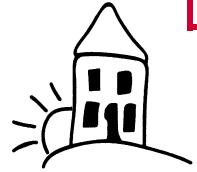


Community Housing Network, Inc.

Promoting Inclusive Communities Through Affordable Housing



Edition Twelve



Fall, 2006

Network News

Message from Marc, New Assessment Spurs Call to Action

"Accommodations for the elderly and people with disabilities represent the single biggest housing need in Oakland County."

Findings from the recently released Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment

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In this Holiday issue of Network News we want to share some good things that have been happening at Community Housing Network and within Oakland County. The CHN Adopt-a-Family Program is in full swing (page 2) and we have been awarded funds to implement two new affordable housing projects (page 3).

Within Oakland County, one of the best things to happen recently has been the completion of the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment. The assessment is very thorough and presents a number of solid recommendations. The study was conducted by Dale Thompson, Ph.D. at the University of Michigan and points out that accommodations for the elderly and people with disabilities represent the single biggest housing need in our area. Findings also indicate that affordable housing tends to be clustered in relatively small portions of the county.

The study recommends that the County earmark the creation of affordable housing as a priority, and that reasonably priced housing be incorporated into all local land use and zoning planning. In fact, the County is already conducting presentations and workshops for local planners based on the issues that are emphasized in the assessment. I would like to personally commend Oakland County

for commissioning this study that represents a strong first step toward building inclusive communities.

Of course, such change is not up to our County officials alone. A unified team effort is called for. All of us who are concerned about the unmet housing needs of the elderly and people with disabilities must make our voices heard to make affordable housing a priority in Oakland County. I hope we can meet this challenge by working collaboratively in the best interest of the people who need our help the most. We have a unique chance to have an impact on the future development of our community by seriously responding to the findings and recommendations in the Oakland County Housing Needs Assessment.

We are almost ready to welcome in a new year and I want to thank everyone who so generously supported our efforts this past year. Let us be grateful for what we have accomplished in 2006 and build on those achievements to create an even better 2007 for the folks we care about. With the help of donations from supporters such as you; we will be able to create even more affordable housing for persons with disabilities.

All of us at Community Housing Network wish you a joyous holiday season. We look forward to working with you and serving you in the New Year.

Adopt a Family Holiday Giving Program Still Needs Your Help



CHN volunteers worked hard to purchase, sort, wrap, and distribute gifts and necessities during last year's Adopt-a-Family Program.



CHN Leasing Assistance Housing Navigator, Jennifer Williams, sorted gifts for the 2006 Adopt-a-Family Program.

The holidays are here and CHN has recruited many dedicated volunteers to help with the Adopt-a-Family Program. This year 190 formerly homeless CHN program members have sought our help. This is a substantial increase over the 55 families we served last year. Many subsist solely on monthly disability benefits of \$489 and are often barely able to meet their basic needs. They will have no holiday without the assistance of others.

Agnes and her two young children were "adopted" last year. Agnes confronts the challenges of mental illness. Last year at this time, the family had just moved from a local shelter into their own apartment with help from the CHN Leasing Assistance Program. They had nothing but some clothing and a few personal items. The prospect of celebrating the holiday was out of the question. Agnes made up a story for her kids about why Santa could not visit; that their new home and being together was their gift.

When CHN asked if Agnes would like to be "adopted", she only asked for coats and boots. To her surprise, a CHN volunteer delivered new coats, boots, and everything else the family needed to have a good holiday; food, clothing, household items and of course, toys. Agnes says she will never forget the love she felt from complete strangers after being "adopted" last year.

CHN was delighted by the kindness of metro area residents during last year's Program. This year many generous volunteers are again helping to make a holiday for our folks. They are sorting, wrapping or distributing gifts, and making donations of cash and gifts. However, due to the increase in the number of families in need, WE STILL NEED YOUR HELP of cash and gift cards. CHN is an IRS approved 501c(3) agency and donations are tax deductible. You can still help by phoning 248-928-0111, or by emailing tmadsen@chninc.net. We sincerely thank you for helping our families.

HRC WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

We meet every second Thursday of the month
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Please, join us!

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1/11/07 | Planning for the home you want in your Person Centered Plan |
| 2/08/07 | Special Needs Trusts |
| 3/08/07 | Co-operatives Revisited |
| 4/12/07 | How do I Select a Roommate? |
| 5/10/07 | Tenant/Landlord Relationships |
| 6/14/07 | Budgeting and Credit Repair |

Please, call (248) 928-0111 to RSVP.

INDEPENDENT LIVING CLUB

Meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of each month at the CHN offices in Troy from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
All are welcome!

- | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/15/07 | Winter Safety |
| 2/19/07 | Keeping Warm: Energy Conservation |
| 3/19/07 | The Independent Living Movement |
| 4/16/07 | What Independent Living Means to You |
| 5/21/07 | Get Ready for Spring |
| 6/18/07 | Money Matters |

NO RSVP REQUIRED

New Grants and Opportunities

OAKLAND COUNTY AWARDS HOMEBUYER FUNDS

In October, the Springhill Housing Corporation was awarded \$468,363 by the Oakland County Division of Community and Home Improvement HOME program to implement a Homebuyer Assistance Program.

Springhill will acquire and improve seven affordable single family housing units to be sold to low income households in various Oakland County communities. This is the third consecutive HOME funds award earned by Springhill and its' sister agency, Community Housing Network.

Springhill programs continue to make the dream of affordable home ownership a reality for low income families.

CHN TO TAKE ON NEW PROJECT

Community Housing Network will handle the property management for a new MSHDA scattered site project. Through sound financial management, CHN is redirecting \$150,000 in savings generated from group home leases into the production of a new \$650,000 affordable housing project. CHN will acquire two to four single-family homes, duplexes, or condos scattered throughout Oakland County for long term affordable rental housing.

Tenant selection will be directed by CHN and OCCMHA Core providers. Site selection will meet the specific needs of the tenants. The monthly rent will be approximately \$261 per tenant.



OAKLAND COUNTY HMIS RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

CHN Leads Award Winning Project

On September 19th, Oakland County received national recognition by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at the 2006 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Conference in Denver. The award for outstanding achievement in the field of HMIS implementation recognized Oakland County's contribution to making the HMIS Initiative a success locally and nationally.

Oakland County was recognized for Effective Strategies in HMIS Projects and received the national award for "The First to Accurately Complete an Annual Homeless Assessment Report". The report contains combined data about homeless individuals receiving services

that will be presented to Congress.

Community Housing Network is the lead agency for HMIS in Oakland County. CHN staff member and HMIS Coordinator, Jill Shoemaker, accepted the award. She noted that the award winning report was truly a group effort between the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing, and the local service providers participating and entering data into the HMIS. The Taskforce has been instrumental in HMIS and works collectively to end homelessness and to increase the supply of sustainable, affordable housing in Oakland County.



Community Housing Network's Jill Shoemaker serves as the Oakland County HMIS Coordinator.

Network News

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Network News is designed and created by Jillian Alexander, MSW, Consultant to CHN

This newsletter has been made possible with the support of the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority.



You can help someone with a disability find safe and affordable housing by donating that old vehicle to Charity Motors. Vehicles need not run....Free timely pick-up. Please call Charity Motors at (313) 255-1000 and designate COMMUNITY HOUSING NETWORK as your charity of choice.

Everyone Counts in Oakland County 2007

On January 24, 2007, hundreds of volunteers will take to the streets of Oakland County to count the number of unsheltered homeless persons. The Everybody Counts 2007 campaign will be the largest homeless census count and survey project ever attempted in the area. Everybody Counts 2007 will include actual street counts in cities though out the County, as well as a shelter and institution count.

Volunteers are needed to survey the homeless in cities and townships in Oakland County on the night of January 24, 2007. Training will be provided on January 17 in Royal Oak and on January 18 in Pontiac.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Michele Wehrheim at 248-928-0111 or mwehrheim@chninc.net.

Why do we need a homeless count?

- To establish a baseline of our homeless population, so that we can track our progress towards ending homelessness.
- To preserve millions of dollars of current federal funding for homeless services in Oakland County
- To improve the ability of government and service providers to plan and implement effective services.
- To increase public awareness about homelessness.