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# Housing Coalition Headlines

## Community Housing Coalition of Madison County, NC

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Chris Watson, Grants and Office Support Coordinator  
George Austin, Repair Needs Assessor  
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### Who We Are

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## Management Musings

**By Chris Brown, Executive Director**

Rejuvenation, it comes with spring. Last week, here in the mountains of WNC we had temps approaching the mid 70's midweek and teens over the weekend. Spring is a time of rejuvenation and bringing back to life. When you live in substandard housing your faith must often be brought back to life. You must be resilient. At CHC we are renewing our acquaintance with many neighbors housing conditions and many distant neighbor volunteers. In this we are reminded of the resilience both of our neighbors hope that something will break, and their housing condition will see an opportunity for reprieve, as well as our volunteer neighbors resilience to give yet again and provide that reprieve. Many thanks to those teams of volunteers from across the mid-Atlantic and South East who willingly renew their commitment, as they book their visits and join CHC staff in the task of building once again that all so necessary bridge between need and resource. They know better than anyone that the giving and receiving constantly shifts on both sides of that bridge.

Much of what we do as staff at CHC is dependent on the rejuvenating powers of grants. From the HOME Investment Partnership Act grants awarded by the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium, and Urgent Repair grants awarded by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency to the continued support of The Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation and the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina - we could not do our work without them. But we also couldn't do it without you, our loyal donors, volunteers and supporters. Just as the spring sunshine warms our spirits, so we feel the same about these

CHC is a 501(c)(3) independent, non-profit organization, governed by a volunteer board. CHC's mission is to promote and facilitate healthy, safe, and affordable housing in Madison County, NC.

relationships that make our work and livelihoods possible. Thank you!

This past weekend I had the honor of being a part of a team presenting at the 38th annual Appalachian Studies Conference. The three others on my team had over 90 years combined experience in community bridge building. We were presenting tools and techniques on How to Build a Healthy Appalachian Community. Bridge building tools creatively honed by the creative and resilient people who live work and serve in Appalachia tools include: LISTENING, LEVELING & ACTING. Actively and carefully LISTENING: lends itself to building trust. LEVELING: realizing that service providers & service receivers have the opportunity to equally grow and learn from one another. ACTING: the folks that live in rural Appalachia have been examined for years often with many false promises. Taking action as soon as possible strengthens the infrastructure of that bridge you've been building which will later be a well-worn pathway for further and more impactful meetings. For me the bottom line goal is building bridges. The success of our communities depends on the skill in which we use these building tools by first seeking where we can bridge and focusing less on the divisions between us. Madison definitely is a living example of this truth.

## Splinters from the Board

**By Rev. Steve Honeycutt**

### **Meeting the Needs of the Higher Cost of Living**

Over the past year I traveled to Tennessee to visit my mother who was living at an assisted living facility. What I noted during these many trips is the overall cost of living is less than in our area. A number of years ago it appeared I was going to be transferred to a sister facility near Nashville, Tennessee. Our company had a program which allowed for a comparison between the area being moved from to the area being moved to in regard to the cost of living. I was amazed the cost of living in and around Nashville, at that time, was 15% less than our area.

The reason I am sharing this tidbit is the fact we have folks who live in our area who are working but are classified as the working poor. We also have elderly people who are on a fixed income. Neither of these can afford the basic maintenance to ensure their homes are a suitable place to dwell. CHC attempts to fill this gap in providing resources to help individuals and families have a safe and livable dwelling.

## Reclaim Madison

As many of you may know, CHC has been investigating the possibility of starting a store, similar to the ReUse store of Habitat to supply reclaimed building materials at a low cost for the community of Madison County. Efforts are underway to get this project going!

We are seeking volunteers to help get Reclaim Madison, our used building materials and household items thrift store, up and running. As a kick starter we will be collecting materials starting in March and leading up to a spring yard sale on May 9th in downtown Marshall. But, before we can start collecting we need volunteers to lead and assist with the collections. If you are looking for a way to get involved, work with people throughout the community and help get this venture off the ground, please contact Chris Watson at 649-1200 or [chrisw@chcmadisoncountync.org](mailto:chrisw@chcmadisoncountync.org).

## Volunteer Corner

**By June Trevor, CHC Volunteer Program Coordinator**

**NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS Saturdays Are on a Roll!**

We had a huge turnout for our second *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* workday on Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. Twenty-four volunteers, including the very actively involved homeowner, worked productively under a gorgeous blue sky. With guidance from George Austin, CHC assessor and site supervisor, the group accomplished a deck tear-off and completion of a 50-foot French drain, within just five hours!

A big shout out to Laurie Jaradat of Mars Hill University (MHU) for again rallying such a substantial crew including her two sons, Justin and David Cross, and 10 MHU students: Samantha Proppe, Mercedes Rich, Rachel Possinger, Rachel Clark, Sumner Stancil, Alexis Tyler, Nich Sanders, Brittany Baker, Robbie Morgan, and Quinton Powell. Thanks to all of these MHU volunteers and to Nancy Dagley of Marshall for volunteering your time and skills.

Thanks also to the CHC-connected folks who assisted: Larry Burda, Lee Hoffman, Chris and Dana Brown, student intern Ash Sargent and to our youngest and equally hardworking volunteers Aine Brown and Quinn Yeakley!



**Want to help a neighbor? Next Workday Is Coming Right Up!**

The next *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* (NHN) Saturday workday is Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at a home on Gabriel's Creek Road near Mars Hill. Projects include digging a French drain and some exterior carpentry repairs. Groups or individuals are welcomed to volunteer. CHC provides site supervision, materials and water for volunteers. All you need to bring is a bag lunch, a neighborly attitude - and a shovel if you have one! To sign up and get more details, contact me at 828-649-1200 or [june@madisoncountync.org](mailto:june@madisoncountync.org).

Can't make April 11<sup>th</sup>? There are plenty more NHN Saturday workdays to choose from in 2015. Here's the schedule:

- May 16
- June 20
- July 18
- August 22
- September 12
- October 17
- November 14

Call or email me if you want to sign up for any of these workdays!

**March 3 *Neighbors Helping Neighbors* Information Session**

Thanks to all who attended our evening information session announcing the NHN Saturday workdays program and learn about other ways of volunteering with CHC's local home repairs program. Our twelve participants also responded to fun CHC housing trivia

questions, receiving handy door prizes (e.g., duct tape, safety glasses, hammer) when they “nailed” the answer! Thanks to Lori Massey, CHC Board Member, for providing delicious snacks for this event.

### **CHC Summer Repairs Program**

We are establishing the schedule for Summer 2015 with volunteer groups who will travel to Madison County to do repairs between late May to early August. I will be contacting returning groups and new groups who have made inquiries through early April to confirm dates, interests, skills levels and numbers to ease finding appropriate project offers. We are also delighted to have at least one new mission group visiting our county for the first time this summer. The extensive volunteer labor available through our dedicated summer program groups has enormous positive impact for our clients. We look forward to working with all of you this summer.

### **Call for Summer Program Interns!**

We are actively recruiting for two summer program intern positions to assist with our busy Summer Repairs Program between late May and early August (start and end dates negotiable). Intern responsibilities include outreach to our visiting volunteer groups including delivering work packets, volunteer support at work sites, communications with clients being served, collecting volunteer reports and many other interesting tasks. These volunteer intern positions require a minimum of 20 hours per week. Mileage for CHC-related travel will be reimbursed. This is a perfect resume-building opportunity for college students interested in housing, social work, volunteer management or working in a nonprofit setting. If interested, please contact me at 828-649-1200 or [june@chcmadisoncountync.org](mailto:june@chcmadisoncountync.org) to request a detailed job description and application form.

## **Grant Update**

### **By Chris Watson, Client and Grants Coordinator**

In the fall of 2014 CHC received a \$100,000 Urgent Repair Program (URP) grant from the NC Housing Finance Agency. Through the end of February CHC has spent \$25,467 of the URP grant and matched those monies with \$24,570 in in-kind labor and material donations, a 96% match! It is specifically because of this community-based Neighbors Helping Neighbors approach that CHC receives this funding, and we are so thankful for all of you that are assisting in these efforts!

On **April 11** CHC is going to host another Neighbors Helping Neighbors Saturday work party in conjunction with a HOME Rural Rehabilitation grant. The volunteer portion of the project will focus on repairing the exterior of the home, while contractors will renovate the interior of the home to make it more accessible for the disabled, elderly residents. This project will also be in conjunction with NC Vocational Rehabilitation Services who will install a new handicap ramp on the home. This is truly a collaborative community effort. Please consider signing up to volunteer at one of CHC's Neighbors Helping Neighbors Saturday work parties, knowing that it is the work of volunteers on the ground that make CHC successful in addressing the housing needs of Madison County residents.

## **Donation Box**

Financial contributions to further support our work are welcome throughout the year. You can always mail a tax deductible gift to The Community Housing Coalition of Madison County, P.O. Box 1166, Marshall, NC 28753. Or visit our website at <http://www.chcmadisoncountync.org> to make a donation on-line.

Thank you!

## Closing Thoughts

As spring weather can be a bit tumultuous, keep an eye out for limbs and debris in your neighborhood that may be dangerous for those with less mobility. Simple gestures such as clearing brush and branches from yards, driveways, and walkways is something you can do to make your neighbors a little more comfortable. If you see a neighbor who may need home repair assistance after damaging storms, let them know CHC may be able to help.

March ended by putting end to some beautiful flowers that began to peek out. But crocuses return, daffodils sprout and Appalachian Mountain ramps will flourish.



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