

# NAHP Update

## Maintaining Boundary Between Professional and Personal

BY JENNIFER JONES

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Resident service coordinators play an important role in residents' lives. They advocate for their clients and provide information on how residents can access community resources and services. In addition, service coordinators work as an intermediary between clients, often serving in a support role for residents during difficult times. No doubt, service coordinators can develop close relationships with residents. However, it is essential that the boundary between professional and personal is not crossed.

"The most important thing to remember is you can be friendly but can't be friends because there is a power differential," said Ruben Rivera-Jackman, resident service coordinator with Human-Good and a freelance trainer. "We can like our residents and care about our residents, but we are not their friends. We have to maintain that boundary. We always have to do what is in the best interest



of our residents."

Being friendly but not being friends might seem like splitting hairs, but there is a difference.

"Different people have different definitions of a friend, but there is a difference between a friend and an acquaintance," Rivera-Jackman said. "The term friend tends to be used loosely. A friend is more than a superficial relationship."

The same applies to using the term family. It sounds

good for companies to say we're like a family or we treat our residents like family.

"I have a family. They are not my family," he said. "We may have a family atmosphere, but we are not family. What it comes down to is that you have to treat everyone fairly. It's all about compassion, empathy and support when it is needed."

Service coordinators—and all staff—can be friendly and

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

care about their residents, but it is essential to define for the residents what is meant by saying, “We’re all family here,” Rivera-Jackman said. He cautioned some residents could take that literally. It is important to establish clear expectations and responsibilities for staff and residents.

“It’s a delicate balance. You don’t have to be rigid as a staff member,” he said. “You have to be compassionate and empathetic when dealing with residents.”

Rivera-Jackman said, for example, that he is clear with residents about roles and responsibilities. He lets them know when he is available and makes sure he doesn’t share his personal phone number or email. When he does run into residents outside of work, he doesn’t approach them. Instead, he waits to see if they will initiate contact. Additionally, Rivera-Jackman asks his residents to not introduce him as their friend to companions



“As we develop relationships over time, we develop compassion, but we don’t want residents to think we have favorites,” he said.

Blurring the lines between professional and personal can also have legal ramifications.

“Behavior can be misinterpreted, and it can ruin your reputation,” he said.

For example, a resident

able to lawsuits.”

Rivera-Jackman said the responsibility of maintaining professional boundaries falls on the staff. In cases where someone isn’t sure what crosses the line, he said to consult with a supervisor or human resources for guidance. He also said participating in regular ethics training is a way to reinforce policies and best practices.

he said. “We do provide companionship. We have to be mindful of not giving all our time to that one person.”

There are also questions staff can ask themselves to ensure their conduct remains ethical: Does this resident mean something special to me? Am I treating this resident differently than other residents? Are my actions in the resident’s best interest?

“The litmus test for me is to ask, ‘How would I feel if these actions or behaviors made it onto the front page of the newspaper?’” **NU**

*Rivera-Jackman is a nonprofit leader with an accomplished 30-plus year career in the housing, human and social services sectors, with practical experience in, and a solid understanding of, a diverse range of management, operations and service delivery applications. He is a certified trainer with the National Resource Center on LGBTQ Aging and an adjunct professor at Seattle Central College, where he teaches as part of the behavioral health department. Additionally, he earned a bachelor’s degree in social sciences from Pace University in New York City and an executive master’s in not-for-profit leadership from Seattle University. He has completed a Geriatric Mental Health Specialist certificate program at the University of Washington. He received the 2011 American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC) President’s Award of Excellence and the 2019 AASC Award of Excellence in Service Coordination.*

*Jennifer Jones is senior director of communications and public relations for NAHMA.*

**“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER is you can be friendly but can’t be friends because there is a power differential.”**

or family. He also doesn’t accept “friend requests” from residents on social media.

“When we run into residents outside of work, it’s best to keep it short and polite,” he said. “In some cases, you may have to remove yourself from the situation.”

One of the reasons to maintain boundaries is to avoid misunderstandings.

may like to hug while another may not. It is important to always respect someone’s personal boundaries. And that goes both ways; a staff member may not be comfortable being hugged.

“There are times when touch is necessary, but it is a fine line,” Rivera-Jackman said. “We don’t want to make ourselves more vulner-

Rivera-Jackman said residents will cross boundaries. It is crucial to hold them accountable in a firm but compassionate way. Let them know they crossed a line and that you do not feel comfortable.

“We do have residents that don’t have anyone else in their social support network, so they start to see staff in that way,”



# Poster Contest Winners Highlight the Importance of Being Helpful

**H**aneen Ames, an 11th grader from Toms River, N.J., has been named the grand prizewinner in NAHMA's annual AHMA Drug-Free Kids poster and art contest. The talented artist's creation will appear on the cover of NAHMA's 2024 calendar. Haneen, 16, also receives an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for a NAHMA Biannual Top Issues in Affordable Housing conference and a scholarship of \$2,500 from the NAHMA Educational Foundation.

The poster contest is open to children and senior residents 55 years or older who live in a community of a NAHMA or a local AHMA member company, as well as residents with special needs who live in a permanent supportive housing community or Section 811 community of a NAHMA or a local AHMA member company.

The underlying message for the annual contest is always a drug-free theme. Still, the association wanted to open the door for more avenues of expression, so a subtheme was incorporated into the poster contest. The subtheme for this year is People Helping People: Promote Acts of Kindness.

Typically, the contest draws hundreds of participants nationwide. The artwork is divided into categories. For each grade category for children and the elderly and spe-



cial needs levels, local AHMAs select up to three winning posters, which can consist of photographs, websites, computer art, or other media. The AHMA winners are then sent to NAHMA for consideration in the national contest.

The grade categories for children are based on the grade the contestants have completed by June 2023: kindergarten-first grade, second-third grade, fourth-sixth grade, seventh-ninth grade, and 10th-12th grade. Only students are eligible for the grand prize.

Regardless of the entry category, each national winner of the NAHMA contest receives a \$1,000 educational scholarship from the NAHMA Educational

Foundation. All winners are also featured in the 2024 NAHMA Drug-Free Kids Calendar.

Furthermore, participants in the annual art contests held by the local AHMAs are eligible to be selected as Regional AHMA Art Contest Honorable Mentions. Those chosen for this distinction are featured in a special calendar section and receive a \$100 scholarship check.

The original grand prize-winning artwork will be sold in connection with the Educational Foundation's fundraising gala on Oct. 25, with the proceeds supporting the foundation's scholarship program.

To purchase calendars, download the [order form](#) and send it to NAHMA today.

**Grand prizewinner, Haneen Ames's art will be featured on the cover.**

Place your order before Nov. 10 and be automatically entered in the Lucky Draw for prizes. The calendar cost is \$5.50, which is a Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Agriculture allowable project expense. Please allow up to four weeks for delivery.

The following page lists this year's national program [winners](#), with their ages at the time of submission, grade completed in June 2023, contest category, the community where they live, the management company, and name of the AHMA that submitted their artwork. —Jennifer Jones

*continues on page 4*

## GRAND PRIZEWINNER

**Haneen Ames**, 16; 11th Grade; Winteringham Village Apartments, Toms River, N.J.; The Michaels Organization; JAHMA

## NATIONAL WINNERS

**Graling Arnold**, 55; Seniors & Residents with Special Needs; Bedford Hill Apartments, Pittsburgh, Pa.; McCormack Baron Management Inc.; PAHMA

**Uriel Fordjour**, 17; 11th Grade; Stratton Hill Park, Worcester, Mass.; Beacon Communities LLC; NEAHMA

**Tiffany Gunawan**, 11; Fifth Grade; Market Mill Apartments, Lowell, Mass.; Peabody Properties Inc.; NEAHMA

**Ravnoor K. Heyer**, 9; Third Grade; Los Robles Apartments, Union City, Calif.; EAH Housing; AHMA-NCH

**Mark Holup**, 52; Seniors & Residents with Special Needs; Emanuel Village, Worcester, Mass.; Beacon Communities LLC; NEAHMA

**Kaya Lopez**, 13; Seventh Grade; Council Groves Apartments, Missoula, Mont.; Tamarack Property Management Co.; Rocky Mountain Heartland AHMA

**Celena Mendoza**, 18; 12th Grade; Village at McArdle Apartments, Corpus Christi, Texas; Prospera Housing Community Services; SWAHMA

**Lily Morway**, 15; Ninth Grade; Stratton Hill Park Apartments, Worcester, Mass.; Beacon Communities LLC; NEAHMA

**Jamison Nwaise**, 6; Kindergarten; Lowell Belvidere Housing, Lowell, Mass.; Peabody Properties Inc.; NEAHMA

**Skylar Nwaise**, 11; Fifth Grade; Lowell Belvidere Housing, Lowell, Mass.; Peabody Properties Inc.; NEAHMA

**Mia Valentine**, 8; Second Grade; Westview Valley Apartments, Greensboro, N.C.; Westminster Company; SAHMA

**Ashton Malik Williams**, 7; First Grade; North Hill Manor Apartments, Meridian, Miss.; The Michaels Organization; SAHMA

**Robert Allan Williams**, 86; Seniors & Residents with Special Needs; Bedford Green Apartments, Bedford, Mass.; Peabody Properties Inc.; NEAHMA

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

**Lorri Becar**, 55; Seniors & Residents with Special Needs; Winteringham Village Apartments, Toms River, N.J.; The Michaels Organization; JAHMA

**Anthony Keshishyan**, 18; 12th Grade; The Gardens on Garfield, Glendale, Calif.; Thomas Safran & Associates; AHMA-PSW

**Nare Keshishyan**, 12; Seventh Grade; The Gardens on Garfield, Glendale, Calif.; Thomas Safran & Associates; AHMA-PSW

**Lucy Lopez**, 14; Eighth Grade; Council Groves Apartments, Missoula, Mont.; Tamarack Property Management Co.; Rocky Mountain Heartland AHMA

National winner, Kaya Lopez's art will be featured inside the calendar.

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People Helping People:  
Promote Acts of Kindness



# Providing Social Services Without Breaking The Bank

BY GWEN VOLK

**W**e can probably all agree that linking our residents to social services and educational opportunities and keeping the children out of trouble and engaged are great ideas. But if you don't have the budget for a full-time service coordinator, and you and

community. Some of the best service providers come from resident suggestions.

**Don't try to do it alone.** Begin with phone calls or emails to the groups you see providing services in the community. Find out what they do and how they do it, and let them know of your needs. Service partners, whose mission is

competitors. You need all the help you can get.

**Be patient.** When looking for service partners to help provide activities, you must find people willing to show up and do the work.

**Start small.** If you wait until you find that perfect service partner who'll come on-site and offer after-school

Flyers, newsletters, bulletin boards, emails, friendly reminders to residents every time you see them, and talking it up to applicants and new residents are all essential. If no one participates, you don't really have a service program at your property.

**Pay it forward.** Many organizations that bring services to our properties could probably use volunteers in turn. Encourage your managers, staff and residents to volunteer for them, such as hosting a holiday toy drive, crocheting blankets for hospitals or connecting generations through reading programs. **NU**

*Gwen Volk, NAHP-e, SHCM, CPO, FHC, has worked in the affordable housing industry since 1983. In 1996, she established Gwen Volk INFOCUS Inc. to provide consulting and training services, where she has been active full-time since 2014.*

**BEGIN WITH PHONE CALLS OR EMAILS to the groups you see providing services in the community. Find out what they do and how they do it, and let them know of your needs.**

your staff are already seriously overworked, such extras often go by the wayside. You can't do it all, after all.

And you don't have to.

The keys to a successful service program on a shoe-string budget are:

**Survey residents.** Find out what the residents are interested in rather than assuming you already know because we have so many opportunities to meet with residents one-on-one—annual reports, interim reports, etc. You can use tools like Survey Monkey for residents who have internet and create a survey that encourages comments.

After the survey responses are in, hold a meeting where residents can come together to discuss the results. Staff can help residents understand what is doable and what is not. This also allows staff to get information about groups the residents know of in the

to reach the specific population you are serving, make the best “free” partners. Create talking points and sell the partnership to the providers rather than begging. Let them know how you can help them meet their mission and how they can help you meet yours.

Some examples of groups willing, able and qualified to help include the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, police departments, local jurisdiction leadership offices, local health departments, and volunteer and faith-based social service outreach groups, to name a few.

When local organizations find out you are interested in enhancing the quality of life of your residents, they will get excited. Soon, they will start coming to you with workable, affordable and practical ideas for your property. And don't forget to tap into the expertise of your neighboring properties—even your

programs five days a week, weekly evening classes for adults, and monthly programs for your seniors, you will probably never get there.

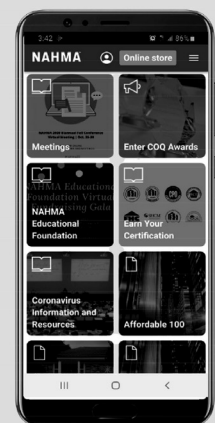
One activity once a month, then once a week, then three days a week—that's how you get there.

**Promote participation.**

## Access NAHMA Information While On The Go

The NAHMA app allows users to access NAHMA website content, including the latest legislative and regulatory news, register for events, or make purchases in the NAHMA Online Store on any smart device.

Download the NAHMA app today, available in the Apple AppStore and Google Play, or on the NAHMA website.





# Clark Enjoys Having An Impact

**NAME:** Sarah Clark, CPO, SHCM, NAHP-e, FHC

**MANAGEMENT COMPANY:** First Realty Management

**POSITION:** Director of Apartments

Sarah Clark started her property management career in 1998 when a friend told her a storage facility was hiring. It was a 1,000-unit property near the Orlando airport in Florida. Twenty-five years later, Clark is the director of apartments at First Realty Management in Boston, Mass.

"The industry has been very good to me. It even

band, who is an electrician, was laid off," she said. "We saw it as a sign."

The family, Sarah, Sean and their 4-year-old daughter, Ainsley, now live in Worcester, which is central to Clark's property portfolio.

As director of apartments, Clark handles personnel training, new software and policy implementation. She is a key member of

In that same vein, Clark has been serving on NEAH-MA's board for six years, including as the current treasurer.

"It keeps me busy. Serving on the board, I've been blessed to work with some amazing people in the industry," she said.

Additionally, Clark volunteers with the Alzheimer's Association and, for several

**"IT'S GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY to apply my business knowledge. I've made some good friends."**

provided me a place to live when I was in my 20s," Clark said. "It's given me an opportunity to apply my business knowledge. I've made some good friends."

Clark and her husband, Sean, were living in the Sunshine State when the opportunity to move home presented itself. Both had grown up on Boston's South Shore and had always talked about moving back.

"I was with IMT Residential based in Florida, and they decided to start selling off their Class B & C properties. Both sites I was managing at the time fell into that. At the same time, my hus-

band, who is an electrician, was laid off," she said. "We saw it as a sign." The family, Sarah, Sean and their 4-year-old daughter, Ainsley, now live in Worcester, which is central to Clark's property portfolio. As director of apartments, Clark handles personnel training, new software and policy implementation. She is a key member of

First Realty's core leadership team, including the directors of marketing and compliance, that helps set company policy and direction. She oversees more than 100 employees, including all on-site personnel, while maintaining her portfolio of 13 properties.

"I'm more of an on-site person. I enjoy being part of that," Clark said. "I like the impact we have in providing a quality place to live for people." She also enjoys the mentorship aspect of her position, saying, "I had so many great mentors. Now, I'm able to share that."

years, has led a Walk To End Alzheimer's team.

The family has two dogs they like to take on hikes, and Ainsley's activities fill up much of Clark's spare time.

"She is my little sunshine," Clark said. "She has horseback riding lessons and swimming lessons."

Clark has a bachelor's degree in business-finance. Besides her NAHMA credentials—CPO, SHCM, NAHP-e, FHC, she has the C3P Tax Credit certification and an Accredited Residential Manager designation. Additionally, Clark is a Certified Public Manager candidate. —Jennifer Jones

# 2024 NAHMA DRUG-FREE KIDS CALENDAR



## ORDER YOURS TODAY!

### The winners have been chosen! The cover art selected!

It's time to order your 2024 NAHMA Drug-Free Kids Calendars—at the same affordable price as last year!  
Just \$5.50 each! The \$5.50 calendar cost is a Department of Housing and Urban Development and  
Department of Agriculture allowable project expense.

*Also, place your order by Nov. 10, 2023, and enter  
the NAHMA Lucky Draw for free prizes!*

### NAHMA Lucky Draw Prizes!

- 3 Free NAHMA Meeting Registrations (Value: \$625-\$850 each)
- 5 copies of A Practical Guide to Tax Credit Management (Value: \$30 each)
- 5 copies of the Green Housing: A Practical Guide to Green Real Estate Management book (Value: \$35 each)
- 5 American Express Gift Cards (Value: \$100 each)

### Drawing will be held on Dec. 8, 2023

Calendars make great holiday gifts for your properties, community event giveaways and colleagues. This year's theme, "People Helping People: Promote Acts of Kindness" is illustrated through the unique poster art created by children, seniors and adults with special needs living in affordable housing. Support the drug-free message today. Send in the order form at right without delay. Or, download order form through the Online Store at [www.nahma.org](http://www.nahma.org).

# 2024 NAHMA DRUG-FREE KIDS CALENDAR ORDER FORM

*Order by Nov. 10, 2023, and enter the NAHMA Lucky Draw!*

☐ **YES**, I would like to order 2024 Drug-Free Kids Calendars and show my ongoing support of drug-free and safe community housing. If I order by Nov. 10, 2023, I will be entered into the NAHMA Lucky Draw for the prizes listed.

**\* Please print clearly. All fields required. Incomplete forms will not be processed.**

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Management Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of AHMA: \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of Calendars: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$5.50\* (+ 6% sales tax if in Virginia) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

# The \$5.50 calendar cost is a Dept. of Housing & Urban Development and Dept. of Agriculture allowable project expense.

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of calendar