



# CARIBE CORNER

**HACE Main Office**  
167 W. Allegheny Avenue  
Philadelphia PA 19140  
(215) 426-8025  
[www.hacecdc.org](http://www.hacecdc.org)  
Monday-Friday: 8:30am-5:00pm

## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #22: WINTER 2021-22

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### Dear Neighbors,

Entering the New Year, we are working towards change in the community and continue to help those in need of assistance.

We celebrate local leaders seeking to make a positive impact within their neighborhoods and invite you to be a part of the change.

### Housing Counseling & Neighborhood Energy Center

HACE is home to a robust Housing Counseling & Neighborhood Energy Center, with HUD-certified counselors providing FREE assistance to Philadelphia residents with a wide array of housing needs. See below for some of our popular program offerings:

#### **Foreclosure Mitigation**

Facing foreclosure due to mortgage and/or tax delinquency...? The City of Philadelphia has free resources available to help you save your owner-occupied home! Call the *Save Your Home Philly Hotline* today: (215) 334-HOME (4663)

#### **First Time Homebuyer Assistance**

First-time homebuyers in Philadelphia may be able to receive settlement assistance and/or other grants to alleviate the cost burdens of buying your first home. Currently, HACE is partnering to offer a matched savings program which could provide up to \$4,000.00 towards closing costs. Enroll for first-time homebuyer workshops and get the support you need by scheduling with an HACE Counselor today!

For more information, contact Jacky Pagan: [jpagan@hacecdc.org](mailto:jpagan@hacecdc.org); (215) 437-7867

#### **Free Tax Preparation Services**

HACE offers year-round support with tax filing, free of charge. These services can help you file an overdue return and/or access tax refunds that you may have missed by filing an amended return, such as:

- Child Tax Credit
- Economic Impact Payment

To schedule and/or for more information, contact Kedliany Ramirez-Rodriguez:

[krodriguez@hacecdc.org](mailto:krodriguez@hacecdc.org); (215) 426-8025 x3003

#### **Credit Academy**

Looking for help improving your credit score...? HACE's Credit Academy provides educational workshops and personalized 1:1 counseling to highlight major factors affecting your credit score, develop a plan to improve your score, and schedule ongoing counseling support to help you meet your goals. Additionally, Credit Academy participants may qualify for a secured credit card through HACE to expedite the credit repair process.

To enroll in the next Credit Academy and/or for more information, contact Rosita Delgado:

[rdelgado@hacecdc.org](mailto:rdelgado@hacecdc.org); (215) 426-8025 x3015

## New Homeownership Opportunities in Fairhill

HACE will soon be taking applications for homes that will be “move in” ready for May 2022. Located on the 3022-3028 block of N. American Street.

For more information, contact Jackie Martinez:  
[jmartinez@hacecdc.org](mailto:jmartinez@hacecdc.org); (215) 426-8025.

- starting at \$160,000
- 3 bedrooms
- 2.5 bathroom
- 3 stories

## Stay Informed about COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect communities across the world, and information regarding how to best protect yourself is often subject to change. Below are important sources for ongoing information about COVID-19 and how to safeguard your health.

- **FREE COVID TESTS**

Get your free COVID test delivered to your door step. Be safe and protect those around you.

Website: Visit <https://www.covidtests.gov/>

- **CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

Text Alerts: Receive updates regarding Philadelphia’s response by texting COVIDPHL to 888-777.

Website: Visit [www.phila.gov/covid-19](http://www.phila.gov/covid-19) daily for the latest updates.

- **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION**

Website: Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/> for the latest CDC information or to subscribe for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) newsletter.

- **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

Website: Visit <https://www.who.int/> for the latest WHO updates or to subscribe to their newsletters, including Health Emergency Highlights.

## Livability Academy Fall '22 Cohorts

HACE’s Livability Academy launched once again this past Fall, composed of two cohorts working in parallel, one in person and one virtually, for eight weeks. Regardless of the changes in modality, the Livability Academy maintained the same goals of enhancing leadership skills among resident participants and supporting them to develop strategic solutions to neighborhood concerns. Throughout the program, three projects emerged focusing on addressing different quality of life issues (*continued to the right*):

*Fairhill United for Livability* envisions a community where neighbors are united together to make a difference by activating public spaces through historical educational workshops, creative community cleanups, and celebrations piloted in Fairhill Square Park.

The *Teen Trauma Team* hopes to create a community that does not have a stigma attached to addressing trauma or receiving help for mental health and proposes to create safe spaces for themselves and their peers to discuss and begin recovering from trauma.

The *Literally Literacy Team* aims to ensure that all adults have the tools they need to overcome illiteracy. Their project is tailored to empowering and educating adults in breaking down the barriers to literacy through reading classes, pop-up libraries, and jingles.

The project groups will continue to be supported by HACE to implement their projects and would appreciate support from partners to complement our work! If you would like to create a project of your own, we encourage you to apply for the next cohort of the Livability Academy which will begin April, 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022. If you are interested in supporting one of our ongoing projects or participating in the program, please contact Sierra at [scuellar@hacecdc.org](mailto:scuellar@hacecdc.org) or connect with us on Instagram [@hace\\_livability](https://www.instagram.com/hace_livability).

## Rebuild Rivera Recreation & Mann Older Adult Centers



Unlike traditional civic meetings, the Restore\*Reimagine\*Rebuild Rivera & Mann Centers project utilizes [the Story Circle process](#), led by neighbors for neighbors, inviting attendees to share personal stories about meaningful experiences they have had at the Centers or in the neighborhood. As an anti-oppression facilitation method, Story Circles encourage participants to reimagine systems and possibilities for a more connected, supported neighborhood, and aims to create a shared sense of belonging of the public Centers that is vital for inclusive community growth and well-being.

Identified from the wisdom shared during Story Circles were 10 collective values that uphold the Rivera and Mann Centers, over 25 activities that contribute to fostering an inclusive community, and nearly 20 target audiences that could benefit from more comprehensive programming in public Centers. To implement the next phase, referred to as a “Data Jam,” a board game was created, inviting residents to move game pieces to indicate which activities should take priority to uphold their collective values, share the benefits each activity has, and identify specific audiences who may engage with that activity.

The Data Jam board game is a unique and innovative play-based model for data evaluation that bridges language-barriers and low-literacy, welcoming residents of all backgrounds to review, revise, and validate insights and ideas that will come to form a “blueprint” as the basis of programming at the newly-renovated Centers. A third stage of this project will soon be launched and welcomes the wisdom of all!

To become involved, please contact Stasia Monteiro at [smonteiro@hacecdc.org](mailto:smonteiro@hacecdc.org) or (267) 902-0764.

## My Voice Matters: Youth-Led Advocacy for Community Safety

My Voice Matters is a youth initiative driven by people ages 14-24 who are passionate about improving community safety. Group formation began virtually in early 2021, when young people in the Kensington and Fairhill neighborhoods were invited by the We CAN Collaborative to connect and explore ways that the system of policing could be improved through participation in an artistic, liberatory workshop series facilitated by Creative Praxis. Following several virtual workshops hosted March through May, the group met in person in late May 2021 to review and refine our many ideas and [Recommendations](#), and prepare for a public presentation of our work, held June 15, 2021 at Orinoka Civic House with community members, police officers, and press in attendance. We reconvened with Creative Praxis in August 2021 to explore next steps for furthering awareness and progress toward actualizing our Recommendations. Findings and information about our process were compiled into a 60-page report, which details ways that not only police, but community organizations and other institutions can effect change for greater community safety.

The group is now working on expanding our impact by developing strategies for distributing the report; engaging other youth by going to different events, protests, and rallies; and welcoming new members. This past Fall and Winter, we have continued sharing our findings with Philadelphia police officers, learning about overlap in changes to departmental policies, and continuing to work towards increased community safety by improving the system of policing and the relationship between the police and the community. We are encouraged to hear that some neighborhood areas with historically tense community-police relations are making progress with building rapport, something we seek to grow into the future. We look forward to building new connections to advance community safety in Philadelphia.



## Happy 2022 from Team NAS



Team NAS is a passionate group of 10-17 community members elected by neighbors to represent their neighborhood as they work together to enhance local quality of life through community education, advocacy, events, and initiatives. We provide a platform for civic discourse and help connect neighbors with vital programs and resources.

Since the February 2021 Neighborhood Elections, Team NAS has met consistently, connecting on shared priorities, planning initiatives to address them, and welcoming opportunities for creativity along the way.

Below are a few exciting accomplishments:

- Installation is underway for the Fairhill Slow Zone, bringing \$500,000 of street safety improvements to streets bound by 2nd Street to 5th Street, and Allegheny Avenue to Glenwood Avenue. This follows engagement and advocacy by Team NAS in 2018 and 2019.
- Planning and implementing various arts-based environmental justice projects through the YES Fund in partnership with Mural Arts, leveraging approximately \$12,000 for resident-led efforts.
- Receiving the Kensington Community Resilience Fund grant through Bread & Roses, allocating \$10,000 to support the creation of a cooperative, neighborhood-wide clean and active block initiative through ongoing outreach, providing needed equipment, and cultivating platforms for neighborhood exchange and celebration.

### Who can join Team NAS...?

Every two years, HACE convenes an Election Committee tasked with planning, promoting, and facilitating Neighborhood Elections and coordinating the Nominations process. Anyone can nominate candidates; however, Team NAS members must be 18+ years old and live and/or work in the Service Area.

### Interested in getting more involved...?

Meet us at an upcoming community meeting or event! Contact Stasia Monteiro for more information: [smonteiro@hacecdc.org](mailto:smonteiro@hacecdc.org) or (267) 902-0764

## Monthly Community Meetings

HACE's NAC Program coordinates Community Meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays monthly starting at 5:30pm. These meetings serve as a platform for civic discourse and exchange to elevate resident voices and develop skillsets that support a healthy, well-informed community. Community Meetings are being held on Zoom until further notice.

Please contact NAC Program Director, Stasia Monteiro for more information:

[smonteiro@hacecdc.org](mailto:smonteiro@hacecdc.org); (215) 426-8025 x3011

## Workforce Training & Job Opportunities

## HACE Management Company Maintenance Department

HACE Management Company (HMC) is accepting applications for its Maintenance Department at various properties. Job postings are full time positions with benefits.

Apply in person at HACE's Main Office, located 167 W. Allegheny Avenue, **9:00am-3:00pm**.

For more information contact David Gonzalez: [dgonzalez@hacemgmtco.org](mailto:dgonzalez@hacemgmtco.org); (215) 426-8025 Monday through Friday (9:00am-5:00pm)

## Stay Informed with HACE!

Enroll in weekly emails, monthly neighborhood mailings, periodic text message alerts, and more at:

<https://tinyurl.com/HACEComms>

## Credits

Thank you to the following contributors and editors for preparing this newsletter: Sierra Cuellar, Daisie Cardona, Sianie Flores, and Stasia Monteiro

Photos by Alberto Huichapa (Rebuild), Zari Tarazona (My Voice Matters), and Daisie Cardona (Team NAS)



Department of Planning and Development  
Housing and Community Development  
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