Bring it Home 2016 was a night to celebrate 15 years of strengthening communities by connecting people with housing resources. One very visible way we have strengthened communities is through the 689 units of affordable housing we have developed for people in need. It was through that work we saw many people we serve encounter barriers that prevent them from getting into housing, and staying under that roof once they move into their new home.

This year we created the Critical Needs Fund to solve situations where a security deposit, vital documents or transportation prevented someone from being housed. Furniture, personal care and household products are also a part of the fund, because lack of access to those things hamper the ability for some to stay housed. Participants in our programs shared the benefit of the Critical Needs Fund in their housing recovery through a video. (The video is available on the home page of our website at communityhousingnetwork.org.)

While the Critical Needs Fund is one more way we have been able to strengthen communities of those we serve, it is only possible because of the generosity of donors and sponsors who have supported us in the past 15 years.

Bring it Home was an evening to celebrate many communities we have been able to strengthen and the community partners who have connected to and supported us. We particularly thank O’Brien Construction Company, Inc., who served as the Leadership sponsor for the event. We are grateful to all of you for your ongoing support! Gross funds raised and pledged at this year’s event were more than $120,000.

Another community formed in the last 15 years is the group of those with whom we have built relationships and joined in partnerships. These allow us to leverage additional funding, resulting in assisting even more people. Marc Craig, our president, spoke about how critical those relationships are as we faced a crisis this past year due to a HUD funding loss in Macomb County.

“The test of an organization is what you do when things don’t go well, even in situations like this, where it was no fault of our own. We were left facing a huge challenge,” he said. “But thanks in part to the cooperation of many, and a true dedication to our mission, I am...
Celebrating 15 years a success!

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happy to report that no one – no one – became homeless as a result.”

One other community strengthened through our work is the group of those in our programs. Each year, we recognize and honor one person with the Emmett Jones Memorial Award. (See story below.)

Thank you for being a big part of our first 15 years! We look forward to your continued partnership!

2016 Emmett Jones Memorial Award recipient

Danny Chessor went from homelessness to being a role model

Each year, we present the Emmett Jones Memorial Award to someone in one of our programs who has made great strides and showed courage and perseverance. This year, the award was presented to Danny Chessor. (Meet him in a video at communityhousingnetwork.org/-support/bring-it-home-annual-fundraiser/emmett-jones-memorial-award/)

Danny never expected to be homeless, never expected that his mode of transportation would be his bicycle and that his housing was a tent, abandoned buildings, the streets, and finally a shelter. For 30 years he was a work repairman for the production line at Chrysler. That all changed after he slid off the roof of a two-story house he was helping a friend roof and was no longer able to work. Medical bills took his savings and he turned to drinking to numb the pain.

When he got into Hope Warming Center, he made the decision to turn his life around. In August he celebrated his first year of sobriety. It was also there that he met

Susan Gibson presents Danny Chessor with the sixth annual Emmett Jones Memorial Award

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Danny Chessor - role model

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Jessica Jasurda, a PATH SOAR specialist for Community Housing Network, on her weekly visit. Jessica worked with him to secure Social Security, access health care and move into housing.

One of his few possessions was a plastic blue bird that chirps that Danny named George Jr. The first thing he did after entering the apartment was find an appropriate perch for George Jr.

Not only did Danny work hard to change his life, he is now a role model and mentor at Aftershock, a program for other men working toward a self-sustaining independent lifestyle.

Danny exemplifies the success possible through our programs and we were thrilled to present him with the sixth annual Emmett Jones Memorial Award.

The award is named for Emmett Jones, who was a well-loved, dedicated CHN employee who was one of the first employees of the Chronically Homeless Leasing Assistance Program, a supportive housing program that helps provide housing stability to people experiencing chronic homelessness. Emmett brought a special kind of “tough love” to his work, and was influential in helping program participants meet their goals and stay the course, even in the face of the enormous challenges they faced. Emmett passed away in July 2010.

MiABLE opened November 1

Michigan became the fifth state to open a savings program for people with disabilities on November 1. The MiABLE (Michigan Achieving a Better Life Experience) program allows qualified individuals who became disabled before the age of 26 to save up to $14,000 a year in a tax preferred savings account. Tax preferred means that qualified distributions are not taxed. ABLE accounts provide self-empowerment and improved quality of life for people with disabilities and their families by allowing them to save and supplement disability-related expenses such as personal support services, housing and education.

Individuals receiving public benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid, are only allowed a maximum of $2,000 in assets. Similar to special needs trust accounts, the ABLE accounts may allow individuals to save money and not jeopardize their eligibility for public programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid.

The maximum allowed in a MiABLE account is $500,000. If the account exceeds $100,000, the beneficiary’s Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is suspended, however, they may remain eligible for Medicaid. Funds remaining in the account upon the death of the participant will go to the state to repay the individual’s Medicaid costs.

MiABLE has an annual fee of $45 as well as a low asset-based investment fee between 0.5 and 0.78 percent depending on the account investment option.

There are five different investment options available for MiABLE accounts ranging from Conservative to All Stock Aggressive. Debit cards are expected to become available February 1, 2017.

The feature that sets the MiABLE program apart from other ABLE programs (currently offered in Ohio, Tennessee, Nebraska and Florida) is the public profile option. Participants may choose to create a public profile that friends and family can make contributions to. The public profiles are available and searchable on the MiABLE website. Anyone may contribute to an individual’s public profile account.

For more information on ABLE accounts or to enroll in MiABLE go to www.miable.org.

(Carrie Alexander is the administrator of Springhill Trust, a managed entity of Community Housing Network.)
Message from Carrie Mendoza

CHN Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Each issue will highlight a message from a member of our executive team.

My mom has always taken the time to remember special days in someone’s life by calling them or sending a card. She instilled in me the importance of appreciating and celebrating those we love. I continue her tradition with notes and calls to let them know I care.

A thank you note is a reminder that in whatever way you remembered someone else with a kindness, your action mattered.

As we near the end of 2016, the CHN team wants to let you know of our sincere gratefulness for all of the ways you have made a difference for those we serve through the year. Thank you!

Your generosity may also be helpful to you at tax time. Community Housing Network is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. That means you may want to talk to your tax preparer since your support may be beneficial for you as well.

We are grateful for all of your help through the year-round Critical Needs Fund, at the holidays with Adopt A Family, or year-end donations, which can be made on our website. There are also other ways to support us every time you use a registered Kroger Community Rewards card or when you list us as the beneficiary of your Amazon Smile account. Information on these ways to help and more is available at communityhousingnetwork.org/support.

Thank you from the CHN team for all of the ways you have made a difference in 2016 for those we serve!