



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT:
MIKE BURNETTE
804-354-0641, ext. 118
804-869-1848, CELL

CARRINGTON GARDENS RESIDENTS START TO SEE NEW HOPE

RICHMOND, VA - Last week, the city's social services went to the aid of those displaced from Carrington Gardens after the city's inspector condemned the 216 unit complex. Richmond's Dept. of Social Services was able to put the remaining 40-50 residents in a local hotel for a week.

Now Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME), a statewide non-profit housing counseling agency based in Richmond, is aiding the residents to find safe and affordable stable housing. HOME is offering individual appointments to help them fill out the paperwork for emergency housing funds. This will not only get them out of a hotel, but with HOME's help, hopefully find them decent yet an affordable place to call home.

Constance Chamberlin, HOME's president, stated "This situation is just one of many housing crises happening every day here in Richmond. Permanent, safe, and affordable shelter is a fundamental need for building healthy families. Without it, they lack the economic and social stability to build better futures for themselves and their children."

Chamberlin went on to say that the media attention to this particular case should help citizens of Metro Richmond realize the kinds of problems their neighbors are having finding decent housing.

HOME will be using funds from Virginia's Homeless Intervention program, a state funded assistance program. These funds are very limited. If you would like to make a donation to help the residents of Carrington Gardens, you can send a tax deductible check

to HOME Inc., 700 E. Franklin St., Suite 3A, Richmond, VA 23219, marked “for Carrington Gardens.” EVERY penny you send will go directly to a family in crisis.

HOME’s program is not just financial assistance, but includes counseling to help recipients to find and keep the best housing possible.

Residents’ experiences:

(She chose not to use her name or image. She would be available for a direct interview without using her image or name in the report.)

One three-year resident said her experience changed drastically after the new management took over. She knew it changed because they got notices on their door to now send their checks to New Jersey. As far as she knows, the new owners have never been on-site. Then things really changed. The maintenance requests were not approved and the trash piled up. She said apparently the owners weren’t approving any expenditures to fix things and the maintenance workers even got bounced checks for their pay. They even tried to track down the new owners to talk to them through Better Business Bureau and directory assistance in NJ, but no listings existed.

She also knew that something was going to happen. She got home from work on February 10th and there were city cars and police cars throughout the complex. Her son said she needed to get down to the meeting. At 1:30pm, they were told they needed to be out by 6pm. She said “I just started crying and I’ve been crying ever since.” Her life wasn’t great she said, but it was stable. Now, everything was a mess. They were moved to a hotel by the city and told they have 1 week there. It has now been granted for 2 weeks.

This working mother is now faced with not enough money for food. She is having to spend her money on application fees to new apartments and eating out because the hotel they were put up in for now 2 weeks has no facilities to cook or store food. “I had to put down \$32 for my first application fee and I was denied and I don’t get that money back. I will be ok; I am so worried about feeding my son. I just started to cry again. I just live pay check to pay check.”

She attended HOME’s session today for one-on-one time with a counselor to help her through this process. She feels much better. She knows she has another week in the hotel and she has rented a U-Haul and storage facility for her stuff which now has to be out of Carrington Gardens by this weekend before the power is turned off and it is boarded up. She has some hope that HOME will be there to help her know her rights, help her with her new lease and hopefully get some financial assistance to help pay the security deposit for the new apartment. She doesn’t have any idea if or when she will see any money

returned that she paid Carrington Gardens. A lot of residents already paid February's rent and were only there 10 days

Another resident told HOME that they were looking for funds to replace his grandmother's hospital bed that was destroyed when the ceiling in her Carrington Gardens Apartment came crashing down during the week of the eviction.

***HOME is hoping that Richmond will help these cases
and the other residents of Carrington Gardens.***

H.O.M.E. is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1971 to ensure that everyone is treated fairly in their search for housing. To achieve this goal, HOME has developed a comprehensive range of programs and partnerships to address the barriers to housing choice. HOME helps victims of housing discrimination, offers comprehensive housing counseling services including pre-purchase counseling, budget and credit counseling, down payment and closing cost assistance, mortgage default counseling and many more housing related services. HOME provides training and technical assistance to the housing, lending and insurance industries to help make their housing or housing related service(s) available to the greatest number of people. (For more information on HOME, visit www.phonehome.org.)

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