Jacquelyn Johnson Dawson took a photo of the progress at Grafton Townhomes every week on her way to the nearby East Detroit Bakery for a loaf of sliced Italian bread. The retired data base coordinator at St. John Hospital would send the photo to her son with the message, “This will be our new home.” She laughs and said she came up with the message even before applications were accepted for the 48-townhome development with 24 homes offering two bedrooms and 24 homes offering three bedrooms.

She and her husband, John, who retired after 30 years in property maintenance, were among the first residents to move into the development on East 9 Mile in Eastpointe. “We love it!” she said of their two-bedroom home while attending the Grafton Townhomes ribbon cutting, tour and lunch event May 19.

Grafton Townhomes, the first residential construction in Eastpointe since 2003, represents an $11 million investment in the community. The development was made possible through a housing tax credit reservation through Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), an Affordable Housing Program award from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, and equity investment from PNC Bank. Continued on page 2
Join us in the Art Van Charity Challenge!

We have been selected to participate in the Art Van Charity Challenge, an annual fundraising competition where a prestigious group of nonprofits compete to raise the most money for their cause. The top teams win additional cash in prizes from Art Van. Whatever we raise during the competition ending June 22 is ours to use!

Our fundraising focus is our Critical Needs Fund. 100% of the donations to this fund are used to provide for the unmet needs of the people we serve.

Each year, we help thousands of people find safe, decent, and affordable housing. Unfortunately, many of the people we serve encounter real barriers that prevent them from attaining and maintaining housing. There is no funding available to remove those barriers that are essential to getting and keeping a roof over one's head.

These barriers include security deposits and obtaining proof of identity, both required to sign a lease. Once people move in, few have the essential items that make a house a home. Items that are essential to enjoying a healthy and dignified life include: furniture; dishes, cookware, and utensils; and personal care and cleaning products. Many people we serve rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation, and often don't have bus fare. All of these critical needs will benefit from the challenge.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in joining the CHN team in this challenge by visiting https://www.crowdrise.com/community-housing-network-artvan2016 or clicking on the link at the top of our website at www.communityhousingnetwork.org.

Grafton Townhomes, Eastpointe, offers ‘community within community’

Continued from Cover

Prior to the ribbon being cut, Marc Craig, president, addressed the guests and spoke about the origins and mission of Community Housing Network (CHN), which is "We strengthen communities by connecting people to housing resources." Communities are stronger, he said, when everyone has the opportunity to live in the neighborhood of their choosing. The development offers 12 units for residents in need of supportive services and five units that are barrier free and are fully accessible.

Kirsten Elliott, vice president of Development, spearheaded the development and spoke about the relationships and partnerships necessary to create our largest development to date.

Jason Paulateer, vice president, Community Development Banking at PNC Bank, served as the master of ceremonies and spoke about the developments made possible with the CHN-PNC relationship including Unity Park Rentals in Pontiac and the upcoming Jefferson Oaks in Oak Park. (See Page 3.)

The image of affordable housing from the 1960s and 1970s is no longer valid, Kevin Eisenheimer, executive director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), said in his remarks. He attributed the change to the system that now brings in nonprofit and individual partnerships "who do the job so much better." Of CHN, he said, "This is a relationship that we rely on and that does a great job, so congratulations for all of the work that you do. I mean that."

CHN was welcomed by Steve Duchane, city manager of the City of Eastpointe, who said "affordable housing builds the backbone of communities." He mentioned that "Grafton" means as an enclosure or settlement within a grove and Grafton Townhomes provides "a sense of community within community, which we really believe, in the City of Eastpointe, is the way of the future." That sense of community is just one of the things the Dawsons said they are grateful for in their new hometown. Jacquelyn Johnson Dawson laughs when she mentions another benefit of living in Grafton Townhomes. They are now very close to their favorite bakery.

Our partners
Thank you to all of our community partners and investors for making Grafton Townhomes possible: City of Eastpointe, Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis, Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas, Inc., Macomb County, Macomb Community Action, Macomb County Community Mental Health, Macomb Homeless Coalition, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, O’Brien Construction, Piper Management Group, PNC Bank and Talmer Bank and Trust.
Save the date, October 13
Bring it Home moves to The Townsend

Save the date! Join us for this year’s Bring It Home event on Thursday, October 13, at a new location, The Townsend Hotel in Birmingham. A portion of the proceeds from Bring it Home will go directly to our Critical Needs Fund and will help to keep closing gaps and provide more people with a pathway to success and the privilege of saying, “Welcome to my home.”

Guests at Bring it Home will enjoy a fun evening featuring networking, an open bar, a delicious sit-down dinner, the opportunity to bid on silent auction items, and more.

Community Housing Network’s annual fundraising event, Bring It Home would not be possible without the generosity of our donors and corporate sponsors. A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available.

If you are interested in sponsoring, attending or donating to Bring It Home please contact Lisa Fuhr, Special Events and Volunteer coordinator, at Lfuhr@chninc.net or 248-824-7313 or visit www.communityhousingnetwork.org/support/bring-it-home.

Community garden move makes way for Jefferson Oaks

Neighbors and community partners gathered recently to move the Good Neighbors Garden from the site of the former Thomas Jefferson School to help make way for the development of the 60-unit Jefferson Oaks in Oak Park.

Construction on our largest development to date is expected to start in the next few months. Completion and lease-up of the property is expected by the end of 2017.

Members of the Good Neighbors Garden, Community Housing Network staff and contractors from Fiberclass in Wixom, Wm. R. Curtis, excavating and grading, in Commerce Township, Starky’s Construction in Livonia and O’Brien Construction in Troy donated time to help move the garden. Garden beds were moved, along with raspberry, blueberry and blackberry bushes and fruit trees. A 275-gallon water container was taken apart and moved, strawberries were moved from raised beds and repotted and debris was removed.

CHN worked with the Good Neighbors Garden leadership on planning for the move and recruited community partners who volunteered to help on moving day.

The adaptive reuse of the vacant school will include 20 one- and two-bedroom units and community space. An additional 40 three- and four-bedroom townhome-style units will be built on the property. Twenty-one of the units will be set aside for supportive housing with project-based rental assistance. Jefferson Oaks will be a mixed-income development with rents guaranteed to be affordable for 15 years.
When the people we serve move from homelessness to housing, they often have all of their worldly possessions in a large bag or a bin. It may include a few pieces of clothing, a photo or two and sometimes things they have found along the way hoping to repurpose into something on which to build their new life.

Other than that bin, their new home is empty. There is no bed, table, chairs, couch or cleaning supplies. These items we use every day each help in some way to help keep someone stay stably housed. While there are programs to assist with rent, there are no programs that pay for furnishings and cleaning supplies.

Our Critical Needs Fund, which receives no program funding, does help as it can, though the need far outweighs the resources. 100% of donations to this fund will provide for the unmet needs of the people we serve.

We are grateful to be a part of the Art Van Challenge, running through 1:59 p.m. June 22, and any funds raised will go to the Critical Needs Fund. You can join in the campaign at https://www.crowdrise.com/community-housing-network-artvan2016 and a link is on the homepage of our website, www.communityhousingnetwork.org. (More information is available on Page 2.)

Furniture and cleaning supplies are essential to help someone transform their life. Your donation to our Critical Needs Fund can help set someone on the road to recovery, housing and employment.

Thank you for your continued partnership.