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## Message from the CEOs

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Dear CVR Team Member,

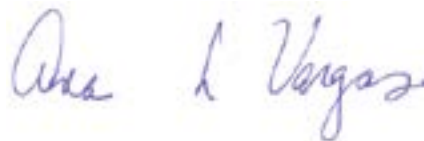
As we approach the close of 2014 and the holiday season, we want to wish everyone at CVR a safe and happy season of celebrations.

CVR, like the rest of the affordable housing world, has had a challenging year with political uncertainties and budgetary setbacks having an impact on all of us. Yet through hard work and our collective commitment to excellence, we have overcome these challenges.

CVR was again re-selected by those clients we already serve, such as the Chicago and Gary Housing Authorities and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. We also helped Pittsburgh win a \$30 Million Choice Neighborhoods Initiative Grant, one of only 4 such grants awarded from a field of 44 applicants nationwide. In addition, we have been retained by many new clients, which in large measure is due to our commitment to excellence and the reputation that we have collectively built with quality work and high customer service levels. We continue to be a high performer across the nation.

As we look to 2015, CVR will celebrate its 20-year anniversary. We are mindful of the efforts and sacrifices it has taken to transform a fledgling company of three to a group of companies with over 300 team members. Through trials and tribulations, we all contribute to our success. We encourage all of you to continue to work hard and embrace our commitment to quality and service excellence. These values have served us well and are the foundation of our collective future. We must strive every day to maximize our opportunities and do the very best work we can for our clients and ourselves. Lastly, we must never forget that our clients, ultimately, are those less fortunate than ourselves; and they deserve the best we can provide.

We wish you and your loved ones a very healthy, safe and happy Holiday Season and look forward to sharing continued success in 2015.



Ana L. Vargas  
Co-Chief Executive Officer  
CVR Associates, Inc.



Fradique A. Rocha  
Co-Chief Executive Officer  
CVR Associates, Inc.

## Adaptability: Adjusting to Change in the Work Place

The new zip code allocation that went into effect on April 1st undoubtedly took its toll on most, if not all, departments within the HCV Program. As a contractor, it is our responsibility to prepare and stay up to speed on all changes that occur. Below are some tips on how to adapt to change at work and in your personal life.

### Recognize That Change Does Happen

Simply notice that you are in the midst of change and that change is a part of you. Denying that change is occurring or will occur, or continuing to live in the past, only makes adjustment more difficult and complicated.

### Stay Alert & Be Aware of Your Surroundings

Know what is happening around you. Keep alert to clues and details in your work environment. The more you notice, the more you can prepare, which will ultimately lead to better adjustment.

### Assess Yourself

Understanding how you deal with change and stress will help you better cope with any big changes imposed on you. By understanding your own strengths and weaknesses, and knowing as much as you can about the new situation, you have a better chance of finding a place to fit in.

### Be Positive in Actions and Attitude

When confronted by uncomfortable changes in the work place, force yourself to sit back and try to view it as a positive. Choosing to see the change in a positive light keeps

you in control of your attitude. Discovering the positives early will help ease your anxieties around upcoming shifts.

### Just Keep Swimming

It's easy to become paralyzed by the fears and uncertainty that come with change. Stay focused and put your energy into something you can control. Remember that showing your resilience and always doing your best will pay off — in your organization, in your career, and in your network of connections.

### Be Flexible

Change requires flexibility. The better able you are to adapt to change, the greater your chances of being successful.

### Maintain Communication

Communications is always important, but especially so when you face change. A lack of communication from others can have a negative impact, while effective communications can have a positive one. Don't just sit back and wait for things to happen. Talk to your boss, your boss's boss, and your co-workers to get their understanding.

### Stay Well-Connected

Developing a strong network inside and outside of your organization will not only help you stay in the loop during times of change, it can also help you keep alert to trends and opportunities coming your way. Plus, having multiple connections gives you broader information and a greater support system during times of chaos.

### See the Big Picture

When things feel out of control because of change in the workplace, be sure to step back and look at the big picture. By staying focused and assessing the operations as a whole, you'll feel more in control of yourself when your daily role changes.



## Up-Close Q&A: Willie Cervantes

"Up-Close Q&A" is a new section that highlights CVR staff members who exemplify the spirit and work ethic of our organization. This edition of "Up-Close Q&A" stars Assistant Director of Tenant Services, Willie Cervantes (W.C.).

### What was your career background prior to employment at CVR?

**W.C.:** I have worked for the HCV Program since December of 2002. I started working as an Inspection Scheduler, then moved to Inspections Dispatcher. A few months later I started working as a Mobility Clerk/Resource Room Attendant. I wanted to learn more about the HCV Program and applied as a Housing Specialist and got promoted. A few years later I was promoted to Team Leader in the West Office and confronted all of the aspects that relate to the HCV Program, such as contract executions, moves, interims, and re-examinations.

In 2011 I was not working for the HCV Program, but worked developing, organizing, and running the Rental Housing Support Program for Housing Choice Partners of Illinois as RHSP Manager.

I also worked as an HIV/STD Counselor for Center on Halsted under one of the State of Illinois founding programs for six years, and was able to educate the LGBT community about HIV and STD prevention. Also in 2011 I took the challenge to get into Massage Therapy and 18 months later I became a licensed Massage Therapist in the State of Illinois and have helped two massage agencies with my services and skills as a professional. I received the opportunity in 2012 to return to the HCV Program.

### How long have you been working at CVR?

**W.C.:** I have been working for CVR for a little over two years. I am very thankful for the company in giving me the opportunity to improve and share my skills.

### What other positions have you held at CVR? What was the transition process like between these different positions?

**W.C.:** I started working as a Senior Program Operations Supervisor, and was recently promoted as Assistant Director of Tenant Services for the new contract. The transition between these different positions has been a challenge, but I like to handle challenges at all times. Being in my new role I am learning more things pertaining to the HCV Program and CVR operations within the Chicago Housing Authority contract, and I expect to perform to the maximum to be compliant with all the new programs.

### What inspires you?

**W.C.:** My parents are my inspiration. They always told me that there is nothing difficult in life to do when you want to do it. I grew up in Mexico City, in a country that does not have housing assistance programs or other public services, and people always struggle with their life due to lack of employment. Here in the United States there are opportunities to have a better life, but you need to earn it. I found that by working within the HCV Program, you can acquire lots of information and knowledge to assist others within the community, and can be active in the community as well. Because of this, I feel at the end of the day I am doing something good in my life.

### How do you handle everyday obstacles or stressful situations in your job?

**W.C.:** Well I learn that I am the only person that can put any obstacles in my life - I try not to think of them as obstacles, but rather challenges which I resolve with knowledge and asking for help when needed. To relieve stress at the end of the day, I go home and read a book or find other things that might help me to relax.

### What are your favorite things about your job?

**W.C.:** I like teaching others and assisting them in understanding policies and procedures of the HCV Program in order for them to complete their work. I feel comfortable having this job as well because it helps me improve as a person, and it makes me feel that I am guiding others to become self-sufficient and increase their knowledge about housing.

### What skills do you make the most use of? In what ways do you provide quality customer service?

**W.C.:** The skills that I use the most is my knowledge about the HCV Program and my organizational skills. I like to be organized in case someone needs help finding anything. In regards to customer service, if I promise something to a Participant or any CVR staff member, I like to complete the entire process to avoid any misunderstandings and complete the task in a timely manner.



## Goal Setting - Best Practices to Reach the Finish Line

Goal-setting is not only an important component of the workplace, but also in one's personal life. Goals help keep us motivated, focused, and determined. It's often easy to get swept up in the current, which leads to us becoming overwhelmed and discouraged.

To set yourself up for success, use the S.M.A.R.T criteria to evaluate your goals:

- **Specific:** Establish your goals in clear terms - think of them as actions you hope to achieve, rather than adjectives. By doing so, you will actually know when you've reached your goal.
- **Measurable:** To track your progress, make sure you set benchmarks or indicators for your goals. Doing this will help you identify your strengths and areas that you need to improve on.

- **Attainable:** Given your time and resources, evaluate if your goal is realistic. While challenging yourself is a great way to grow professionally and personally, you don't want to feel overwhelmed.

- **Relevant:** Before devoting your time and attention to a project, think about how it fits in with your greater goals. Does it make a positive impact? Is it worth the effort?

- **Timely:** Give yourself a timeline for your project. Establishing a deadline will motivate you to actively work towards your goal and allow you to better structure your time.

Setting up goals and following through helps you improve your confidence by demonstrating just how much you can actually achieve!

## Guess Who?

Each issue we'll rewind back to "the good ol' days" with this fun staff mystery picture game.



Can you guess who posed for this photo? As a child, this CVR staff member had a bad habit of chewing her finger nails. Although she hasn't quite broken that habit as an adult, she makes up for it by ensuring all paperwork submitted by our clients are accurate and match our files for processing. Keep an eye out for the answer in the next issue!

Want to be part of the fun? Submit your baby picture and a fun factoid about yourself as a child to Megan McCarthy via email at [mmccarthy@chacontractor.org](mailto:mmccarthy@chacontractor.org).

## Remember This Face?

Do you remember the previous issue's "Guess Who"?

From kindergarten through 3rd grade, this CVR staff member attended school in a small rural town in Mexico, making Spanish her first language. Now she's the one playing teacher by instructing CVR employees about the Housing Choice Voucher Program.



This CVR staff member is none other than **Yanira Valdez**! Did you guess correctly?

Be sure to check out each issue of *From Good to Great* for more fun nostalgia!

## HR Corner

In each issue, this section will feature a list of the newest additions and/or changes to the CVR Associates, Inc. staff. Below are updates from this quarter:

### New Hires:

Jonathan Campbell, Director of Tenant Services  
 Shanton Mathis, Housing Specialist  
 Serene Smith, Housing Specialist  
 Keisha Hollie, Contract Administrator  
 Diana Cornejo, Housing Specialist  
 Zuleyka Alicea, Housing Specialist  
 Sabrina Richardson, Housing Specialist  
 Aneesah Muhammad, Housing Specialist  
 Candice Dewhart, Housing Specialist  
 Bisera Rozic, Customer Service Specialist  
 Keia Hutchins, Customer Service Specialist  
 Delilah Hicks, Customer Service Specialist  
 Nakeshia Muldrow, Customer Service Specialist  
 Deanne Ward, Customer Service Specialist  
 Myran Smith, Customer Service Specialist  
 Jasmine Cosey, Customer Service Specialist

Courtney Wood, Customer Service Specialist  
 Adrienne Morris, Inspections Admin Supervisor  
 Ouida Jones, Special Projects Manager  
 Clevel Burton, Finance Coordinator  
 Shandra Richardson, Owner Excellence Program Analyst

### Re-hires:

Noel Martinez, Scanning QC Clerk

### Promotions:

Jennifer Banks, Finance Supervisor  
 Brenda Maldonado, Program Operations Supervisor  
 Renirrio Giles, Call Center Supervisor  
 Crystal Jones, Housing Specialist II  
 Kenneth Mitchell, Housing Specialist II  
 Nicholas Najjar, Enforcement Coordinator  
 Cheri Fox, Master Apprentice  
 Sherri Williamson, Reporting Analyst

## Workiversaries

In this section, we highlight staff members who celebrate "Workiversaries" during the fourth quarter of 2014. Below are the employees who started working at CVR Associates, Inc. in October, November, and December Congratulations!

### October:

Yvette Osborne, Participant Liaison, 1 year  
 Franchelle White, Abatement Specialist, 1 year  
 Michelle Agbolade, Participant Liaison, 2 years  
 Steve Castro, HQS Inspector, 2 years  
 Carmen Garcia, Customer Service Specialist, 2 years  
 Louis Green, HQS Inspector, 2 years  
 Shawanna Hartman, Housing Specialist, 2 years  
 Mallory Tinkler, Reporting Analyst, 2 years  
 Lashon Davis, Contract Administrator, 4 years  
 Roberto Garcia, Team Lead Scanner, 4 years  
 Michael Martin, Marketing Communications Mgr., 4 years  
 Nina Antuna, Housing Specialist, 6 years  
 Dawanna Mays, Customer Service Specialist, 6 years  
 Tamycka Ortega, Assistant Dir. of Tenant Services, 6 years

### November:

Shawn Gibson, Housing Specialist, 1 year  
 Shabar Giles, Program Supervisor, 3 years  
 Angelica Solis, Performance Standard Compliance Auditor, 4 years  
 Allison Brown, Customer Service Specialist, 6 years

### December:

Makeattia McNeal, HR Generalist, 4 years  
 Oliva Zarco, Contract Administrator, 5 years  
 Lakisha Dunn, Performance Standards Compliance Auditor, 4 years  
 Emilio Hernandez, Enforcement Coordinator, 4 years  
 Trudy Streeter, Scanner, 4 years  
 Shareef Taylor, Owner Services Coordinator, 4 years  
 Alicia Durr, Customer Service Specialist, 4 years  
 Siamid Quintana, Participant Liaison, 4 years  
 Brenda Bailey, Human Resources Analyst, 2 years