

Message from the President

I was honored to be part of HANDS as we celebrated the organization's 40th anniversary. I am equally honored to have carried on the role of my father, Charles Scalise, and to keep the vision of my parents and HANDS' founding members alive as we continue to serve to low-income families, elderly, and adults with disabilities to meet their affordable housing needs.

In 1966, Charlie and Kathy Scalise worked for the parish as volunteers of the Catholic Diocese of Erie's Christian Family Movement (CFM). It was through CFM that Charlie and Kathy became aware of the effect of local redevelopment efforts on low-income families. While the development of the Central Mall area was to have a great economic impact, many of Erie's older homes and apartment houses were being demolished to make way for new office buildings. Consequently, many low-income families were being displaced with few decent, affordable housing alternatives available to replace the housing that was lost.

In November of 1966 with CFM members John Poux, Gilbert and Jane Kuehl, and Charlie and Kathy Scalise leading the charge, a small, private nonprofit agency called St. Martin de Porres VIP Housing was founded. In 1967 the organization became recognized as a 501(c)(3) and was later renamed Housing and Neighborhood Development Service – HANDS.

For five years, the group of friends worked as volunteers directing HANDS' housing programs, developing new housing sites, and speaking to church and civic groups to raise additional support. It wasn't until 1971, when the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs awarded HANDS an operational grant that the organization became a full-time agency with a paid staff. At this time, Charlie Scalise became executive director of the agency, and Kathy Scalise became the agency's bookkeeper. Once able to devote full time attention to helping people solve their housing problems, HANDS soon became an official FHA/HUD counseling agent for the Erie area.

HANDS achievements in the 1970s were crowned by the 1978 renovation of the former St. Joseph's Orphanage on 6th and Maryland, now the St. Joseph Apartments, a 204 unit development for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. St. Joseph Apartments offers a general store, library, all-faith chapel, health suite, beauty/barbershop, arts and crafts studio, meeting/reception rooms, and on-site laundry facilities.

In the 1980s, more major housing development and renovation projects followed. In 1988, HUD, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency awarded HANDS \$718,000 to purchase and renovate a 30-unit apartment building at 516 East 6th for the homeless and disabled persons. Shortly thereafter, HANDS received funding from HUD, the PA Department of Public Welfare and the PA Department of Community Affairs to develop the Sharp Apartments at 727 French Street for physically and mentally disabled persons who might otherwise be homeless. Then in August of 1989, HANDS West Apartments, which was similar in scope and funding, opened at 320 West 8th Street.

In the 1990s, HANDS continued to plan and develop projects independently including: HANDS Center City, HANDS Triad, Metro and Niagara Apartments in the City of Erie for persons experiencing mental illness, and the Brookside Apartments in the City of Meadville for senior citizens. At the same time HANDS expanded its development efforts by becoming partners with other non-profits in the region, identifying and securing funding for their housing projects. A few of these developments included the Alex W. Thompson Apartments for Erie's Martin Luther King Center; Capabilities of Crawford County, Liberty Hill Apartments and Terrace Overview Apartments for UCIP; Gargano Towers Apartments for Mercer County Community Action Agency; and Maryvale and Villa Maria Apartments for the Sisters of St. Joseph of NW PA and Penrose Properties. In 1998 HANDS also began development of Mid-Town Homes, a lease purchase development funded in part by low-income housing tax credits. In the late 1990s HANDS began administering the City of Erie HOME program, which provided down payment, closing cost assistance, and rehabilitation funds for first-time homebuyers. During HANDS tenure as administrator of the program, more than 100 homebuyers were assisted.

Since 2000, HANDS has developed more than 100 apartment homes including: Chestnut Street Apartments, Titus House, Warren Anthem, Presidential Place, Poplar Place, and Oak Haven Apartments. Since 2004, HANDS has also constructed 12 new single family homes for first-time buyers.

From the early grass roots of the late 1960s and 1970s HANDS has grown to become one of northwestern Pennsylvania's largest non-profit providers of affordable housing management and development. Today, HANDS has 850 apartment homes in its asset management portfolio.

Fiscal Year ending 9/30/07
Planning/Programming Activities

October 2006

- HANDS received notification of a \$26,500 Community Development Block Grant program planning grant for Millcreek Township. The funds will be used to study the market, identify appropriate development sites and plan/apply for funding for a senior and a general occupancy/family development.
- HANDS and its development partner PIRHL submitted an application to PHFA for an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to construct 40 single-family town homes in the Borough of Chambersburg. The development, Chambersburg Family Town Homes, will be managed locally by the Franklin County Housing Authority or its non-profit subsidiary. The development will follow the lease-purchase option of the LIHTC program.
- St. Joseph Apartments common area renovations were complete.

November 2006

- Susan Strange joined HANDS as Vice President of Finance and Administration.

- Construction began on the 29 single family homes (Edinboro Family Homes) in the Scots Glen subdivision.
- HANDS received notification from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development that it was granted Fund Reservations under the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly and Section 811 Supportive Housing for the Disabled programs for three new developments. Requests were: St. Francis Xavier Apartments, a 22 unit senior development to be located in the Borough of McKean; Liberty Place Apartments, an 8 unit development for persons with disabilities in the City of Erie; and Rosewood Apartments, a 6 unit development for persons with disabilities in the City of Erie.
- Construction began on Cascade Run, an 8 unit US Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 811, Supportive Housing for the Disabled development.

December 2006

- HANDS reorganized its corporate structure and governance model to more closely resemble a line of dots. In doing so, Charles G. Scalise was named President and Chief Executive Officer.
- The Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh recognized Charles G. Scalise, HANDS President, for his 9 years of service on the Bank's Advisory Council. The event was attended by more than 80 of Chuck's peers and community leaders. Chuck also received formal Proclamations from Congressman English and Mayor Sinnott at the event.
- HANDS established an endowment fund at the Erie Community Foundation.

January 2007

- In order to allow HANDS to focus on its core competencies of development and management, in June 2006 HANDS requested that the City transition administration of the City of Erie HOME Program to another agency. The transition of the program to St. Martin Center occurred over several months and was finalized in January.

February 2007

- HANDS celebrated its 40th Anniversary with the Community at the former Villa College Library.

March 2007

- HANDS received notification that it was awarded an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits for Chambersburg Family Town Homes, 40 single-family town homes in the Borough of Chambersburg. The anticipated budget for the development is \$9 million.
- Renovations began on Highland Pointe, an 8 unit US Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 811, Supportive Housing for the Disabled development.

May 2007

- New construction of three single-family homes began in the Little Italy neighborhood.
- HANDS took over management of Buchanan Court, Rose Terrace and Springboro, three USDA Section 515 developments.
- Terrace Overview renovations including fire, safety, and HVAC upgrades plus paving, were complete. The renovations were made possible through the September 2006 refinancing.

June 2007

- The first units in the Edinboro Family Homes development were completed.
- HANDS was selected as the beneficiary of the Weber, Murphy, Fox annual golf outing, and received \$7,500, which was the largest WMF event contribution to date.

August 2007

- Renovations to the individual apartments at St. Joseph's were completed more than a year ahead of schedule.

September 2007

- HANDS successfully transitioned management of the Better Housing communities to a new property management firm.
- Renovation at the Center City Apartments, including the addition of landscaping, entry canopy, air handling exchangers, along with boiler replacement and extensive community room upgrades were complete. The renovations were made possible through the September 2006 refinancing.

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