team achieved sustainability this year by contracting with LifeBridge Health to provide services to LifeBridge’s campuses in Baltimore and Carroll counties. To improve the skill level of the Team, the supervisor has indentified professional development training for staff for later this year and is working with various partners to schedule the training.

- **Real Estate Development:** In 2010, the City of Baltimore and PHR established a MOU that established the roles of the City and PHR relating to general development plans, property disposition, etc. Depending upon the project, PHR may be developer, co-developer, facilitator or marketing agent for projects within the community.

For the status of individual real estate deals, please see Indicators of Progress below.

“Living, Learning, and Loving in Park Heights”: We have launched a campaign to sell the Park Heights community as a place for homeownership. We were donated a vacant house that we are developing into the “Park Heights Renaissance Homeownership Center.” This Center will provide a model housing unit and a place where prospective homeowners can go to get pre-purchase housing counseling and support to obtain and retain homeownership in Park Heights. We estimate construction to be completed and for staff to re-locate there in 120 days. After operating the pilot for two years, we expect public funds and developer fees to sustain the program.

In the meantime, we continue to provide services such as our Neighborhood Loan Program, General Housing and Financial Literacy Counseling; Pre-purchase, Post-purchase and Foreclosure Prevention Counseling; Closing Cost/Down Payment Assistance; Workforce Home Benefit Initiative Program; and Energy Savings Loans. Over the past year, 350 residents attended workshops and/or received foreclosure prevention counseling. We are developing new outreach programs to increase attendance.

**Civic Works:** In January, Civic Works, Inc. received $1.1 million in federal funding for their YouthBuild program. With these funds, Civic Works will collaborate with PHR to create summer employment for local youth. Roughly half of the 62 participants, who will be co-enrolled in AmeriCorps, will receive training in the construction trade and an education award upon graduation that they can use for college or trade school; the others will be trained in health care. PHR intends to employ some of the students at the Park Circle site described below and or at other scattered sites to develop their construction skills.

**Vacants to Value:** The Mayor’s initiative to eliminate blight is an opportunity to help raise property values, create community amenities, increase local tax revenue, and attract new residents and businesses. PHR has acquired thirteen properties, stabilized six for future development, and is awaiting
demolition of the south side of the 2600 block of Loyola Northway to make way for a planned park adjacent to our senior complex Renaissance Gardens.

Programs’ Accomplishments, Challenges and Solutions.

As noted above, PHR has had some very notable achievements over the past year, including the partnership with Civic Works and our symbiotic relationship with Morgan State University (MSU). The MSU connection in particular provides both PHR and the Park Heights neighborhood with critically-needed expertise at substantially lower cost. It also is a “home-grown” program: student community members contribute their university-level knowledge while stakeholder community members contribute their street-level wisdom and experience. It is through these and other combined efforts that we have been able to deepen the community’s “buy-in” to the projects we are advancing.

We recently launched an initiative to expand our partnerships for our 21st Century School, Pimlico Elementary/ Middle, to support the project-based learning approach, which seeks to improve student performance through active exploration of real-world challenges. Students learn about a subject by investigating related problems and applying practical solutions that can be found in the community. For example, we will establish a partnership with Cylburn Arboretum to allow students to study natural ecosystems. As discussed under Sustainability below, PHR has entered into four joint venture agreements to develop more than 300 units of affordable housing for Park Heights.

Major Changes in Objectives and/or Budget that Occurred During the Past Year

Over the past year, PHR has deepened and broadened our focus on development to re-brand Park Heights as a community of homeownership. Through joint venture agreements with for-profit and not-for-profit developers, we are improving the physical, social, and educational well-being of Park Heights. We are building the capacity of neighborhood organizations, including those of the faith community, to take on more strategic roles in these efforts. Part of that work includes creating new networks and methods of integrating the activities of both new and existing partnerships. We want all “development” efforts – the new housing, the updated schools, the education programs, etc. – to be part of an overall system rather than individual solutions to discrete problems.

Indicators of Progress or Success

Progress of real estate deals.

Loyola Northway 2600: The scope of the project is to renovate 13 vacant homes, construct a “Pocket Park,” and provide façade improvements to eight occupied homes. To date, PHR has renovated seven vacant homes and built the Pocket Park. We are working with a real estate agent to acquire the only occupied property on the south side of the street, which will allow us to raze the northernmost properties and move forward on creating a green space for community usage.

Renaissance Row: This will be a four-story elevator building with above ground parking and a unit-mix of 40 one-bedroom, 36 two-bedroom, and eight three-bedroom. PHR will rent 1,500-2,000 square feet of office space. During January, the development team had its initial meeting with the City of Baltimore Department of Public Works. We have submitted project information for the Board of Estimates Approval and will be finalizing decisions on storm water management, residential parking, and lighting.

Park Circle Redevelopment – Rehabilitation of scattered site housing: PHR has held several meetings with the City regarding properties to be conveyed to the organization as a part of the redevelopment of
the Park Circle area. The City has requested PHR work with Rebuild Metro on a strategic plan for the area development that will lead to a joint venture agreement to co-develop more than 25 properties in the Park Circle neighborhood. We have submitted a proposal to the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to acquire three properties in the 3600 block of Park Heights Avenue so we can begin PHR-inspired rehabilitation in that community. In the meantime, PHR and HCD staff have begun data collection and analysis of property disposition in preparation for a joint venture agreement.

**Woodland Gardens – HUD Section 202 Application:** Comprehensive Housing Assistance, Inc. (CHAI) was informed that HUD would issue a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for HUD Section 202 capital funding in September 2018. The application has been submitted to HUD for review. There are many unknowns at this point (amount of funding, whether state or national, scoring) but Comprehensive Housing Assistance Inc, (CHAI) and Park Height Renaissance (PHR) want to work together to be ready to apply. Typically, once the NOFA is published there is 60 days to apply.

Based on several meetings with Baltimore City, we would like to proceed with an option to enter into a Land Disposition Agreement (LDA) for a 2.5+ acre site located at 4701-4755 Park Heights Avenue, 3132-3144 Virginia Avenue, and 4702-4726 Delaware Avenue, closing subject to receiving a HUD Fund reservation. The site currently has 48 separate lots owned by Baltimore City with vacant houses, but our understanding is that the City will be funding and demolishing all the existing houses on the site soon, using Project CORE funds. The site can then be conveyed as one parcel for redevelopment.

**Wiley Avenue Senior Complex:** Proposed by Commercial Development, the project provides 53 units of senior (39 one-bedroom and 14 two-bedroom units) housing located on the corner of Reisterstown Road and Wylie Avenue across from the Zeta Center. Commercial Development has developed pro forma, although we may modify it to reduce the financial gap needed to complete the project. Commercial Development has recast the terms of the Joint Venture which PHR staff is reviewing.

**Next Steps and Sustainability**

PHR has entered into four joint venture agreements with developers, through which we will share development fees and income, as we are providing the land as our equity interest in the deal. We continue to receive funding from the Pimlico Community Development Authority, primarily from slot machine revenue. The current statute provides funds to the Pimlico Area through fiscal year 2032, although the annual discussion centered around the Preakness and the future of Pimlico means such funding could be in jeopardy. Executive Director Pollock provided testimony to the Maryland House of Delegates Ways and Means Committee in support of House Bill 1190/Senate Bill 800 to create a Workgroup to develop a financial plan to redevelop a new Pimlico as outlined in the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) Pimlico Race Course Study Phase Two released in late 2018.