

CHOSEN IDEAS

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BURNOUT

MENTAL HEALTH INCENTIVES AND RESOURCES NORMALIZING SELF-CARE

POAH is committed to creating a culture that values the mental health of employees. Every single employee is offered numerous mental health incentives and resources to encourage staff to prioritize self care. Regular offerings to staff include:

- **Mental Health days** (in addition to PTO)
- **Discounts** to local spas
- Annual **healing retreat** for staff to refresh mindsets
- Regularly scheduled **mental health trainings**
- Monthly **"Healing Days"** to incentivize self-care and normalizing conversations about mental health

PRIORITIZE HEALING

MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS CARING FOR STAFF + RESIDENTS MENTAL HEALTH

POAH offices nationwide are equipped with Mental Health teams—doctors, therapists, psychiatrists and coaches aimed at serving residents and staff. The presence of these teams normalizes mental healthcare and promotes healing. This team of professionals meets residents and staff one-on-one and hosts workshops to equip individuals with healing practices and tools.

POAH YOUTH LEADS CULTIVATING YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND CARE

POAH's youngest residents are the future. They also face many challenges—policy brutality, systemic racism, a global pandemic and climate change. POAH's youth development program focuses on equipping this next generation with healing tools and practices. It encourages engagement between young POAH residents and with their neighborhood. These young leaders are building resiliency through:

- **Mentorship** from local leaders
- Youth healing **retreats**
- **Regular workshops** at Cincinnati Recreation Centers about issues young people care about
- **Events** promoting fun and connection—game night at Play Library

COMMUNICATING WITH DIGNITY AND BELONGING

NEW RESIDENT ORIENTATION

WELCOMING RESIDENTS TO THE POAH COMMUNITY WITH COMPASSION

New Resident Orientation gives new residents an opportunity to learn more about the property, the POAH community, their new neighborhood, the staff and their unit. During orientation POAH staff reviews the roles of staff, policies and procedures, and makes sure the resident has key staff/resident contact information. Maintenance staff walks through the unit with the resident to make sure they know where important things are and that their questions are answered.

Each resident is given information about their new neighborhood including local businesses, civic groups and activities or programming. POAH staff make sure to incorporate tours of the surrounding area and introductions to key stakeholders who might interest the resident. Not only does this provide a warm introduction to the POAH community, it also gives the newcomer perspective on what life will be like in their new home. Orientation also includes:

- A **compassionate explanation** of POAH rules and policies
- **Resident goal setting** with POAH staff
- Welcome basket with **POAH Bucks**—gift cards that can be used at local businesses—laundry detergent, a warm blanket, etc.
- Support in **enrolling in any relevant programs** (i.e. homeownership courses, after-school)
- Building **resident directory** so new tenants know their neighbors
- **Mental health assessment** by the Mental Health Team (if desired)

THE POAH MOBILE

BRING POAH TO THE COMMUNITY

The POAH Mobile is a unit on wheels aimed at bringing POAH staff, amenities and resources to residents' buildings. The POAH Mobile regularly schedules trips to Cincinnati neighborhoods carrying maintenance supplies, snacks for families and even a portable porch where people can gather.

The POAH Mobile is designed to be multipurpose. So, depending on the needs of the residents, the vehicle can be used to support a celebratory community event or host important health screenings. It can also be a temporary office for staff who need to connect with POAH residents on things like upcoming inspections or recertifications.

FUTURE IDEAS

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BURNOUT

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

MOBILE RELAXATION PODS

DESIGNATED, ACCESSIBLE PLACES FOR STAFF STRESS RELIEF

In Cincinnati, staff is not always near the central office in Over-the-Rhine. The scattered site portfolio means that oftentimes staff are in neighborhoods with no access to private, quiet spaces to prepare for meetings or decompress in the middle of a stressful day. Until now. Staff has access to mobile relaxation pods throughout the City. Each one room relaxation pod offers brief respite from the outside world, ensuring that staff can metabolize stress or trauma experienced in the field.

Mobile Relaxation Pods are designed to accommodate the emotional and social needs of different staff. The pods can include comfy chairs and blankets, gaming devices for stimulation, massage chairs, snacks, and plants.

POAH SATELLITE OFFICES

INCREASING PRESENCE IN NEIGHBORHOODS

Cincinnati's scattered site nature presents a challenge for the property management and maintenance team. In the past, the team had to complete administrative tasks in their cars or waste time traveling downtown to a central office. In addition, residents had to time out of their day to travel if they needed to connect with staff. **POAH established satellite offices in different neighborhoods, giving staff and residents a home base closer to where they work and live.** These offices increase POAH's presence in key parts of the City, making the organization more accessible to residents.

COMMUNICATION CARE STAFF

DESIGNATED EXPERTISE FOR KEEPING CONNECTIONS

Clear, compassionate and timely communication is critical for establishing trust between POAH staff and residents. POAH's Communication Care Staff is dedicated to crafting messages, important rule and policy changes or upcoming events with empathy and an understanding of the resident experience. This person sets the tone for the nature and frequency of communication. They also help the staff develop healthy, responsive communication habits between each other. The Communications Care staff is readily available to talk to residents and address concerns when property management, maintenance or Community Impact staff aren't available. They are responsible for giving residents frequent updates on the status of work orders, inspections or recertifications.

PRIORITIZE HEALING

COMMUNITY HEALING CENTERS

PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR COMMUNITY-WIDE HEALING

Community Healing Centers offer therapy, healing and training city-wide to support resiliency and emotional, psychological and social well-being. CHC's are non-denominational and open to all. They spread throughout Cincinnati to ensure easy access. POAH staff and residents utilize the CHC's at no cost. Community Healing Centers include the following:

- Mental Health Teams of **trained professionals to support healing**— psychiatrists, family counselors, therapists, spiritual guides and coaches
- Luscious green spaces to **cultivate connections to nature**
- **Gardening and growing workshops** for all ages
- Activities that promote **cultural competency**
- **Racial healing** workshops and circles
- Art studios
- “Smash rooms” and boxing classes to support rage release
- **Dialogues and forums on social justice** issues affecting the community

CHOICE HOUSING

ALTERNATIVES TO APARTMENTS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

POAH residents living in Cincinnati now have more choices when selecting housing. In addition to smaller, apartment-style units in dense neighborhoods, POAH has developed options that support individuals and families in aligning their dwelling with their preferred lifestyle and needs.

TOWNHOMES This suburban style home gives families their own greenspace while still living in a community setting. Residents in POAH townhomes also have an opportunity to purchase the home.

TINY TRANSITION HOMES These smaller, temporary dwellings offer refuge for residents in transition (moving from another city) or in instances of emergency (ex. Floods or fires).

MIXED USE BUILDINGS Apartments above commercial units or community centers are available for residents who want a walkable, accessible experience.

POAH residents can easily request a change in unit type based on the growing and changing needs of their families. **They can even request location change should a job opportunity or personal circumstance require the resident to move to a new city.**

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POAH FLATS

HOUSING WITH MARKET RATE AMENITIES

POAH Flats are overhauled units and buildings with competitive, market rate amenities. These newly renovated units and buildings provide quality, efficient and beautiful housing. POAH Flats are respite for Cincinnati residents and they are aimed at creating ease for families and individuals. Amenities include:

- **Extra large closets** and storage spaces
- **Private balconies**
- In-unit laundry
- **Energy efficient units** with solar powered electricity
- Supply locker(s) in common areas with things like lightbulbs, tools for small fixes, etc. for residents
- Recycling and composting areas
- **Small computer labs** for residents to use (key entry)
- Regular, building wide emails communicating changes, upcoming events or tips for apartment maintenance
- **Healing-centered interior design consultation**

COMMUNICATING WITH DIGNITY AND BELONGING

[READ FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

DESIGNATED, FLEXIBLE RESIDENT SPACES

CULTIVATING PLACES OF BELONGING

While public parks and outdoor spaces are important parts of communities, they are oftentimes programmed extensively. This programming defines the space and how it's used. **New designated, flexible POAH resident space is a beautiful outdoor space that is defined by the community.** Flexible furniture and programming initiated by and for residents means the space is truly for the POAH community. Whether an individual wants to sit outside and enjoy a cup of coffee or host a birthday party, it allows residents to claim and create spaces that represent belonging. Characteristics of these spaces:

- Expectations and norms around using the space are determined by residents
- Space can be reserved OR used whenever it's available
- Includes amenities like fire pits and grills

POAH CAFÉ

A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DRIVING CONNECTION

To support resident community building and POAH's bottom line, POAH opened the POAH Café. Staffed by POAH residents, the café is a community center and a revenue generator open to residents and the public. It's a popular spot for staff to gather after work to share a meal, listen to music and build relationships.

The café is family friendly with arcade games for kids and an outdoor patio. There is also a small cyber space with tablets for guests to use, making it fun and easy to access information.

OTHER IDEAS

RESOURCES FOR STAFF

- **Fidget toys to staff** and for residents in lobby
- **More smiling faces.** Not having anxiety coming to work. Having a better outlook when it comes to dealing with residents.
- **More manageable workloads** so that issues that come don't feel stressful)—staff has time to work with residents.
- **Weekly Appreciation lunch for Maintenance**

FLEXIBLE SECOND CHANCE POLICIES FOR PEOPLE FORMERLY INCARCERATED

NEW HIRING PRACTICES

- Compassion assessments for potential staff to gauge empathy, skills and strengths
- Residents are involved in the interview process

FORM CITYWIDE INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY HEALING — INVOLVE THE MAYOR!

- POAH is a champion for community healing
- Different ways to support each other
- Programs for teens to help deal with trauma (CCY)—e.g. employment programs to give teens something to do
- Programs for residents to help get off public assistance (e.g. home purchasing programs)

CHOSEN IDEAS

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY CARE

TRAUMA-INFORMED COMMUNITY LIVING MORE CHOICES IN YOUR AMENITIES AND UNITS

Residents often have few to no choices when it comes to where they live, especially in affordable housing. POAH offered residents more choices and amenities for their apartments, recognizing that residents wanted more opportunities to have agency and control over their surroundings.

Residents and POAH staff work together to find the living situation that's right for them. This dialogue sets the foundation for a collaborative relationship where residents can share more about their family, living situation, and interests. More choices meant less turnover at Flat 9 and happier residents.

Unit Options

- Choice of a range of floor plans, flooring, select appliances, and paint colors
- Choice of furnished or unfurnished
- Short-term units for temporary and transitional guest stays
- Multi-generational units (e.g. 2+ bathrooms for unit for multiple family members)
- Flexible policies

Community Features and Amenities

- Storage space
- Community supply closet—everything you need to fix minor issues such as spare lightbulbs, batteries, and maintenance manuals
- Community education—ongoing workshops and classes (e.g. home maintenance, summer grilling, etc.)
- Grill area
- Onsite resident assistants and maintenance for immediate support
- Onsite concierge services, including event planning, interior design consulting
- Flat 9 Swap Shop—free, community market—take an item, leave an item
- Easy transition plans for if your family grows



COMMUNITY “GREEN” HOUSE

CREATING ACCESS TO CANNABIS JUSTICE AND WELLNESS

As POAH’s resilient communities took shape, dispensaries opened up all around Flat 9. But in 2021, residents were restricted from using drugs on the property. Moreso, dispensaries were typically owned by privileged entrepreneurs while disproportionately criminalizing poor and BIPOC residents. Later that decade, POAH introduced the Green House, a revolutionary wellness space and social enterprise.

The Green House includes a smoke room, education and workshops, a community garden, and farmers’ market. Residents can learn how to grow cannabis, then sell what they produce. The Green House also helps residents build equity. Residents who volunteer with the Green House may receive funds they can apply toward their rent or home ownership.

- **Community Organizing:** training and advocacy workshops on cannabis justice
- **Education:** workshops and classes on growing cannabis, types of cannabis and uses
- **Health and wellness:** meditation in the garden, connection to social services
- **Community garden and farmers’ market**
- **Social Connection:** after-hours events, concerts

COMMON AREAS AND COMMUNITY SPACES

HAVE A SEAT, BUILD COMMUNITY

Back in 2021, some of Flat 9’s buildings were missing community space. Residents missed the common areas where you could talk to your neighbors. Later, POAH redesigned their buildings and programming so they were more conducive to building community. Some of those initiatives included:

- **Intentional Community Housing** (see below)
- **Bulletin boards** for community announcements
- **Incentives and programming** to encourage neighbors to get to know each other

REDEFINE LEADERSHIP

STAFF-LED DECISION MAKING STRENGTH-BASED SHARED LEADERSHIP AT POAH

Staff wanted more clear expectations and opportunities to make their own decisions. POAH overhauled their staff development by focusing on staff's strengths and shifting the decision-making power to staff. POAH introduced several successful initiatives from hiring to onboarding to ongoing professional development that shifted their staffing and leadership development (see below). As a result, issues got resolved faster and POAH increased their staff retention.

Onboarding and Training

- Reframed to emphasize what you're empowered to do rather than what you're restricted to do
- Invites staff to imagine how their strengths and outside expertise could apply to their position at POAH
- Includes job shadowing so staff could get familiar with other roles and positions
- Peer to peer mentorship support that pairs newer staff with more established staff not linked to formal assessment or evaluation. Can help communicate issues so supervisors can respond quickly.

Management and Support

- Management available for a set number of days onsite → resulted in increased communication and contact between management and staff
- Management has smaller teams and more staff assigned to properties.
- Staff can consult other teams, share expertise → sites could more quickly address issues
- without involving supervisor
- POAH internal network for improved communication (see "POAH Internal Network")

Feedback and Performance Evaluation

- 360 reviews so staff can review peers and leaders

FUTURE IDEAS

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY CARE

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY HOUSING COMMUNITY-BASED HOUSING

The pandemic, climate change, and rising living costs encouraged people across the world to join “intentional” communities, or planned residential communities designed to focus on social cohesion and collaboration. POAH introduced intentional community housing so residents could build a stronger sense of community care. POAH residents live in individual units but share facilities and common spaces with neighbors with similar lifestyles and worldviews. These intentional communities created organic and structured support networks. For instance, one building houses single parents and seniors, which helped reduce isolation and helped alleviate childcare and afterschool care. The building included amenities like a playground and community room.

REDEFINE LEADERSHIP

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

POAH INTERNAL NETWORK CONNECTING AND CELEBRATING TEAMS

POAH established an internal network where employees can communicate with each other and share and access important information. The intranet includes news, communities, and a strength-based staff directory. The staff directory includes a search feature where you can find staff based on their expertise and skills. The message boards and chat features also offers a platform where you can contact staff to ask questions and ask for advice, and celebrate milestones and share notes of gratitude about your coworker.

ADDRESSING COMMUNITY TRAUMA

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

THE NET: NEIGHBORHOOD EMERGENCY TEAMS RESIDENT CRISIS TEAMS

The Neighborhood Emergency Teams (aka “The NET”) is organized and led by Flat 9 residents who want to help care for the community during major emergencies and crises. The NET team are paid team members elected by residents who can support residents and report back to POAH leadership to make sure residents’ needs are communicated. The NET organizes and provides:

- Ad-hoc reflection groups and events to process traumatic events
- Community resources for healing and processing (e.g. Bible study, reflection prompts)

RESTORATION ROOMS SPACES FOR RESTORATION AND HEALING

Residents have 24-hour access to Flat 9’s many “restoration rooms.” These spaces are designed by and for POAH community members to provide a break from the stress and trauma of daily life. Each room has a distinct look and feel to support different needs. The soundproof room offers private space for staff and residents to scream, listen to loud music, or dance. The “low-stimulation” room offers a dark, quiet space with aromatherapy to slow the senses.



OTHER IDEAS

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- **Mental Health days for staff** (different than PTO)
- **Staff/peer circles** to share experiences, get support
- **Therapy** for residents and staff: Provided by clinical social workers/interns
- **Mental Health workshops or services:** Specific to skills or certain practices (ex. behavior health strategies or restorative justice circles); open to staff and/or residents; can be tailored to strengths and needs for specific communities (e.g. grandparents); ACES

ABOLISHED POLICE

- Public safety is cared for by neighbors “for us by us”

PROACTIVE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES

- Monthly meetings to address issues and come up with ideas to address it — don’t wait for problem to be a huge thing

MANAGEMENT / STAFFING MODELS

- **Cluster model:** Group management model where multiple properties report to a regional supervisor; everyone has similar expectations
- **On-call supervisors (inspired by hospitality managers on duty):** Available for quick responses and troubleshooting. Call tree staffed with people who are familiar with the property.
- **Floor generals (rotating engagement):** Residents in building A are in charge of community activities; rotates every quarter. Distributes expectations and engagement. By floor or building. Give residents leadership so they are comforting presences. Residents who are respected and valued. Making sure they have that support.
- **Upper Management Swap Day:** Upper management spends quality time with residents to be more in touch with what is happening on the ground

FUTURE IDEAS

ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY CARE

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

PARENTS LEAD

AWARD WINNING PARENT LEADERSHIP GROUP

Raising young people is hard and lonely work. Parents Lead is a group led by and for parents where POAH families can share the challenges and the joys of supporting and raising their children.

Parents Lead is so much more than just a place to connect or vent. Participants share resources with one another on things such as programs at nearby schools, after-school activities or tutoring support. Parents Lead also helps equip and inspire caregivers to raise capable and caring children through parenting classes and workshops. Upon joining Parents Lead, new parents are assigned a parent mentor so they feel like they belong. Once a year, Parents Lead use feedback from families at Brandy Hill to develop plans for making sure residents are supported.

Parents Lead is also:

- A first stop for new residents with children
- A visible support system for POAH parents
- A safe space to ask questions about childcare, school and community resources
- A connector for community support such as ride share, meal exchanges or homework help

STAFF CARE PLAN

POLICIES, TRAINING AND SUPPORT TO NURTURE STAFF

POAH believes in prioritizing care for staff. Without a healthy and supported staff, we can't have healthy supported housing. POAH's official staff care plan incorporates everything from a clear and fair distribution of workload on staff to compassionate human resource policies. Some of the staff benefits include:

- **Ongoing training** on trauma resiliency, self care, and mediation / deescalation (see #3)
- 35-hour workweeks and manageable workloads
- 8–10 weeks of PTO
- Multiple staff on call
- **POAH resident support:** Resident Leads, identified and trained residents in each building who can support maintenance in resolving small building or unit issues
- **Vendor/contractors** to handle sporadic, time-consuming, or highly specialized/dangerous maintenance tasks
- **Flex or floating teams:** Staff trained to pinch hit on site teams when the unexpected comes up or in times where capacity becomes stretched, like recertification

RESILIENCY TRAINING FOR STAFF AND RESIDENTS

NURTURING A COMMUNITY OF CARE

POAH incentivizes staff and residents to participate in free resiliency trainings to help empower others to be trauma-informed. These interactive, hands-on trainings are offered to fit different learning styles and often led by residents and staff. Participants receive rewards like gift cards and free movie tickets.

Training topics:

- De-escalation and conflict mediation with helpful scripts and common scenarios to practice compassionate responses, take the pressure off of having the 'right' response in the moment)
- Detecting and understanding burnout
- Healing-centered first-aid and emergency response training

ACCESSIBLE RENOVATIONS

CREATING SPACES OF BELONGING AND INCLUSION

Brandy Hill is a warm, lively community. The property went through major renovations, from the grounds to the common spaces, to center multi-generational families and invite play. Their groundbreaking designs prioritized accessibility, safety, and belonging, helping them win multiple awards. By offering more accessible, ground floor walk-in units than any other property of its size, POAH is able to accommodate more residents and guests with disabilities.

Renovations include:

- **Intercom systems** with cameras that help communicate with people at the door (text, video chat, etc.) to allow of ease in receiving visitors and packages
- **Wide, designated areas to play sports** that are protected and safe for Brandy Hill's youngest residents
- **Free wi-fi** for all residents
- **Designated bike paths** on the property
- **Computer labs** in every building
- **Sound proof** units, common areas and office spaces
- **Tree Fort Bus Stop**, a protected bus stop for kids waiting for the bus. They can safely play while waiting or get out of the rain or snow on a wet day with this state-of the art shelter.

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

FLEX TEAMS

ALLEVIATING WORKLOAD FOR POAH STAFF

POAH knows how important it is for residents to have functioning, quality housing. But sometimes fluctuations in staff or outside events impact POAH's ability to address property and unit issues.

Flex teams include property management, maintenance and Community Impact staff who can fill in and support properties when the unexpected occurs. New capital project that requires additional staff? Damage cleanup from a local storm? The Flex team has that property's back.

POAH Flex teams also support POAH's staff training initiatives. Since the Flex Teams have an eye on multiple POAH sites, they can create training opportunities for new and existing staff that are responsive to recurring challenges.

TRAUMA-INFORMED MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

BUILDING A COMPASSIONATE TEAM

POAH maintenance staff face two key issues: they interact with residents the most, often during stressful moments like during inspections or when units have an issues. Maintenance teams can also feel overwhelmed by the high volumes of work orders. The Trauma-informed Maintenance program includes three critical components:

1. **Training and coaching:** The trauma-informed training program is specially designed to help maintenance staff lead with compassion and care for themselves and their team. Every maintenance staff joins trauma-informed training and meets regularly to discuss ways they are integrating principles and approaches into the day-to-day.
2. **State of the art facilities:** Every POAH site includes designated space for the materials and equipment needed for staff to address site and property issues. This creative and dynamic space elevates the role of this critical, front-line team and makes it easier for the maintenance to complete work orders and serve residents.
3. **Resident workshops:** In order to alleviate the workload of the team and provide residents with choice and agency over their own units, maintenance regularly runs workshops in their facility. By training residents how to properly resolve simple issues in their homes like changing light bulbs or unclogging a toilet, residents and staff can work together to keep POAH housing quality.

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MAINTENANCE CO-OP

TRAINING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The POAH Maintenance Co-op is a training and workforce development program for POAH youth and potential full-time hires who want to learn what it takes to serve on a property maintenance team. The co-op offers a paid, part time opportunity to acquire skills in basic property maintenance and customer service. Not only does the Maintenance Co-op support the POAH maintenance team workload, the program allows POAH to cultivate new employees. Participants in the POAH Co-op program are able to complete on the job training while also receiving training from local vocational schools. The co-op earns credits and experience in the workforce, regardless of whether or not longer term employment with POAH comes to fruition.

JOB SHADOW PROGRAM

MAKING NEW CONNECTIONS

To drive compassion for one another and to inspire career growth within the organization, POAH launched its very own Job Shadow program. The job shadow program gives new and current employees a peek into each other's daily tasks, responsibilities and challenges. Every single employee — even the CEO — participates in POAH's job shadowing program to broaden their perspective on the employee experience.

Since the program launched, POAH's executive leadership have made more informed decisions about staff and organizational policy. They see first-hand how their decisions directly impact staff's daily workload. POAH leaders also know how and when to advocate to policy makers and funders to change things like HUD regulations since have a better understanding of residents and staff's experiences.

Peer sharing has reduced workplace tension and inspired the staff. The POAH team knows how their jobs and roles are connected. When issues arise, staff is able to problem solve using multiple perspectives. When teams feel stuck, shadowing their counterparts at other sites opens up new possibilities. And the Job Shadow program better prepares new hires. They receive a more immediate and holistic picture of how POAH functions and get chances to learn by doing.

COMMUNITY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY AND FOR RESIDENTS

Brandy Hill organizes regular workshops and information sessions to teach residents new skills or learn about important changes at POAH (e.g. recertification). These workshops are planned and occasionally led by residents. Residents can offer workshops based on their skills or strengths and can even partner with POAH staff. For example, at least once a year POAH maintenance and residents co-host a basic maintenance course to help give the community the confidence to undertake simple unit maintenance, like changing the range hood filter. An updated database of building or resident issues and resident strengths help inform content for the workshop series.

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BRANDY HILL RESIDENT COUNCIL

SUPPORTING RESIDENT LEADERSHIP

The Brandy Hill Resident Council (BHRC) is a multi-generational team of leaders who represent resident issues and advocate on their behalf to POAH staff and other key affordable housing stakeholders. The BHRC members are appointed by their neighbor and include residents from ages 14 and older. This council has a number of responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- **Inform POAH's strategic plan** and hold POAH accountable to its execution of the plan
- **Support the creation and enforcement of rules**, using a restorative justice approach to mediate conflict between residents
- **Determine workshops to support resident requests.** For example the BHRC might partner with maintenance to host a recertification training.
- **Advocate for changes in policy or legislation** at a local and national level, advancing the work to develop quality, trauma-informed affordable housing
- **Interview candidates** for POAH staff opening

Each resident who is part of BHRC is compensated for their time. Members also have an opportunity to learn credits and certification as they receive training or earn leadership experience.

COMMUNICATING WITH DIGNITY AND BELONGING

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

BUILDING CAPTAINS

CREATING COMMUNITY ONE BUILDING AT A TIME

Every building at Brandy Hill has a peer nominated and compensated resident leader. This Building Lead has a birds-eye view of the residents well-being and potential issues - both interpersonal or related to the property. The Building Lead is responsible for supporting community development, regularly hosting meetings or experiences that allow residents to connect with one another.

The Building Lead facilitates an annual “House Rules” meeting where each tenant in the building can help set the building rules and norms. Residents can also share any circumstances or needs that might be important for their neighbors to know (e.g. working third shift). This annual house rules meeting also helps the residents determine how to respond to issues in building and which issues are most important.

Other Building Lead responsibilities:

- **Organizes a Welcome Wagon** as new residents move in
- **Supports communication** between residents and staff
- Informs property-wide workshop topics
- Organizing **social events and activities**
- Helps **residents register bikes**

NEW RESIDENT ORIENTATION

WELCOMING RESIDENTS TO THE POAH COMMUNITY

POAH’s Resident Orientation gives new residents an opportunity to learn more about the property, the Brandy Hill community, the staff and their unit. During orientation POAH staff reviews the roles of staff, policies and procedures, and makes sure the resident has key staff/resident contact information. A walk through of the unit with maintenance allows the resident to become familiar with their new home.

Each resident is greeted by the Building Lead or Welcome Wagon (group of residents). Not only does this provide a warm introduction to the POAH community, it also gives the newcomer the resident perspective on life at Brandy Hill.

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BRANDY HILL PRIDE 2.0

INVESTING IN OUR NEXT GENERATION

Brandy Hill Pride was reinvigorated following the pandemic pause. Brandy Hill Pride is a youth-led social group that works to make connections between young people living at POAH. BHP chooses a different focus area each year. **Brandy Hill also built a new youth community room to provides space not only for meetings but also for youth to relax, study or hang outside of their home.**

Some things BHP focuses on include:

- **Environmental stewardship:** partnering with maintenance to preserve nature at Brandy Hill
- Organize fundraisers and awareness around **social causes**, like animal rescue
- **Anti-bullying** education and conversation
- **Recycling** workshops

By participating in BHP, youth can also earn leadership accreditation and certificates to support their educational goals after high school.

OTHER IDEAS

MORE SPECIALIZED ROLES

- Designated staff roles based on strengths where they can utilize their expertise and specialized training

AUTOMATED RECERTIFICATION

- Residents are automatically recertified

CHOSEN IDEAS

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BURNOUT

COMMUNITY CARE PLAN

TRAINING, SUPPORT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND COMMUNICATION

Neighbors and staff informed and defined the Hawthorne Community Care Plan, a multifaceted plan. As a result, Hawthorne's culture shifted. Taking "mental health leave" became normal and celebrated, which helped reduce resident and staff turnover. The plan consists of four main facets:

1. Community-Wide Training

Staff and neighbors are incentivized to participate in free resiliency trainings to help empower others to be trauma-informed. These interactive, hands-on trainings are offered to fit different learning styles and often led by residents and staff. Participants receive rewards like gift cards and free movie tickets. Topics include:

- De-escalation and conflict mediation
- Detecting and understanding burnout
- Cultural humility to help understand other perspectives

2. Support

POAH offers several resources for families and staff suffering from burnout. They also established emergency plans to help staff respond to burnout (care packages for families that include gift cards and stipends for childcare support, meals, and family activities)

3. Accountability

Regular check-ins; plan is publicly posted and updated

4. Communication

POAH established multiple initiatives to improve communication between teams and partners.

- Efforts to openly celebrate and communicate
- Small efforts include designated "staff mailboxes" to drop off documents, physical indicators on the desk or mailbox to help create boundaries.
- Initiatives that encouraged staff to ask for help, communicate their needs, and share how they're feeling
- Community agreements
- Administrator to manage community calendar and help synchronize individual calendar

Note: group suggested merging this facet with "Ongoing Education and Training for the Hawthorne Community"

REDEFINE LEADERSHIP

HAWTHORNE NEWSLETTER

A NEWSLETTER WRITTEN BY AND FOR HAWTHORNE'S RESIDENTS

POAH hired resident reporters to help bring back a newsletter for Hawthorne residents. Reporters submit stories, help maintain a community calendar, and publish important events and announcements. Because the newsletter is written by and for residents, residents were more in the know about what was going on at Hawthorne.

RESIDENT LIAISONS

ADVOCATES FOR RESIDENTS

Hawthorne introduced **resident liaisons** to help reduce miscommunication and stressful interactions between residents and staff. Hawthorne residents helped outline the liaison role and chose liaisons who were trusted by community, but could also take action and work with partners. Many of the liaisons are multilingual, helping fill a major need at Hawthorne. The liaisons treated residents with dignity and respect and patiently answered questions, quickly making them invaluable members of the community. Some of the ways they support Hawthorne residents:

- Connecting residents to support
- Sharing information, important announcements
- Working directly with POAH and community partners to respond to specific concerns.
- Mediating conflict with focus on restorative justice
- Hosting open office hours and community forums to listen to residents' ideas and concerns
- Resident liaisons are community members but do not live at Hawthorne to protect people's privacy.

Note: This idea is a combination of the volunteer ambassador and resident liaison ideas.

HAWTHORNE ZONE TEAMS

STAFF AND RESIDENT LIAISONS FOR YOUR BLOCK

Hawthorne recognized that their largest property needed more targeted support to reduce stress on residents and staff. POAH divided Hawthorne into "zones" and assigned each zone a comprehensive support team. The team, which serves up to 90 families in their zone, helped address issues faster, improved communication and reduced backlogged orders. These smaller, more nimble teams were able to host office hours and meet residents onsite to help meet residents where they were. Each team includes:

- **Rotating management** help assist the support team and communicate issues and needs back to POAH and partners. They also help facilitate more complex initiatives, like helping residents set their own inspection days.
- **Maintenance advocate:** Residents and maintenance often miscommunicate about maintenance issues, which wastes time and resources. The problem doesn't get fixed and then maintenance has to come back. A maintenance advocate works directly with residents to understand the maintenance issue, then communicate with maintenance.
- **Resident liaisons** (see above)

Note: Teams liked that Zone Teams offered a single point of contact, or "one-stop family support" for families. However, this is not related to the idea "One-Stop Family Support," which specifically relates to case management.

COMMUNICATING WITH DIGNITY AND BELONGING

RULES AND POLICIES REIMAGINED

A MORE COMPASSIONATE APPROACH TO THE RULES OF POAH

Whenever you asked staff and residents if they could change anything, the rules always came up. Many of the rules and policies were confusing, difficult to understand, and seemed unnecessarily harsh. POAH decided to overhaul some of their processes and rules to make them more compassionate and easier for everyone to understand. Some of the changes they made included:

- Introducing rewards for on-time recertification
- **Changing language** to be positive rather than punitive
- Working with CSL to assist neighbors with certification
- Creating an **easy-to-read guide on POAH housing expectations and rules** for partners and neighbors
- Introducing forms with information about onsite partners (a “get to” and not a “have to” to maintain your housing)

FUTURE IDEAS

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BURNOUT

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

REIMAGINE THE 5 DAY WORK WEEK FLEXIBLE STAFF POLICIES AND A MORE INCLUSIVE CULTURE

POAH drastically altered their staffing structure and created more flexible schedules. POAH instituted a four-day workweek and allowed staff to work flexible hours outside the typical 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM workday. This flexibility allowed staff to build in self-care breaks.

POAH's trust in their staff and flexibility slashed staff turnover. In 2051, staff in every department unanimously voted POAH as one of the top 50 places to work.

- Everyone wears "one hat" — regular team meetings are part of your role
- You can spend 10% of your work time on anything, including professional development to learn about a new role, field
- Staff are incentivized to take short self-care breaks (e.g. walking, meditating) with rewards like discounted healthcare, etc.
- POAH built calming stations where people can take short breaks to calm their minds

REDEFINING LEADERSHIP

DIGITAL BULLETIN BOARDS KEEPING RESIDENTS INFORMED AND CONNECTED

POAH installed digital bulletin boards in designated areas to help keep residents connected and informed. These digital bulletin boards share announcements, deadlines, and important dates. The boards used positive, judgment-free language and cartoon and positive affirmations. The digital bulletin boards Residents had less lease violations and felt more connected to their neighbors.

(continued)

ONE-STOP FAMILY SUPPORT

A SINGLE POINT-OF-CONTACT FOR FAMILIES

When families look for support or resources, they often have to navigate a muddled, confusing network of many providers and organizations. Inspired by similar “collective impact” models like [Impact KCK](#), POAH and community partners introduced a one-stop model to help streamline case management for families so they only had to work with one person. Partners worked together to give families more comprehensive wraparound services, and it also meant less paperwork and travel between agencies for families.

ZONE BLOCK PARTIES

BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH BLOCK PARTIES

Coming out of a pandemic, Hawthorne decided to prioritize joy as a critical way to build a more resilient community. Residents stepped up to plan block parties for their zone, and POAH followed their lead by offering support and resources. The block parties helped shape a new generation of community leaders. Neighbors also got to know each other better, which helped reduce conflicts between residents. POAH and partners also set up at the block parties to share information and resource. Each party looks different, but some of the ideas that came out of the parties included:

- **Enlightened Blocks:** Special lantern installations that helped increase lighting and made people feel safe walking around after dark
- **Community Days:** Different partners offer activities at the block parties, including STI education, free mammograms, and haircuts

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT CLASSES

EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO EMPOWER FAMILIES TAKE CHARGE

The Hawthorne community set up classes and trainings to educate and empower POAH residents. These community classes helped reduce notices and reduced maintenance requests. Topics include:

- Interpreting your utility bill
- Time management and life organization
- Cleaning and organizing
- Money management

COMMUNICATING WITH DIGNITY AND BELONGING

[SEE FULL LIST OF IDEAS](#)

COMMUNITY CENTER FOR KIDS AND TEENS PREMIERE ON-SITE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR KIDS AND TEENS

POAH built a brand new, state-of-the-art community center at Hawthorne, which includes an early learning center and Boys and Girls Club. The center expanded in 2030 because demand was so high. The program involves multiple generations, including elders, parents, and children. Kids and teens learn valuable relationship skills and education to prepare for successful futures. The additional childcare helped increase employment because more parents were able to work.

REIMAGINED COMMUNITY POLICING CHANGING HOW WE RESPOND TO CRIME

Hawthorne changed how they responded to criminal activity, focusing on creating a more transparent culture and introducing initiatives that made calling the police the last resort. POAH installed new cameras and a neighborhood watch program. They also installed IPD liaisons, similar to IPD's mental health co-responders, which freed up LEOs to handle criminal situations. Families feel safer, and they feel more comfortable calling the police when it's needed.

ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR THE HAWTHORNE COMMUNITY CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING AND CONVERSATIONS FOR NEIGHBORS, STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

The Hawthorne community is made up of many people with different perspectives, but those perspectives often led to misunderstandings and miscommunication. Hawthorne introduced free education and training that the whole community could participate in to understand where people were coming from, and help mediate conflict. As a result, ACES scores decreased and major conflicts decreased. Some of the trainings included:

- **Cultural humility** to understand cultural dynamics between neighbors
- **Systemic causes of poverty and simulations** to understand different circumstances and causes of poverty, barriers families face
- **Mediation and de-escalation**

OTHER IDEAS

STAFF SUPPORT

- Coffee for staff
- Maintenance team has the latest equipment and resources. People are lining up to be part of Eric's team!
- New spaces

NEW COMMUNITY SPACES

- **New sports arena** in the unused green space. Free for families. Coaches and professional athletes volunteer to help grow their skills.
- **Community garden** is back! Bigger, three locations.
- **New community and staff spaces:** Lounge area, pool table, massage space. Min. 30 min shut down for staff to make use of these spaces!
- **New pool:** Safety team and swimming classes offered for children and families.

RESIDENT AND STAFF SUPPORT

- Resident council— made up of multiple perspectives who make key decisions.
- Restorative justice processes in place.
- **Shuttle service** for seniors to get them to the pantry, community building, etc.
- **Interpreters & translators** are part of the team for people who need that service.
- Everyone is greeted at the front door of the offices with a friendly, helpful, and positive face and message.
- **Counseling & Therapy:** Two locations offer services to families, children, adults.
- **Annual resource & career fairs**