

Church Point Housing Achieves Accolades For Louisiana

The Church Point Housing Authority and Johnneisha White, Public Housing Resident, were presented with first place awards from the Southwest National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (SWNAHRO) at their 75th Anniversary Annual Conference Scholarships and Awards Ceremony, held at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel on July 1, 2015.

Other member states of SWNAHRO are Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and New Mexico. SWNAHRO and seven other Regional Councils constitute the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) - the leading advocate of housing and community development committed to help create a nation in which all people have decent, safe, affordable housing and economic opportunity in viable, sustainable communities.

The seven state SWNAHRO region has nearly 900 HUD Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher agencies. Twenty-one agency and individual first place awards were presented at the luncheon. Other award recipients from Louisiana were Alexandria, Houma-Terrebonne, and St. James Parish. Church Point Housing was the lone agency presented with two SWNAHRO agency awards. The only two agencies credited with three SWNAHRO were Church Point Housing and Texas's Austin Housing Authority - an awesome achievement which reflects well on our community.

The two first place SWNAHRO agency awards presented to Church Point Housing were for "Best Newsletter" and for "Other Agency Publication" (Best Website: cphousing.org / cpnow.org). Church Point Public Housing Resident, Johnneisha White, was first recognized and honored for her academic excellence by Mr. Larry Hopkins, SWNAHRO President, before being presented with her "Special Achievement By A Program Participant" first place individual award.

JoAnn Duplechin, Board Chair, accepted the "Best Newsletter" award on behalf of Church Point Housing. Recapping the milestone for the agency, JoAnn says, "Great food, great time, but most of all, it was great company that made yesterday and last night a huge success. Gonna be hard to top this year's accomplishments, but I know somehow you will beat those odds. You are all making a difference. Keep up the great work!"

Accepting the "Other Agency Publication" award for Church Point Housing was Charles Labbe, Executive Director. Charles says, "We are extremely grateful to our guests for being a part of this well attended and heart-stirring event and are proud of these as well as our many other telling successes, but we do what we do for our families and community, not to win awards. It is indeed a wonderful privilege to accept this recognition for the level of effort put forth by our Board of Commissioners, our Staff, our Outreach Committee, and our Tenants."

Johnneisha White, accompanied by her grandmother Ms. Rose Espree, accepted her "Special Achievement By A Program Participant" individual award. Reflecting back on the day's events, Johnneisha says, "I had the time of my life on July 1, 2015! The entire day felt like a dream. Not once did I ever expect to be recognized on such a major scale. Standing with my grandmother in a room filled with people and being applauded was truly the greatest feeling in the world. I was completely engulfed in a moment where I felt so much appreciation, honor, and worthiness. My hard work had not gone unnoticed. Now, every time I look at my award, I feel those same emotions again and a smile comes to my face."

Daniel Strange, Executive Secretary of the Louisiana Housing Council, and his wife Susan had these kind words to say: "Charles, we appreciate Church Point's participation and returning Church Point as a well-managed agency again. Church Point certainly had a banner day and made Louisiana look great!" Dan is former president of both SWNAHRO and the Louisiana Housing Council and is a founder of the Dallas based firm Housing Solutions Alliance. For many years, Dan and Susan have been assisting housing agencies, providing professional services, and promoting improved communities and quality housing for all.

After the awards ceremony, guests from Church Point Housing had time to visit the French Quarter to take in the sights and sounds. Some just enjoyed the view and a refreshing cup of coffee at Café Du Monde, while others took a stroll to the French Market and Jackson Square. A bit later, guests met for dinner to celebrate at Antoine's Restaurant - the renowned French-Creole restaurant located in the heart of the French Quarter, celebrating its 175th birthday in 2015. For a restaurant that has endured a Civil War, two World Wars, the Great Depression and Prohibition, Antoine's has a few stories to tell.

Antoine's is one of the best French-Creole fine dining restaurants in New Orleans, if not the world. The exquisite restaurant features fourteen beautifully adorned and picturesque dining rooms, each having a unique charm and history. Just for starters, guests of Church Point Housing feasted upon a gourmet meal of tantalizing food served to perfection in Antoine's Proteus Room, named after the second oldest krewe in the New Orleans Mardi Gras parade. The impeccable service, ultra elegant atmosphere, and superb dining experience was made even more magnificent when the headwaiter offered guests an after dinner tour of Antoine's other lavish dining rooms, dungeon, and wine cellar.

So many wonderful people helped us bring home these accolades for our agency. They deserve our appreciation, gratitude, and thanks. Without their inspiration, guidance and support, Church Point Housing would not have been able to attain such recognition and success. We also would like to acknowledge, compliment, and thank all the industrious men and women who work indefatigably behind the scenes to put on these spectacular and praiseworthy events.

Our sincere thanks to the Church Point Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and Outreach Committee members, local public officials, schools, hospital and police department, and to the many volunteers, business leaders, and citizens of Church Point. We are especially thankful to the families and individuals who participated in our "Opportunity Now" Outreach Program.

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