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Housing Coalition Headlines

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Management Musings

By Christopher Brown, Executive Director

A belated Happy 2017, my fellow Madison County folks! Welcome to a new year and unpredictable winter weather! One minute it's 65 degrees and sunny, and the next it's frigid and below freezing. Still, I'm excited for what lies ahead and just trying to roll with all of the outside forces we cannot control.

One of the things we CAN make an immediate impact on if not the weather is the level of involvement we as individuals contribute in our community. I have been thrilled to see CHC clients get more and more involved in Neighbors Helping Neighbors workdays, for example. Participating in their own repairs and on other clients' homes as a way of giving back is exactly what Community Housing Coalition is all about. And so is focusing on connections, rather than divisions. Having celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. day recently across the nation, I have been reflecting on the importance of less competition and separation in our society, and more togetherness and "we're all in this together" thinking. The great civil rights leader once said "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." Dr. King's words have been ringing in my ears as I shape new goals and set my intentions as Executive Director of CHC for the year ahead with all the many changes that are already underway. This month I was privileged to attend a leadership training event in Hendersonville, and boy, was it intense! Allow me to elaborate.... WNC Nonprofit Pathways hosted an overnight retreat for various leaders of nonprofits in the region, and it was equally exciting, inspiring, and humbling to be a part of it. Personally, I wish every elected official had to go to one of these before assuming his/her position! It should be a

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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.

requirement to deeply reflect on one's strengths and the areas where one needs to stretch and grow. I got a 360-degree assessment from staff, board and other colleagues, and I am super grateful for the honesty and helpful feedback!

The other big news already underway in 2017 is the new team CHC is putting into place. I've already mentioned that our previous Volunteer Coordinator, Annie Jaradat, who was such a dedicated member of our team, had to step down. We are excited to be welcoming Stephanie McCullough to the CHC family as the new Volunteer Coordinator! You can read more about her in her piece in this Newsletter, below, but you may also remember hearing that she was our excellent Summer Intern this last summer.

Welcome Stephanie, and also welcome to our new Administrative Assistant, Whitney Mitchell! She will be starting in February to fill the role that was newly created and broken-in by Katie Hart, CHC's first Administrative Assistant in this growing organization. Ms. Hart is stepping down to follow a different career path, but we are grateful for all the infrastructure and organization she's put in place. Many thanks to Katie for creating a framework that will be utilized for many years to come!

Whitney Mitchell has been regularly volunteering with CHC for several weeks and months now, and we've been impressed with her talents and hard work. What better way to thank her stellar service to her community than to offer her a position on our staff? This new team of long-time members Chris Watson and myself plus Stephanie and Whitney promises to be a well-balanced group who are all passionate about working for CHC and dedicated to taking action in the community. The four of us may be a small core group, but we have a wide network of other key players, such as Jake Owen and George Austin as Site Assessors, and devoted board members and volunteers who keep coming back to help CHC out.

So if you're reading this, consider yourself a partner in CHC's mission to build awareness and take action in your local community through improving safe housing and bridging neighborly relationships... Let us know when you're ready to get involved! Call us at (828) 649-1200 to find out about action oriented opportunities to simultaneously improve your's and a neighbor's living conditions in Madison alongside a truly community-centric organization! You never know where it might lead... Cheers, neighbors!!

Splinters from the Board

By Katherine Early

I recently joined the Community Housing Coalition board and look forward to working with the other board members, staff and volunteers to help Madison County residents have homes that are safe, dry and warm. I have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity helping to build homes for 20 years, first in Orange County, North Carolina and for the past sixteen years here in Western North Carolina. I was excited when CHC started the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program and have worked on three homes thus far.

Before joining the Board, I only knew about the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program and have been amazed to learn how many more houses are repaired and rehabbed through CHC's other programs and how much is accomplished with such a small staff. During 2016, 84 homes in the county received repairs - new roofs, well/septic repair/replacements, and many other repairs to make homes safer. The role of volunteers makes this possible.

I encourage you to join us one Saturday at a Neighbors Helping Neighbors work day - even if you're not particularly handy with a hammer there's plenty of work you can do!

Volunteer Corner

By Stephanie McCullough, Volunteer Coordinator

Hello everyone! I am thrilled to be able to introduce myself as the new Volunteer Project Coordinator of Community Housing Coalition of Madison County. Along with a slight change in position title, there are lots of other exciting changes going on at CHC, which you'll read more about in other sections. As for me, I am jumping right in with fervor, anxious to coordinate projects and volunteers for CHC and its neighbors.

If my name rings a bell it is because I interned at CHC last summer. It was such a great experience, I just couldn't stay away! Annie paved the way for me to make the position my own, and though her shoes will be hard to fill, I will do my best. She is missed daily and we are so grateful to Annie, and her family, for all they did to contribute to CHC's cause.

Thank you Annie!

A quick note about me: Having helped run a general contracting business for years, I have some housing renovation experience. In recent years my shift focused to social work and in December I earned my Bachelors of Social Work degree with a minor in Psychology. I have lived in Madison County nearly 18 years. My five children and I currently live in Marshall and I look forward to getting them involved at CHC wherever possible, particularly on Neighbors Helping Neighbors work days.

So let me jump right in to say that just because it is February and the weather may be a little dreary, it doesn't mean our neighbors don't have urgent needs. In fact, even more needs arise at this time of the year, particularly in regard to heating homes. There are also many homes with roof damage, the extent of which may not be apparent until our area receives torrential rains or heavy snow. Our very first NHH work day of 2017 will be on Saturday, February 25th. Please spread the word and let me know who I can count on to be there. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact the CHC office at 828-649-1200 or volunteercoordinator@chcmadisoncountync.org.

Thank you for all the warm welcomes I have already received. I look forward to working for CHC and its neighbors for a long time to come.

Client & Grants Update

By Chris Watson, Client and Grants Coordinator

Last Tuesday, after two years of fundraising and hundreds of volunteer hours we are excited to announce that CHC has gone live with our new PODIO platform. The PODIO software will allow CHC staff to manage clients, repairs, contractors, volunteers, and grants from one online system. Currently we are only utilizing the client management side while we learn to navigate the system, but already we are seeing how powerful a tool PODIO is. We can now easily sort and manage repairs by priority, skill level, cost, and type. In addition, we have improved our ability to track client progress and better coordinate staff work flows. This will improve our ability to serve our neighbors, match their needs with available volunteers, and track CHC's impact on the community. With all that being said, I can tell you now, with a simple click of the mouse, that we have 119 homes needing 696 repairs, 96 of which are urgent. We also are looking to repair 60 leaking roofs as quickly as possible.

I would like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to Jennifer Woodruff, Pietra Walsh, Whitney Mitchell, Kayla McClendon, Raven Forney and Ben Owen for volunteering their time to input all the client and volunteer data into PODIO. It was a tremendous undertaking that took hundreds of hours to complete. We could not have done it without their time and commitment.

Notes from Our Neighbors

Every once in awhile, we receive notes of clients' expressed gratitude. We would like to share these with you as a means of sharing their appreciation. Without your support, we would not be able to do this work! Here is a note received from a client about a roof repair:

"My heart cries tears of joy in the gratefulness of the most needed roof. I don't know really how to say thank you as in just thank you, but I am truly grateful. THANK YOU"

Donation Box



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: 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!

Eats & Drinks for Housings Sake

STAY TUNED!!! And look forward to Blue Mountain Pizza in March!

Closing Thoughts

Have you ever taken a walk in your neighborhood, enjoying the birdsong and the play of light through the trees, maybe taking a deep breath in and pausing to appreciate the abundant diversity and beauty of nature all around you.....only to notice out of the corner of your eye a crushed soda can and fast food wrapper littering the side of the road?

If your answer is yes, then unfortunately you aren't alone! Littering is a serious problem in Madison County, but luckily most of us are good neighbors and are motivated to clean things up. There are many volunteer opportunities in Madison County to keep our beautiful mountains and rivers healthy.

Recently, RiverLink and Ivy River Partners teamed up with a bunch of Madison County residents to clean up the French Broad riverbanks by the Redmon Dam. On January 21, the group collected 25-30 bags of trash plus additional debris that couldn't fit in bags. CHC's own Chris Watson and Whitney Mitchell (staff) and Pietra Walsh and Laura Cheatham (regular volunteers) answered the call to participate in the clean-up. Many thanks to RiverLink's Dave Russell for organizing the event! Anyone who wants to contact RiverLink to lend a hand at future opportunities can contact Dave Russell at (828) 545-9099 or dave@riverlink.org.

We at CHC support all the community action taking place in our beautiful county!

Forward
To A Friend

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