

AT HOME

NEWS FROM CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST

SPRING 2015



**Closing in on completion of the first Green Mountain Habitat
for Humanity Duplex at Harrington Village, Shelburne**

PROFILES • RESOURCES • EVENTS

DEAR MEMBERS,



Members of our 2015 Legislative Day contingent listen as CHT COO/CFO Michael Monte testifies before the Senate Health and Welfare committee at the Statehouse in Montpelier.

In many ways this has seemed to be a long winter; weeks of freezing weather will do that. But as I sit down to write this it seems only a short time since last fall when I invited you all to contribute to the power of membership by joining in our annual events. And you did, as our very successful Annual Meeting and Legislative Day attest.

The 2015 Annual Meeting was a successful mix of business and social time, with 150 residents and community supporters converging on the Hilton in Burlington to hear business updates, elect new Board members and enjoy dinner and mingling. Board President Sarah Muyskens shared the great news that at the close of its 30th year, CHT is doing well and celebrating innovation with new neighborhoods, new projects and new community partners.

In February, CHT members and staff joined more than a hundred affordable housing and conservation advocates at the Statehouse in Montpelier, speaking out for continued funding of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, which supports many of our programs. Looking ahead, mark your calendars for our most festive annual gathering – this summer’s picnic on Saturday, July 18.

Champlain Housing Trust is proud to be a membership organization that emphasizes and supports resident participation and engagement. It is one of the things that makes us strong. In keeping with this priority CHT chose the theme “Community Matters” for our current Strategic Plan, a three-year blueprint where we set goals for CHT’s board and staff and also establish measurable strategies to achieve them.

At the heart of the “Community Matters” vision is a commitment to deepening our services to residents and adding new community-building activities like community gardens and neighborhood barbecues. This will be achieved through a new staff position and expanded responsibilities for other staff (details inside). We are very proud to have marshaled the resources to do this and look forward to working more closely with you to strengthen your connections to each other and with that, to improve your neighborhoods overall.

Also inside are updates about one of our new developments, Green Street in Hinesburg. There’s also a feature on our “Resident-Controlled Housing Collaborative,” which offers workshops and peer support for residents who manage their own properties through volunteer leadership.

Finally, this issue features three of our staff members who were chosen as Employees of the Quarter based on nominations from their coworkers. In an organization with almost 90 staff members as well as multiple locations and departments, we take time to come together each quarter to learn, and to recognize and appreciate the many contributions of the CHT team. I hope you also enjoy learning about these jobs and the dedicated people who do them.

Thank you for being part of this community! I look forward to deepening our connections.

Brenda Torpy, CEO

EVENTS

WE WRAPPED UP OUR 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR with another well-attended annual meeting. 150 members were in attendance and we recognized our youngest award recipient so far, Lexi “Lulu” Hall (center photo) who received the *Carole Pack Award for exemplary volunteer service*.



PROFILE **PAY IT FORWARD**



Willie Pearson, CHT Homeowner and Board member.

In early 1999, Willie Pearson was working in inventory control at a local gardening center and paying high rent in Burlington. By the end of that year he had not only purchased his first home, but also joined the Board of Champlain Housing Trust.

“I just could never save enough money on my own to buy at a market level,” Willie explained. After looking at a few places in his price range, he recognized that he didn’t have the “master carpenter” skills to renovate any of the buildings to a liveable standard. So Willie contacted CHT and enrolled in the Shared Equity program.

“ONCE I MOVED INTO MY NEW HOME I STARTED TO WONDER HOW I COULD HELP RETURN THE GOOD WILL.”

Working with a Shared Equity counselor, he began to tour properties. “[The first place we looked at] was immaculate – clean, crisp. I could move right in,” he said. This would be the home Willie would end up buying and was just the start of a number of personal and community investments he would make.

“Once I moved into my new home I started to wonder how I could help return the good will,” he said.

Volunteering on CHT’s Board has given him the opportunity to learn about business, communities, development, tax issues and many of the other challenges and triumphs of the local housing scene. Willie found there is a time commitment, and “a lot of reading involved,” and there can be a learning curve in the beginning.

“It’s been an amazing journey of growth and expansion, being able to help more people in more areas,” Willie said of his Board service, which spans the past 16 years – but comes to a close at the end of 2015.

There has been some personal growth as well. Having a nice home with an affordable mortgage in the community where he works allowed Willie to build his retirement savings. So in addition to his service on the Board, Willie also decided to include CHT in his will as a way to pay it forward.

“It’s a great way to be able to continue to contribute after you’re gone,” he explained, “and CHT is an organization you know you can trust.”

PLANNED GIVING OPTIONS

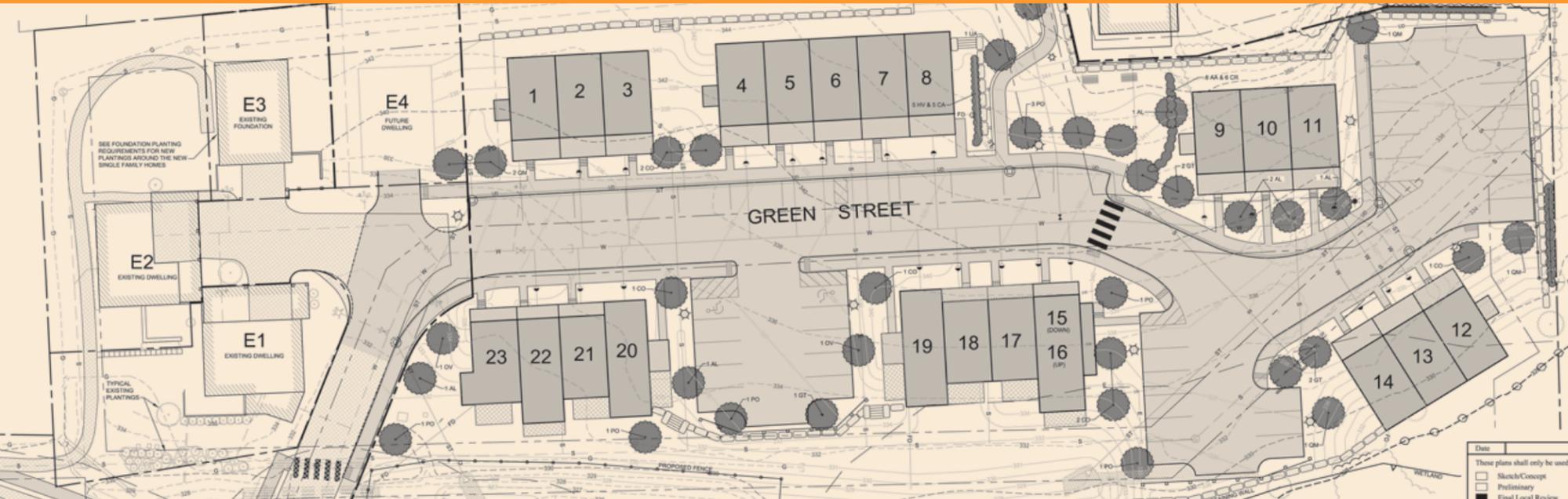
MAKE A DIFFERENCE & LEAVE A LEGACY

At CHT, we believe that everyone deserves a safe, decent and affordable home. Each year, our programs and neighborhoods are supported by fees and rents paid by our residents, but around 25 percent of our expenses are funded by donations from community members and government sources. Whether it’s the \$30 check sent in to join at the “Carpenter” member level or planning ahead to include CHT in your will, your support makes our work possible.

“Planned giving” refers to charitable gift options that are given in the future – contractual pledges for supporting the work you believe in after you’re gone.

“It’s easier than you might think,” said Katie Grauer of the Vermont Community Foundation, a philanthropic financial organization that offers assistance and services to CHT and our donors. “Think creatively...[supporting a cause] doesn’t have to come out of your paycheck.”

If you would like to learn more about supporting our work through Planned Giving please contact Chris Donnelly, Director of Community Relations, at chris@champlainhousingtrust.org or call 862-6244.



Site plans for the Green Street development in Hinesburg.

GREEN STREET IN HINESBURG

We are pleased to announce updates on the Green Street project in Hinesburg, where we are building 23 homes in a new neighborhood along Charlotte Road (across from Town Hall) to create the first affordable family rental housing in the town. The buildings will be mostly townhouse-style, two-bedroom apartments with views overlooking an open field and the LaPlatte River.

“Having homes that are centrally located is an important part of our neighborhood design,” said Kathy Luce, Vice President of CHT’s Board and the Chair of its Real Estate

Development and Management Committee. “Being able to walk or bike to jobs, schools and other amenities makes these communities a great place to live.”

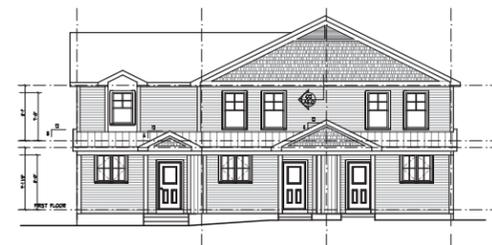
Residents will enjoy easy access to the CCTA bus stop, grocery store, shopping, banking, recreation fields and schools, as well as jobs at area businesses.

We expect to break ground soon, and the neighborhood is slated for completion in early 2016. Stay tuned – housing applications will be accepted beginning this fall.

“BEING ABLE TO WALK OR BIKE TO JOBS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER AMENITIES MAKES THESE COMMUNITIES A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE.”

The Town of Hinesburg, especially its Affordable Housing Committee, has been very supportive of the new development, including the Town’s application for a federal grant through the state. This grant was awarded in March.

Green Street is a partnership with Housing Vermont and is being developed by Chris Snyder of Snyder Homes. The company will build to CHT’s specifications and then the organization will purchase the property (a process known as a “turnkey” development). This is the latest collaboration with Snyder, the builder for Cedar’s Edge in Essex.



NEW: RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Spring days invite gardeners to the dirt, planting seedlings while weeding out stray growth. Days lengthen into summer evenings, ripe for barbecues and friends sharing stories.

If you live in a CHT apartment and these activities sounds enjoyable, stay tuned. “We want to develop more meaningful relationships with our residents,” Anna explained, “and help them to be able to connect with their neighbors.” Part of that can be achieved by creating activities that bring people together.

The first step has been to create a new position, and add a new twist to an existing one: Anna Herman will serve as CHT’s new Community Relations Specialist, while Ryan Addario will expand his duties as Resident Relations Coordinator.

“THIS IS ABOUT OPPORTUNITY. A ROOF IS IMPORTANT, BUT BUILDING COMMUNITY IS ABOUT MUCH MORE THAN THE PHYSICAL SPACE.”

This spring, residents at South Meadow celebrated Green Up Day, taking to the streets to help clean their Burlington

neighborhood and then enjoying ice cream together. At Winchester Place, we’re working with residents to create mentoring opportunities for the almost 150 children on site, and plans are underway to install a new playground during the property’s redevelopment.

Harrington Village in Shelburne will soon boast 20 raised bed gardens, built with volunteer help and maintained by tenants. Local companies are reaching out with advice, discounts and seed donations, and in early June during our NeighborWorks® Week the residents at Harrington Village are invited for a planting party and barbecue.

These efforts come out of CHT’s Strategic Plan, created by the Board and staff to guide its programs for a three-year period. The theme for 2014-2016 is “Community Matters” and part of the vision is to promote a sense of place and community among our residents. While we’ve always hosted activities for all residents and supporters, this enhances our services.

“This is about opportunity,” said Ryan. “A roof is important, but building community is about much more than the physical space.”

To learn more about this new initiative, suggest ideas, or offer your help, please contact Anna Herman at aherman@champlainhousingtrust.org or call 802-862-6244.

Want that empty bottle of ketchup to have a second chance in life?

How about that box from your mac and cheese? It’s simple! Recycling in your home is quick, easy, and – gasp! – it’s the law. Here are some juicy tidbits to help you recycle better at home.

Lots of items that can be recycled come from your kitchen: the empty can of beans, cracker box, jar of peanut butter, bottle of dish soap — all recyclable! BUT: Before they can be

recycled into something new, they need to be clean. Food leftovers, whether it’s

leftover refried beans or smears of peanut butter, are NOT recyclable. If you see stuck-on food, you can do something about it by soaking, rinsing, or scraping it off.

Make it easy for yourself by soaking stubborn food bits. Conserve water by using rinse water from other dishes. Let that gunky mayonnaise jar sit for a bit, then swirl it around, give it a rinse, and voila – a clean jar, ready for recycling!



HERE ARE FOUR TIPS FOR BETTER RECYCLING:

YES: Food residue needs to be rinsed and removed from recyclables.

NO: Paper that has been used for food (paper plates, coffee cups, napkins) is NOT recyclable.

NO: Plastic bags are NOT recyclable in your blue bin. Take them to the bag collection bin at your local Shaw’s, Hannafords, or Price Chopper store.

NO: Refrigerator and freezer boxes (paper milk cartons or frozen pizza boxes) are specially coated and cannot be recycled – so throw them out.

“I SUPPORT RECYCLING BECAUSE IT REDUCES WHAT GOES TO THE LANDFILLS... RECYCLING HELPS PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT”

– Roberta from Swanton, CHT tenant

Got a question about recycling or composting? Lay it on CSWD! Here’s how: CALL (802) 872-8111 EMAIL info@cswd.net VISIT www.cswd.net



Julia Curry, Co-op & Community Organizer, leads a conversation with resident leaders at an annual training and retreat.

RESIDENT-CONTROLLED HOUSING – BUILT ON PARTICIPATION

The term encompasses a range of housing types, including cooperatives, cohousing neighborhoods and more. Members enjoy unique benefits and responsibilities because they govern their community together. They may hire their own property managers or contractors, make the rules in such areas as allowing pets and handling arrears, approve the yearly budget and spending priorities, do work together, and in some cases, set criteria for approving new residents. All residents have the opportunity to take part in leading their communities.

These housing models call for members to develop their business and teamwork skills. Many also have a “roll-up-our-sleeves” approach and a desire to share and learn from each other.

Seeing a great opening for collaboration, CHT formed a Resident-Controlled Housing (RCH) network in 2012, bringing together leaders of CHT’s co-ops; mobile-home

co-ops from around the state; Burlington Cohousing, and Northgate Apartments, an affordable rental community governed by its residents.

By organizing training workshops, gatherings, and other ways to meet their shared needs, the RCH network embodies Principle Six of the Cooperative Principles, “cooperation among cooperatives.” The network provides ways for everyone to learn together and for experienced residents to help new ones.

“With four new mobile-home co-ops forming right now, we have a lot of people looking to learn, so this really meets a need,” notes Sarah Woodward, director of the statewide Mobile Home Program at partner organization CVOEO.

Thirty residents from eight housing communities attended the first “Nuts and Bolts” workshops in 2013; in 2014 the network

held additional workshops. Topics included Housing Law, Board Basics, How to Hold a Great Meeting, Emergency Preparedness, Handling Tough Conversations, and Fair Housing.

“It has been good to meet some of our ‘cousins’ from other communities,” said John Olson, a CHT Board member and leader at the Flynn Avenue Co-op, “and learn how different groups handle the challenges we all face. It’s energizing to see that we are part of something larger.”

This fall the RCH network will host a public event in Burlington to highlight resident-controlled housing. It is also creating an online forum where members can exchange advice and ideas. The network will also continue to grow, as CHT will break ground this spring on the Bright Street Co-op, adding 42 households to this cooperative community.

The Resident-Controlled Housing network has been supported by grants from NeighborWorks® America, which provided funding for the initial startup and its expansion.



Name: Barbara Geries
Job: Home Education Manager
Years at CHT: 10+
EOQT: Fall 2014

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR WORK: I love empowering people with knowledge and a plan of action to meet their goals. I especially love it when a customer comes in not completely believing they can improve their situation but then gets excited when they learn they can.

WHAT WOULD CHANGE: I would love for there to be more funding sources to engage in providing more education opportunities.

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT CHT? The broad range of services and programs CHT offers.

ONE THING PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU IS: My family is the foundation upon which all that I am has been built.



Name: Anna Herman
Job: Community Relations Specialist
Years at CHT: 8 months
EOQT: Fall 2014

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR WORK: One of the most rewarding parts about working at the front desk is being able to see peoples’ faces when they finally find an apartment or close on their dream home.

WHAT WOULD CHANGE: It would be nice to have a translator who can speak 100+ languages standing by me at all times!

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT CHT? We want to provide people with a place to call home and also help sustain their financial health and well-being.

ONE THING PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU IS: I used to be an avid figure skater and even travelled to Russia and France to compete.



Name: Michael Fraley
Job: Property Manager
Years at CHT: 2
EOQT: Winter 2015

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR WORK: My favorite thing about my work is being able to help people find affordable housing.

WHAT WOULD CHANGE: I love my job. What needs to be changed?

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT CHT? That we help people with all types of housing needs.

IF YOU HAD A MAGIC WAND, WHAT WOULD YOU TO DO IMPROVE VERMONT’S HOUSING SITUATION? No one would have to pay rent!

ONE THING PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN ABOUT YOU IS: I talk really fast!

SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL MEMBERS’ DAY PICNIC





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