Dear Friends

In May 2017, I had the privilege of joining THA as the new CEO/President. As I crossed the threshold of this great organization, I carried with me a vision for the future of THA and a strong sense of both commitment and gratitude for the shoulders that I found myself standing upon.

Daily, I strive to take THA to its next level, and fortunately for me, this is not an effort I am tasked with performing alone. My excellent staff, Board of Commissioner members, and city officials work alongside me to ensure that THA remains effective in its service to Tulsa’s most valuable commodity – its citizens. In 2017, the THA adopted a new Strategic Plan. With the help of our Board, partners, community leaders and residents, we created six strategic goals that will serve as our roadmap over the next few years. You will see examples of us turning these strategic goals into action throughout this report.

Further, THA positioned itself to act upon the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program Portfolio Award. This award will allow THA to re-develop all of its housing sites using tax credit equity and public-private partnerships. THA will receive our first seven CHAPS in 2018, with closings and conversions set for 2019.

For 50 years, THA has opened its doors to the people of Tulsa and helped ease the suffering that often accompanies poverty by providing affordable housing, social services, and a basic foundation for self-sufficiency. During the last 50 years, THA has evolved into an organization that today serves almost 20,000 individuals in the Tulsa area. This did not happen in a vacuum; it took the collective efforts of each of us working together to get THA to where it is today, and it will take this same level of commitment to keep us ascending towards greatness in the days ahead.

THA would like to thank its partners in city government as well as THA’s resident leadership for their support. In addition, we acknowledge the dedication of THA’s staff. THA’s staff has played a major role in the agency’s ability to accomplish its operational objectives. Finally, many thanks to the Board for its effective leadership and dedication over the last year.

Thank you for your support.

Aaron Darden
President/CEO

THA Today

Today, THA communities provide housing to nearly 20,000 individuals, which includes 9,000 children, 1,300 elderly and 3,600 disabled persons. In the Assisted Housing Program, more than 10,000 of Tulsa’s disadvantaged are served.

The THA Board and staff continue to work diligently to accomplish the organization’s goals while remaining a high performing housing agency – a designation bestowed on THA by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

THA’s Departments

Executive Office

The Executive Office is responsible for the overall operations and performance of THA. The Executive Office is comprised of the President/Chief Executive Officer, Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel.

Construction Services

To keep THA properties in safe, decent and sanitary conditions, the Construction Services department contracts for all modernization work and administers annual contracts for routine and non-routine maintenance needs.

Social Services

THA recognizes that the provision of housing is only part of the need facing low and very low income families who strive to become more self-sufficient. Community Relations staff are present at all housing communities and offer a multitude of assistance ranging from fun activities to employment assistance.

Finance and Administration

The Finance and Administration Department is led by the Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer, who is responsible for overseeing all budgets, funding requests and draw downs, as well as supervising the accounting staff.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Department is responsible for recruiting, hiring and maintaining adequate staff to perform THA’s tasks. These efforts include participating in job fairs, internal training opportunities and maintaining THA’s benefits and wellness plans.

Information Technology

The Information Technology Department is responsible for the administration of THA’s network infrastructure, including wide area network communications, to THA’s apartment communities. The IT Department delivers services in alignment with client requirements, in part by creating and maintaining software applications for use by THA staff.

Security

The Security Department provides security at all family and elderly communities. Security personnel also monitor the Drug Hotline which takes anonymous reports of suspected drug use or drug sales in THA communities.

Community Development

The Community Development Department is primarily responsible for all major capital improvement projects and all new development projects which include property acquisition, pre-development, due diligence, financing and development management with the ultimate goal of passing each new endeavor over to our in-house Construction Services Department or a contractor. Our greatest endeavor is to ensure quality housing into the 21st century.

Rental Assistance

The Rental Assistance Department (formerly known as Section 8) is responsible for families receiving rental assistance where they can select housing of their choice, provided the owner of the unit is willing to accept the family under the Voucher Program guidelines. The Voucher Program enables families to move from state to state and maintain their rental assistance.

Affordable Housing

THA provides housing for low and very low income residents through several THA-owned properties. This department is responsible for the management and maintenance operations of 15 apartment communities in the Tulsa area.

Communications

The Communications Department is where you will find all our latest news and multimedia content, a searchable database of archived news releases, background on our leadership, media relations contacts, and a variety of other helpful information about our agency.

Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

– HENRY FORD

Read Walter Smith’s story on page 11.
Named the Rising Star for the Tulsa Housing Authority (THA) for the year 2017, Stephanie Reisdorph, Social Service Coordinator at the South Haven Manor and Riverview Park housing complexes, has lived up to that sentiment with her daily contribution to the families and youth at her properties.

In the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Harvey and the Las Vegas mass shooting, Reisdorph decided to utilize the events to teach the youth in her youth program about empathy. So, through a three-week card-making campaign, she and the 20 youth in her program worked after school each day to create bracelets and cards for hurricane and shooting survivors and their families.

Through her efforts, these cards were sent to the hospital in Las Vegas, that still had many of the shooting victims, and to the Mayor’s Office in Houston, TX. Within a few days of receiving the care packet, the Mayor of Houston was so touched by the gesture that he held a press conference where he distributed the cards and bracelets to workers from the City of Houston who had lost everything in the wake of Hurricane Harvey.

Reisdorph is also responsible for creating community partnerships with the Sheriff’s Office to provide the families at her property with Christmas presents and food – through the Sheriff’s County Secret Sheriff Program.

In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, Stephanie decided to become a bridge between local law enforcement agencies and the youth at her property. Working with the mayor to create the Junior Deputy program that paired at-risk youth with a Sheriff’s Deputy in a mentorship program, her efforts have given rise to true friendships forming between the youth in her program and local law enforcement officers.

Stephanie continues to raise the bar of excellence at our agency and within our community. She is a positive influence in the lives of everyone she encounters, and we expect nothing but the best from her in the days ahead.

True compassion means not only feeling another’s pain, but also being moved to help relieve it.

– DANIEL GOLEMAN

Mayor Sylvester Turner of the City of Houston distributes cards to his staff from THA youth.

Mayor Sylvester Turner of the City of Houston distributes cards to his staff from THA youth.
The Housing Authority of the City of Tulsa recognizes that the provision of housing is only a part of the need facing low-income families. Through the Social Services Department, THA can fulfill the goal to help residents achieve self-sufficiency while living in affordable housing, by identifying barriers and offering programs that assist residents in breaking free from the web of poverty. The department has a Social Service Coordinator at nine of our family properties and at the four elderly/disabled high-rise apartment communities to assist residents in maintaining independence and/or become self-sufficient. We have achieved this goal by partnering with multiple agencies in the community to break the transportation barrier and bring vital services to our residents, as well as having the on-site Social Service Coordinators provide specialized programming tailored to meet the needs of their resident populations.

Health Services
Elderly/Disabled: The Social Service Coordinators provide referrals for home health care, Hospice care, pharmaceutical delivery, group behavioral health counseling, flu vaccination clinics, eye exam clinics, nutrition education, Social Security and Medicare application assistance, veteran assistance services, vocational rehabilitation for employment integration, health education services as well as community health and safety fairs. Additionally, they hold individual programs that promote daily exercise and walking clubs to promote and prolong independence.

Family/Youth:
Nutrition education, vaccination clinics, eye exam clinics, reproductive counseling education and awareness, behavioral health groups, parenting classes, cooking classes, and bullying education/prevention education.

Job Training Skills and Employment Assistance
Elderly/Disabled and Family/Youth: We have on-site computer labs and the Social Service Coordinators offer a variety of programming such as resume writing, job search assistance, and interview tips. They also promote job vacancies in the community. In addition to these services, external agencies offer professional development and employment training and opportunities in the labor field.

Financial Literacy and Education
Elderly/Disabled and Family/Youth: We partner with numerous external financial institutions that provide on-site services offering free credit repair, access to establish and/or re-establish checking and savings accounts, as well as financial education to assist residents in achieving financial independence and well-being.

Higher Education Access and Assistance
Elderly/Disabled and Family/Youth: We partner with external technical and vocational agencies as well as community colleges and state and private universities to promote information on Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), GED education, college prep/tuition assistance programs, workforce development skills and programs as well as multiple scholarship opportunities.

Literacy and Education
Elderly/Disabled: Social Service Coordinators have designated

Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.

- Maya Angelou
library space in each of the high-rise sites and partner with the Tulsa County Library System to bring a mobile book service to the properties on a bi-monthly basis. In addition, they provide access to on-site registration assistance to acquire library cards and access to check out books and other educational materials that can be mailed back to the library free of charge.

Family/Youth: The Social Service Coordinators work with external agencies to raise resident parent awareness of the importance of early childhood education available in the community for children ages 0-5. They work with local educators to assist youth who are struggling with literacy by providing on-site programs that focus on reading, with books available in the Community Center Libraries and homework tutoring assistance after school Monday through Friday for youth of all ages. Family and youth residents also enjoy the benefit of our partnership with the Tulsa County Library System and access to the mobile book service on a bi-monthly basis, as well as on-site registration assistance to acquire library cards.

The Tulsa Housing Authority has a grant through the George Kaiser Family Foundation, in collaboration with the Tulsa Children’s Museum, that allows educators from the Tulsa Children’s Museum to provide on- and off-site programming. This grant enables youth and their families to enjoy presentations that focus on national evidence-based practices proven effective to bring youth together and reduce bullying behaviors. This curriculum is currently being taught in Tulsa Public Schools and the Social Service Coordinators received a special train-the-trainer presentation so they can teach the curriculum to youth on-site throughout the year.

Community Policing, Fire Prevention and Neighborhood Watch Programs

Elderly/Disabled and Family/Youth: The Social Service Coordinators have partnered with local police departments to provide resident education to establish neighborhood watch programs. Local fire departments provide on-site resident education regarding prevention of fires, the importance of establishing a safety/escape plan, as well as field trips to the Tulsa Children’s Museum. This year, the curriculum has expanded, and select family sites are piloting a special program called “Cookies and Bookies,” focusing on health and wellness for caregivers and their kids.

The Tulsa Housing Authority is also a part of the Anti-Bullying Coalition, a program operated through the Parent Child Center that focuses on national evidence-based practices proven effective to bring youth together and reduce bullying behaviors. This curriculum is currently being taught in Tulsa Public Schools and the Social Service Coordinators received a special train-the-trainer presentation so they can teach the curriculum to youth on-site throughout the year.

Family Social Service Coordinator Grant

Family: Six of our family properties receive case management services under a HUD Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency Social Service Coordinator grant. Interested residents can sign up for case management services to help achieve specific goals such as education, job training and other specific, important life goals directed at self-sufficiency.

The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation.

– BERTRAND RUSSELL
When Walter Smith was discharged from the Army, he was excited about the journey ahead. Proudly serving his country for two tours of duty, Walter began life as a civilian in Texas, where he worked as a welder. After being offered a higher-paying job in Tulsa, he left everything behind to accept this new position, and the future looked bright. Unfortunately, within days of arriving in Tulsa, Walter was hit with a devastating blow when he learned the job he had relocated to accept was no longer available.

What came next was a series of heartbreaking events. First, he found himself unable to land another job and, after his money ran out, Walter became homeless. Then Walter endured his biggest loss yet; after placing his belongings and welding equipment into a local storage facility, he found himself unable to make the monthly payments and was notified his items would be auctioned off. With no means to pay storage fees, Walter lost everything and found himself staring rock bottom directly in the face.

It would be a random conversation with an unlikely ally that would set in motion another series of events in Smith’s life, but this time the outcome would be positive.

While residing at a Tulsa homeless shelter, Walter met another homeless veteran who referred him to the BRRX4Vets program. Following the lead of his newfound friend, Walter contacted BRRX4Vets, who then referred him to the VA HUD-VASH Program. HUD-VASH helps homeless veterans and their families afford decent, safe and sanitary housing through the distribution of housing vouchers.

Tulsa’s local HUD-VASH program, which is administered through Tulsa Housing Authority, qualified Walter to participate in its program, and on September 19, 2017, he moved into his new home. Through the program’s partnerships with the organizations BRRX4Vets and Sharehouse, Walter not only received the money he needed to pay his security deposit, but he was provided with furniture to furnish his new home as well.

Today, life looks completely different for Walter Smith than it did just two short years ago. Enjoying a life of self-sufficiency, with a house to call home and a job he enjoys, Walter is living proof that a hand-up is always more powerful than a hand-out.
Canzada Rogers, the single mother of four, joined the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program in December 2010. In addition to working to meet the program requirements, Canzada began looking towards the future by setting goals. On the top of her bucket list were two somewhat elusive goals – obtaining credit/budget counseling and homeownership.

Utilizing every tool available to her through THA’s FSS Program, within a brief time Canzada began meeting with an FSS Coordinator and was soon referred to Housing Partners of Tulsa to learn more about becoming a homeowner. Joining the organization’s Homeownership Counseling Program, Canzada garnered all of the tools needed to become a viable homeowner, and in August 2016, she completed homeownership counseling.

As if parenthood and learning about homeownership was not hectic enough, Canzada added a few more items to her plate when she began attending classes at Cameron University to complete her undergraduate degree. So, against all the odds, Canzada tapped into a deeper level of self-imposed discipline and focus, and in the spring of 2016, she found herself walking across the stage at CU receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Moreover, within a few months of graduating, Canzada received the news she had been waiting for when she was hired by the Catoosa Public Schools as an elementary school teacher.

Honored at the 2016 THA FSS Program holiday party for earning her degree and landing her first job in her field, Canzada was ready to take on the world. Graduating from THA’s FSS program a short time later, Canzada checked off one of the top items on her bucket list when she purchased her first home in February 2017.

Today, Canzada is winding down her second year as a fourth-grade teacher with Catoosa Public Schools. As Canzada thrives, so does her family, and she is happy to report her family is now settled into their new home with her children having checked off their own bucket list item – picking out the wall colors for their bedrooms.

Grateful for every milestone she reaches on her journey, Canzada credits THA’s FSS Program with giving her the support she needed to change her life and reminds everyone – including the students in her class – that success is always a “TEAM” effort!
The new face of THA

As THA rounded the corner on its 50th year, it was decided that the look and feel of the agency needed to evolve as well. From overhauling the website to creating a new logo, the THA brand reintroduced itself to the Tulsa community in a grand way. By the end of 2017, THA had received three international awards for its new branding efforts and had garnered the respect of the marketing community in the U.S.

THA’s 50th Anniversary Luncheon

Employees were formally introduced to the new logo at THA’s 50th Anniversary Luncheon and the result was both welcoming and positive. The luncheon, which took place September 29, 2017, at the Oklahoma Jazz Hall of Fame, featured speeches from former and current THA residents, included a special presentation of state and city government proclamations and a commemorative video presentation.

Festivities culminated with the introduction of a new THA award, “The Super Hero Award,” which was given to Bob Hurley of Bob Hurley RV for his outstanding philanthropic activities that have included providing Christmas gifts to THA families.

“I AM THA”

In October, THA launched an innovative marketing campaign called, “I AM THA.” The year-long campaign featured THA employees in YouTube videos and on community billboards showcasing a lighter, caring, and more humanized side of both themselves and the agency.

Staff members from the Rental Assistance Department enjoy the festivities at THA’s 50th anniversary luncheon.

Beth Cole is one of the THA staff members featured in the “I AM THA” marketing campaign.

THA employees enjoyed a tasty meal as well as good conversation at the 50th anniversary luncheon.

Bob Hurley (left) thanks THA for his Super Hero Award as CEO Aaron Darden looks on.

Bob Cole is one of the THA staff members featured in the “I AM THA” marketing campaign.
Employee Profile

Rachella Bressler, Employee of the Year

It would be at THA’s Inaugural Employee Appreciation Bowling Event that Human Resources Generalist, Rachella Bressler, would learn that she had been named the 2017 Employee of the Year for the agency. Bressler says the recognition initially caught her off guard, but when she saw the response of her team members, she knew it was really happening. “Receiving this award was both rewarding and humbling,” said Bressler. “It just felt great to be appreciated by a company I love so much and the people I get to serve through my position.”

Garnering a THA Employee of the Year Award is no easy task. First, the employee must be recommended by the THA Employee Association, then their immediate supervisor must write a letter of recommendation, and lastly the finalist is determined by the Executive Office. For Bressler, she relishes the fact that every day she gets to wake up and work in a position that allows her to positively impact the lives of those around her.

“My mission in life is to encourage people to believe in themselves, so they can reach their goals in life,” remarked Bressler. Working for THA since December 2000 as an HR Generalist, Bressler’s prowess for working in excellence has been repeatedly showcased during her tenure at the agency. In 2008, she was awarded the agency’s Creative Thinker Award for utilizing social media platforms to extend the reach of her department’s job postings. That same year, the mother of two also received the Professional of the Year Award from THA community partner Goodwill Industries of Tulsa. And in 2013, Bressler was named “PAC Member of the Year” by Vatterott College.

Determined to imprint a legacy of hard work and dedication within the fabric of THA’s corporate culture, Bressler says when she looks ahead she sees her best days just over the horizon. Hoping to be the type of co-worker others remember fondly, Bressler says it’s what you leave in others – not give to others – that matters most in the long run. “At the end of my tenure here at THA, I want to be remembered as someone who was always helpful, positive and uplifting,” continued Bressler. “I hope 10 years after I’m gone that people will hear my name and still smile.”
Revenues, Contributions, Expenses And Change in Net Position
For the year ending December 31, 2017

Revenues and Contributions
Tenant rentals $4,132,792
Housing assistance payment subsidies 31,983,553
Operating subsidies and grants 16,533,714
Interest income 261,160
Capital contributions 2,462,865
Other 997,848
Total revenue and contributions 56,371,932

Expenses
Housing operations and administration 10,734,401
Tenant services 602,537
Utilities 3,239,306
Maintenance 8,115,046
Housing assistance payments 29,522,275
Protective services 599,162
Interest expense 300,516
Insurance premiums 984,339
Depreciation and amortization 6,720,289
Other 1,404,609
Total expenses 62,222,480

Change in net position (5,850,548)
Total net position at beginning of year 77,386,017
Total net position at end of year $71,535,469

These numbers are from unaudited financial statements.