

# next door

PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER



FALL 2015



## ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT

PIEDMONT HOUSING TURNS A NEW LEAF WITH PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SUBSIDIARY

**IN MAY 2015, PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE** officially established its property management department as a subsidiary called Alliance Management. Debbie Webber, Portfolio Manager, is bringing a high level of customer service, efficiency and effectiveness to property management operations, and she relies on a great crew to get the job done at 205 affordable apartments in Charlottesville and Albemarle.



Debbie understands the importance of community building. She and her staff have pitched in to make our properties attractive and welcoming, and they have worked with the residents to provide activities for each community to enjoy.

In Crozet, residents enjoyed the Crozet Meadows Community Day in September, which featured music, a talent show, and a presentation by a local theatrical company (see photos). Scottsville School Apartments had their own community day with a cookout, music and a raffle. Monticello Vista residents enjoyed a St. Patrick's Day luncheon, and will celebrate Halloween this fall. ■





## MESSAGE FROM FRANK

Welcome to our new newsletter, *NEXT DOOR*. For us, this name symbolizes the sense of community we try to build at all of our projects, where your next-door neighbor is there to lend you a hand (or a cup of sugar) when you need it.

It also signals our intention to take action and move forward to the next opportunity. In the article at right, you will see that we recently announced our intention to purchase the Friendship Court property and undertake a resident-centered planning process for future redevelopment. Our board has approached this decision with integrity and seriousness of purpose, as you can see in the Principles for Redevelopment printed on the following page.

We want to make sure that the families, including more than 260 children, who live at Friendship Court, have the brightest future possible. Ensuring safe and affordable housing is a first step toward those bright futures.



Frank Grosch addresses guests at the Building Community Breakfast.

# PIEDMONT HOUSING TO PURCHASE FRIENDSHIP COURT PROPERTY

### RESIDENT CENTERED ENGAGEMENT PLANNED WITH TEAM OF NATIONAL EXPERTS

**ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21,** Piedmont Housing Alliance hosted a Building Community Breakfast at the Omni Hotel. Those in attendance heard remarks from Mike Hawkins of the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the event sponsor, followed by a keynote address from UVA Associate Professor of Urban and Environmental Design Barbara Brown Wilson, *Successful Approaches to Community Engaged Design*.

Piedmont Housing Alliance's CEO Frank Grosch announced that Piedmont Housing will purchase the Friendship Court property in 2018, and, with a \$500,000 challenge grant from the Donovan Foundation, will undertake a resident-centered redevelopment planning process over the next two years with a team including national planning experts David Dixon, Marc Norman and Liz Ogbu.

Piedmont Housing is grateful to the many partners who helped to make the event possible. Event Sponsor **VHDA** was joined by Lead Banking Sector Sponsor **SunTrust Bank**, Underwriters **Allied Concrete, Boyd & Sipe Law Firm** and **Pinnacle Construction and Development**, and table sponsors



Sponsor Melvin Burruss visiting with Andrea Copeland-Whitsett from the Chamber of Commerce

**Bankers Insurance, Diana and Melvin Burruss, Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors, First Citizens Bank, Jagers Communications, Martin Horn Inc., RE/MAX Realty Specialist, Renee's Boutique, Snook and Haughey law firm, Southern Development Homes, TowneBank Mortgage, United Bankshares, Virginia Community Capital, and Virginia National Bank. ■**

# PRINCIPLES FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDSHIP COURT

**INTRODUCTION:** The development of these principles followed Piedmont Housing Alliance’s strategic planning process for 2014–2017. In the strategic plan, Board members and staff identified the redevelopment of Friendship Court as one of four major organizational goals. They envisioned an interactive and thoughtful planning process in preparation for late 2018, when Piedmont Housing Alliance will acquire Friendship Court. To arrive at these principles, the Piedmont Housing Alliance CEO and the Board Chair asked the Board to participate in a series of five meetings. These meetings included a tour of redeveloped properties in Northern Virginia and Washington, DC, and advice from national experts in community engagement and redevelopment. In the final meeting, the board made a unanimous decision to adopt the statement of principles for Friendship Court, reprinted below.



**PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE’S CORE VALUES** are **home, opportunity, community, and respect.** These core values reflect an ethic that those inside and outside of Piedmont Housing Alliance can come to expect from the leadership and staff in all of our work.

As we plan for the redevelopment of Friendship Court, the Board and staff of the Piedmont Housing Alliance will live by these values. Piedmont Housing Alliance will engage residents, neighbors, and our community partners in an inclusive and respectful process. Our goal is to help develop a mixed-income, healthy, welcoming, and environmentally responsible neighborhood with improved housing choices and quality of life for current and future residents.

Piedmont Housing Alliance will make financially responsible investment choices that are sustainable for the long run, and will be committed to measuring, analyzing, and communicating our results.

The following core values and principles underlie the redevelopment of Friendship Court:

**HOME. Everyone should have a place to call home.**

Current residents will be able to remain in affordable housing at Friendship Court and, to the greatest extent possible, we will preserve Section 8 project-based assistance. We will strive to minimize disruption and relocation during redevelopment.

**OPPORTUNITY. Housing opportunities can be the start of great things for individuals and families.**

By design, Friendship Court will be beautiful, healthy, and a great place to live. New resources will increase access to economic opportunities for individuals and families.

**COMMUNITY. Working together, we can build strong and vibrant communities.**

Planning will include real and substantive input from residents, neighbors, and our community partners. Redevelopment will promote connections to the neighborhood and the larger community. Together, we will promote

improved infrastructure, public services, and education for families and their children at Friendship Court.

**RESPECT. All people deserve to be treated with compassion and respect.**

Redevelopment will build upon the community’s strengths, promote cultural and economic diversity, and encourage mutual respect among residents. ■



*Creating housing opportunities  
and building community through  
education, lending and development.*

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### ARE YOU A STATE EMPLOYEE?

Piedmont Housing Alliance is a designated charity through the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign. Your pre-tax gifts through the CVC will help us to maintain our high quality service in housing counseling, lending, property management and development, creating affordable housing opportunities for our community.

**Piedmont Housing Alliance's  
CVC Number is 3865.**

## HOUSING FIRST:

### PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE'S ROLE IN ENDING HOMELESSNESS



**SOME IDEAS ARE SO OBVIOUS** that they can be overlooked. One of these is that the solution to homelessness is housing. Housing First is an approach that emphasizes stable, permanent housing as a primary strategy for ending homelessness. It has been shown to be more cost effective and to provide longer-term benefits for homeless individuals and communities than the traditional approach of providing services to homeless individuals, then housing them.

Often homeless individuals and families are eligible for housing assistance. This is where Piedmont Housing Alliance comes in. For more than 20 years, we have been creating and managing apartments that are affordable to low-income individuals.

The availability of this housing has kept many families from homelessness.

Recently, through a partnership with the Housing Navigator at the Haven, Piedmont Housing has been able to create housing opportunities for households facing homelessness. Last winter, a mom and her children were burned out of their home and lost all of their possessions. We were able to provide them with an affordable apartment, and secured donations of furnishings that supplied their basic needs. This spring, an elderly woman returned to Charlottesville after several years absence to find increased housing costs and decreased supply. The navigator introduced her to Piedmont Housing, and she is now living in one of our apartments in Crozet. And this summer, our staff and board came together to fully outfit an affordable apartment for a homeless individual.

One of Piedmont Housing's chief goals over the long term is to increase the stock of rental housing that is affordable to low-income households. In this way, we will continue to be part of the solution to local homelessness.

### FORECLOSURE COUNSELING PREVENTS HOMELESSNESS

This summer, a local agency referred a family to Piedmont Housing for assistance. The chief breadwinner for the family, a self-employed worker, suffered a career ending accident. The spouse was caring for her injured husband and looking for a full time job. The family had fallen behind on its mortgage payments and was facing the loss of their home.

Piedmont Housing stepped in to seek a mortgage modification so that the family would have affordable payments. Within 10 days, the mortgage company had agreed to a modification that reduced the monthly mortgage payment nearly in half. As a result, the family was able to stay in their home while putting their life back together.