

NEWS FROM CHAMPLAIN HOUSING TRUST | SPRING 2019

At Home



CHAMPLAIN
HOUSING TRUST



WWW.GETAHOME.ORG

Save The Date!

Members' Day Picnic

Saturday, July 13, 2019

North Beach, Burlington



Bring your friends
and family!

11:00 to 11:30 Games and Entertainment
11:30 to 1:00 Burgers and Dogs
12:45 to 1:30 Ice Cream and Music

RSVP by Wednesday, July 10th

Call 862-6244 or email mtedder@getahome.org

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

Dear CHT Members

Rebirth and renewal are on my mind these days – not so much in relation to spring – because, let's face it: it's been a pretty muted season. The rebirth on my mind stems from the very vibrant new life occurring every day at the Old North End Community Center.

CHT has been working tirelessly for more than three years with the organizations renting space at the former St. Joseph School on Allen Street in Burlington, with volunteer leaders, and with tremendous City partners from the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department to the Mayor's office to fully remake this stately old building. It has, and will continue to become, a top-notch and very affordable center for recreation, the arts, child and family services, casework, language and job training for our new Americans, youth and elder-specific programming, and more.

In early April, we hosted a celebration, where our Capital Campaign Chairman Peter Clavelle announced a lead gift of \$500,000 from Trey and Dominique Pecor. Dominique's expression of gratitude for being part of the Center touched everyone and inspired the group so much that we raised \$112,000 within a month from attendees. This puts us in sight of our campaign goal of \$2.2 million with just \$88,000 to raise. We're this close thanks to so many people whose generosity has provided CHT with the necessary equity for the purchase and rehabilitation of St. Joseph School at a total cost of \$8.8 million.

It hasn't been an easy path, but we never doubted that it was the right one. We purchased the building and installed elevators and a commercial kitchen in 2017 on borrowed money. We're now bringing all funds together and starting the final phase of rehab that includes new energy efficient windows and overall insulation, modern heating and cooling equipment, electrical upgrades, and

more. Happily, AALV, Robin's Nest Children's Center, the Janet Munt Family Room, Burlington Parks and Recreation, the Very Merry Theatre, North End Studios, and various sub-lessees have cheerfully adapted to operating around a construction project because the early improvements provided accessibility and critical facilities for their operations. This last phase will certainly test everyone's endurance but the goodwill and shared vision that have fueled us all along will no doubt help to get everyone over the finish line.

**And you can help us to get there too.
Please join the campaign and help us to
raise the last dollars needed.**

Included in our center photo spread on the project, you will find an envelope for your gift of any amount to support this project. This is a first for us – we have never wanted to ask for contributions in this letter, but this project is special and touches so many – 4,000 people a year now and we know that will only grow with time. Every single donor will be recognized in the building – no doubt that plaque will have to be big to show how much this Center belongs to us all and represents the way we all come together to make this a great place to live.

Thank you for your consideration, and a special thanks to our volunteers and the people, businesses and foundations who have given so generously already.

Brenda Torpy, CEO



Richard Kemp: A life of advocacy

When Richard Kemp sat on the Board of the Champlain Housing Trust, virtually every meeting ended with him asking, “What are we going to do to house people who are incarcerated?” The answer was, of course, that CHT does in fact house people who were ex-offenders. But the challenge was a little different: Richard wanted CHT to create specific housing that would suit the needs of people unable to leave the corrections system after they had completed their sentence. This proved to be a little more difficult, and the question was an important one.

“I just feel that the fact that you may be an ex-criminal, that you maybe made a mistake... That shouldn’t keep you from getting housing or a job or be accepted in our community.”

This spring, however, we are heeding Richard’s advocacy, and have housed nine parolees in a building in Burlington we’ve named “Kemp House” recognizing his longtime commitment to community justice and social equity. People moving in have come from transitional housing and able to live more independently while freeing up capacity for more ex-offenders to safely be discharged to a home with services.

“I just feel that the fact that you may be an ex-criminal, that you maybe made a mistake... That shouldn’t keep you from getting housing or a job or be accepted in our community,” explains Richard.

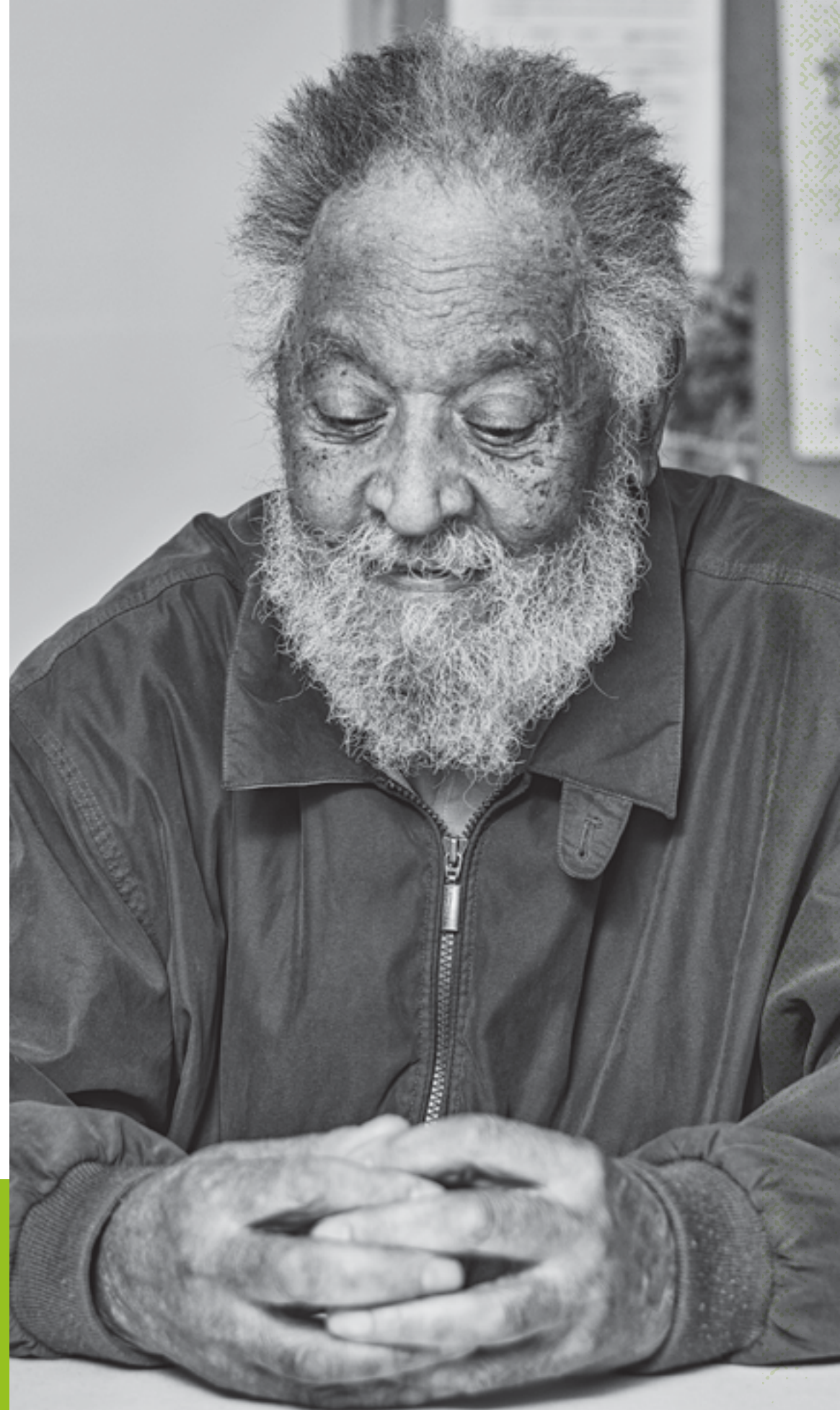
Longer than anywhere else he has lived, Richard has been at the Flynn Avenue Housing Cooperative in Burlington’s south end since its beginnings in 1993. After a long career that ranged from a paper mill to IBM, he had settled into retirement. The co-op’s philosophy meshes well with his values. As he says flatly, “A co-op serves the interests of the people who live there, not some profit motive.”

He – like many of us – lost long-time close friend and Flynn neighbor Marcia Mason when she passed away this year. Until recently he was just one of two remaining original members of the co-op still there after 26 years, but recent health challenges have him convalescing at a rehab facility in Burlington. He’ll be turning 87 this October.

“The most significant thing about living in this co-op is very simple,” he says. “It’s still affordable after all these years.”



One of his most memorable experiences came as a representative of CHT’s Board when he traveled with CEO Brenda Torpy to Luanda, Angola in 2008 where CHT was recognized at the United Nations World Habitat Award ceremony. “To be there representing what the organization has done in Burlington and Vermont was really something,” he added.



Editor’s Note: More so than any building or program, CHT’s work is about the people who live in the housing we create. In celebration of our 35th year, we’d like to capture more of our history through the stories of our long term residents, like Richard Kemp. If you are interested in participating in a profile like this one or in our efforts to curate our history, please be in touch with Chris Donnelly, chris@champlainhousingtrust.org or 862-6244.

Supporting the Old North End Community Center



Local residents, businesses and foundations – almost 200 in total – have already come together to support the transformation of the St. Joseph School into the Old North End Community Center. Also backed by public funders like the City of Burlington, this \$8.8 million project will be a resource for generations to come.

In early April, we celebrated a \$500,000 gift from Trey and Dominique Pecor, leaving us just \$200,000 from reaching our goal – which we're busy working to raise. We are now turning to the community for your support. Please use the envelope here to give as generously as you can. No amount is too small, or too large! It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create this community asset.



Annual Meeting 2019

Two hundred-plus joined us for our Annual Meeting in Burlington last January. We recognized former State Representative Helen Head and US Senator Patrick Leahy with the Tim McKenzie Award, and staffer Amy Demetrowitz for 25 years of service. Jeanne Boucher, recently retired from New England Federal Credit Union, was signaled out for her many years of volunteerism at CHT.



The Golden One



Most people who travel to Abu Dhabi will return home with a souvenir or two, but it's likely Kate Bove has them beat. The avid swimmer recently returned home after spending two weeks competing in her second Special Olympics World Games, accompanied by two big medals and a ribbon.

Kate took gold in the 50M Breaststroke – her first ever gold beyond state level – bronze in the 100M Freestyle and earned a seventh-place ribbon in the 4 x 50M Relay. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” she explains. “The pressure was on, but I rose to the occasion and did very well.”

In fact, as the only Vermonter in the entire U.S. delegation this time around, her big win may have been as special to her as it was for Vermont.

Kate acknowledges just how far she's come. “When I was young, I found out that I was different than other people, and it took me a really long time to be comfortable with that. But I learned that it's okay to be different – and I'm really happy now!”

“I was so emotional during that part that I didn't even notice the fireworks going off. It's such a powerful song – it's saying, 'This is who I am, and you can't change it!'”

Six years ago, Kate moved into one of Champlain Housing Trust's shared equity homes at Burlington Co-housing. After years of living in a rougher neighborhood, she says it was a welcome change.

“It was a very therapeutic process. I wasn't in the best place at the time, so the move gave me something to focus on and be positive about. Plus, everyone here is nice to each other; they want to get to know you. I feel much safer here than where I was before.”



As part of the co-housing community, Kate serves on the Board of Directors and is part of two committees. They coordinate a variety of community events, including a community dinner every even weekday night. Kate's favorite meal to eat – and a recipe that

came from a neighbor – is Bom Som, which they've all renamed to 'pork crack'. “It's highly addictive,” Kate explains.

And while swimming might seem to be Kate's primary hobby, she says nothing comes before her love of music. Kate's played piano since

she was a kid, and she helps to coordinate monthly drum circles and occasional concerts for her neighbors as well.

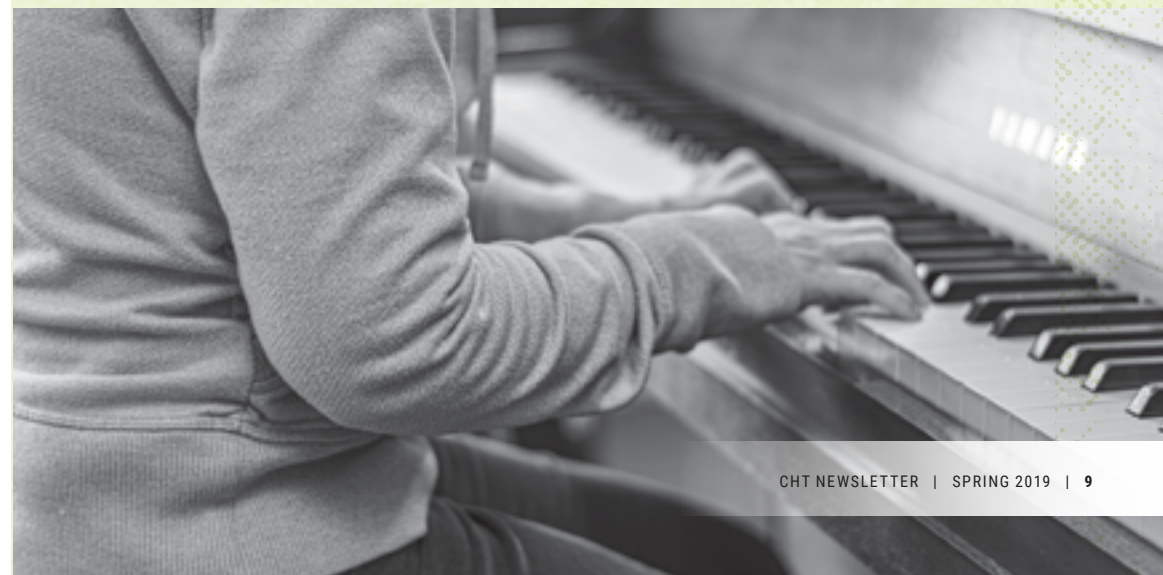
“Forget any stereotypes you've heard about these places,” Kate says. “We're not a hippy place. We're about being conscious of the environment, getting to know your neighbors, and respecting each other.”

It means a lot to her to be part of such an inclusive community. For the past six years, Kate has made a point to connect with others at CHT's Annual Meeting in January. “I enjoy meeting other people and hearing about their experiences with CHT – plus, the food's really good,” she explains.

Kate says she has no plans of leaving Burlington Co-housing anytime soon. She's surrounded by people who are likeminded and supportive, and she acknowledges that sometimes, that can be hard to come by. “As a person with a disability, I know the world can be cruel, but you just have to stand up for yourself!”

She recalls the Special Olympics' closing ceremony just a couple weeks back, where they ended with the song “This is Me” from Greatest Showman.

“I was so emotional during that part that I didn't even notice the fireworks going off. It's such a powerful song – it's saying, ‘This is who I am, and you can't change it!’”





88 King Street
Burlington, VT 05401



Members' Day Picnic, July 13, 2019

Details Inside!

