



## Georgia DCA Healthy Housing Initiative Summary

Strong physical and mental health is a necessity for thriving individuals and families. Where a family resides strongly influences household health through resources like access to quality care, education, and healthy foods. In addition, safe, quality, affordable housing provides the foundation and central location for encouraging healthy lifestyles. As such, DCA has a strong commitment to encouraging better health outcomes for residents through site selection, site design, community partnerships and focused services. Included in the Georgia Healthy Housing Initiative Summary (below) are examples of healthy housing initiatives in current DCA funded Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) developments submitted during the 2015 and 2016 DCA competitive funding cycle.

1. The development provides trauma and holistic healing services to residents and the surrounding community of Cartersville at no cost to the participants. The established partnership will create peaceful safe spaces for residents, including children, to take part in the trauma and holistic healing services. The community building includes a yoga/meditation room and children's art and playroom for use by residents. Services provided to residents include but are not limited to: Yoga Classes, Meditations, Trauma Therapy, Art Therapy for Children, Musical Therapy.
2. The goal of this development is to improve health outcomes and decrease the excessive use of emergency healthcare and re-admissions to the hospital. The developer launched a new electronic data collection and decision-making tool, Care Guide, which enables Service Coordinators to gather and track health and outcome data on the residents in order to identify potential risk factors and collaborate with the appropriate outside agencies to help manage health outcomes. The data tracked by Care Guide will allow targeted and appropriate on site senior services – as opposed to ineffective and/or unnecessary on site senior services.
3. This development has MOU's with the Community Service Board of Middle Georgia who will assist eligible households with supportive services depending upon the tenant needs. The local Area on Aging called Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC AAA has agreed to assist the development with finding ADA and senior residents to meet the chosen set-asides. Through an established partnership with the Telfair McRae Senior Center and the Telfair County Extension Office, residents of the development will receive presentations and classes focused on prevention of disease and focusing on healthy eating and lifestyle choices. The Three Rivers Home Health Services, Inc. will provide the residents with presentations on high blood pressure, fall prevention and diabetes management. Three Rivers Home Health also provides skilled nursing, physical therapy, speech therapy and home health aide services. Records will be maintained by management and provided to DCA on a semi-annual basis. Records will include the number of participants and resident surveys.
4. The development uses the Supporting Seniors Aging in Place (SSAIP) approach, which facilitates successful aging in place at DCA funded developments by improving residents' health through using on-site telemedicine. Residents who have chronic conditions, such as hypertension, diabetes, and congestive heart failure, will be monitored regularly using biometric Bluetooth-connected devices (blood pressure monitor, glucometer, weight scales, pulse oximeter, etc.). Monitoring results will be transmitted electronically to a secure cloud data center, where the results will be stored and made available to the residents' primary care providers. Through the development, SSAIP will be added to the usual Resident Services program, which is available in all of the family and older adult communities. Participation will be voluntary, with signed agreements maintained. The partners in SSAIP include the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in Charleston and Armstrong State University (ASU) in Savannah. In both cases, the development will be working with the universities nursing education programs. The students will be assigned for at least a semester, allowing them to form trusting relationships with the residents. Not only will the

students assist participating residents with monitoring their chronic conditions, but they will also offer information and support related to other health and wellness issues, such as nutrition and exercise. Results from each monitoring device will be wirelessly sent to the accompanying laptop computer. From there it will be securely transmitted to MUSC's Technology Applications Center for Healthful Lifestyles (TACHL), where it will be stored and made available to the residents' primary care providers. In this way, timely conversations and interventions can occur with individual residents, between their regularly scheduled medical appointments, to prevent incipient crises that require emergency room visits or hospitalizations.

5. This development integrates older persons with children and families to promote health and social interaction in both groups. Intergenerational interaction has been shown to improve respiratory and pulmonary function, increase lifespan, and decrease loneliness in seniors, and to reduce ageism against older generations and encourage social and cognitive development in children. This concept consists of a two-tiered model. The first involves group activities, held at least monthly, including career days, life skills classes, tutoring, picnics, game nights, holiday events and birthday parties, games in the gymnasium or trips to the pond or pet therapy center. The second includes direct interactions through Hephzibah's mentorship program, which will pair older persons with children and families from Hephzibah's programs for an ongoing mentoring relationship. Measurable benefits of this program will be tracked via three key performance indicators (KPIs): levels of participation, especially repeat participation, participants' opinions of the program and the program's health and social outcomes.
6. The College of Coastal Georgia (CCGA) has agreed to partner with the development company to ensure the successful design and implementation of a health and wellness tenant engagement program. Since physical health, including exercise and good nutrition, can lead to improved mental health, the students will provide holistic education programs. CCGA nursing students will provide monthly seminars and regular programs, including, but not limited to, seminars on medication side effects, cold and flu facts, healthy eating, and programs for weight loss and smoking cessation. Residents will be made aware of the seminars and programs through flyers, announcements, and word of mouth, and be encouraged to attend and participate at no cost to the resident.
7. This program seeks to integrate health and housing through encouraging walking, quarterly visits from hospital staff, the Food Talk program, and participation in health related activities. Outcomes for the program would be tracked first by participation in meetings and events, and second through the health-related statistics of individual residents who are participating. Sign in sheets would be provided for participants in the monthly health meetings and track "graduates" of the Food Talk program, utilizing pre- and post-class questionnaires to see if the food preparation and consumption habits have changed. The development would also work with staff from Taylor Regional Hospital to create simple journals or log books for Taylor 2 Taylor participants to encourage them to track not only their health markers (e.g. blood pressure, weight, body measurements), but also their daily activity and food consumption. If participants would prefer web-based tracking, they could also utilize the Walk Georgia site ([walkgeorgia.org](http://walkgeorgia.org)) which is a site dedicated to helping people move more and live more. The site can help people track activity, eat healthier, and exercise more efficiently. The development would also track the number of residents who participated in the Run for the Health of It event each year, with a goal to increase participation each year.
8. This development will offer an alternative for seniors to improve their quality of life and keep an important part of their family. The development plans to provide an Animal Therapy program which includes making the development an 100% pet friendly environment by allowing pets in all units (with certain size and breed restrictions), having therapy animals visit the property on a regularly scheduled basis, employing a Pet Care Coordinator, offering dog obedience classes, constructing a dog park and having treat, watering and waste stations located around the property. This will allow residents to experience the positive effects a pet can have on their health and outlook. In addition, the social aspect of this program will allow the residents to build lasting friendships with other tenants who are animal lovers also.

## Additional Resources

### Community Gardens:

- The UGA Cooperative Extension office is Georgia's resource for community gardening. Contact an Extension Agent for assistance with siting, planning, testing, and operating a garden: <https://ugaurbanag.com/gardens/garden-resources/>
- The staff/volunteer time and partnerships will be important to the success of the garden – engaging residents, building skills, and ensuring that the basic organization and management of the garden is maintained. The American Community Garden Association has some resources for managing community gardens: <https://communitygarden.org/resources/sample-forms/>
- Evaluation of Community Gardens resources: <https://communitygarden.org/resources/sample-evaluation-tools/>

### Accessibility for Community Gardens:

- <https://communitygarden.org/resources/gardening-with-seniors-people-with-varying-levels-of-ability/>
- <https://danecountycommunitygardens.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/accessible-raised-beds.pdf>