



JON GUTZMANN'S REMARKS FOR THE 2018 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION EVENT

Welcome to the PHA's annual employee recognition and awards breakfast. We are here today to celebrate and thank each and every one of you for your outstanding performance in fulfilling the PHA's mission.

From our 45 year-employee being recognized today, Glen Hobbins, to the new and promoted staff you just met, we offer our humble thanks and praise. You are the people who get the job done yesterday...to standards only dreamed of in other HA's and other public entities.

Our work of "helping families and individuals with low incomes achieve greater stability and self-reliance by providing safe, affordable, quality housing and links to community services" is not easy. No one knows that better than the people in this room.

Today we are taking a pause from the daily grind to thank our PHA Commissioners, employees, legal team, and our fantastic partners in the St. Paul Police Department.

I'm happy we are joined by two members of our governing Board, John Cardoza representing the hi-rise residents and our newest Board member, Gy Vameng Chajili, representing the family residents on the Board. We especially thank the PHA Board for sponsoring this event and once again granting the staff the half day off certificates as small token of their appreciation for staff's efforts. Let's please give them a round of applause.

From the St. Paul Police Department, in recognition of our 27 year ACOP community policing partnership, we welcome and thank:

Senior Commander Julie Maidment
Commander Pam Barragan
Sgt Don Grundhauser
Officer Todd Bjorkman
Officer Carlos Wong
Community Liaison Officer Song Vang
Community Liaison Officer Ehdoh Ezekisoe

One of our combined PHA SPPD Proud stories is listed on the last page of our fact sheet. It states that the annual crime statistics report (provided by SPPD) confirms that the crime rates in the PHA's family housing areas continue to be lower than the citywide average for Part 1 Crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, residential burglary, commercial burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft and arson). We think that statistic is myth-busting...wouldn't you agree?

And let's welcome and thank our amazingly talented Legal Team...if they would please rise:
Led by General Counsel and Deputy Executive Director Louise Seeba

Attorney Sean Whatley
Attorney John Stechmann
And Law Clerk Nikita Luyken

Next please help me in thanking the members of senior staff who inspire and help guide me every day...if they would rise too...

Louise Seeba
And following in alphabetical order:
Tim Angaran
BettyLou Authier
Charisse Brown
Lisa Feidler
Al Hester
Alicia Huckleby
Dominic Mitchell
Ron Moen
Mai Moua
Kim Nguyen
Mike Winston

Thank you leadership team. I know I call upon you 24/7...and you always deliver for the greater good.

PHA staff...regardless where you work...you are celebrated and appreciated.

Maybe as part of the amazing HCV staff that contributed to the PHA's achieving SEMAP high performer status for the 17th consecutive year. (The HCV program is the PHA's largest program in unit size and budgets). The HCV unit utilization achievement is detailed in the handout in front of you this morning.

Or maybe you are part of the incredibly efficient Maintenance team...The folks responsible for completing 29,317 work orders in record time last year. And the Hi-rise crew who prepared 615 vacant units in an average of 8.69 days. And soon the best snow removal in the City. Please all take a bow.

And Maintenance Contracting who handled over \$12 million of capital repairs large and small while interfacing with site staff and residents.

And the Rental Office that processed 944 files for final housing eligibility determination, helping the PHA completing last year with an overall occupancy rate of 99.6%, representing the 23rd consecutive year we have achieved an occupancy rate of 99%.

And Resident Services and Finance staff that collected 99% of rents.

And Resident Service staff performing:
Day to Day front line property management including

Resident Relations

Lease enforcement

Annual determinations of rent

Record keeping and HUD reporting

Management of community centers

I am especially pleased we are in the process of adding more Assistant Managers to the Hi-rise team! All site managers including HSC's have some of the most difficult jobs in the PHA all striving to produce successful tenancies. Or stepping up with professionalism and care when things don't always go so well for our clients.

And Housing Policy who keeps the PHA abreast of latest changes in HUD regulations while also staffing the Hi-rises with amazingly competent Human Service Coordinators.

And our Finance team producing and monitoring compliance reports on approx. \$83 million of budgets (PH, HCV, CFP, CHSP, Building Fund)...and IT...and more.

And Resident Initiatives who manage over 100 community-based partnerships delivering services to residents...from AARP to Alina Health to Amherst Wilder...from bees to bikes for kids...from City Departments to Concordia University...And that's just the ABC's... I'd be here all day reciting the complete "A-to Z" list of partnerships.

And HR who helps the PHA attract and retain this talented and diverse work force...now comprised of 44% women and 40% people of color working at all levels of the PHA.

In other words all the staff, attorneys, law enforcement folks in this room, and other community partners responsible for the PHA achieving High Performer status for the 28th consecutive year! We cannot thank you enough.

Other facts about our programs and services are detailed in the Agency Accomplishments Report. Please take a minute to read this publication and share it with your family and friends. I say that last part because as proud as we all are about these accomplishments...and as important as this precious housing resource is to the 22,000 public housing residents and HCV participants we serve...we also know our work is often taken for granted or worse, forgotten and ignored by community leaders.

They aren't alone. Most Americans have no real understanding of the work you do keeping together this vital safety net program. A slide from our "PHA 101" powerpoint...which I urge you all to have at your work station...demonstrates that of the 133 million units of housing in America...representing all housing types, from homeownership to rental...of that figure, only 1 million units are public housing...and only 2 million units of Section 8 HCV. Factoring in other types of HUD subsidized housing, only 5 million units, or 4% of the housing supply in America, is deeply affordable.

Studies say that only one of four households who qualify for affordable housing are in it...so doing the math...if this nation was to meet that demand, we would need around 20 million units

of affordable housing. Instead we have 5 million units out of the total US housing supply of 133 million. Is there any wonder there are families doubled up? Or paying more than 50% of their income for rent? Or living in unhealthy and unsafe conditions just to get by? Including the growing numbers of homeless in the twin cities?

President Barack Obama seemed to understand our work when he said “our celebration of initiative and enterprise, our insistence on hard work and personal responsibility, are constants in our character.”

Regardless of your political affiliations...Those words ring true. They sum up this amazing group of human beings assembled here today:

Your initiative

Your enterprise

Your insistence on hard work and personal responsibility

These are constants of your character. And I like to think of the character of the St. Paul Public Housing Agency...

So regardless if the public knows of this or not...we get why we do this work...it's in our heart and character. And for that I am forever grateful and in your debt. Thank you employees and friends of the PHA! We hope you enjoy this program and day.

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