Housing remains a primary economic driver in the U.S.

Housing, historically and for the foreseeable future, is a primary economic driver for this country. Purely from a capitol perspective, it's a tremendous resource within communities. A lot of people, and many investors, put their own money into housing. The creation of new housing, or replacement of existing housing stock, creates jobs, improves quality of life within communities and drives broader economic activity with the production of goods and services. Economically, housing is a big deal.

Housing strategies provide a great opportunity for communities, from small villages to entire counties, to impact the quality of life for their residents. Carefully considering lessons learned from the past, housing strategy needs to be used as a way to promote diversity and deconcentrate poverty. It’s been found that diversity is a key element of stronger communities.

“There appears to be widespread agreement among housing practitioners that including a mix of incomes within a development can be helpful in creating a safe, healthy and sustainable living environment for families,” according to the Center for Housing Policy.

Community Housing Network is involved in virtually every aspect of housing, and is fortunate to have staff members who are experts in most of them. In future blog posts we look forward to sharing our knowledge and expertise with you, whether you are a community planner, an elected official, someone interested in housing as a social issue, someone who wants to know more about our planning and zoning strategies so there are opportunities not only for people with disabilities, but lower-income wage earners and moderate-income wage earners to live in the communities where they work. It’s also been proven that people benefit when living next door to someone with a different life experience.

In “The Rise of the Creative Class,” Richard Florida documents how “regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas.”

Marc’s Message

Of all the resources available aiming to end homelessness, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV), formerly known as Section 8, may be one of the most well known. The voucher provides a permanent subsidy where holders 30-40% of their household income toward rent, as long as their income falls below a specific threshold.

The HCV has been amended over the last handful of years as their income falls below a specific threshold. The voucher provides a permanent subsidy where holders 30-40% of their household income toward rent, as long as their income falls below a specific threshold. The process begins with a preliminary meeting. On occasion, when there are a number of significant project changes in a given county, a preliminary meeting can be convened by 150-200 applications. On February 27, we and Szajna & Associates teamed up fast-track the application process for 202 people at our Troy office. We completed approximately 30 applications per hour throughout the day.

This effort was only possible with the assistance and support of our community partners. During the time prior to each of these preliminaries, the Housing Resource Center is charged with locating and contacting eligible households and scheduling appointment times. This must all be done within 10 days of the wait list pull.

Preliminaries of this size have been a fairly new development that’s come about just in the past few months, the last one being in the beginning of December. Continued on Page 3

Continued on Page 3
760 were helped through Adopt A Family!

Adopt A Family 2014 raised an unprecedented $34,559 in cash donations and $51,925 in in-kind donations! With help from our generous donors, we were able to provide holiday gifts for 760 people this year through our offices in Troy and Wayne! Many of these individuals and families have very little in their budget for basic necessities, not to mention holiday gifts for their children. Many wish lists included sheets, towels, cleaning supplies, hats, boots and gloves.

I cannot express how grateful I am for your generous gifts. This means the world to me! You helped me give my sons a good Christmas. May you have a joyous holiday season. Thank you! - 2014 Adopt A Family gift recipient

Sherral Hughley is all smiles as she opens up a sweat suit at the Adopt A Family event at our Wayne office.

Marc’s Message

The community, making an effort to streamline resources, has coordinated travel efforts to transport homeless individuals from shelters and warming centers across Oakland County to be at this important meeting. Providers include South Oakland Shelter, Welcome Inn warming center, Lighthouse PATH transitional housing, Easter Seals, and Hope warming center; all that provided transportation to more than half of the attending households that day.

The process from application to lease-up with the HP-HCV is a complicated one. Program participants often are unable to obtain necessary documentation for the application and then encounter numerous barriers in locating and getting approved for housing within the time frames allotted by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. The support and assistance of community partners throughout this process is invaluable and often times the difference between a household securing housing or remaining homeless.

Also: We have just completed a new “Opening Doors – Transforming Lives” video. It offers a glimpse of some of our housing options, explanations of how these options meet residents’ needs, and highlights of how we have creatively utilized multiple funding streams to develop safe, decent, and affordable housing. Please check it out at communityhousingnetwork.org/videos.

Thank you for your continued partnership!
Marc Craig
President

Housing Hub

Judson Street in Unity Park, Pontiac, is one example of how our mixed-income development has transformed blocks.

Many wish lists included sheets, towels, cleaning supplies, hats, boots and gloves. A special thank you to three key volunteers, Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade, and Dave Wade, Darlene Wade.

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Tami Jelinek, for the countless hours they put in to help make this year’s Adopt A Family a huge success!

For information about Adopt A Family or volunteering, please contact Lisa Fuhr at LFuhr@chninc.net or 248-824-7313.

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In the past few decades, well-intended developers created pockets of sameness; both in terms of the look of housing and those who lived in that housing. Over time, those housing developments proved to be unsustainable for both the housing stock and the residents. The tapestry of a neighborhood is enhanced by a diverse population contributing various life experiences, thus strengthening and reinforcing the community.

“Mixed-income housing also potentially can have a significant role in transforming a distressed neighborhood into a healthy community that is home to households with a wider range of incomes, has fewer social ills, and offers a higher quality of life,” writes Alistair Smith in “Mixed-Income Housing Developments: Promise and Reality” for the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation.

Our role as a community development organization is to work with communities to help them plan and implement successful strategies. Those include promoting affordable housing, giving people with disabilities and others, a chance to live in the communities where they grew up, to address existing homelessness and to stem its causes. They also include promoting sustainability so housing stock will not be vacant 10, 15, 20 years from now and so that their community will be a desirable place to live long into the future.

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