Community Housing Network invites you to join us for a night of fun and fundraising – all for a great cause!

On Thursday, Oct. 6 at 6:30, CHN supporters will gather at the Royal Park Hotel in Rochester for networking, silent and live auctions and more. The event, which is in its eleventh year, will raise money to provide affordable housing opportunities for people with disabilities and those who are homeless.

“I am so pleased to be involved in Raise the Roof again this year,” said event committee member and CHN board member Cindy Boudreau. “I am proud to help on this signature event that focuses attention on the need for decent, affordable housing for people with disabilities. Of course, I love the fact that it’s a wonderfully fun event, too!”

Raise the Roof sponsors this year include Leadership Sponsor Attorneys Title Agency and President’s Circle Sponsors Flagstar Bank and O’Brien Construction. Detroit Home is the Media Sponsor.

To learn more about sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets please visit www.communityhousingnetwork.org or contact Leslie Groves at (248) 269-1312/Lgroves@chninc.net.

We hope to see you there!

Let us know what you want!
Do you prefer to receive this newsletter (Network News) and our e-newsletter (e-Network News)? Or just one or the other? Email Anne Osmer aosmer@chninc.net and let her know! We want to meet your needs.
**With Housing, Program Participants Make Progress**

Finding a job, caring for a family or even taking care of one’s own health can become huge challenges when you are without a home. That fact is something that CHN staff members see every day, as they work to house people who are homeless.

“We help our supportive housing program participants set goals and we make sure they work hard on them,” said Leasing Assistance Program Director Jessica Mumma. “The goal is for them to gain independence in their housing and their lives. Housing is the first step, however. It is virtually impossible for people to make progress on their life goals while they are homeless.”

Monica Alandt and Sarah Monroe* are two CHN program participants who are realizing their goals of stable housing and increased independence from outside help.

When Monica came to CHN, she was living in a makeshift apartment in a rural area. The apartment was full of mold, the ceiling was coming down, the septic tank wasn’t working and the electrical wiring was unsafe. There were roaches everywhere and the lock on the door didn't work. It was the only place Monica could afford for herself and her young son, who had been born prematurely and suffered from serious health issues.

"I remember being there and just crying every night," Monica said. "It was horrible."

Monica called CHN after seeing the phone number posted at a municipal building. A CHN staff member visited her, and was able to help Monica first through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), then through the more long-term Leasing Assistance Program.

Monica's new apartment is a fresh start. "It's the complete opposite of my old place," she said. "It's light and new and fresh and clean. My old place was like a dungeon. It was so dark. I moved in here and got inspired. It was like I started crawling out of a hole."

Now that Monica and her son are in a place they can call home, Monica is able to get her son the medical care he needs. She is working on her life goals, which include going back to school to get her GED.

Sarah Monroe* and her family also struggle with health issues. Sarah has had an epileptic disorder since age six. Growing up and not understanding what was happening to her, she developed anxiety, panic attacks, and agoraphobia.

Her husband, a Vietnam War Veteran, lives with post-traumatic stress disorder and was fired from his job when he lost vision in one eye. Adding to their health

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**CHN Wins 2011 Corrie Bair Award**

Community Housing Network was honored recently to receive the 2011 Corrie Bair Building Inclusive Communities Award from the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC). The award is presented each year to an individual or organization that has made significant accomplishments in creating inclusive communities. CHN was given the award for its longstanding work in creating inclusive, accessible housing for people with disabilities.

“We were very pleased to receive this award,” said Marc Craig, CHN President.

“Corrie Bair was a passionate disability rights advocate, and it is truly an honor to receive this award in her name. CHN is dedicated to living up to Corrie’s vision of inclusive communities for everyone, including people with disabilities.”

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*Name has been changed for reasons of privacy.*
New Programs Launch for People with Developmental Disabilities

Community Housing Network is excited about two new programs for people with developmental disabilities and their stakeholders.

Getting My Own Address for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Others with Developmental Disabilities is a guide and program with a comprehensive but simple explanation of the steps, options and choices that are available to plan for housing in the community of one’s choice. The program is funded through a grant from the Autism Society Oakland County.

“We are excited to support this program,” said Lisa Kowalski, president of the Autism Society Oakland County and collaborator on the program. “Housing planning is a critical need for the families we serve. A large number of people on the autism spectrum are now adults. With many more teens close behind, it’s more important than ever that people know how to obtain housing, ideally in settings that allow for the most independence possible. Getting My Own Address is an invaluable resource in reaching that goal.”

The Getting My Own Address guide is available for free online and will soon be available for purchase in binder format. The program also has support groups and workshop components, led by trained professionals. Go to www.communityhousingnetwork.org/GMOA or contact Linda Brown at LBrown@chninc.net for more information.

Working with Continuum of Care Bodies is another new CHN program geared toward people with developmental disabilities. The program, funded by a grant from the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council, seeks to empower people with developmental disabilities, secondary consumers and advocates to become full participants in their local Continuum of Care, the body through which important decisions regarding housing are made.

Participants in the workshop series will learn:

- What is a Continuum of Care? Why should I be a part of it? How can I get involved?
- Housing funding resources
- What types of housing are available and affordable?
- How can I advocate for more affordable and accessible housing?

Workshops are ongoing and anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend. Visit www.communityhousingnetwork for more information or contact Juanita Harper at (248) 269-1343/jharper@chninc.net or Yvette Thomas at (248) 269-1326/ythomas@chninc.net.

We hope you'll join us for these exciting programs!

Program Participants Make Progress

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challenges is that one of their children lives with back and foot problems and has had to undergo multiple surgeries.

“With all of our medical problems, it’s hard not to have a home,” Sarah said, yet they struggled to find stable housing.

When her husband lost his job in October 2009, the Monroes began living in a camper without running water. A year later they found CHN, which helped provide the family with an apartment through HPRP.

“I can’t even imagine where I’d be without CHN – all I can think about is that camper,” Sarah said.

Sarah said that the hardest thing for her to overcome in finding housing was having to ask for help, but that she felt comfortable at CHN. “At CHN nobody makes you feel bad about being in that situation,” she said. “Everyone’s so nice and tries to help you reach your goals. They really go the extra mile.”

The Monroes are no longer receiving help through HPRP – and, with the stability that an apartment provided, they were able to improve their circumstances and purchase their own home. Sarah is happy about the move, and said that her plans for the future involve unpacking and homemaking. She is also working on her agoraphobia and is learning more about how to manage her epileptic disorder.

- Article written with input from CHN intern Mary Hannahan.
We continue to be galvanized by the increasing need for the work we do. Over the past year, we’ve seen calls to our Housing Resource Center skyrocket, to more than 1,700 calls each month, each call representing someone looking for help.

At the same time, and as you are probably all too aware, resources continue to decrease. That is one of the reasons CHN is committed to looking carefully at each of our programs and assessing the value we bring to our program participants, funders and community at large. To that end and with outside help, we are performing an evaluation of the value we bring to our stakeholders. You may be hearing from us soon about this initiative. We appreciate your help in helping us to serve you better.

We are dedicated to continuing to do our best to bring outstanding programs and services to all of our stakeholders – by measuring outcomes, implementing best practices and listening to those we serve. Please let us know your opinions and concerns at any time by calling us at (248) 928-0111.

We value your partnership and hope that we will see you at our upcoming annual event, Raise the Roof for Affordable Housing! It is always a warm gathering of friends and supporters, an event we look forward to each year.

Happy fall, and onward and upward!