



Connection

The Newsletter of Community Affordable Housing Equity Corp.

Opening New Doors®

www.cahec.com

Final Issue 2004

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Partnership Village "Graduates" Two New Homeowners

Greensboro, North Carolina, is the home of Partnership Village I and II, two CAHEC-sponsored tax credit developments. Phase I, completed in 1999, consists of 32 studio apartments designed for single adults. Phase II, placed in service two years later, is a family development with 24 three-bedroom units. The two developments share a community building and on-site supportive services.

Another feature they have in common: Both Phase I and Phase II are examples of transitional housing whose residents are formerly homeless individuals and families.

The sponsors of Partnership Village had a vision: to help those living in homeless shelters move into a safe and structured environment where they could succeed in achieving economic self-sufficiency. Working with a case manager, residents at Partnership Village must hold a job, keep a bank account, and

pay their rent and utility bills on time. With a two-year residency limit, they must also participate in a housing readiness program to prepare them for renting a traditional apartment or possibly homeownership.

To make the transition from homelessness to homeownership would be a challenge for even the most ambitious, but two determined women did just that. In the past year, Sandra Huffman and her children moved into their own home in a small town north of Greensboro. Jacqueline (Jackie) Davis teamed up with Habitat for Humanity and over an 18-month period helped build the home she now shares with her 6-year-old daughter. Both received a First-Time Home Buyer's Grant from CAHEC, but their pluck and perseverance played decisive roles in their inspiring success stories.

Sandra Huffman

It took Sandra Huffman over a year to find the right house, but

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Partnership Village is a special needs development that provides supportive services for formerly homeless individuals and families.



Brian Coyle, former member of CAHEC's Board of Directors, initiated the partnership with the North Carolina Writers' Network.

Writing Contest Open to Residents

The North Carolina Writers' Network, in partnership with CAHEC, has designed a writing contest specifically for residents living in CAHEC-financed developments. Residents in all CAHEC's properties, not just those located in North Carolina, are eligible to enter. The deadline is March 1, 2005, and the judges will name one youth and one adult winner in May.

The North Carolina Writers' Network is a nonprofit organization that aims to encourage all writers, from beginners to published authors. Believing that "everyone's voice is important and should be heard," the Network offers workshops, conferences, and other support services to meet the needs of writers and to connect them with readers. The Network also sponsors writing competitions and awards more than \$30,000 annually in honoraria, prizes, and stipends.

Bringing CAHEC and the North Carolina Writers' Network together was the idea of Brian

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Community Affordable Housing Equity Corp. (CAHEC) was created in 1992. Our mission is "to raise and invest equity capital in low-income housing tax credit projects, to empower residents living in developments CAHEC helps finance, and to promote home ownership."

Connection is published quarterly by CAHEC for its constituents in the affordable housing industry.

Please let us hear from you. E-mail ndietz@cahec.com with your comments and suggestions.

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CAHEC
Community Affordable
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CAHEC PROFILE

Mazzi Ghoddoussi came to CAHEC with a background in banking—and cancer research. How did such an unusual combination of occupations lead him to CAHEC?

The simple answer to that question is he studied both biology and economics in college. Taking the answer a step further, Mazzi points to his need to apply what he knows for the practical benefit of others.

"I see service to the community as a common theme connecting all my jobs," Mazzi says. "Being of service to others is the source of my motivation."

At CAHEC, that theme of service continues. In the newly created role of Investment Development Officer, Mazzi is responsible for building long-term relationships with investors. This relationship involves the understanding that "doing good and doing well are not mutually exclusive." To that end, Mazzi explains, CAHEC's equity funds offer investors a socially responsible way to improve their bottom line. And, Mazzi continues, investors appreciate and value the connection between realizing their corporate goals and helping disadvantaged people pursue their dreams.

Mazzi likes the fact that his work at CAHEC has a positive impact on the people he serves—both the investors who entrust CAHEC with millions of dollars and, ultimately, the low-income tenants living in the developments financed with the investors' capital. "This is the first time," Mazzi says, "that I love the work that I'm doing as well as the people I work with. It's a good fit."

Working toward the "well-being of the community" extends to Mazzi's leisure activities as well. From scuba diving to rock climbing to flying lessons, he observes changes in the environment and—speaking as a biologist, economist, and concerned citizen—advocates the judicious use of limited resources. Whether he's under the sea, in the sky, or on terra firma, the theme of service is a driving force for Mazzi Ghoddoussi. 🏠



Mazzi Ghoddoussi

Partnership Village continued from page 1

in the end, she says, "I bought what I really wanted." Hoping to return to the area where she grew up, she faced a number of disappointments along the way. Looking back, however, Sandra believes that the frustration ultimately led



Sandra Huffman and her children now have a roomy house to call their own.

to a happy result because she "would have settled for something" that was not quite what she wanted. Now that she is enjoying the home that fits her needs, she says with assurance, "God has His hand in this."

In a quiet, woodsy neighborhood, Sandra's house has much to offer the Huffman family: four bedrooms, a full basement with a fireplace, and a garage. Sandra's oldest son is away at college, but three children live at home. A good school district was one of the reasons Sandra had been eager to return to her childhood home, and now her children attend the schools that she once did.

Sandra gives a lot of credit to Partnership Village and its housing readiness program for her new status as homeowner. Now out on her own, Sandra sees "quite a difference" between the assistance provided at Partnership Village and her own self-reliance. "You get a lot of support from Partnership Village," she says. "It's a really good program." She should know—she's a bona fide graduate.

Jackie Davis

Jackie Davis came to Partnership Village from Mary's House, a Greensboro-based ministry that provides transitional housing for women in recovery. Living in Partnership Village's studio apartments, Jackie was unable to have her daughter with her, so one of the goals she set with

her case manager was to be reunited with her little girl. While a resident, she held a steady job at Mary's House and also worked toward earning an associate's degree in human services at Guilford Technical Community College.

As Jackie was nearing the end of her second year of residency, she learned about Habitat for Humanity, and as she puts it, "In my little heart things started jumping." In addition to the hands-on training she acquired, Jackie took pride "in being a part of something that you never dreamed of." She says, "Every nail, every splinter, all the aches and pains were worth it. They didn't hand it to me." She's grateful for the staff at Partnership Village, who stood by her until the very end. "They held my hand like my family," Jackie recalls. She's also grateful for CAHEC's Home Buyer's Grant, which helped her stay with the program.

Today in her new home Jackie says, "I believe I was destined to be here." She takes delight in everything—the great room that's approximately the size of her entire studio apartment, the royal blue carpet, the chandelier, and most importantly, the memory of the look on her daughter's face when she learned that this house was going to be her permanent home. Now the first-grader



Ann Morelli, Director for Greensboro Urban Ministries Case Management at Partnership Village, greets Jackie and her daughter at their new home.

occupies the master bedroom ("She has more things than I have," Jackie explains) and can bring her friends over to play. Best of all, Jackie says, "We're finally together." 🏠

YRP Gets Fun-Filled Start at Village South

Dance contest, ring toss, and egg on a spoon—these were some of the activities enjoyed by the young residents at Village South Townhomes in Richmond, Virginia. The occasion was the Youth Recognition Program Kick-Off Party, an event that marked not only the start of a new school year but also the inauguration of a new Community Program at Village South.

It's no coincidence that the arrival of the Youth Recognition Program (YRP) soon followed the arrival of Cynthia Jordan, the new CAHEC VISTA at Village South. As the YRP coordinator, Cynthia went knocking on doors to recruit students and volunteers to participate in this academic-incentive program. Within a month's time, she had student participants signed up, a Community Programs Committee (CPC) organized to help oversee the development's Community Programs as well as plan the Kick-Off, and volunteers from the community offering their time and services.

The purpose of the YRP is to encourage academic achievement and promote positive behavior among students in grades 3 through 12 living in developments CAHEC helps finance. Participating students and their parents sign a contract with CAHEC and the CPC pledging to



Youngsters of all ages can enjoy the ring toss competition.

achieve good grades and above-average school attendance and to display appropriate behavior in and out of school. Students must also agree to participate in two fundraising and two social events sponsored by the CPC.

In turn, CAHEC recognizes and rewards students who complete the program by providing an expense-paid trip to a nearby amusement park at the end of the school year. Additionally, each year CAHEC contributes \$400 to a fund for the successful participants' post-secondary education, up to a maximum of \$4,000 per student. This year 118 students are participating in the YRP at 11 CAHEC-funded properties; that's up from 68 students last year.

The Kick-Off event at Village South owed its success to the work of the CPC and support from the local community. Edward Pittman, a Richmond DJ, provided the music. A church group donated refreshments and school supplies, while CPC members contributed prizes for the

games. Volunteers were also on hand to assist with arts and crafts.

The Kick-Off event not only motivates and excites students; it's also an opportunity for the site to introduce students to the YRP, review program expectations, schedule progress assessments, and establish dates and ideas for fundraisers and social events. An added benefit is the relationships created between the on-site volunteers and the local nonprofit organizations; those relationships, it is hoped, will provide a lasting, valuable resource for both parties.

Cynthia, who was excited by the number of residents who participated in the Kick-Off, indicated that the kids are looking forward to future fundraising and social events hosted by the YRP. There is no doubt that fun-filled Kick-Offs like the one at Village South are drawing students in, and the year-end trip motivates them to succeed again and again as well as nurtures their sense of accomplishment. ♪



Larry Heflin and Lawrence Kahn wrap gifts for the residents of the Raleigh Rescue Mission.

CAHEC Shoppers Grant "Angel Tree" Wishes

With CAHEC's generous contribution, eight CAHEC employees made their second annual "Angel Tree" shopping trip for the homeless. On December 8, the shoppers purchased Christmas wishes for 47 residents of the Raleigh Rescue Mission. They spent a warm, sunny day searching for much-needed diapers, all types of clothing, and toys. The employees also bought other items, like sheets and blankets, needed by the Mission. After a full morning of shopping and then lunch, the group boxed and

festively wrapped each item and labeled it for its new owner.

Once again, the Angel Tree shopping experience united employees in providing a community service that benefits not only the homeless, but also the employees themselves, who feel they have made a difference in the life of another. CAHEC's Community Service leave, available to employees after their first 90 days with the company, makes such a volunteer opportunity possible.

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Angel Tree
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The Raleigh Rescue Mission in downtown Raleigh “was founded in 1961 to bring hope and healing to the poor and homeless of Raleigh and the Triangle. The Mission provides physical, emotional, spiritual and academic assistance to hurting men, women and children.” Annually, the Mission’s Angel Tree program provides “angels” with the name, age, and wish of a resident. Wishes usually consist of clothing, a toy, or books. The wishes are purchased by members of the community, carefully wrapped, and delivered in time for the Mission’s holiday celebration. 🏠



Sam Davis and Toshia Walters prepare Christmas wishes for the homeless.

Writing Contest
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Coyle. Brian is a former member of CAHEC’s Board of Directors and currently serves as a Board advisor. Brian is also a writer (he’s completed a couple of mysteries) and sits on the Network’s board. Brian saw a connection between the two organizations’ missions: to “empower residents living in developments CAHEC helps finance” and to “connect, educate, and promote writers of all kinds at all levels.” The two groups began to discuss ways in which the Network could assist CAHEC’s residents to grow as writers, and the writing contest was born.

Members of the Network will judge the entries, which must be the original work of the resident-authors. Contestants may submit a single poem in any verse form, a short fictional narrative,

or a piece of creative nonfiction, which includes personal essays, memoirs, reminiscences, and biographical portraits.

The winners will each receive a collection of books written by North Carolina authors as well as public recognition at CAHEC’s and the Network’s annual meetings. In addition, CAHEC and the North Carolina Writers’ Network will donate a collection of books to the community library of the housing development(s) where the winners live. All participants will receive a certificate of recognition. 🏠

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