

Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee: @Promise self-sufficiency training program elevates low-income residents

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The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM) is pleased to announce the first graduating class of the @Promise Resident Training Program, a new HACM initiative to assist its residents in achieving self-sufficiency. The graduates were celebrated by their family and friends, Mayor Tom Barrett, Common Council President Hamilton, Alderman Cavalier Johnson, and HACM staff during a graduation ceremony on Thursday, January 18 at the Hillside Family Resource Center.

The name of the program stems from a realization that HACM's Secretary-Executive Director, Tony Pérez, had several years ago. "Many of our young people are perceived as 'at risk'. I chose to call them 'at promise' instead. The idea here is how many of these promises will go unfulfilled, not because these individuals didn't try, but because no one lent a helping hand," explained Pérez. "We can be that helping hand."

HACM invited its residents to attend an informational session about the program. Of the 55 interested residents, 12 successfully completed a three-week job readiness boot camp that explored the benefits of self-sufficiency, offered career assessments and planning, and prepared the participants for a successful transition into the workforce. Six participants were selected to move on to paid training provided by HACM. These individuals will now begin working 20 hours a week in administrative

positions for HACM for up to two years. They will also further their education by enrolling in Milwaukee Area Technical College's Administrative (MATC) Professional Associate Degree Program. To help with the cost of this program, they will receive a \$2,000 HACM Scholarship and up to \$1,500 in tuition reimbursement per calendar year.

Angelita Ingram, an @Promise graduate, was immediately drawn to the opportunity. "It was a little intimidating at first because there were so many qualified people interested in the program. To be chosen to participate in the boot camp and ultimately be selected to work for HACM and to further my education means so much to me and my children. I believe I am capable of doing anything," stated Ingram with a warm, enthusiastic smile.

HACM is committed to ensuring its residents have opportunities available to help them achieve self-sufficiency through programs such as @Promise and the organization's numerous collaborative partnerships.

Mayor Tom Barrett commended the graduates and recognized HACM's commitment to improving the lives of the people it serves. "The Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee is not only in the business of providing decent, affordable, respectable housing. It is also in the business of creating hope and opportunity in people's lives," said Barrett.

At the graduation ceremony, each graduate received a proclamation from Common Council President, Ashanti Hamilton. The ceremony also included remarks from MATC Provost, Mohammad Dakwar, on what it takes to succeed and the importance of perseverance. The final guest speaker for the evening was former HACM resident, Alysia Mullins. She shared the story of her journey and the role HACM played in helping her earn a college degree, purchase a home, and move from public housing to independence.