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### MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Here comes the sun! This summer has been off to a great start as our community has begun to resume in-person activities with COVID-19 restrictions being lifted. We hope you are enjoying your summer and want to ensure everyone that we are still keeping safety a priority.

Our talented Director of Public Housing, Michelle Thorne, has done amazing work here over the years at the Edison Housing Authority. As of July, she has left the team but she will very much be missed. She has positively impacted numerous residents' lives here in the community.

We would like to extend our congratulations to Raquel Landero, Manager of the Housing Choice Voucher Program and Food Coordinator, who has been promoted as the new Director of Public Housing. Stop by the office to say hello!

One exciting section in this newsletter is "How Does Your Garden Grow?" which highlights two residents, Sotirios Grekos and Betty Collins, putting in some hard work this summer by starting their own gardens. The results have been incredible and our community will be able to enjoy fresh produce. We also have put the spotlight on the Tenants Association, which actively brainstorms ways to improve the quality of life here at EHA.

As a reminder, feel free to reach out to our administrative offices if you need any PPE products or assistance with applications such as rent relief or utility relief programs, which are highlighted within this newsletter.

Sincerely,

*Deborah Hurley*



### TENANT ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT

We are pleased to announce that the Edison Housing Authority Tenants Association of the Robert E. Holmes Gardens meets every other month on the third Tuesday of the month in the community room. Pictured here are President Laura Esannason and Secretary Shaniqua Spann for Robert E. Holmes Gardens. Members include Vice President Betty Collins, Treasurer Haydee Martinez, as well as Supportive Members of the Tenants Association: Sandy Johnson, Louise Gooding, and Carolyn Reece.

An EHA representative and the Tenants Association come together to discuss different topics at each meeting. We have been working hard at addressing concerns, discussing tenants' rights, repairs, the beautification of the property, safety, and much more. The Tenants Association continues to develop ideas to foster a thriving community by coming together and forming communicative groups to bring our families together. The Tenants Association's next meeting is September 21, 2021 at 5:15 pm. If you wish to contact the Tenant Association, please email [REHTenantsAssociation@gmail.com](mailto:REHTenantsAssociation@gmail.com).

## EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SPOTLIGHT: CARMEN AMALBERT



Carmen Amalbert

The Housing Authority is proud to welcome Carmen Amalbert as an executive assistant. Carmen will be instrumental in tending to the needs of residents at Julius Engel Gardens and Robert E. Holmes Gardens.

Ms. Amalbert is an experienced, bilingual, social service provider and public relations professional. Driven by her work ethic and commitment to help others, she takes pride in providing the best services possible. She completed undergraduate studies at Phoenix University and received her Bachelor of Science degree in human services and management.

Carmen is committed to serving the needs of families as an agent of support and guidance. She is a powerful force in the workplace and uses her positive attitude and tireless energy to provide quality services to all she meets.

As executive assistant at the Edison Housing Authority, Carmen’s goal is to foster a strong sense of dedication, motivation, and responsibility in our dynamic workplace as well as utilize her design qualifications and professional skills to make effective and constructive contributions to the Edison Housing Authority.

## RENTAL & UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

With the moratorium on evictions ending soon, we want to ensure our residents have financial stability during this difficult time. We encourage families who are having trouble paying their rent and utilities to take advantage of the following programs which provide temporary rental and utility assistance to households affected by the pandemic:

1. The NJ Department of Community Affairs’ COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance program: For more information and to apply, visit [njdca.onlinepha.com](http://njdca.onlinepha.com).
2. Middlesex County Emergency Rental Assistance Program: For more information and to apply, visit [www.middlesexcountynj.gov/rentalassistance](http://www.middlesexcountynj.gov/rentalassistance).

If you need help filling out these applications, contact Carmen at 908-561-2525 or email her at [Camalbert@edisonha.org](mailto:Camalbert@edisonha.org). She will be happy to assist you.

## NEW DROP BOX AT JULIUS ENGEL GARDENS



We’ve made it even easier to drop off your rent check each month. Now you can place your rent check in a new, convenient, secure drop box in front of the Julius Engel Gardens office. The drop box is accessible 24/7 for several purposes such as safely dropping off documents, small packages, or keys, making it easier for those who are not able to visit the office

during hours of operation. Residents can utilize this contactless option as a means to continue communications without missing due dates. We are looking forward to safely receiving all types of documents from our residents.

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?



The members of The Julius Engel Gardens Club did an excellent job planting and watering the plants this year. Our master gardener, Sotirios Grekos, and the Neha Jain family have been working

hard pruning and watering the garden. They are growing tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, peppers, and fresh herbs.

Our master gardener Mr. Sotirios Grekos loves gardening, and he is very good at it. He started early in the spring to clean up the garden by the administrative building. Upon realizing that the garden was too small, Mr. Grekos volunteered to enlarge it. He replaced the wood edging, added more garden soil, and prepared the space for planting.

The members of the Garden Club planted the vegetables and flowers. Then we realized that our vegetables needed some support since they had grown so big, so Mr. Sotirios Grekos built a support system for them. As you can see, the community garden looks beautiful and soon we will be able to enjoy our own produce and herbs!

We also have Betty Collins, a Robert E. Holmes Gardens resident pictured with her garden. She has planted strawberries, sunflowers, greens, watermelons, and more! Not only are healthy meals prepared for the family, the time spent in the garden brings about a renewed spirit when she tends to her garden. Much care is involved and it shows!



EHA also encourages you to get outside and do some healthy exercise this summer. Julius Engel Gardens offers a garden club and walking club for residents to enjoy.

### EDISON FAMILY SUCCESS STORY

Carolyn Reece, a certified nurse assistant (CNA) at Parker at Monroe, is a single mother of three who has been living at EHA for about 18 years now. Originally from Irvington, she moved her family to take advantage of the higher quality school system.

"I am grateful to be here for all these years, because it has allowed me to be able to afford additional activities for my kids. It has helped them to achieve what they have today."



Carolyn says her children have been able to play many sports, "football and track, everything, tennis, you name it." EHA also spoke with Carolyn's two sons, Nadale and Naran.

Nadale is a senior at Rutgers University double-majoring in human resource management and labor studies. He's part of the track and field team and is also completing an internship at UBS bank. In regards to the past year of college, Nadale explained, "I liked not having to come into class but I actually am happy to go back in to my classes. I'm happy to see people's faces and I also want to start doing more networking with people in the same field as me." He also mentioned, "In the future I want to pursue my dream to be a professional sprinter, if the opportunity presents itself, otherwise I'll fall back on my degree."

Naran, the youngest in the Reece family, just graduated Mater Dei Prep and has already begun his summer classes at Kent State University in Ohio.



He received a full-ride football scholarship to attend KSU, "I'm looking forward to being able to pursue my dream for an extra four years." Naran is glad to be attending his first year of college in person and will be majoring in business management. In addition to his football career and his college education, he has been involved in community service such as a Keyport beach cleanup with his Mater Dei Prep football team.

Over the years, both Nadale and Naran have been mentored by their Big Brothers from the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey. They also both shared that here at Edison Housing Authority they have grown up close to everyone in this tight-knit community and feel like they know everybody.

The EHA team applauds Nadale and Naran's hard work and exceptional educational and athletic achievements and we wish them the best of luck in their aspirations! We're glad to have the Reece family with us!

### FAMILY FUN DAY AT EHA

Family Fun Day, presented in partnership with the Mobile Family Success Center of Middlesex County and Victory Home Remodeling, took place July 24th at Robert E. Holmes Gardens from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Dr. Seuss-themed event was complete with refreshments, music, raffles, outdoor activities, and more.



Over two hundred families, including vendors participated in the event. The day was a success in so many ways! Thank you to all who joined us for a day of fun for the whole family!



## YOUTH STEM PROGRAM AWARD CEREMONY

Edison Housing Authority residents were able to take advantage of a mentorship program for their elementary and middle school students from April through June.



The STEM Mentoring program (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) available to MLK Elementary School students successfully brought together mentors and youth through fun activities. Youth ages 6-10 partook in projects with connections to science, stimulating their academic success. Once the 10-week program was completed,



the Edison Housing Authority celebrated the students' accomplishment with a ceremony on June 9, 2021. Each student was proud to receive a certificate for completion of the program and a medal for their project.



The goIT program was also a 10-week program, available to John Adam Middle School students. In order to prepare students to obtain the necessary skills and confidence to work through challenges, these students developed problem solving skills and learned about the technology industry. On June 19, 2021, the Edison Housing Authority celebrated



the students' accomplishment with a ceremony, providing each with a certificate of completion and a medal for their projects and presentations.

These programs were hosted in partnership with The Township of Edison, John Adams Middle School, MLK Elementary School, TATA Consulting and YMCA of Edison and Metuchen. Funds to support the programs were made possible by the Edison Township Community Development Block Grant.

## SIGN UP FOR THE NEXT EXTERMINATOR VISIT

Both Robert E. Holmes Gardens & Julius Engel Gardens are frequented by an exterminator every 2nd Wednesday of the month. If you are in need of an exterminator, please call us at 908-561-2525 to be included on the list.

## SPRING JOB FAIR: PICK UP A PACKET OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Edison Housing Authority's spring job fair was a success, with more than 300 cars of jobseekers in attendance to take advantage of employment opportunities. If you have not

received an employment opportunities packet, they are still available at both EHA sites. Please visit your administrative buildings at Robert E. Holmes or Julius Engel Gardens to pick up a packet of all the flyers and jobs that are available.

## COVID-19 INFORMATION RESOURCES

We at the Edison Housing Authority know how important it is to keep our community informed of the current pandemic during this difficult time. Here you will find several resources on testing, vaccinations, and other information to keep you and your families healthy and safe.

Edison COVID-19 Information Center

<https://cms2.revize.com/revize/townshipofedison/covid-19>

Middlesex County COVID-19 Resources

[www.discovermiddlesex.com/covid19](http://www.discovermiddlesex.com/covid19)

Office of Health Services: 732-745-3100

New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub

[www.covid19.nj.gov](http://www.covid19.nj.gov)

24 Hour Medical Question Hotline: 1-800-962-1253

General COVID-19 Info: Dial 2-1-1

## MONTHLY COVID-19 TESTING AT EHA

Protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community by getting tested for COVID-19. It's quick and easy. COVID-19 testing takes place every 2nd Monday at Robert E. Holmes Gardens and every 3rd Friday at Julius Engel Gardens from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We extend our thanks to Wellcare Transitional Chronic Care Management for providing this service to our residents.

## COVID-19 VACCINE REGISTRATION

EHA continues to work in partnership with the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) and Edison Township in order to get as many people vaccinated as possible. Edison Township provides transportation from Julius Engel Gardens to Robert E. Holmes Gardens to make vaccination more convenient for those without transportation. Once the next vaccination date has been confirmed, we will notify residents. We thank the township and the VNA for their continuous support of our community every month.



In the meantime, Middlesex County residents can register for vaccination online by visiting [covidsheduling.middlesexcountynj.gov/vaccine/vaccine\\_availability](https://covidsheduling.middlesexcountynj.gov/vaccine/vaccine_availability) or calling 732-745-3100. (As of 5/10/2021, Middlesex County will no longer accept appointments booked through [covid-vaccine.nj.gov](https://covid-vaccine.nj.gov)).

If you are interested in receiving the vaccine, EHA is here to help by providing guidance or assisting with the registration process.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AUGUST 9TH, & SEPTEMBER 13TH

COVID-19 testing at Robert E. Holmes Gardens community room from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### AUGUST 20TH, & SEPTEMBER 17TH

COVID-19 testing at Julius Engel Gardens community room from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### AUGUST 19TH

Food Pantry at Robert E. Holmes Gardens and Julius Engel Gardens - Every third Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

### SEPTEMBER 21ST

The Tenants Association's next meeting at 5:15 p.m. If you wish to contact the Tenant Association, please email REHTenantsAssociation@gmail.com.

### AUGUST 19TH

Back to School Event at Robert E. Holmes Gardens from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

## TENANT NOTICE: EHA TEXT-CALL FEATURE

If you wish to:

- Learn about upcoming events EHA is hosting
- Receive notices about the food pantry operation and COVID-19 testing
- Have your apartment exterminated for ants, bed bugs, and other pests

Make sure your number is on our Text-Call feature. You will be able to receive important information from the Edison Housing Authority that helps to provide a positive quality of life within your community. Call Carmen Amalbert, executive assistant, at 908-561-2525 and have your name and mobile number placed on our list. Please know that your information is not provided to the public or used for any purposes unrelated to EHA activity.

## BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

DATE	LOCATION	DATE	LOCATION
August 2021 - No Meeting	No Meeting	November 16, 2021	TBD Virtual/In Person
September 21, 2021	TBD Virtual/In Person	December 21, 2021	TBD Virtual/In Person
October 19, 2021	TBD Virtual/In Person		



For more information on how to participate, visit our website at [EdisonHA.org](http://EdisonHA.org). | Dial (646) 558-8656 (New York) Meeting ID 975 6432 0749 Passcode: 850500

In response to the State of Emergency regarding COVID-19 Coronavirus, The Edison Housing Authority regular Board Meetings are scheduled for the dates above beginning at 6:00 pm and will take place via zoom. The public will be permitted to participate during the public portion of the meeting via zoom.

## CONTACT US EDISON HOUSING AUTHORITY

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