

# NAHP Update

## Providing Opportunity Through Education

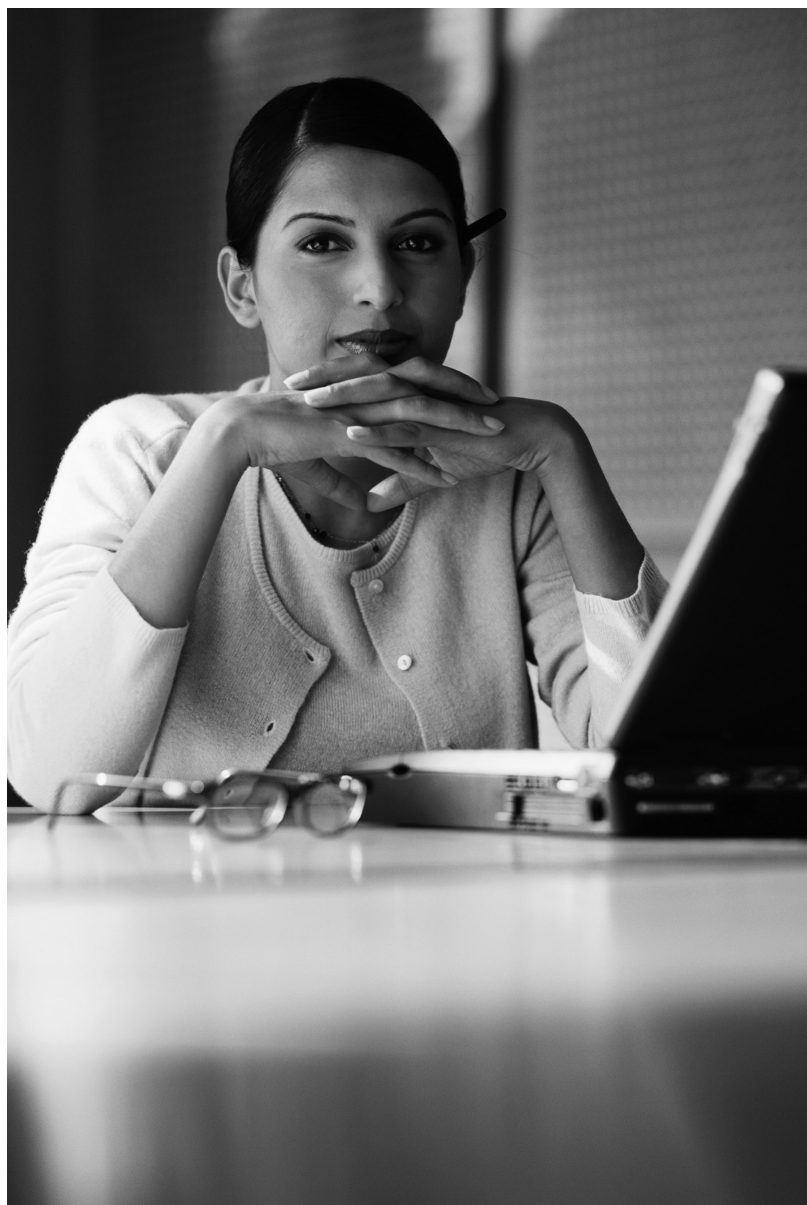
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In the 10-year history of the NAHMA Educational Foundation scholarship program, more than \$931,500 worth of scholarships have been awarded to accomplished student residents. Do you know a resident who could use a hand in furthering his/her education? Now is the time to start working on the 2017 scholarship application. The deadline for completed applications is 10 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, May 31.

Studies have shown that having a safe, stable home can lead to academic success, and academic success can lead to greater economic opportunities. In fact, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, earnings increase and unemployment decreases as educational achievement rises.

For example, workers with a professional degree had the highest median weekly earnings, \$1,730, and lowest unemployment rate, 1.5 percent, in 2015. The median weekly earning of someone with a bachelor's degree



**NATIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
(NAHMA)—Protecting the Interests  
of Affordable Housing Property  
Managers and Owners**



Rhasaan Nichols, 2008 scholarship recipient speaking at a foundation fundraiser in 2016.



To access the application, visit <https://nahma.communityforce.com>. It can also be found on the NAHMA website at [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org), and then clicking on the Educational Foundation icon.

working full time is \$1,137 compared to someone with a high school diploma who is earning an average of \$678 a week. Additionally, the unemployment rate among those with just a high school diploma is 5.4 percent versus 2.8 percent for those with a bachelor's degree.

Through the years, the NAHMA Educational Foundation's scholarship program has helped AHMA-affiliated multifamily community residents pursue their dreams. In 2007, the foundation awarded 22 scholarships worth a total of \$22,000, and last year, 79 scholarships were awarded worth \$197,500.

"I never thought of myself as an at-risk inner city youth," Rhasaan Nichols, a 2008 scholarship recipient said at a foundation fundraiser last June. "My mom always believed in me. She told me I was smart and I believed her."

Nichols is a native of Philadelphia, Penn. He grew up at 8 Diamonds Townhouses. After graduating from high school, he was accepted to Yale University. He started out as a pre-med major but changed to film studies to follow his passion.

After graduating with his bachelor's degree, he moved to Los Angeles and founded Nichols Makes Sense Produc-

tions. He has been working as an award-winning independent filmmaker ever since, including receiving the HBO Award for Best Documentary Feature at the 2013 Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival for, *Letters to My Sister: Cheneé Speaks*, about his younger sister who was born with cerebral palsy.

Margaret Brown, a 2014 recipient and Camden, N.J. native, earned an associate degree at Camden County College and went on to receive her bachelor's degree in social work at Rutgers University-Camden. In May 2015, she earned her master's degree in social work from Rut-



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NAHP Update is published four times a year by the National Affordable Housing Management Association, 400 North Columbus St., Suite 203, Alexandria, VA 22314, Phone 703-683-8630, website: [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org)

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Complimentary to NAHMA credential holders.

**QUERIES:** Letters to the Editor and other queries should be sent to Jennifer Jones, NAHMA manager of communications and PR, [jjones@nahma.org](mailto:jjones@nahma.org) or to the address above.

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gers-Camden while receiving NAHMA scholarship funding. All while raising two children as a single mother.

"The award history of the scholarship program demonstrates an impressive and progressive history of support for NAHMA scholars looking to continue their education. The foundation is hopeful that we can again increase

ing cost of higher education, our scholarships can have a positive financial impact on our residents that are pursuing their educational goals," said NAHMA Educational Foundation Chairperson Melissa Fish-Crane during a recent foundation meeting.

The foundation is now accepting applications for scholarships to be awarded

visit <https://nahma.communityforce.com>. It can also be found on the NAHMA website at [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org), and then clicking on the Educational Foundation icon.

Eligibility for the program requires that an applicant be a resident in good standing at an AHMA-affiliated multifamily community and be either a high school senior

**"I NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF as an at-risk inner city youth," Rhasaan Nichols, a 2008 scholarship recipient said at a foundation fundraiser last June. "My mom always believed in me. She told me I was smart and I believed her."**

the number of awards and the total amount of money being distributed while maintaining our individual award amount of \$2,500 per recipient in 2017. With the ever-escalat-

to worthy student residents for 2017. This year will be the 11th consecutive year that the foundation has made scholarships available.

To access the application,

with a minimum 2.5 GPA or a matriculated student with a minimum 2.3 GPA at an accredited community college, college, university or trade/technical school.

The process requires applicants to complete an online application form, two references, an essay and a certification of residency in good standing form. A current grade transcript is also necessary and is the only application component sent via U.S. mail to the foundation. All necessary forms are provided within the web-based application at <https://nahma.communityforce.com> and no hard copies are needed. Anyone with questions about the application process or the scholarship program in general should contact Dr. Bruce W. Johnson, NAHMA scholarship program administrator, at 215-262-4230 or at [bjohnson@themichaelsorg.com](mailto:bjohnson@themichaelsorg.com). **NU**



FLICKR/PATRICK MANSELL

# Partnership Aims to Create Book-Rich Environments

In an effort to promote literacy and boost educational outcomes for children in public housing across the country, the departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Education are joining forces with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, the National Book Foundation and the Urban Libraries Council to launch the Book-Rich Environment (BRE) Initiative, according to a HUD press release issued in January.

BRE aims to transform Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) into book-rich environments. BRE was inspired by recommendations from former President Barack Obama's My Brother's Keeper Task Force, an initiative to address persistent opportunity gaps faced by America's youth and ensure that all young people

for our nation's children."

"President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative seeks to build bridges of opportunity and break down barriers for boys and young men of color and for all students so they can reach their full potential," said former U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. at the launch. "The critical work to ensure an equal opportunity for every child requires true collaboration. We are pleased to join with partners across sectors to announce this innovative partnership with libraries, public housing authorities and community organizations to give more children access to great books, literacy tools and a love of reading. If education is a ladder, then reading is a first step that can help our children reach places that



FLICKR/DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

literacy activities offered by local libraries and nonprofits, and by strengthening partnerships between PHAs, local

Libraries Council, to host community book distribution events throughout 2017. At these events, public housing residents will have access to a diverse set of high-quality books secured by the National Book Foundation (NBF). NBF worked with publishers such as Penguin Random House, which is providing 200,000 books toward the initiative. Hachette Book Group and Macmillan Publishers have also committed to substantial donations to the initiative. The distribution events will also serve as a platform to strengthen and launch new local partnerships with libraries, public housing authorities and nonprofits, organized by the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, that can help ensure continued access to high quality literacy resources. **NU**

**Public housing authorities will partner with local libraries, organized by the Urban Libraries Council, to host community book distribution events throughout 2017. At these events, public housing residents will have access to a diverse set of high-quality books secured by the National Book Foundation.**

can reach their full potential.

"This initiative will help ensure that young people, no matter where they live, have the tools they need to reach their full potential," said former HUD Secretary Julián Castro in January at the time of the launch. "HUD is proud to join forces with these public and private partners to boost literacy and educational opportunity

would otherwise be an impossible climb."

With nearly 4 million low-income children living in HUD-assisted housing across the country, BRE aims to foster a love of reading and to improve educational outcomes of children living in HUD-assisted housing by distributing free, high-quality books to children, promoting

public libraries and literacy partners to develop and deliver programming to improve educational outcomes of PHA residents, according to the press release.

The BRE initiative will launch in 35 communities across the country. Public housing authorities will partner with local libraries, organized by the Urban

# Shine a Light on Your Community

**T**he Vanguard Award recognizes new, quality multifamily affordable housing development. The award pays tribute to developers of high-quality affordable housing; demonstrates that exceptional new affordable housing is available across the country; demonstrates the creativity and innovation that must be present to create exceptional properties given the financing and other challenges to development; highlights results of private-public partnerships required to develop today's affordable housing; and shares ideas for unique design and financing mechanisms with industry practitioners to further stimulate creative development in the affordable multifamily industry.

The deadline for nominating a property for one of NAHMA's



to make affordable housing communities gems in their neighborhoods and places residents are proud to call home.

"The Vanguard Award complements NAHMA's Communities of Quality (COQ) National Recognition Program, through which multifamily properties are certified as having achieved a high standard of excellence in the way they are managed, the services they provide residents, the experience

**A-Mill Artist Lofts is a past recipient of the Vanguard Award.**

Categories include:

- New Construction, two sub-categories: more than 100 units and under 100 units
- Major Rehabilitation of an Existing Rental Housing Community
- Major Rehabilitation of a Nonhousing Structure into Affordable Rental Housing
- Major Rehabilitation of a Historic Structure into Affordable Rental Housing

Affordable multifamily housing communities that are less than 3 years old—as of June 2, 2017—may apply, based on date of completion of new construction or completion of major rehab. Please note: A management company may submit only one entry for each category.

Applications and information about entry fees, judging criteria, the benefits of winning an award and more is on NAHMA's website at [nahma.org](http://nahma.org). Click on Vanguard Award Overview.

Winners of the Affordable Housing Vanguard Awards will be recognized at an awards ceremony at the NAHMA fall meeting in Washington, D.C., Oct. 22-24. **NU**

**"THE VANGUARD AWARD WAS CREATED to honor communities that are too new to meet the qualifications for the COQ program. As the properties mature, they will become eligible—and will be encouraged—to enter NAHMA's COQ National Recognition Program."**

2017 Affordable Housing Vanguard Awards is June 2. The application can be downloaded from the Vanguard Award webpage, [www.nahma.org/awards-contests/vanguard-award](http://www.nahma.org/awards-contests/vanguard-award).

The award is a great way to highlight a wonderful design or an amazing rehabilitation transformation. It also serves to show all the hard work on-site personnel do every day

and training of personnel, and other criteria," said Kris Cook, executive director of NAHMA. "The Vanguard Award was created to honor communities that are too new to meet the qualifications for the COQ program. As the properties mature, they will become eligible—and will be encouraged—to enter NAHMA's COQ National Recognition Program."

## Welcome New Certificants!

### NAHP

- » Michael Martinez  
First Realty Management  
Worcester, Mass.
- » Lora Wallace  
Housing Authority of  
Greensburg  
Greensburg, Ky.

### NAHP-e

- » Kerry Dervil  
First Realty Management  
Boston, Mass.
- » Melinda Jones  
Vista Capital Management  
Group  
Greenville, S.C.
- » Detra McGovern  
WinnResidential  
Roxbury, Mass.

### NAHMT

- » Jeffrey Mogan  
First Realty Management  
Boston, Mass.
- » Phong Pham  
First Realty Management  
Boston, Mass.

Earn one of NAHMA's prestigious professional credentials, which are dedicated solely to recognizing and promoting achievement of the highest possible professional standards in affordable housing management. Programs include:

- National Affordable Housing Professional (NAHP™)
- National Affordable Housing Professional-Executive (NAHP-e™)
- Specialist in Housing Credit Management™ (SHCM™)
- Certified Professional of Occupancy™ (CPO™)
- Advanced Issues in HUD Occupancy™ (ACPO™)
- Fair Housing Compliance™ (FHC™)
- National Affordable Housing Maintenance Technician (NAH-MT™)
- National Affordable Housing Maintenance Supervisor (NAHMS™)
- Credential for Green Property Management

**For more information, go to [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org) and click on Education.**





# Choosing a Different Path

**NAME:** Crystal P. Watler, SHCM, NAHP, CGPM, CPM

**MANAGEMENT COMPANY:** WinnCompanies

**POSITION:** Property Manager

Crystal P. Watler has her aunt to thank for setting her on a career path that has taken her on a 40-year journey and is not over yet.

The College of Holy Cross graduate earned a sociology degree with the intention of teaching children with special needs, but she needed money for graduate school.

"My aunt was a director for a property management company. She told me she was not going to pay me much and

that I would work hard for my money," Watler said. "I thought of this as a stopgap until I could go back to school. I never wavered. I love it."

Watler said working in property management afforded her opportunities she never would have had sitting in a classroom.

"Doors were open like I never expected," she said. "I saw the impact [affordable housing property managers] had all over our country. I had a very narrow world. This career opened that world up and I never looked back."

Even though she decided against pursuing her teaching career, she said the affordable housing field is right where she belongs.

"At the end of the day, if you feel you want to provide

a service to someone, property management is a good career," Watler said. "You have your finger on the pulse of everything that is going on around you."

Come this June, Watler will be celebrating 23 years at the WinnCompanies where she is a property manager at Washington Columbia I in Dorchester, Mass., but also serves as support for the other managers in her region. Additionally, she has been affiliated with NEAHMA for many years, holding several board positions. Currently, she participates on the finance committee and the annual conference committee.

Watler only became manager at Washington Columbia in February, so one of her goals is to get to know the neighborhood and develop mutually

beneficial relationships.

"You have to be in the community to be a part of the community," she said.

She also offers this advice: "If you do not love what you are doing, you will not be successful. You always have to make sacrifices, but don't forget to put your own family first."

Watler has made family first her mantra. She said, for example, when her boys were growing up if she had to work late, she would leave a little early another day.

Her two sons are grown now—Jemal lives in Texas with his family and Tomas is a bartender in Boston—so she spends her free time relaxing, reading and participating in her church where Watler is in the choir and serves on a couple of boards "to stay connected to my roots," she said. **NU**

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS AND OWNERS