

Ann Ryan, Director of Family Services at the Housing Authority
of the City of Frederick,
awarded 2018 Person of the Year by Women’s Democratic
League of Frederick County



The Housing Authority of the City of Frederick (HACF) took home two prestigious awards from the Women’s Democratic League of Frederick County on Oct. 3rd – one to Ann Ryan, director of family services who was named 2018 Person of the Year and another to HACF’s “Bridge the Digital Divide” initiative, which was the recipient of WDL’s 2018 Community Project of the Year Award. Bridge the Digital Divide is a partner project to the Frederick County Chamber of Commerce’s Leaders on Loan program.

“BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE”

The awards, handed out during the WDL’s 95th anniversary celebration, denote the important services that the Housing Authority provides in the community by offering quality, low-income housing for residents who qualify, as well as a variety of programs that teach critical life skills on everything from education to economic stability and empowerment. Perhaps nowhere is that more evident than in the role that Ms. Ryan brings to HACF. Quite simply, she walks the talk. Ask the young adults that she mentors or the mothers that she checks on or the seniors that regale her with their stories while she listens attentively, letting everyone know that they matter, and it becomes clear to see that her heart and commitment are with the residents at HACF and the greater Frederick community.

Lara Westdorp, president of WDL, said Ryan was chosen for Person of the Year because she embodies the spirit and criteria of the award, which is given to “honor women that not only succeed in their profession, but step outside their community and build bridges with differing communities and groups to create a stronger, interconnected, and more diverse Frederick County.”

A VOCAL CRUSADER

At the event, Mayor Michael O’Connor introduced Ryan and congratulated her on the award.

“A vocal crusader for creating a trauma-informed community that understands how ACEs, or Adverse Childhood Experiences have a lifelong effect, Ann is at the forefront of this effort both within the Housing Authority and Frederick County,” O’Connor said. “Tireless in her advocacy for the Housing Authority’s residents, Ann is known for asking the question that many low-income individuals have never been asked before: *what do you want to do with your life?* By dropping this single pebble, the idea of being worthy of having a dream begins a ripple effect: I would go back to school; I would get my driver’s license; I would get a better-paying job; I would read to my children; I would buy a home. And then together, with a series of pebbles, Ann helps to set change in motion.”

Although Ryan wasn’t able to make the awards event due to a prior commitment, she prepared remarks which were read by HACF Executive Director, Kevin Lollar. In the remarks, Ryan said the work she does is in keeping with the mission and tradition of the Housing Authority – to be a beacon in the lives of its citizens.

“Our work at the Housing Authority is based on the belief that all our citizens can thrive if given the chance. And in giving them that chance, we invest in their children, helping each to get a healthy start in life,” Ryan said. “We invest in education and training for living wage jobs. We create a pathway to prosperity that includes home ownership. In short, we open the door for a few more to realize the American Dream.”

CREATE A PATHWAY TO PROSPERITY

“But we do not do this in isolation at the Housing Authority. We partner with others who know that the health of a community is realized more fully when no one is left behind. From cradle to career, we rely on our partnerships to help us create a seamless pipeline to prosperity. It is in these partnerships that there is any hope of progress,” she added. “We are here to make things better, to be bolder in our efforts to make sure each child thrives, each family moves toward economic stability. We believe we, together, can make this happen in Frederick.”

We couldn’t agree more! Congratulations, Ann and participants of the Leaders on Loan “Bridge the Digital Divide” initiative! Thanks for embodying the Housing Authority’s mission and helping HACF make a difference in the lives of our citizenry.