

At Home

NEWS FROM CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST | FALL 2019



CHAMPLAIN
HOUSING TRUST



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Interested in Board Service?

CHT's 15 member Board of Directors has five seats for residents. Because members are term limited we are always looking for interested candidates for future vacancies.

No experience with boards? CHT staff provide training, orientation, and lots of support to welcome new and less experienced candidates. All it takes is a commitment to the board responsibilities and the ability to put in the time required. In addition to being a great opportunity to learn and build a variety of skills, joining CHT's board is a chance to meet and enjoy a great group of people who are committed to our mission of permanently affordable housing.

If you are interested, email Addie Livingston at Addie.Livingston@champlainhousingtrust.org



"By volunteering and sharing my knowledge with the board and staff, I have an opportunity to work with one of the most innovative organizations in the country. To ensure that housing - something that is a basic human right - is affordable to all. By doing this work, more people have affordable housing - the entire community is more prosperous - making it a better and safer place for all families - including ours. That matters."

- Jeff Smith, Board Member

Dear CHT Members

With 136 apartments coming on line in Burlington and South Burlington, our downtown development underway in St. Albans, and new projects in the works for Winooski and Colchester we are marking out 35th birthday by producing more homes than we ever have in one year.

It was great to launch our 35th anniversary celebrations with so many of you at the summer members' picnic. We had a record turnout and we hope to top that again next year when we can welcome the new resident members from the Lauretide and Garden Street apartments who will all be in their new CHT homes in time for the holidays.

If you've driven down King Street in Burlington lately you couldn't miss another anniversary project: the beautiful mural on The Turning Point Center of Chittenden County building. The artist wove the twin themes of recovery and home into her design. Thanks to all who came by to put their creative stamp on the mural. Serendipitously, just as the mural got underway we concluded the sale of the building to Turning Point. This had been CHT's home office for over a decade, and we are delighted that it will continue to serve the community through Turning Point's caring and compassionate work.

Our next anniversary project will celebrate our roots as a community land trust. In November we are bringing a very special guest speaker, Dr. Theresa Williamson of Catalytic Communities to present on her ground-breaking work with the people of Rio Di Janeiro's favelas, and on how community land trusts are working in Rio and other cities in the global south to help people achieve security of tenure.

We will wrap up our anniversary year with a special Annual Meeting gathering in January. Don't miss this special birthday celebration!

However, this year is not all about looking back or celebrating the past. The CHT Board is just now putting the final touches on our three-year strategic plan titled "Building for the Future." We will print an overview in the spring newsletter and post the whole plan on the website. In it, you will see some familiar priorities like serving people experiencing homelessness and producing new affordable homes. We also plan to expand the income levels that we can serve to include all who struggle in the market as well special populations who need homes with services attached. Organizationally we are focusing on developing our leaders from within to assure continued strength and we are analyzing a range of new growth opportunities to assure that we grow in ways that strengthen and advance our core work here in northwest Vermont.

We look forward to the challenges we have set for ourselves knowing that the partners and supporters who have joined with us along the way share our commitment to helping the people of our region to enjoy the security of home and a caring, inclusive community. We could not do it without all of you and we thank you all for your support.

Best,


Brenda Torpy, CEO



A Long and Winding Road

Sitting comfortably in an oversized leather recliner and surrounded by photos of her 20+ grandchildren, Charlotte reveals that her granddaughter's upcoming wedding is the first time all her family will be together again since leaving the Congo in 2000.

Family has always been very important to her. In Congo, she lived in a modest and clean home with her 14 children. They travelled to Europe for family vacations, led church activities and held neighborhood potlucks, unaware at the time that these connections would become a faint memory.

**"I tell them about the peace
that I have seen here."**

In 1989, the conflict in Congo escalated. Charlotte was detained and beaten by local authorities, leaving her with a significant knee injury that remains to this day. Traumatized and scared, Charlotte and her family received refugee status that ultimately scattered them across North America.

Despite being separated from most of her family, Charlotte was grateful to have her family protected from the violence in her home country. She focused on rebuilding her life in her new country – she attended language classes, began physical therapy and introduced herself to neighbors. Living alone for the first time in years, Charlotte longed to see her family again and struggled to accommodate her new disability.

"I came with my leg very big and I had no shoes at the time...Now I am a Vermonter, I like the snow and I like it here."

About a year after arriving in Vermont and living in a rundown apartment in Burlington's Old North End, Charlotte's daughter encouraged her to apply for an open apartment in her building, CHT's O'Dell Apartments in South Burlington. Touring the nearly new apartment, Charlotte noted the convenience of this location – it was just steps away from grocery stores, shops and the bus line. Combined with the opportunity to be closer to her daughter, Charlotte signed off on the lease. Right away, she began cultivating a culture of neighborliness by sharing meals, giving housekeeping advice and encouraging other New Americans to apply.

"I tell them about the peace that I have seen here and how if you tell [CHT staff] when you have a problem big or small, then they will quickly come to take care of it. This is a thing I love about living here."

Several years after settling into the community, Charlotte's daughter – the one who lived above her – passed away. She struggles to talk about this memory the impact it's had, explaining that she didn't know if she'd ever experience that type of closeness with another family member again.

But Charlotte's sorrow quickly disappears as she recalls receiving her granddaughter's wedding invitation in the mail. Her eyes light up as she exclaims, "Yes, I can go to this wedding!"

After years of separation, the family gathered in Atlanta this fall to share memories and celebrate a new chapter. Returning home to the supportive CHT community that she helped cultivate for the past sixteen years, Charlotte feels at peace. "It's like my past is here; I have my life and my children."



CELEBRATING 35 YEARS 1984-2019

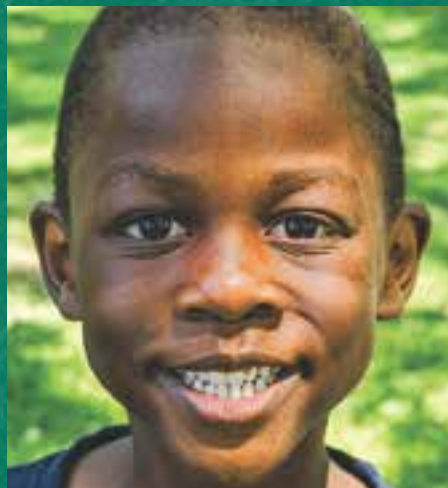
In celebration of our 35th anniversary, we decided to do something a little different: to organize a public art project that would be a gift to the community. We teamed up with The Turning Point Center of Chittenden County to paint a mural on the side of our former office space at 179 South Winooski Avenue in downtown

Burlington, a building we recently sold to Turning Point who in turn lease space to a number of nonprofits. Local artist Tara Goreau painted the south-facing wall with a design that celebrates the two organizations' mission of housing, recovery and community. Dozens of volunteers came out in August to help put the final touches on the mural.



Members' Day 2019

A couple hundred CHT members gathered on a sunny day for our annual picnic at North Beach in Burlington. We handed out beach towels to celebrate our 35th anniversary and folks enjoyed a barbecue, scoops of ice cream, balloon sculptures from Dux the Balloon Man, and a photo booth to capture portraits and family photos.



Construction Starts at New Apartments in St. Albans



Old housing, three commercial buildings and a surface parking lot in downtown St. Albans will soon be replaced by new apartments, space for the Community College of Vermont, and other uses. The City of St. Albans acquired these properties and demolished the buildings to make way for this redevelopment on the corner of Main Street and Congress Street.

CHT helped 20 tenants of the former Maiden Lane apartment building, which was in pretty rough shape, find new homes while construction takes place. Working with the City and Snyder/Braverman Development the new building, 20 Congress, will offer 30 energy-

efficient, affordable apartments that should be ready for occupancy in the Fall of 2020.

The redevelopment faces City Hall and will be across the street from the St. Albans Free Library on Maiden Lane. It'll be a great new addition to downtown St. Albans!



Survey Says!

Champlain Housing Trust surveyed our residents in the Spring of 2019 to help inform our new three-year strategic plan.

Thank you to all that participated, and congratulations to our raffle winners Michelle Watcke, Eng Talk Win, and Elizabeth Metevier!

WHAT RESIDENTS ARE SAYING:

76%
report overall satisfaction with property management is better than average.

85%
report overall satisfaction with maintenance staff as better than average.

76%
say condition of their property is better than average.

77%
report feeling **VERY SAFE** in thier apartment.



TOP ACTIVITY INTERESTS:

Fitness & Exercise:

Yoga Classes
Guided Meditation

Health & Nutrition:

Summer Nutrition
Rec Program for youth

Cooking:

Cooking in the
Gardens

Social/Potlucks:

Community BBQs
Pizza Parties

Please reach out to your property manager or our resident engagement specialist Meghan, at mtdedder@getahome.org, to discuss expanding services at your site.



88 King Street
Burlington, VT 05401



*Save the Date
Annual Meeting
January 31, 2020*

