



# NETWORK NEWS

Community Housing Network, Inc. - Edition 8 - Fall, 2005

## Message from Marc: Needs Assessment Prompts New Housing Strategy



CHN President & CEO,  
 Marc Craig

I am pleased to tell you that Community Housing Network is currently involved in a special effort to assess the housing needs of persons with disabilities in Oakland County. This housing needs assessment is being conducted in connection with a broader Oakland County sponsored assessment that will include a section pertaining to "special needs" populations. Data gained from the assessment will be used to develop a strategic housing plan for persons with disabilities.

The needs assessment is being implemented by the Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) at Wayne State University and is going to provide us with a lot of valuable information. DDI is doing this in a consumer driven manner based on the principles of self-determination. The Institute is employing a variety of techniques such as focus groups and individual surveys, to gain first hand information from people with disabilities, their families, and advocates.

The goal of our assessment is to obtain good baseline information about what people want such as: What housing stock is currently available and is it adequate to meet people's needs? What future unmet needs have we identified? What are our strengths in terms of being able to meet those needs? This assessment will allow us to quantify information so we can make good decisions about what kind of housing resources are needed for the future.

But the needs assessment is only a first step. The next step is to have a strategy in place that will give us ongoing information, in terms of where do people want to live a year from now, where do they want to live five years from now, what kinds of options are they thinking about?

The assessment and strategic plan will present us with opportunities to break new ground and to develop approaches that are going to expand resources and choices for persons with disabilities. We must continue to be active on several levels if we are going to reach the goals of a strategic plan. We must continue to advocate and work with various funding organizations at the federal, state

and local levels. CHN has formed connections and affiliations with other non-profits and we have worked to make known the housing needs of persons with disabilities to legislators. We are trying to pull together a coalition at all levels of people who are stakeholders in the effort meet the housing needs of people with disabilities. We are trying to ensure that housing for people with disabilities does not end up on the back burner in the struggle among worthy causes.

I must emphasize again that the assessment and strategic plan will create opportunities for people to advocate for our cause. Housing development is a long-term proposition and takes several years to have an impact. We want to help create communities that include people with disabilities in the same proportion that they are seen in the rest of society. This is a resource intensive proposition where we have to work with local planners, elected officials, and funding sources.

The entire community inclusion concept ties into the needs assessment process and the strategic plan. We have come a long way toward helping people with disabilities to live outside of institutions. Now we need to take it to the next level. We must ask what our communities can do ensure that people with disabilities can live successfully as valued citizens.

In summary, we will have an Oakland County needs assessment, we will have our housing assessment for people with disabilities, and we will have a strategic plan that will be reflective of what the community wants.

### Inside This Issue

Message from CHN President, Marc Craig . . . . .	Page 1
Chuck's Home Care Corner . . . . .	Page 2
Hats off to CHN Supporters. . . . .	Page 2
Dedication . . . . .	Page 2
Special Insert: Airport Rd. Home. . . . .	Page 3
Special Insert: Crumb Rd. & Laurelton Homes. . . . .	Page 4
Legal Q & A: The Eviction Process . . . . .	Page 5
New Housing Resource Manual . . . . .	Page 5
Collaborative Effort . . . . .	Page 6

### Chuck's Home Care Corner



Resource Manager,  
Chuck Bratton

Have a home maintenance question? We encourage you to write Chuck Bratton, CHN Housing Resource Manager at: Chuck's Home Care Corner, Community Housing Network, Inc., 570 Kirts Blvd., Suite 231, Troy, MI 48084. Answers to your questions will appear in future issues.

**Question:** What must be done to ensure a home remains in good shape as the leaves begin to fall?

**Answer:** A checklist can be helpful when preparing your home or apartment for cooler temperatures. The following is a Fall Home Maintenance Checklist you might consider using:

- Have septic tank pumped.
- Have heating system cleaned and inspected by a licensed professional.
- Have hot water heater drained and inspected.
- Change thermostat battery (if applicable).
- Clean or change furnace and humidifier filters.
- Put storm doors/windows back in place.
- Rake and bag leaves from lawn.
- Store garden hoses.
- Turn water supply to outside water faucets off from the inside. Leave outside faucets in open position.
- Remove debris from gutters and downspouts.
- Fertilize, repair and re-seed lawn.
- Clean oil and other automotive fluids from driveway.
- Arrange for winter snow removal.
- Purchase salt-free de-icing agents for sidewalks.
- Clean dryer venting.
- Inspect all doors and windows for proper weather stripping. Replace as needed.
- If home has an in-ground irrigation/sprinkler system have it professionally blown-out and winterized.
- Inspect and clean trash containers.
- Ensure downspout extenders and splash blocks are in place.

### Hats Off to Our CHN Supporters



**Citizens Bank - Charlotte**

**Mr. Safa Dawisha**



*Ms. Donna Johnson*

**Perfect Floors**

Mr. & Mrs. David Lewis

Mr. & Mrs. Steven McDonald

**Mr. Allan Meltzer**



Women's Council of Realtors

### Dedication to Those Affected by Hurricanes

This newsletter is being published shortly after the Gulf Coast was devastated by the winds and flooding of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. As an organization that assists persons who are homeless, Community Housing Network clearly recognizes the great need being experienced by the evacuees and persons who lost everything in this overwhelming disaster. Our hearts go out to them and hence, we dedicate this edition of "Network News" to the evacuees and to all the individuals and agencies participating in the relief effort.

**Special Insert: Life is Good in Three Homes Provided Under the HUD Section 811 Program**

Progressive Lifestyles, Inc. provides support services to many persons with disabilities in Oakland County. Dedicated staff members make the principles of self-determination come alive each day, as they gently teach and motivate individuals to actively participate in making decisions affecting their lives. In this insert we shall share stories about the remarkable people who live in three area homes. Each resident pays a portion of the rent, which is made more affordable by the HUD Section 811 Supportive Housing program for persons with disabilities.

**AIRPORT RD. HOME:** A house on Airport Rd. is home to three developmentally disabled adult women; Michelle, Roberta and Vicki. The home is located in the heart of Waterford with lots of shopping, recreation, and other opportunities for inclusion in the community. Each woman enjoys having a private bedroom and appreciates the spaciousness of the home's bi-level design. The three ladies are well matched and get along well. They all pitch in to perform household chores and interact enthusiastically with home manager, Brenda. The philosophy of Gentle Teaching, putting the relationship between student and teacher first, is practiced by the staff throughout a typical day.



From left to right: Michelle, Home Manager, Brenda, Vicki, and Roberta enjoy chatting at their kitchen table.

Each lady comes from a different background. Roberta spent more than 20 years living in a large state institution. She has been fortunate to receive services from Progressive Lifestyles for the past 18 years. Roberta has lived in several places since leaving the institution but says she is happiest living in the Airport Rd. home. She works hard at the Palace of Auburn Hills four days a week. This is quite an accomplishment; the money helps pay the bills and allows for some fun as well. She is also involved in activities at the church across the street from the home.



Roberta, staff support person, Michele and Vicki are proud of their home on Airport Rd. in Waterford.

Michele has been living in the Airport Rd. home for a little over a year. She stayed with her parents until they passed away and briefly lived with a supportive sister. The opportunity to share a home with other women in her situation has helped Michele grow in numerous ways. Learning to live with people other than family members has been quite an adjustment. The acceptance and support of the Progressive Lifestyles' staff has helped her make the transition. Now she attends the church across the street with her sister's family, making it quite easy to stay in touch with her family as well as assimilating into the local community. She also engages in volunteer activities five days a week such as Meals on Wheels and visiting senior citizens.

Vicki is the youngest of the three women and has spent time in and out of psychiatric hospitals. She currently works weekends as a volunteer in a day care center at the church across the street. This is

very important to Vicki as she wishes to find employment in this area upon graduating from school. Undoubtedly, the experience gained at the day care center will prove to be invaluable.

Each woman shares the need for a home in which only three individuals live. This arrangement has allowed for tremendous growth. In addition, the secure nature of the lease and a reasonable monthly rental charge has allowed for long term planning, the nurturing of close relationships, and a security that can only be found in a stable home life. The Section 811 program also proves to be cost efficient in terms of the programmatic cost of being able to share staff, resources, and vehicles. The home has proved to be an integral part in the building of secure, stable, and productive lives for the three women that have the good fortune to live in the residence.

Continued from page three

**CRUMB ROAD HOME:** Joel Hawkins is a soft spoken articulate man who has lived with quadriplegia for forty-two years. He relies on an electric wheelchair and requires assistance with many daily functions such as dressing, eating, and writing. In spite of his disability, his creative spirit is evident in his conversation. Joel ran track in High School and set a school record. Tragically, a diving accident at age sixteen left him with the inability to live independently. He was very angry after the accident and adjustment was difficult. For twenty-five years he received care at home from his parents and nine siblings. During that time he began studying Christian Science literature and slowly raised himself from a self-imposed mental and emotional bondage. Joel notes, "If you know you will never get well again, you have to learn to accept it".



Joel Hawkins does not put his varied interests on hold because of his disability.

After his parents passed away, Joel lived in a Pontiac nursing home for several years. Joel stated that the unresponsive staff frequently left him to lie in bed for many hours, which resulted in painful bedsores. He had just about lost hope for a useful, productive life. Fortunately, the nightmare ended in 1994 when Joel began receiving services from MORC. It was then he was able to leave the confining nursing home to reside in the house he loves so much. He shares his living accommodations with two room-

mates and works with his MORC support coordinator, Linda Nelson, in defining new goals and choices.

The home is located in a rural part of western Oakland County. Joel's bedroom doorwall opens to a deck with a stunning view of the yard sloping down to a pond surrounded by towering trees. Joel never tires of watching nature's beauty and the varied wildlife that wander into the yard. He says the home's location allows him to enjoy "naturevision" in place of television. Since moving into the home eleven years ago, Joel has been attending classes at a local college. He has earned 33 credits and maintains a 3.5 GPA. He is pursuing his dream of someday working in the computer field, with the use of voice activated assistive technology.

It is not surprising to see Joel driving his wheelchair down the street to the local Meijer, where he does his own shopping, including going through the checkout line by himself. Each day he sweeps the floor of his bedroom by utilizing an adaptive stick he created to obtain items from shelves or the floor. He does daily exercises to improve both upper & lower body strength. In addition to science, nature, and electronics, he displays a poetic side that can be appreciated when reading his writing. The quality of Joel's life has dramatically increased with support from MORC and rental assistance from the HUD Section 811 program.

**LAURELTON STREET HOME:** An attractive three bedroom brick ranch on Laurelton Street in downtown Clarkston is home to three developmentally disabled adult men. The home has a large backyard, spacious living areas, and a bedroom for each resident. Rick is the Home Manager and has worked for Progressive Lifestyles for many years. He deeply values the dignity of each person living in the home and interacts with each man in a caring, respectful manner.



From right to left: Carl, Rick and Dean pose for a "family" photo op.

Two of the men, Dean and Paul, are non-verbal and have had difficult lives, living in many different placements throughout the years. They are both currently attending school. Due to their particular needs the cost of their services are quite high. The lower cost 811 program lease arrangement has allowed the local mental health system to invest the necessary monies for the highly skilled staff that support these two individuals. Carl lives with Huntington's disease. He is fortunate to have a supportive family which he visits regularly. Carl has a friend who lives nearby and they enjoy doing things together. He is employed at a workshop four days a week and works at Red Lobster one other day. At first he took a bag lunch to the restaurant until Rick intervened. Now he enjoys Red Lobster cuisine at noontime. Carl attended Huntington's camp in August where he hiked, swam, and participated in crafts. When he first started going to the camp he was quite introverted and shy. He has made so much progress in this area that last year he was voted the most outgoing camper.

Reliable, dedicated staffing makes it possible for each person to experience the many shopping, recreational, and work possibilities available in the community. The men go out frequently, walking in local parks, visiting family, and attending other events which provide occasions for improving social skills. Long term meaningful relationships are critical for these men to be able to realize their full potential. This home has provided the best chance yet for Carl, Dean, and Paul to experience the richness and responsibilities of community living.

## Legal Issues - The Eviction Process



Knowing the law about fair housing and disability can be invaluable, whether you are an advocate, a service provider, or are living with a disability. This column will feature answers to questions that address legal issues that concern people with disabilities. Please send your inquiries to CHN Vice-President, Dawn Pischel, J. D., at 570 Kirts Blvd. Suite 231, Troy, MI 48084. Answers to your questions will appear in future columns.



**Question:** I have fallen behind on my rental payments and am afraid I will be evicted. Can you explain the eviction process?

**Answer:** An eviction is the legal process where the landlord asks the district court for the authority to remove a tenant from the rental property. An eviction may take place if:

- The tenant does not pay the rent;
- The tenant causes damage to the rental property;
- The tenant breaks the rules or terms written in the lease;
- The tenant causes a serious & continuing health hazard;
- The tenant engages in illegal drug activity or criminal conduct;
- The tenant continues to live in the apartment after the landlord tells him/her to move out.

The eviction process starts with a Notice to Quit, from the landlord to the tenant. Only after this notice has been given and the time the tenant is given to leave has passed, can the landlord start the eviction procedure in court. There are two types of a Notice to Quit. A seven day notice is used when one of a list of violations occurs (see above). The tenant has seven days to "fix" the violation or move out. A thirty day notice is given if the lease contains a clause that any violation of the lease is grounds for forfeiture of the lease, or if the lease has a specific ending date and the tenant stays on.

The eviction Notice to Quit must be in writing and must include the tenant's name and address; the reason for the eviction if it is a seven day notice; the date of the notice, and the landlord's signature. The Notice to Quit must be properly served. This means: 1) giving the notice to the tenant personally, 2) delivering it to the tenant's address and giving it to a responsible person there, or 3) sending the notice to the tenant by first class mail.

If the tenant does not move within the time set in the Notice to Quit, the landlord's next step is to file in court. The landlord cannot start the court case until the time in the eviction notice runs out. The court case is filed in District Court. To start the case, the landlord must show that he or she has properly given the tenant the Notice to Quit. The landlord can sue to get the tenant out, for money damages (including rent owed), or both. The starting court papers (Complaint and Summons) must also be properly served on the tenant. The Summons tells the tenant when to be in court. As a tenant, it is important to show up in court on the date you are given. Otherwise the landlord is very likely to get a judgment for whatever eviction or damages are requested in the Complaint. If you disagree that the landlord has grounds for evicting you - you need to show up with written evidence and/or witnesses to support your claim. You may also want to consult with a lawyer.

After the evidence in support of and opposing the eviction is heard, the judge will make a ruling, known as a Judgment. The Judgment may order the tenant to pay money damages for rent owed or injury to the rental unit. It may also include the ruling that the tenant must pay the rent due within 10 days, or move out of the property or it may order (in the case of termination of tenancy) that a tenant must move within 10 days, with no option to stay. If after the 10 days pass the tenant has not done what was ordered, the landlord may get an immediate "Writ of Restitution" signed by the judge. This is a court order commanding a sheriff or court officer to physically and forcibly, if necessary, remove the tenant and all his/her belongings from the rental unit.

## New Community Housing Network Housing Resource Manual Now Available



People have been telling us they appreciate the information we have provided on our CHN website. Now, with the support of the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority and its core providers, Community Living Services, Community Network Services, Easter Seals of Michigan, Macomb Oakland Regional Center, and Training & Treatment Innovations; Community Housing Network has spearheaded an effort to create a comprehensive Housing Resource Manual for Oakland County. Persons with disabilities, their families, advocates, and professional support persons now have two ways to access information contained in the manual: 1. A hardcopy manual was distributed to core providers. 2. An on-line version is available through the CHN website. The manual is the result of a collaborative effort between CHN, many core service providers, and other members of the local disability community. Information is being contributed by experts in their respective fields on such topics as Person Centered Planning, Self-determination, Fair Housing, Landlord/Tenant Law, Employment, Income Assistance and Benefit Programs, Alternatives to Guardianship, Estate Planning, Developing a Budget, Credit Repair, and Basic Home Maintenance, among other topics.



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Community Housing Network, Inc., is a non-profit community organization dedicated to the acquisition, development, and maintenance of safe, affordable and desirable housing for individuals with disabilities.

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**Collaborative Effort - Common Ground Mobile Crisis Unit Helps CHN Leasing Assistance Program**



Community Housing Network is enthusiastic about our collaboration with OCCMHA core service providers and other community agencies. Cooperative relationships frequently offer opportunities to provide the best possible service to consumers. On a recent occasion a woman in a CHN housing program was assisted by the newly formed Common Ground Mobile Crisis Unit.

The woman, who lived with severe mental illness apparently stopped taking her medication. CHN was contacted by the woman's landlord who expressed concern. The consumer had barricaded herself in her apartment and had disconnected her phone. Subsequent attempts by CHN to communicate with the woman failed and her safety was of immediate concern. At this point the CHN Housing Navigator contacted the Mobile Crisis Unit at Common Ground Sanctuary. After initially failing to communicate with the woman, members of the crisis unit obtained a court order to gain access to the apartment. The MCU team legally entered the apartment, diffused the situation and assessed the woman's condition. The woman was transported to a psychiatric hospital where she received the treatment she required to return to self-sufficient independent living.

The Mobile Crisis Unit team, consisting of a registered nurse, a master's level clinician and a psychiatrist are available to provide mental health services for individuals in Oakland County experiencing behavioral, situational or psychiatric crisis that require intervention. "This service will help us to better serve the community," said Liz Knisely, vice president of psychiatric services, Common Ground Sanctuary. "Our experienced team can go *directly* to the person experiencing the crisis instead of waiting for them to come to us."

Funded by the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority, the mobile unit is available 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to midnight. The team works in coordination with local police and sheriff departments, hospitals, nursing homes, group homes and private residences. Telephone referrals may be made directly to Common Ground Sanctuary at 248.456.1991. Clinicians will be available to triage and assess the safety of a situation in order to provide safe and thorough interventions. The police may be called for assistance in cases where the safety of the situation is uncertain.