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## Housing Coalition Headlines

### Community Housing Coalition of Madison County, NC

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## Management Musings

**By Christopher Brown, Executive Director**

As the flags flew at half-mast in our County this month, and in several counties around the U.S., I'm reminded of how vital being a part of a strong community is. Madison County and its welcoming web of caring neighbors and folks willing to lend a hand stands out to me as having that crucial heart and soul that I haven't found in other places I've lived. If people are searching for a sense of belonging and support, they need look no further than the friendly neighbor who stops to chat with them on Main Street or at the grocery store, church, or on their own front porch. While I want to acknowledge the real hurting that is happening around recent events this month, I also can't help but give thanks to the fact that I live in a community where folks feel safe in reaching out to each other. Community-building seems to be the answer when I look at all that is happening in the world outside our community and I wonder how to put my foot forward.

And, appropriately, reaching out to the community was a big focus for this month at CHC. Our June board meeting was held as planned at the Spring Creek Community Center in Hot Springs. The Spring Creek Community is blessed to be situated in a rural valley far from the hustle and bustle of highways and shopping centers. Wow, can I just say what eye-popping beauty we have in these hollers!! We at CHC had the wonderful opportunity to sit with several members of the Spring Creek Community Center's own board of directors and to share the important work CHC is doing to keep folks in their homes. I learned about the food pantry they're running at the Community Center with the help of Manna Food Bank and the Salvation Army. I felt very excited to make new connections with folks who are working hard in their neighborhood to

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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.

keep people warm, well-fed and supported. Hopefully word will spread to more folks who need home repair assistance in the Spring Creek area that CHC is here to help!

I'm also super excited that the summer season is in full swing. Summer is traditionally CHC's bread and butter time of year, where swarms of mission groups from all over the U.S. converge upon Madison to make home rehabilitations for CHC clients. CHC is making history already in Summer 2016. We're only one month into the season and already in the completion stages of FOUR roof replacements! I'm talking \$10,000 worth of materials and major volunteer mojo happening to make these crucial rehabilitation efforts succeed. Let's celebrate all the hard work these volunteer groups and CHC staff have done to put new, safe covering over the heads our neighbors in need.

## Splinters from the Board

By Lin Von Dreele, President

### CHC's Board of Directors Takes to the Road

In the article above, Executive Director Christopher Brown, stated the reasons for the CHC Board to hold its monthly meetings in Madison County communities. These road trips give CHC the opportunity to hear people talk about needs in their immediate communities; to articulate the specifics of CHC's home repair services, the application process, and eligibility; and to encourage community organizations and individuals to participate in the Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) program.

Nothing takes the place of sitting with folks for a while, sharing common interests, and figuring out how CHC's resources can help the neighbor up the road. That kind of conversation happened at the Spring Creek Community Center June 15. Betty Reeves, chair of the Center's board, gathered their members to meet with our board and staff. Besides reviewing the practical CHC operational details, talk centered on concern for un-named local neighbors who have a hard time remaining in their homes . . . the very homes their families have lived in for generations I was struck by the level of sharing that night. As a close knit (beautiful!) valley community, the Center has an active food pantry and feeding program from which low income neighbors are "well fed." The Center, however, is not equipped to organize major housing repairs for widows and very low income community residents. Also, there was frank discussion about the deeply held mountain pride of residents.

Understandably, many are reluctant to seek outside assistance. Although CHC is always cognizant of this sensitive issue across the county, it was a valuable discussion point with Spring Creek folks.

During this calendar year, CHC has completed or will work on 7 projects in Spring Creek. In partnership with community centers throughout our far-flung mountainous county, CHC hopes to have more "eyes on the ground" to further meet the housing needs of residents.

Plans to organize similar meetings in the Shelton Laurel, Ebbs Chapel, Beech Glen, and other communities are underway.

## Volunteer Corner

By Annie Jaradat

The summer is here and CHC is up and running full steam ahead. There has been so much happening on the frontlines it is hard to know where to start. Our summer mission groups have already started coming and working on our neighbors homes. This has been such an eye opening and humbling experience in working with these mission groups in order to serve our neighbors.

I am continually amazed to see the selfless acts of giving by these youth and their leaders. We have already had St. Patrick's Summer Mission Group who came all the way from Ohio who did a fantastic job in serving several neighbors while they were here. They were even able to help a

neighbor to have new gutters professionally installed and helped them with a much needed household furnishing. There was also Westover Baptist Church from Greensboro, NC who also did a wonderful job in serving our Madison County neighbors. I would also like to give a big shout out to Glory Ridge, along with our very own fabulous board member Jennifer Reda, and her awesome assistant Caleb Thomason. They are doing such a wonderful job in hosting and managing so many summer mission groups who are serving our neighbors throughout Madison County. These guys truly do an amazing job in facilitating many volunteers for CHC and the neighbors we serve.



Even with the many summer mission groups that are coming and volunteering here in the county, there is still a great need for local volunteers. There is so much work being done, but there is still much to be done. I would like to challenge each and every one reading this newsletter to get involved, encourage the youth in your community and/or church to become involved. There are many of our neighbors that need very basic yardwork/repairs done during this time of year. Take some time and help a neighbor near you, and if you can just sit a spell and have a conversation with them. I would also like to welcome a few additions to our CHC workspace, Laura Cheatham who is helping out in the office and baking us some awesome muffins. We also have Stephanie McCullough from Mars Hill University as our Social Work intern for the summer showcasing some amazing empowerment skills. We appreciate these ladies for giving their time and talents as we serve our neighbors of Madison County.



#### Neighbors Helping Neighbors Updates

Want to get involved? We are still seeking volunteers for upcoming NHN workdays. If you or your group is interested, please email [volunteercoordinator@chcmadisoncountync.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@chcmadisoncountync.org)

NHN Workdays in 2016  
(All Saturdays ~ 10 am to 3 pm)

Volunteers Signed  
Up

Repair projects will be announced.

August 27- Wells Fargo

September 17- *Still in need of volunteers and/groups to sign up*

October 15- *Still in need of volunteers and/groups to sign up*

November 12- *Still in need of volunteers and/groups to sign up*

## Client & Grants Update

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

I just returned from the URP16 implementation workshop in Raleigh. CHC is again receiving \$100,000 in URP funding for the 2016 funding cycle. Clients who are eligible for URP funding have to own their home, be low income, and have a special need. A special need is defined as elderly, disabled, single parent, large family, or have a child with an elevated blood lead level. New to this year's program is that being a veteran qualifies as a special need. This change will allow CHC to better serve the veterans in our community.

With our summer mission program in full swing we are taking advantage of all the volunteers and putting new roofs on old houses. In the first three weeks of the summer, we have put on three membrane and one metal roof with volunteers and matching URP funds. By summer's end we hope to have at least 12 new roofs installed by volunteers utilizing both URP and HOME grant funds.

## Support CHC at Zuma Coffee Wednesdays in July!



[www.zumacoffee.com](http://www.zumacoffee.com)

Looking for something cool to do on a hot Wednesday in July? Zuma Coffee is donating 10% of Wednesday sales to CHC throughout the month of July. Gather some friends and enjoy your morning cup of Joe, an afternoon cooling rocket shake, cold brew, or iced tea, or dinner during Open Mic Night. If you can't make it on a

Wednesday, we'll have a donation box on the counter. Be sure to say a big "Thank you" to Joel for supporting CHC while you're there!

## Donation Box



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 directly, those donations are always welcome. 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!

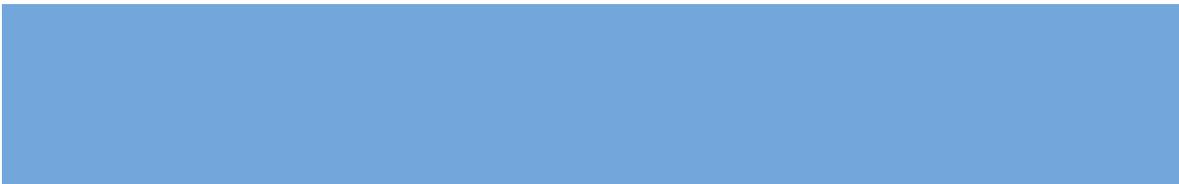
## Legs & Regs

New legislation introduced this month in the Senate seeks to expand affordable housing production on the federal level. The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2016, if passed, will expand the Low Income Housing Tax Credit allocation by a whopping 50%, and will introduce an income averaging option to increase affordability. Greater access to affordable housing options is becoming more and more crucial, as statistics show the U.S homeownership rate has neared a 48-year low. According to a Harvard study, declining vacancy rates have sent rents soaring – the number of vacant units with rents under \$800 dropped by more than 12% between 2013 and 2014. Only a quarter of low-income families eligible for federal rental assistance even receive it.

Housing work is also economic development work. Without safe and affordable housing, it is difficult for folks to get a decent paying job and access higher levels of opportunity. Let’s make sure to support the Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act and continue to do all that we can for housing work on the local level.

## Closing Thoughts

Though we haven’t seen much rain this summer, that’s all the more reason to consider installing a rainwater harvesting system at home. Rain barrels collect water that would otherwise clog our sewer systems. They allow folks to cut back on their water usage for watering their gardens on dry, sunny days and also provide drinking water for farm animals. Environmentally conscious and also cost-effective, rain barrels can be purchased quite cheaply, or you can convert a large plastic trash can, DIY-style, into a rain-collecting device. Feed a line from your gutters or other drainage pipe into the top of the barrel and make sure it’s covered to keep out sunlight and mosquitoes. Cut a hole near the bottom and install a faucet and hose. Then when it rains, you can rest assured all that falling water will help you save water in the future!



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