



25 YEARS
in their brand-new
home... see page 3

AT HOME

NEWS FROM CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST

FALL 2013

DEAR CHT MEMBER,



This fall CHT embarks on a new strategic plan, as we do every three years. The work of setting these goals started in January with the entire staff thinking for a day about what CHT needs to change, add, or just do more of to best meet our mission. We also asked thirty partner agencies to give us feedback.

Then our board explored these and other ideas over several meetings and a full-day retreat, and early this summer we set down an ambitious and detailed plan that will be available soon for all to see on our new website.

Our last plan completed a six-year effort we had dubbed 'Strength Matters' in which we rebuilt our systems, upgraded properties and made CHT a strong organization that our residents can count on to get through the tough economic times and fiscal austerity that is our new world. That work is never done, but we have built sufficient strength now to add services and programs to support our residents' wellbeing and success, and we call this new plan 'Community Matters.'

In the next three years, in addition to creating new affordable homes and caring for the ones we have, we will add services for seniors in our apartments, community-building opportunities for renters in our large properties, and financial education for residents and applicants. We are also answering broader community needs by adding services and shelter for people who are homeless, in cooperation with partners.

In spite of the national fallout from the mortgage meltdown, we continue help people become homeowners. A new partnership with Habitat for Humanity will enhance these programs and bring new opportunities. The crisis has also shined a light on the great value of our financial counseling and we are expanding our offerings for courses, counseling, and workshops to all corners of the community; this will continue to grow.


Perhaps one upcoming development will stand as the flagship of the 'Community Matters' direction: the planned co-op

This fall we happily present our new improved website! As part of our focus on meeting the community's needs we made it much easier to use on mobile devices. Let us know what you think of it.

community on Bright Street in Burlington. For nearly two years CHT staff has consulted with neighborhood residents and leaders to plan these new homes, including a 500-home survey of the area. A new co-op community will enhance and complement the strong bonds that people feel in this historic and vital part of Burlington's Old North End.

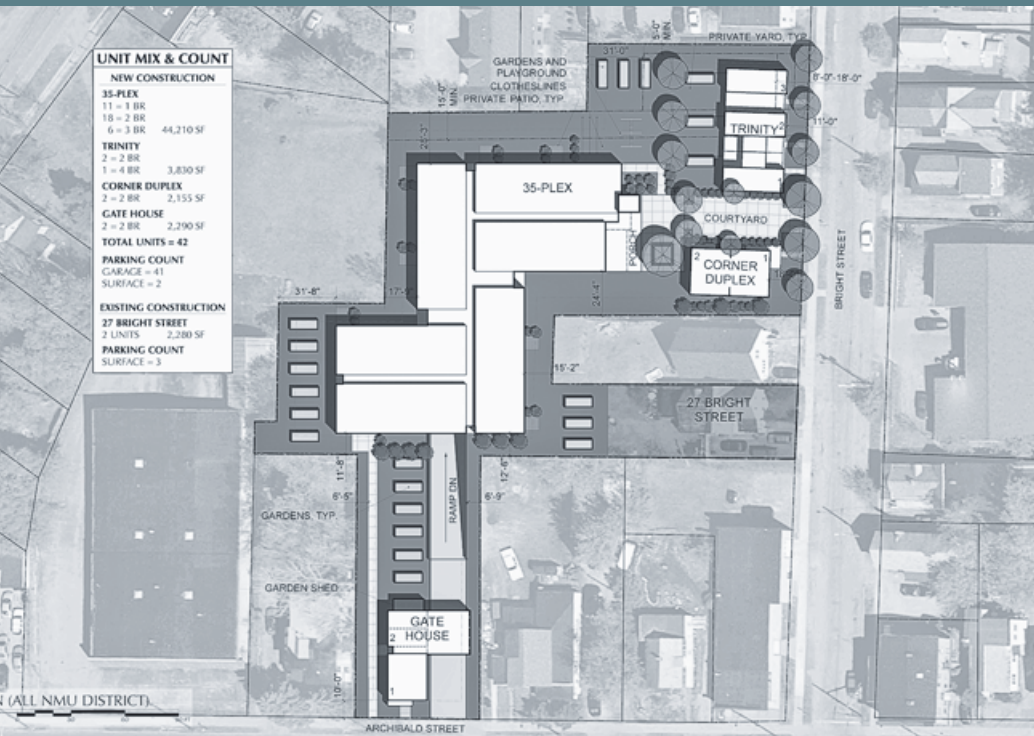
This new beginning comes just as the Flynn Avenue Co-op in the South End celebrates its 20th anniversary. 'Community Matters' and all that we will accomplish under this banner, truly returns us to our roots and core mission.

Happy Fall,


Brenda Torpy,
CEO



www.getahome.org



A BRIGHT FUTURE

Our newest project is in Burlington's Old North End, taking us back to our roots. This now-thriving part of town looked different twenty years ago: the presence of several derelict sites raised fears that the area could spiral down.

With the help of city hall and some activist residents, we redeveloped seven lots on North Winooski and Archibald streets. The results – renovated apartments, creation of a 20-unit housing cooperative, buildings that house community services, and a pocket park – gave the neighborhood the boost it needed.

Now that we have the chance to build on nearby Bright Street, we are excited to unveil plans for a 42-unit housing cooperative that will—true to its name—brighten a block that missed that earlier wave of energy. This plan, like our earlier work, got help from a committee of neighbors. They saw a housing cooperative as a great addition to the area because co-ops foster community and stability.

The hallmark of housing cooperatives is the members' self-management. Financially, joining one of our co-ops is similar to renting. But with members sharing control and responsibility for their property, the interactive nature of co-op life makes it

different from either renting or individual ownership. "The entire premise is to participate in running the co-op, which is a business," explains Ann Rogers, a long-time member of the Queensbury Cooperative. Through working together, "people know each other and often get to be friends."

Co-op members value that control, and the security that comes with knowing each other. The right to set their own policies allows for flexibility in areas such as pets or how the grounds are used. Managing their own budget means they can look for ways to hold costs down. This level of control derives from the fact that the members jointly own the co-op corporation. Thanks to the combination of autonomy and community, many co-op members stay for the long term.

The Bright Street co-op will feature a three-story central building with parking underneath, and duplex units along the street that will fit with the scale of other buildings there. It will offer a wide range of unit sizes, from one-bedroom apartments to a four-bedroom townhome. A community room will host the co-op's meetings and also be available for other uses. And the property will feature 'green' amenities such as raised garden beds and clotheslines, fostering even more connections among members.

We are happy to be able to create new homes in the area where we did so much of our early work and we look forward to expanding our co-op housing program with this beautiful new complex.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

THE BRIGHT STREET CO-OP WILL HAVE A RANGE OF UNIT SIZES:

- Twelve 1BR apartments
- 22 2BR apartments and duplexes
- Five 3BR apartments and duplexes
- One 4BR townhome
- Monthly charges will be similar to those for CHT rental apartments

THE CO-OP WILL INCLUDES AMENITIES SUCH AS:

- Covered parking
- A laundry room
- A community room
- Raised garden beds

WE EXPECT TO BREAK GROUND IN SEPTEMBER 2014.

To learn more, contact Julia Curry at 802-861-7378 or jcurry@getahome.org.

When most people buy a house they need a little time to settle in and decide what goes where. Not so for Karleen and Alan Wagner; the townhome they just bought at South Meadow in Burlington was where they had already lived for 25 years. For a couple that loves feeling at home, the option to own the place where they had been for so long was just too good to pass up.

The Wagners grew up in the central Vermont town of Barre, but could not find security there. They moved to Burlington for the job prospects: "I haven't been out of work for a week since," noted Alan, "even if it was minimum-wage to start with." At first their apartment in a different complex suited them and their three young children, and a rent subsidy made it affordable. But when they heard the place might be sold, they decided to make a move and became one of the first families at South Meadow, a mixed-income development of 148 flats and townhomes.

The new community was a good fit. The family developed friendships with neighbors and Alan had a shorter commute to his job at DynaPower, a manufacturer of solar technology. Karleen worked cleaning houses, which allowed her to be home when the children were young and to pursue her calling as a minister. As the family's income rose over time their rent did too, but "we love our location, we have good neighbors, our utilities are cheap and we're warm and cozy," noted Karleen.



"WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS WITHOUT CHT," KARLEEN SAID. "WE KNEW NOTHING AND YOU WALKED US THROUGH EVERYTHING."

The couple did sometimes think of buying a home, Karleen recalled. "We would look at listings from time to time and see things in Richmond or Huntington" – smaller towns that would mean a big change in their living patterns. More recently, "our kids tried to convince us to move to Texas near them. But we like it here."

In 2012, the Wagners learned that South Meadow would be sold to the Champlain Housing Trust. "You worry; people said 'things will go downhill,'" explained Karleen. Instead, the shift brought the chance for them to become homeowners. In buying South Meadow to preserve its affordability, CHT saw a way to both increase the number of below-market rentals (from 40 to 64), and add affordable ownership into the mix. It lined up the financing to convert 32 townhomes to condominiums and gave current residents the first option to buy them. Some of the condos are permanently affordable; others are 'market' units with no resale restrictions.

Fittingly, Alan and Karleen became the first residents to close on their condo. The conversion included major updates: new

flooring and bath fixtures, some energy efficiency, and most dramatically, removal of a wall to open the kitchen up to the living area. The Wagners relocated to a unit across the street while the work was done.

"We could not have done this without CHT," Karleen said. "We knew nothing and you walked us through everything." CHT's homebuyer education helped the Wagners assess their credit for mortgage-readiness. "I was shocked at how high mine was," Alan said with a touch of pride. "I keep one credit card, that's it." With advice from their counselor, Karleen was able to raise her credit score by 40 points in three months – a step that helped the couple qualify in today's tight lending environment.

With a mortgage payment that comes to about what they paid in rent, the Wagners are happy to be building equity that they can pass on to their children – and especially happy that they did not have to move to make it happen. They hope their neighbors will also buy in, but either way they are well pleased with how things turned out for South Meadow and them. Karleen summed up their feeling: "CHT, you really have a good sense of family."

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OWNERSHIP OPTIONS AT SOUTH MEADOW, contact Brandy Grattan at 802-861-7337 or bgrattan@getahome.org.

EVENTS

WERE WE'VE BEEN



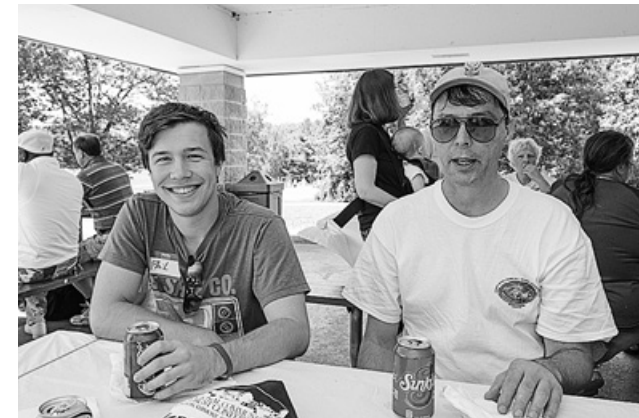
« DRAGONBOAT TEAM

CHT employees competed in the Dragonboat fundraising races this August and had even more fun than they expected. "We were 17th out of 34," reported property manager David Ellsworth-Keller; "not awful for our first time but we'll do better next year." The team—organized by senior accountant Kerry McManamon—was proud to raise \$1,590 for Dragonheart Vermont, which supports survivors of cancer.



« MEMBERS' DAY »

Our annual members' picnic gets better every year – especially when the sun shines on us! CHT board members served burgers, hot dogs and Ben & Jerry's ice cream to nearly 200 members at Oakledge Park on Burlington's waterfront. During an update from CEO Brenda Torpy, we were impressed to learn that members came from as far as Swanton for the get-together. We hope to see you next summer.



SAVE

THE DATE

WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US FOR DINNER AND OUR YEARLY MEMBERS' MEETING AT THE HILTON HOTEL ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 25TH, 2014.



SHELBURNE GROUNDBREAKING »

This June we broke ground at Harrington Village in Shelburne, to build 42 rental apartments and 5 homes for shared-equity ownership; the complex will also include affordable rentals for seniors built by Cathedral Square. Attendees at the ceremony included housing professionals who helped organize over \$10 million to finance our project, and community members who donate in support of CHT's work.



The evening features music, a cash bar, and a sit-down meal with a choice of salmon, pasta, or roast beef. The meeting includes awards and celebrations; the election of new members to our Board of Directors, and an update on our work. It is a great opportunity to share ideas and questions, to learn more and show your support.

CHT

EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

EACH QUARTER EMPLOYEES AT CHT RECOGNIZE COWORKERS WHO HAVE DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB



Name: Mike McCaffrey
Job: Associate Director of Property Management
Years in the field: 13 ■ Years at CHT: 6

named him Employee of the Quarter for his excellent work. Josie wrote: “Mike covered all of my duties while I was on maternity leave; he did this on top of his own work and never complained. I left feeling the work was in good hands and I was able to enjoy my time with my little one without worrying. When I returned everything was like clockwork—nothing left undone.”

SOME FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT YOUR WORK:

My favorite thing is seeing people’s emotions when they move into a new apartment.

THINGS ABOUT YOUR WORK YOU WOULD BE HAPPY TO CHANGE:

We aren’t able to help everybody.

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT CHT?

I wish more people knew all of the great people that work here!

IF YOU HAD A MAGIC WAND, HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE VERMONT’S HOUSING SITUATION?

I would create more subsidized apartments and vouchers for the many people that need them and are on incredibly long wait lists.

ONE THING PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU IS:

When I am not working or home with my family, I am usually at a soccer field officiating a game.

When director of property management Josie Curtin went on leave this year, associate director Mike McCaffrey covered for her. CHT



Name: Tiana Hartmann
Job: IT Administrator
Years in the field: 15 ■ Years at CHT: 5

now ahead of the curve on the technology we have access to, including iPhones and statewide videoconferencing. She calmly coordinates services for multiple sites and makes sure we are all well taken care of!”

SOME FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT YOUR WORK:

Seeing staff learn and use technology to do their jobs more efficiently. Being able to figure out how new technologies can better assist CHT.

THINGS ABOUT YOUR WORK YOU WOULD BE HAPPY TO CHANGE:

I could use more hours in the day (or more IT staff) to keep up with new technologies and support our growing staff.

WHAT DO YOU WISH MORE PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT CHT?

I had no idea of all the great programs that CHT offers and what the organization does for the communities. It is heartwarming and amazing to be a part of such an organization.

IF YOU HAD A MAGIC WAND, WHAT WOULD YOU TO DO IMPROVE VERMONT’S HOUSING SITUATION?

Give more grants and funds to go towards our programs, projects and staff.

A colleague nominated Tiana for Employee of the Quarter with this:

“Tiana is amazing. She has a huge workload meeting the IT needs of everyone at CHT. She is always patient and helpful with challenges that staff bring to her, no matter how many tasks she is juggling. She does a great job thinking through options for IT expansion, planning the best solution and implementing it. Due to her skills and hard work, we are

FOCUS

BEHIND THE SCENES

CHT’S UNIQUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



An organization’s Board of Directors “steers the ship,” guiding big-picture decisions and keeping its program activities true to its mission. CHT’s Board plays several key roles:

- it charts our course by hiring and evaluating the CEO;
- it creates strategic plans that set goals and ways to measure our performance; and
- it makes all major financial decisions, including the budget and every proposal to buy or sell real estate.

Board members also help us promote and explain our work to the public, help us raise funds, and give voice to needs in the areas we serve.

At the core of CHT’s Board is a belief in community control. Our organization was born in 1984 out of citizens’ efforts to create and maintain permanently affordable housing in the Burlington area, and this grassroots voice has remained a key part of our mission. CHT engages the people and communities we serve by ensuring that they are ‘at the table’ guiding and overseeing our work.

In fact, our board of fifteen directors must include equal representation from three groups: residents of our housing, including co-op, rental and homeownership; public members (municipal officials from among the towns we serve); and general members, who give of their talents and expertise to help us achieve our vision. This unusual arrangement keeps us accountable and connected.

“Serving on the Board gave me a much stronger sense of where I lived, and made me feel encouraged about the future,” notes Bob Robbins, a CHT homeowner who served for several terms. “The education I received was invaluable. It helped me understand my own situation, explain the community land trust model, and think more broadly about social justice and economic development.”

Bob recalls, “I learned from other board members and from residents with very different experiences from mine ... I was able to travel to conferences and see what folks were doing around the country. It was heartening to feel that our little corner of Vermont was part of a bigger effort to create opportunities for people all over.”

New board members spend a good amount of time learning the ins and outs: “Listening to staff members and discussing policies helped me understand how a nonprofit organization actually runs, from managing a budget to managing people,” explained Bob. “The experience was a healthy antidote to pessimism. You can never say too much about the rewards of working together for a common goal!”

If you are inspired by the work of the Champlain Housing Trust and would like to share of your perspective, consider applying for a seat on our Board of Directors.

BOARD OPENING

FOR A RESIDENT MEMBER

Are you a renter who might be interested in serving on the board of directors? In this high-level volunteer role, you can help CHT realize its mission to strengthen our communities by helping people secure and keep decent, affordable homes. The three-year term will begin in February 2014.

Board members attend monthly meetings, serve on committees, and help us do community outreach, fundraising, and advocacy for affordable housing. Members receive training and mentoring to learn their way around these functions.

CHT staff and board leaders will meet with potential applicants to provide more information. Candidates for board openings will be elected by CHT’s members at our Annual Meeting at the end of January.

To learn more, please contact Julia Curry at 802-861-7378 or jcurry@getahome.org.

« BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FRONT ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: JOE COLANGELO, CARINA DRISCOLL, SANDRA DOOLEY, SARAH MUYSKENS. SECOND ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: RICHARD KEMP, KATHY T. LUCE, JOE REINERT, JESS WILSON. BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: FRANK LENTI, WILLIE PEARSON, PAUL BOHNE, TIM GUTCHELL, ROSALYN GRAHAM. NOT PICTURED: ADAM PIPER