



# The Arlington Advocate

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## Levy excited about new endeavor as HCA director

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SPECIAL TO THE ADVOCATE

The redbrick building has "High School" carved over the ornamented stone arch that's sandwiched between the numbers 18 and 94. On the second floor sits the office of the Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA), an organization whose mission is to enable residents with a low to moderate income access to affordable housing in Arlington, whether through rentals or homeownership.

The HCA office is small and unpretentious and modestly furnished with the basics found in the typical office, things like a copier, a meeting table with gray upholstered chairs and a coffee maker.

David Levy is low-key and self-possessed; he is also the new executive director of HCA.

Although HCA was founded in 1986, Levy been with the organization for about two months, having started in mid-December. With two month's perspective, Levy described his feeling about the job so far.

"It's a challenge...one that I'm excited about. Urban and suburban areas need affordable housing. It's one of those rights that people take for granted. To work in this capacity in this community, makes the job that much more important to me. It takes time, however, to settle in and to learn local politics...but, I'm enthusiastic about it," said Levy, who recently took over for Laura Wiener, who moved on to the town's Planning and Community Development Department.

Levy graduated from Clark University where he discovered his passion for social action, a passion nurtured by Clark's progressive environment.

"Clark pushed students to think about the world. Many of Clark's students and faculty were involved in social action."

As a student, he worked for Preservation Worcester, an experience that fueled his interest in housing and social policy. Pursuing his growing interest in housing policy, he applied for an internship at the Worcester Housing Partnership, which subsequently led to a job with that organization.

Combining his interests in social action, geography, and sociology, Levy graduated from Clark in 1993 with a degree in urban geography. Subsequently, he worked at the State House on housing issues and for an urban planner, ultimately ending up at a Somerville community organization.

Levy said HCA's mission is: "To advocate for and develop affordable housing opportunities —home ownership, rental opportunities, in Arlington."

He continued to explain the organization's purpose, "HCA is a community development organization. We have the ability to pursue other causes, such as homelessness. For example, we have a 'Homelessness Prevention Fund.' We also have our own loan funds for prospective homebuyers." According to Levy, the federal government defines "affordable housing" as "housing not exceeding 30 percent of a household's income, for rent or mortgage payment."

Having two organizations in Arlington dedicated to housing issues could contribute to some residents mistaking one for the other.

"The Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) is state-run, (and one of the roles of) the Board of Directors is to manage public housing for the community. HCA is a private non-profit organization that is run by a volunteer Board of Directors. AHA has a more narrow focus (whereas), HCA has (the ability to be more flexible) to play a role in advocacy."

Levy said there has been

limited contact so far between the two groups.

"I would like to pursue the opportunity to work together. It would be a lost opportunity (if that didn't occur). Other communities have worked together successfully to provide affordable housing. I'd like us (the AHA and HCA) to be a model for that (here in Arlington). I'm committed to making that happen."

Levy's said he wants Arlington to know about HCA.

"We have homes available for rent; these include two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. If there are Arlington residents who have any

two-family homes that they're interested in selling, I would encourage them to give me a call at our office."

Continuing, "we have a 'Walk for Affordable Housing' that will take place on April 4. Any Arlington residents can contact us or make a donation. (I hope that this) event will demonstrate solidarity and promote affordable housing in Arlington..."

"I want (Arlington) to know that the individuals that make up the board and the organization are deeply committed to... affordable housing. What impresses me is how dedicated the board is and how much time they have volunteered over the years..."

"Arlington residents shouldn't hesitate to contact us, to attend meetings, and (to contribute toward helping) us

meet our goals. We do our best to be an open organization. I hope that Arlington residents can help us (contribute toward maintaining) a diverse community."

The Housing Corporation of Arlington is located at 20 Academy St. Executive Director David Levy can be contacted by phone at 781-316-3429 or by e-mail at [dlevy@housing-corporation.org](mailto:dlevy@housing-corporation.org).