

**Remarks of HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge
Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
Community Heroes Celebration
Boston, Massachusetts
November 18, 2022**

Introduction

Thank you and Good Evening.

Secretary Walsh... thank you for that gracious introduction. It is nice to join you on your home turf.

Thank you, President and CEO **Sharon Scott-Chandler**, Board Chairman **Sean Daughtry**, and everyone at ABCD, for allowing me to share in this celebration of your diamond jubilee: 60 years of service to people with limited access to resources in the Greater Boston region.

It is my pleasure to join you to honor the 16 Community Heroes being awarded tonight...as well as the two recently- retired leaders who are being inducted into the A-B-C-D hall of fame: **Dr. Gary Gross** and **John Drew**. Collectively, you have dedicated more than 90 years to this organization.

Mr. Drew, you carried your own experiences with you at every step of your journey with ABCD, including the 13 years you served as its leader.

As a resident of Public Housing and a parent of Head Start students, you were able to help people whose stories you understood very intimately.

I congratulate you both.

Congratulations to the Community Heroes who were honored tonight, as well.

You have each dedicated your time, energy, and expertise to your communities and the people who call them home.

You do so as ministers and librarians...political and social leaders.... health workers, and much more.

Although you may practice any number of faiths, you have heeded the Biblical call to “not become weary in well doing... for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

In a way, that season has come for you now. I hope you are proud of the work you have done.

Remarks

ABCD, when I think about why I answered President Biden’s call to serve in this historic Administration, I recall a quote from Dr. Maya Angelou.

She wrote, “the ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go and not be questioned.”

When I was growing up, my family did not have much, but we had a home.

I had that safe place. And my home—never mind how crowded or cramped it was—set a solid foundation for my future.

I believe everyone in this country deserves that same security.
Everyone in this country deserves a safe place to call home.

I feel that it is my duty as the Secretary of HUD to ease the ache
for home that lives in so many of our brothers and sisters.

To show people in all communities that the government can
work for them. Government can make a difference.

The entire **Biden-Harris Administration** is working hard to
make a difference in the lives of everyday people.

We are doing the work to bring down prices for all Americans,
especially when it comes to housing. This Administration is
committed to ensuring families do not have to struggle to put
food on the table or put gas in their car or keep a roof over their
heads.

We know how important home is. That is why we work as hard
as we do to ensure people have access to affordable and stable
housing...

...to address the longstanding inequities that are woven into our
systems and all forms of discrimination that show up in the
housing market...

...to combat homelessness with the urgency it requires...

And, to expand access to homeownership and opportunity for all, especially people of color and people who live in low-income households.

Under this Administration, we have led a historic expansion of housing vouchers, which help individuals and families afford the rent on homes in the private market. That includes the most expansive allocation of new flexible rental assistance in 20 years.

We have increased the value of those vouchers so people in need will have a better chance of finding a decent place to live as rents rise.

To increase access to homeownership, we have neutralized student loan debt so that it does not prevent hardworking people who can afford a mortgage from obtaining one through the Federal Housing Administration...

And, we now accept positive rental history to determine a person's creditworthiness for an FHA loan...

Further, we are expanding access to housing counseling services and down payment assistance...

And we are committed to making sure more homes can get built in all communities and people have the resources they need to take care of the homes they have.

We want people, no matter their station in life, to have the ability to build better lives for themselves and their families.

It is our responsibility as leaders in the federal government to ensure everyone has a fair shot at the American dream.

We cannot do this work without strong community partners.

Thank you for all that you do to help people living in poverty transition toward stability and promise.

Every year, your services reach more than 100,000 people across this region.

You touch nearly every aspect of the lives of some of your youngest neighbors, through the Head Start Program and holiday toys...

Community elders, who receive meals from the Senior Brown Bag Program...

And everyone in between...Those in need of health care and energy assistance...immigration services and tax help....career and educational development.

In the darkest days of the pandemic, you provided everything from emergency rental assistance to car repair and diapers.

There is no person in this community you won't help, no job too small for you to take on.

You have done this work with grace for six decades.

At 60 years, you celebrate your diamond jubilee.

I believe that is fitting.

For 60 years, you have met people's challenges and the pressures they have faced, with a positive pressure of your own.

Along the way, you have made diamonds.

Diamonds in the form of people whose lives you've touched.

Communities that have become stronger and better because of how you have empowered residents.

Those diamonds shine brightly now, in large part, because of what ABCD has done.

We are facing a great deal of pressure in our world today.

Pressure in the form of high housing prices. Apathy. A lack of civility and concern for our fellow human.

We need you to **keep up the pressure.**

Keep up the pressure to combat bigotry and discrimination.

Keep up the pressure so that people just trying to make ends meet can afford to live in comfort and safety.

Keep up the pressure so that our children and our children's children can get a good education and live the lives of their dreams.

Keep up the pressure so that people in low-income households, and people of color can have equitable access to a bright future.

ABCD, we need you to keep up the pressure so that, for the next 60 years, you can continue to make diamonds out of every person in your community who was born behind the starting line in life.

Amanda Gorman writes, “we cannot possess hope without practicing it. It is the most fundamental craft we demand of ourselves.”

Thank you for practicing hope. Thank you for empowering people of low means to practice hope.

And, ABCD, thank you for making diamonds.