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Management Musings

By Christopher Brown, Executive Director

A jolly 'top of the month' to everyone!! December is here, Christmas is around the corner, and I hope folks have recovered from a big Thanksgiving meal with family and friends. We will not be doing a January newsletter, so this issue will have to be big and special enough to tide everyone over for awhile. It's the perfect time to grab yer cup of joe, settle in by the fire or under a cozy blanket, and dig in!!

2016 was a huge year for CHC. I'm proud to report that our work in the community engaged with 988 individuals, including the repairs of 164 neighbors' homes. Thanks to CHC's summer and year-round volunteer programs, over 10,000 hours of volunteer labor helped ensure safe housing in Madison County. CHC volunteer crews sweated hard this year, completing important jobs like roof replacements, well & septic repairs, and building a bridge so a neighbor could have automobile access to and from her home.

So much growth has happened for CHC in the community that I feel called to sit back in recognition for a moment. CHC's community fundraising campaign with local restaurants helped raise awareness for CHC and drove more customers through local business doors - a win for both parties. Amazing new volunteers rocked our "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" workdays this year. We've had folks from Wells Fargo, Print Pack, and Mars Hill University come out to participate, as well as former clients who were helped by previous NHN workdays. I can't stress enough how important this program is to rehabilitating homes and building community in Madison. Folks from all different

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[Who We Are](#)
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.

backgrounds work side by side to learn home maintenance skills and tackle big repair projects. It truly demonstrates how many hands coming together can get a great deal done.

Those last words remind me of a favorite quote of mine. It keeps me inspired before every CHC board meeting, so much so that it's written on the outside of every meeting folder: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

I think these words are especially important as the year winds to a close and a new one approaches. Local community, I believe, is where the seeds of real change get planted, grow strong, and pollinate the world with new ideas. I hope these words encourage readers at home to get involved locally, whether through CHC or another organization in your town. Create the kind of world you want to live in starting right at home, right in your neighborhood. What would a community be without caring neighbors? Meet folks who also want your community to be resilient, safe, and connected by many criss-crossing webs. Reach out. Support positive change. Share knowledge. Spread joy. Good words, perhaps, to base a New Year's Resolution off of. . . . which brings me to all the exciting work CHC has planned for 2017. Becoming a developer of affordable housing and starting a used-goods store of building materials ("Re-Claim Madison") are still CHC's long-term goals. A lot of the groundwork has been laid already, and the next steps are to seek funding and continue to build our capacity.

Personally, I'm excited about participating in the 2017 Pathways for Nonprofit Leadership program, which I just found out I've been accepted into. Myself and other leaders of local nonprofits will grow our skills so we can better guide the organizations we're a part of. As Executive Director, my job will be to manage the infrastructural growth and to push CHC towards serving a greater number of homeowners in need by way of galvanizing more community members and business owners to join hands with CHC.

As I wrap up this final newsletter of 2016, it's with regret that I must give our final salute to two members of the CHC family. Annie Jaradat, our Volunteer Coordinator, and Mike Ray, CHC's bookkeeper, will both be leaving us during this 2016-2017 transition.

Annie has greatly expanded the perspective of what the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program really means. Her decision to leave CHC does not mean that she's giving her final goodbye. She will continue to advise us and keep us honest about the true needs of those heavily burdened within the Madison Community. Her dedication to managing the summer volunteers, NHN volunteers, and MHU interns during her tenure with CHC will always be greatly appreciated. I will miss her lighthearted humor, since she definitely kept me on my toes more than once or twice and turned a lot of folks' frowns to smiles. Thank you, Annie, for all your hard work and your big heart that you shared with all of us at CHC.

Mike is a long-time member of the CHC family who has dedicated over 5 years to managing CHC's books. What a ride it's been! Thankfully, he has managed to train a new bookkeeper, Ms. Lyn Tedone, to take over in his stead. We deeply appreciate all the time and hard work Mike has given to CHC, and offer him a fond farewell. We also welcome the talented Lyn, who has over 20 years experience, to the CHC family! Look to the section "Mike's Farewell" later in this issue to read about his reflections on how much CHC has grown during his time with us.

Happy New Year everyone, and see you all bright and shiny in 2017!!

Splinters from the Board

By Jennifer Reda

Each November I am given the opportunity to contribute in this spot, my "splinter" of a story as a Board member. And I like that it rolls around at Thanksgiving time when gratitude is invited to the forefront of our lives by the holidays. To be honest, gratitude keeps me grounded all year round but it's nice pausing to give it some deeper reflection.

Last night, at my family's dinner table, our 13-year-old son offered thanksgiving for his wrestling team. I was thankful for the warm soup in front of me. My husband, reflecting on a conversation we had earlier in the day

about the work of CHC, offered, "I am thankful for Jake and George." Jake and George are two men, amidst many people, that help make CHC tick. These guys are what we call in the agency, assessors. They visit the homes of our neighbors in need of critical home repair. They drive our Madison County roads to greet a family, look at a problem, determine what it will take material, skill, and money wise to fix that problem. Then they organize that information into worksite write-ups that get passed along to volunteer groups or contractors that help get the work done. They are an important bridge. They have conversations with homeowners about ways they can get involved with the work being done on their own home. They help troubleshoot worksite logistics and provide education to those who want to help but need skilled advice on how to best complete a project. In a word they are invaluable. And, like many things in our world that we count as invaluable, their impact can't be fully captured in a statistic.

I can tell you that CHC is growing and evolving in exciting ways, and during the summer of 2016, 7 assessors visited 34 homes putting in over 100 hours. These numbers matter. The data guides us and holds us professionally accountable. But there are also ripple effects that remain hidden behind these numbers; we can call it the "heart math" that makes $1 + 1 = 3$. Or 4. Or 10.

I am grateful to report that in 2016 CHC-managed volunteers served 43 homes and 164 of our neighbors. Within those numbers, 13 roofs, 2 wells, and 3 septic systems were replaced. But I'm also grateful to share this bit of impact:

As directors of a summer youth ministry, our family has watched teenagers returning to our camp from a workday at a resident's home arrive with more pep in their step because Jake or George was at their worksite. You can hear in their stories how the gifts and the presence of the assessors made possible better work on more complex projects, less worry when problems arose, and a rich sense of teamwork. They feel their less skilled hands were able to contribute more fully because of the assessor's leadership. Then later, in a worship circle, we've listened as they share stories from the workday. It is not at all uncommon that their affection for a CHC staff person they've worked alongside on the worksite comes up. 1 assessor + 1 worksite = a whole crew of empowered young people who better serve their neighbors.

Volunteer Corner

By Annie Jaradat, Volunteer Coordinator

What a wild and amazing ride I have had over the past year here at CHC. I have had the opportunity to work with and for some of the most wonderful, caring, and awesome people ever. I have seen CHC have and deal with major growing pains; I have seen an expansion, along with many other highs and lows. Through it all, I have seen the commitment that CHC has made to our community, our neighbors, and our environment. From the local volunteers to summer mission groups, I have seen the difference that you have made and I want to say thank you.

It is with a heavy heart for me to tell everyone that I will be leaving CHC as the volunteer coordinator, but I will be staying as part of the family, a supporter, a volunteer, and an advocate. My life has taken some unexpected twists and turns and I feel that I am needed to focus more fully on my family, my business, along with myself. This was not a decision that was made lightly, or without much heartache. I see a bright future full of growth for CHC and the number of neighbors they will be able to serve. With that said it will take us all to continue to donate, volunteer, advocate, and support CHC and its mission to promote and facilitate healthy, safe, and affordable housing through advocacy, education, and resource development. This job was such a great opportunity to learn, grow, and give back to a county and its neighbors that I love so well. It is my wish that everyone who reads this will continue to give their full support to CHC and volunteer in order to make a difference in the lives of our Madison County neighbors.

What an awesome group we had at our last "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" of 2016. Remember to be like Ben, keep the peace and volunteer in 2017!



If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the CHC office at 828-649-1200 or volunteercoordinator@chcmadisoncountync.org.

Client & Grants Update

By Chris Watson, Client and Grants Coordinator

One of the best parts of my job is working with the large network of agencies, missions, groups, businesses, and individuals who make up the web of support for our Madison County neighbors. Although I'm sure I'm leaving someone out, and my sincere apologies to those I have missed, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and recognize the social services network that helps make Madison County such a great place live and work: Everyone at Assisting Ministries of Madison, French Broad Baptist Association, Madison County Government, NC Housing Finance Agency, City of Asheville Community Development Office, Community Action Opportunities, United Way of Madison County and Pisgah Legal Services. We also would not be where we are today without the wonderful foundations that support the day-to-day operations of CHC: Fanny Landwirth Foundation, Sisters of Mercy of NC Foundation, the Madison County Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Western NC. I am also especially thankful and grateful to have the opportunity to get to know and work beside nearly two dozen client volunteers.

For the past few months, Pietra Walsh and Laura Cheatham have been volunteering in our office. Pietra has been leading an enormous effort to get our PODIO client management software populated and running. Laura has been instrumental in writing several of our operating grants, as well as identifying new grant opportunities, including connecting CHC with Resourceful Communities and the Conservation Fund. These two efforts will help CHC continue increasing the impact to the community through improved efficiency and resource development.

In 2017, with the help of many hands, we will be working to fully implement PODIO to manage clients, volunteers, and grant resources, expanding our scope of fund development, and planning for the future implementation of both the Reclaim Madison Store and new affordable home construction. Cheers to all that make this Coalition an amazing community effort!

Mike's Farewell

I became the volunteer bookkeeper early in 2011 after Rick Molland came to our church (Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit) and did a presentation on CHC. During his presentation, he said the bookkeeper had recently resigned and that they were looking for a volunteer bookkeeper. Jo (my wife) said on the way home that I should consider volunteering. I had just finished a consulting job with my former employer so she assumed I had some extra time on my hands!

I found an April 2011 CHC Cash Forecast report on my old computer that showed monthly cash expenses of approx \$4,000 and unrestricted cash on hand of \$6,000. Needless to say, CHC had a hard time keeping the doors open. Rick was the sole employee and he had reduced his hours to a couple of days

a week. The U.S. had just started the climb out of the recession but Madison County was still trying to find the bottom.

I have observed the steady climb from the financial bottom of the organization to where it is today. The mission of CHC never changed during that time period but its ability to service the needs of the community has grown significantly during the last five years. Once CHC stabilized, I became a paid bookkeeper as a self employed contractor. The bookkeeper function has remained part time but has become more time consuming as the organization has grown. It has been a pleasure to work first with Rick Molland and currently with the present staff and Chris Brown, the Executive Director. My decision to end my time as CHC's bookkeeper has been with some regret but I look forward to continuing to be a supporter of CHC and its mission to our community.

December Eats & Drinks for Housings Sake

CHC is excited to partner with one of the best burger & BBQ joints in Western NC this month! Continuing CHC's efforts to raise awareness for our organization and local restaurants alike, EVERY WEDNESDAY IN DECEMBER, Stackhouse American Eatery & Pub will donate 10% of the day's sales to CHC.



Stackhouse has quickly become a local hotspot in downtown Mars Hill with its creative, well-crafted menu. Signature burgers come loaded with fixins', or you can build your own with an assortment of tasty toppings. Boasting grass-fed beef and vegetarian and kid-friendly options, we can see why it's so popular! Stackhouse restaurant is located at 37 South Main St in the heart of downtown Mars Hill. Hours are 11:00am – 10:00pm.

Eats & Drinks for Equal Housing is a community fellowship drive that builds bridges between CHC, local restaurants, and residents in Madison County. Neighborhoods are only as strong as the ties that bind members to eat, connect, volunteer, and support each other within the same community. CHC thanks The Original Papa Nick's Italian Restaurant for partnering with us in November!

Winter Appeal & Donation Box

The CHC volunteer Santa's Elves have been working diligently writing letters, printing, stuffing, addressing, and stamping envelopes, and putting on them on the postman's sleigh! **Watch for these holiday letters arriving soon in your post box.** Keep in mind that donations from pocket change to pocket gold when leveraged through CHC's program are instantly multiplied by at least 4! So please, give what you can. You will be directly affecting big change whatever the amount!



As a reminder, CHC is proud to be a United Way partner! As you make contributions to the United Way of Madison County, you can designate CHC as a recipient.

If you would like to make a donation to CHC now, rather than waiting for the winter appeal letter:

You can 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 online.

Thank you!

Legs & Regs

November's election results are in, and no matter who you voted for, affordable housing is a non-partisan issue that CHC will be paying attention to

as it relates to our mission and affects some of our key sources of funding. At the state level, housing advocates in North Carolina can celebrate the passage of four affordable housing bonds in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, and Orange County, totaling \$70 million dollars in affordable housing investment.

At the federal level, CHC has many questions with regards to a Trump presidency and Republican control of both the House and Senate. While President-Elect Donald Trump was silent on affordable housing issues during the campaign, he has spoken about the need for investments in infrastructure, which may include a place for housing. Questions remain about funding levels for HUD and the USDA, whether the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) will survive, and the future of the [Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule](#). We will continue to look for answers as President-Elect Trump appoints members to his cabinet.

Closing Thoughts

Last month's issue we had some DIY tips for staying warm in your home. This month we are passing on the good advice of Friends of Animals in Madison County to make sure our pets are staying warm too. Dogs can freeze if left outside in the cold (32 degrees or less). A dog house can help, if it's adequately insulated with straw or blankets and has a door covering. If you see any pets left out in the cold without proper shelter, call on your neighbor to see if you can help, or if need be, call FOMCA ((828) 649-9798 in Madison County) or your local animal shelter to get some helpful advice. Make sure the love our pets give to us is honored with the same love and protection in return.

On a lighter note, happy holidays everyone! See you in February 2017! Embrace the long nights that draw us inward to home and hearth, gathering the things we love into our arms for the blessed solace they always bring. If you are feeling isolated during this time, call a friend or neighbor over for tea. Don't be afraid to reach out to others and lend a hand where others need you. If instead you are craving solitude and creative space, the winter season is perfect for focusing on projects and shutting out all distractions! Celebrate all that you feel called to put your passionate energy towards.

Blessings and be well.



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