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# The Home front

A Housing Development Corporation  
MidAtlantic Publication



From left to right: HDC MidAtlantic District Manager Cindy Geib, Gerry O'Donnell, Fulton Bank VP of Community Development Lending Tracy F. Fletcher, City of Wilkes-Barre City Councilman Tony Brooks, City of Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tony George, HDC MidAtlantic President & CEO Michael R. Carper, PHFA Executive Director & CEO Brian A. Hudson, Sr., Office of Senator John T. Yudichak's Chief of Staff Mark Grochocki, CH&E President Pete Egan, HDC MidAtlantic Acting Director of Property Management Nancy Batchelder, Architectural Concepts President Bruce Weinsteiger, HDC MidAtlantic Community Manager Lori Sabol.

## Celebrating in Luzerne County

**The Wilkes-Barre Home Front:** In October, HDC MidAtlantic celebrated the grand opening of Heritage Point Apartments in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

Elected officials, development partners, community members and residents joined HDC MidAtlantic at a ribbon cutting ceremony for the brand new 56 apartment community constructed on two sites including a former hospital site along Dana Street as well as site along Moyallen Street.

"The transformation of this site from an abandoned hospital to these remarkable, aesthetically beautiful apartment homes is astounding," said HDC MidAtlantic President & CEO Michael R. Carper.

"These apartments will provide the residents of this community a safe, decent, affordable place to call home."

A few years ago, the Wyoming Valley Health & Education Foundation and the City of Wilkes-Barre approached HDC MidAtlantic about the site. The old hospital that stood on the site was an eyesore to the community and presented an ever-increasing health and safety hazard to neighboring residents. The Wyoming Valley Health & Education Foundation and the City of Wilkes-Barre were seeking a developer with vision as well as capacity and experience to transform the property into a useful, sustainable and beneficial asset to the community.

Today, Heritage Point Apartments offers one, two and three bedroom homes. The development includes a 1,500 sq. ft. community room and 86 on-site parking spaces. In addition, HDC MidAtlantic offers resident supportive services to assist residents with needs or access resources for which they may be eligible.

The portion of Heritage Point Apartments located on Moyallen Street was constructed according to Passive House—a set of rigorous, energy efficiency standards that result in dramatically reduced energy costs for residents.

In May 2015, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) awarded \$1,148,260 in Low Income Housing Tax Credits to Heritage Point Apartments. Other sources of funding include support from the City of Wilkes-Barre and the County of Luzerne. The total cost of development was \$14.4 million.

In keeping with the goals and objectives of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, every unit has been made affordable to residents at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Special thanks to our development partners including Architectural Concepts, general contractor Caldwell, Heckles and Egan, Inc., our tax credit equity investor CREA, our construction lender Fulton Bank, and PHFA.

## Geisinger Makes Contribution

**The Wilkes-Barre Home Front:** HDC MidAtlantic received a \$3,000 charitable contribution from Geisinger to assist in the purchase of equipment for the Rolling Mill Hill Neighborhood Playground in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

"I want to express my personal thanks to Geisinger for providing this essential financial support benefiting the children of the Rolling Mill Hill neighborhood," said HDC MidAtlantic President & CEO Michael R. Carper.

The playground will be located adjacent to Heritage Point Apartments—a brand new affordable community featuring 56 safe, attractive homes for rent.

During the predevelopment of Heritage Point Apartments, neighbors expressed interest in seeing a playground for their children. As a result, HDC MidAtlantic dedicated two lots adjacent to the new community to the City of Wilkes-Barre for a park.

HDC MidAtlantic is actively fundraising for the playground. Last year, the organization was awarded a \$6,000 grant from Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeast PA, Inc.

Heritage Point Apartments is located at 151 Dana Street in Wilkes-Barre. For more information, visit [hdcweb.com](http://hdcweb.com).



## #ExtraGive

**The Lancaster Home Front:** Mark your calendars. The Extraordinary Give is coming!

The Extraordinary Give is the largest day of giving in Lancaster County, Pa. For the past five years, the Extraordinary Give has raised \$22.5 million for more than 500 organizations!

This year, on November 17, every dollar donated at [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org) will be stretched with at least \$500,000 from the Lancaster County Community

Foundation, Rodgers & Associates, The S. Dale High Family Foundation, and other community partners to support the causes you care about.

Feeling inspired to give? Please consider making a contribution to HDC MidAtlantic at [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org) on November 17. Your gift makes a real impact on the lives of the people we serve. Thanks for your generosity and support.

On November 17, follow HDC MidAtlantic on Facebook to hear how your gifts make a difference.

THE EXTRA  
ORDINARY  
GIVE



NOVEMBER 17 2017

The Home Front Newsletter | Vol. 13, No. 3

**Our Board of Directors:**

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**Our Mission:**

We build hope and opportunity by providing a safe and affordable place to call home.

**Our Vision:**

HDC MidAtlantic will be the premier nonprofit provider of affordable housing.

**Our Core Values:**

- Residents
- Stewardship
- Healthy Communities
- Financial Stability
- Diversity
- Employees
- Partnerships

**Our History:**

Founded in 1971, Housing Development Corporation MidAtlantic is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation dedicated to providing quality affordable rental homes for working families, seniors, and individuals living with disabilities throughout Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland. HDC MidAtlantic owns, develops and/or manages more than 3,700 affordable homes for rent by delivering high-quality and secure housing solutions through innovative property management, real estate development, and resident supportive services.

**Our Registration Notice:**

The official registration and financial information of Housing Development Corporation MidAtlantic may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

**Our Solicitation Policy:**

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**The Home Front Editor:**

Amanda P. Meyers, Marketing Manager

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## DeWitt Joins Board

**The Lancaster Home Front:** *HDC MidAtlantic welcomed Mary Ellen DeWitt to its volunteer board of directors.*

DeWitt has been a Lancaster City resident since 1986. She is deeply invested in the community and served on several local nonprofit boards including Hospice & Community Care and First United Methodist Church.

DeWitt has worked at Cargas Systems, a business software and consulting firm in Lancaster, Pa., since 1995.

As a licensed CPA, she has more than 17 years of accounting and project management experience with industry and nonprofit clients. She specializes in financial applications and reporting, and has served as a project manager for a variety of implementations.

Her vision of "making the customer's life better" has resulted in business systems which



Mary Ellen DeWitt joins HDC MidAtlantic's board of directors.

enhance the work life of those using Microsoft Dynamics GP and Sage Intacct.

Dewitt holds a bachelor's in music from Belhaven University. Music continues to be an influence in her life and she's spent time performing with both the Allegro Orchestra Lancaster as well as the Wheatland Chorale.



*HDC MidAtlantic expands its mission and services to Montgomery County, Pa., with the acquisition of Norriswood Apartments.*



## Expanding our Footprint

**The Norristown Home Front:** *HDC MidAtlantic recently acquired Norriswood Apartments, an affordable apartment community located in Norristown, Pa., for working families, seniors, and friends and neighbors living with disabilities.*

Norriswood Apartments is the first property HDC MidAtlantic owns and manages in Montgomery County, Pa., and marks a milestone in the organization's long-term vision to expand its mission and services.

Built in 1962, Norriswood Apartments is located at 1828 Arch Street and includes 42 one-bedroom, one-bath apartment homes for rent. Amenities include laundry facilities, off-street parking, as well as 24-hour emergency maintenance.

Prospective residents apply through the Montgomery County Housing Authority.

For more information about Norriswood Apartments, visit [hdcweb.com](http://hdcweb.com).

## Best Practices Award

**The Leesport Home Front:** *HDC MidAtlantic received a Best Practices award from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for Southgate Apartments in Leesport, Pa.*

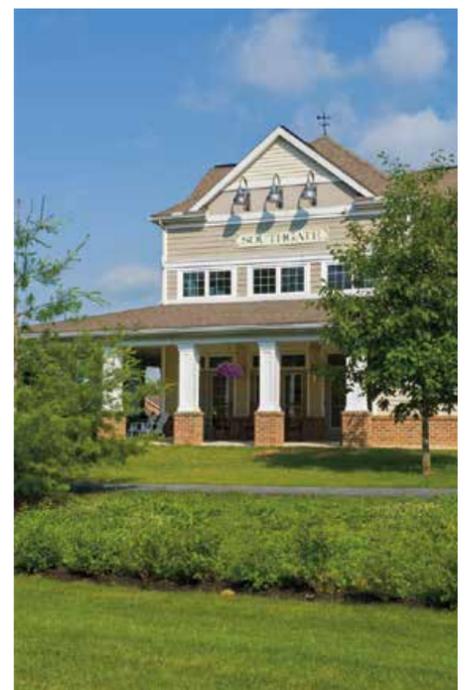
The award recognized Southgate Apartments for outstanding property performance including effective waitlist management, apartment turnover procedures and the property's rolling 12-month 100% occupancy status among other notable accomplishments.

"We have an obligation to people in need of affordable housing to make every vacant apartment ready and available soon as possible," said HDC MidAtlantic President & CEO Michael R. Carper.

"Our outstanding team of dedicated and professional staff follow rigorous internal performance standards to ensure our residents have a safe and affordable place to call home."

The award was presented at PHFA's 2017 Multifamily Affordable Housing Conference held this past summer in State College, Pa.

Built in 2002, Southgate Apartments features 45 one- and two-bedroom apartment homes for seniors age 62 years and older. For more information about Southgate Apartments, visit [hdcweb.com](http://hdcweb.com).



*Southgate Apartments in Leesport, Pa., received a Best Practices award from PHFA for property performance.*

## A Full Life

**The Shillington Home Front:** *This time of year, Richard Jensen likes to get together with his friends and cheer on the Philadelphia Eagles. He's only slightly ashamed to admit he used to cheer for the Oakland Raiders. But Jensen's friends helped him see the error of his ways after some gentle hazing and ritual burning of Raiders memorabilia.*

Friends are important to Jensen. So is his family.

This all sounds pretty typical, right? Friends, family, games on Sundays. But, there is nothing typical about Jensen or the challenges he's faced in his life.

Jensen lives at Sencit Towne House Apartments in Shillington, Pa. He is in his 40's and has cerebral palsy. Cerebral Palsy, or CP as it is often called, is a disorder caused by damage to the brain usually from an injury or abnormal development before, during or after birth.

Jensen was born with CP three months premature. "During birth because my neck was soft, my head got bent entirely back between my shoulder blades and the circulation to my brain was cut off causing my CP," he explained.

"The doctors told my mom to put me in a home and forget about me. They said I wouldn't amount to anything."

But Jensen's mother didn't do that. Instead, she selected a few choice words to express her sentiments to the doctors, and set off to make the best life possible for her son.

"My mom was my biggest supporter," said Jensen. "She wanted me to be independent so any kind of activity or program that I could be involved with, my mom wanted me to be a part of it," said Jensen who recalled training for the Special Olympics in Hawaii when he was in the 8th grade.

For eight months he trained in weight lifting, and track and field. At the end of the games, Special Olympics organizers announced there would be no 1st, 2nd or 3rd place that year—everyone would get a participation trophy. "I could have shown up and eaten a hot dog and I would have gotten the same trophy," Jensen laughed.

While Jensen faced his physical challenges head on, he struggled in school, too. "I had trouble with reading skills and comprehension for a long time. When I got into middle school, they didn't have special education. I had to do a lot of writing and that was hard for me so my teachers would let me record my work onto cassette tapes."

That's just one way Jensen learned to adapt. Adaptation was a skill his mom helped him learn, and one he has used over and over again his entire life. "There are some obvious things that hold me back, but my mom always instilled in me to find another way," he said. "She knew that not everybody out there would cater to my needs, so I would need to be able to adjust to whatever environment I was in."

Jensen's parents divorced when he was young and his relationship with his father has been strained at times. "I knew instinctively that I had my mom's support, but my father struggled to accept my disability."



*Richard Jensen lives at Sencit Towne House Apartments in Shillington, Pa.*

That disability led to 12 leg surgeries. Doctors thought if they could move the muscles in his legs, he would be able to walk. And while it helped for a time, Jensen said he could never really walk independently.

He shared a story about a time after the 3rd or 4th surgery, sitting with his legs bandaged in the back of a station wagon, crying. He asked his mom, "Why am I handicap? Why do I have to go through this?" Jensen's mom paused for a moment before replying, "God chose you because he knew you could handle the responsibility."

Jensen said whenever he is having an "oh poor me," moment, he remembers what his mom told him in the back of that station wagon so many years ago.

"As I'm getting older, it's getting harder to move," he said. "It would be nice to walk just for the convenience of it, but I've adjusted to living in my [wheel] chair full time."

Jensen has traveled and lived throughout the U.S., but said his home at Sencit is the first time he's lived anywhere that was fully handicap capable. Jensen learned about the apartment community from a friend who works for Berks County, where Sencit is located. Unfortunately, at the time there weren't any vacancies. Jensen put his name on the wait list and would call every three or four months to make sure property staff knew he still wanted to live there.

In the meantime, Jensen applied and got an apartment at another HDC MidAtlantic property—Henner Apartments in Womelsdorf, Pa. He was able to get an apartment but the location is rural and transportation was a challenge. "The bus didn't come out that far," said Jensen who explained that transportation is by far the thing he needs the most help with. "I can't drive because the CP affects my reaction time and depth perception."

Jensen transferred to Sencit when an apartment became available. "When I applied here [at Sencit] five years ago, my goal was to live here," said Jensen. "Even if I had to wait 10 years, my goal was to live on my own."

At Sencit, Jensen has access to a bus, shopping, restaurants, and other conveniences located in town. He said he feels a connection to this area of Pennsylvania. He attended college here and still has a core group of friends who live in the area.

Jensen has two college degrees in data processing and web design though he said he's never really had an opportunity to use them. He's worked jobs here and there, but his disability limits opportunities.

In so many ways, Jensen lives a pretty typical life. He has an apartment, friends, and family. "To live a normal life—that's the ultimate goal for a disabled person," he said.

"I don't have lots of money but as long as the bills are paid and there's food in my fridge, I'm happy," he said. And that's saying a lot for Jensen who has been grieving the loss of his mom who passed after a brief illness almost two years ago. "I didn't realize how much she championed me. Whenever I needed something, like moral support, she was there for me."

After her passing, Jensen had to manage all her arrangements while consoling his family, especially his young nephew who took the loss hard.

"My mom was strong. She was a single mother of two kids. She paid for daycare for my sister and for all of my equipment—my braces

“When I applied here [at Sencit] five years ago, my goal was to live here,” said Jensen. “Even if I had to wait 10 years, my goal was to live on my own.”

At Sencit, Jensen has access to a bus, shopping, restaurants, and other conveniences located in town.

and walkers.” Despite the hardships, Jensen said his mom never let them feel like they were poor growing up. “We had movie nights on Fridays. My mom would rent a movie. We would eat popcorn and I would get an Orange Crush out of the soda machine at the apartment complex.”

Grieving has been difficult, and Jensen admits he still gets depressed about his disability from time to time. Still, his life experiences have given him a tremendous capacity to empathize with people facing hardships.

“Even if you're disabled and have low income, you can still live a happy and full life,” said Jensen.

HDC MidAtlantic would like to thank Mr. Jensen for taking time to talk with us and share his experience living at Sencit Towne House Apartments.

To learn more about this or any HDC MidAtlantic community, visit us online at [www.hdcweb.com](http://www.hdcweb.com).



Joleen Schuler has been promoted to Compliance Manager.

## Schuler Promoted

**The Lancaster Home Front:** Joleen Schuler has been promoted to Compliance Manager.

Schuler joined HDC MidAtlantic in 2011. She worked in the organization's property management department before transition into a role as a Compliance Specialist where she assisted in the maintenance of regulatory standards across HDC MidAtlantic's growing property portfolio.

In her new role as Compliance Manager, Schuler is now responsible for the oversight of the Compliance Department, and ensuring all of HDC MidAtlantic's properties meet local, state, and federal regulations.

Schuler earned her AHM® (Assisted Housing Manager) Certification, TaCCs® (Low Income Housing Tax Credit), COS Public Housing, and Rural Development STAR Certifications. Schuler holds a bachelor's from Albright College, and is a licensed Real Estate Salesperson.



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## The Home front



Celebrating in  
Luzerne County



Best Practices  
Award



A Full Life



In the fall, Congressman Smucker (PA-16) visited the homes of two households living at Skyline View Apartments in Reading, Pa.

## Visits from the Capital

**The Washington, D.C. Home Front:** Congressman Ryan Costello (PA-06) and Congressman Lloyd Smucker (PA-16) took time out of their busy schedules to visit HDC MidAtlantic properties.

Costello visited Sencit Towne House Apartments, a 200 unit senior apartment building in Shillington, Pa. After a brief tour, Costello joined a small crowd of residents gathered in the community room. Residents used the opportunity to advocate for more affordable housing and express their gratitude for the safety, convenience, and affordability provided by places like Sencit Towne House Apartments and organizations like HDC MidAtlantic.

Smucker toured Skyline View Apartments, a 140 unit senior apartment building, in Reading, Pa. After a brief tour of common areas, Smucker visited the homes of two households where residents shared personal stories and experiences about how living in Skyline View Apartments has positively impacted their lives.



This summer, Congressman Ryan Costello (PA-06) met with residents living at Sencit Towne House Apartments in Shillington, Pa.

HDC MidAtlantic would like to thank both Congressman Costello and Congressman Smucker for taking time to visit with us. And, special thanks to the residents of Sencit Towne House Apartments and Skyline View Apartments who opened their homes for touring, and shared their stories about living in HDC MidAtlantic communities.

To learn more about Sencit Towne House Apartments or Skyline View Apartments, visit [hdcweb.com](http://hdcweb.com).