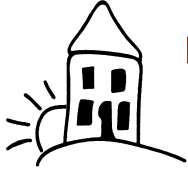


Community Housing Network, Inc.

Promoting Inclusive Communities Through Affordable Housing



Network

Edition Fourteen

Summer, 2007

“Community Housing Network is about building strong communities, and strong communities are diverse.”

“We will only be able to end homelessness when we have faced our fear-based misperceptions about living next to people who may be different than ourselves.”

Marc Craig, CHN
President & CEO

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Message from Marc: Understanding “Affordable Housing in Inclusive Communities”

What do we really mean today by the phrase **“affordable housing in inclusive communities”**? For so long, people have had an image of affordable housing meaning the large “projects” that were produced in the 60’s. Living in the projects meant that many poor people were placed under one roof and lived in one part of town.

The old, outdated perception of affordable housing is not what we are striving for in 2007. We want to push production of affordable housing in a different direction; toward what we call **inclusive communities**. This does not mean that there should be a quota of low-income families or people with disabilities in each neighborhood. What it does mean is that social and economic diversity in all areas can contribute positively to the fabric of each community. It means that everyone, including seniors, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and those with lower incomes are valued members of their communities. We can achieve

this goal of community inclusion.

We now have an opportunity to make sure that there are places in each city and suburb where people who have historically been isolated from the mainstream are able to live and receive whatever supports they may need. That is the promise that drives our thinking at Community Housing Network. We are about building strong communities and strong communities are diverse. We will only be able to end homelessness when we have faced our fear-based misperceptions about living next to people who may be different than ourselves. CHN and our community partners have made progress and have achieved some success addressing homelessness. The **Oakland County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness** and the **Housing Needs Assessment** are products of our efforts. That said, we will not successfully address homelessness unless we find ways to ensure our citizens with disabilities, our seniors, and people with fixed incomes have places throughout our communities where they can live.

You Can Help End Homelessness Now!

There are many ways you can help with the work of Community Housing Network to end homelessness. You CAN make a real difference in the lives of many people with disabilities, the homeless, and other disenfranchised populations we serve. The choice is yours:



CHN volunteers give their time to help homeless families.

- You Can Offer a Monetary Gift - As little as \$25 can help pay a utility bill.
- You Can Offer Your Time & Services as a CHN Volunteer - One hour of donated time can wrap Holiday gifts for our Adopt-a-Family children
- You Can Offer In-kind Support - One warm blanket could make a difference to a homeless child on a cold night.
- You Can Help with CHN Special Events - One hour of your donated time can help make a fundraising event a reality
- Call 248-928-0111 or log-on to communityhousingnetwork.org to receive more information about how you can help

Adopt-a-Family Wish List

Wrapping paper
 New winter coats, hats, gloves, & boots
 New household goods
 New children's toys
 New toiletries & personal care items
 Non-perishable food items
 Cash, gift cards

Volunteer Activities

Sorting & listing gift donations
 Wrapping gifts

Make a Personal Connection - Help the CHN Adopt-a-Family Program

The holiday season will soon be upon us. This is the third year of operation for the CHN Adopt-a-Family Program. The number of persons needing assistance has doubled since last year to nearly 300. We are looking for compassionate people interested in adopting families with disabilities in our Homeless Leasing Assistance Program. Though you may not actually meet the family, you will know their first names and will connect with them as they gratefully receive your generous help this holiday season. CHN will accept cash donations, as well as donated gifts for our consumers.

We have collected wish lists from our clients, so please contact us for more information. You may also donate your time as a volunteer, by sorting and wrapping gifts for our families. Your assistance will help to make our holiday program a success!

CHN is an IRS approved 501c (3) agency and donations are tax deductible as permitted by law. You can help by calling: 248-928-0111, or by emailing cbraton@chninc.net. We sincerely thank you for helping these families who are trying to build better lives.

Another Homeownership Success Story - Kelley Kruse

Kelley Kruse is an inspiration to many people. She has turned her disability, Cerebral Palsy, into a desire to help others. The industrious thirty year old is completing a Master's degree in counseling and works as an advocate and intake coordinator at Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). She reached her goal of purchasing her own home, with assistance from the CHN Home Buying Program. She considered buying a home but had doubts if she could qualify. Kelley learned about the CHN Home Buying program and contacted Linda Velandra, CHN Housing Resource Specialist, who believed Kelley would qualify. After some time and effort, Kelley found the "right" house; a three bedroom ranch on a double lot in a quiet neighborhood, not far from family and work. She used the down payment assistance from CHN to help make the monthly payment reasonable.

Kelley has always been a hard worker. She has worked part-time since she was fifteen until she completed college. Her position at MRS, contracted through the Disability Network, is her first full time job with benefits. "I like my job and it's nice to be able to help people in the same community I grew up in," she notes. Future plans include providing personal counseling and life/family planning for adults with disabilities. She recalls being taunted and treated poorly in high school because of her disability. The situation improved in college where she became interested in counseling. She likes to share her story with people who have never known someone with a disability. It is important for her to share that anything and everything is possible with grit, determination, and the help of people who care.



Kelley knew the first time she saw it that this was the "right" house for her.



Kelley at her home closing.



Relaxing in her family room.

Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Now Available!

Community Housing Network is currently seeking qualified home buyers for their Home Buying Program. You may receive substantial down payment and closing cost assistance for the purchase of your home if you meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Buying home in Oakland County
- First time home buyer
- Have a household member with a disability
- Qualify as low income - 50 to 70% of area median income
- Minimum household income of \$1,600 a month
- Good credit score/history
- Ability to obtain a mortgage

For questions or to request an application, contact Linda Velandra at 248-928-0111, x208.

Network News
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Community Housing Network, Inc., is a non-profit community organization dedicated to promoting inclusive communities through affordable housing.

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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.

Being a Peer Support Specialist

By Karen Webster, CHN Peer Support Specialist

A Peer Support Specialist lives, breathes, and exists as a peer. Nothing can change that. I am a peer to those who have mental health needs, live on Social Security, and need affordable housing. As a peer, I understand the people I work with because I walk in their shoes. I have the experience and empathy it takes to understand those who want better lives and who reach out for help. My function is different than that of a Peer Advocate, who stands up on behalf of another peer when that person cannot. A Peer Support Specialist empowers another peer to take action to help him/herself. Fortunately, there is an appropriate time for both those who support and those who advocate.

Many Thanks to CHN Volunteers

CHN thanks the children from the Vacation Bible School Ministry of the **University Presbyterian Church** in Rochester Hills, Michigan for their generous donation of 25 Welcome Buckets of cleaning supplies for our Leasing Assistance clients. We are grateful to University Presbyterian Church for investing their time and money to help our clients transition into their new lives.

Thanks also to the many **National City Bank** employees who volunteered their time on Community Appreciation Day on May 9, 2007. They helped spruce up some of the homes in which CHN consumers reside. National City Bank also reimbursed CHN \$10 per hour for each employee who volunteered to defray the cost of supplies.