The Unity Park Rentals development was celebrated with a ribbon cutting, open house at some of the homes, a shuttle tour of the neighborhood and lunch July 15. The 32 new, lease-to-purchase homes scattered throughout Unity Park in Pontiac were built on lots that not too long ago held vacant and blighted houses.

“This is all integral to our mission of bringing affordable housing to an integrated, diversified setting,” Marc Craig, president of Community Housing Network said, in brief remarks at the event. The homes are available to those in varying income levels and eight will provide a housing solution for those who are homeless and/or have a disability.

These two-, three- and four-bedroom homes offer new opportunities for the community, and also reduced the neighborhood vacancy rate from 32 to 21 percent.

Pontiac Mayor Deirdre Waterman spoke at the event and said, “Building stronger communities is a very vital part of building a stronger city and this is a very pivotal part you have brought, and you continue to bring, along with all the amenities such as the community center and the gardens.” She then presented CHN with a mayoral proclamation.

“This is a game changer for the neighborhood and the community,” Jason Paulateer, vice president and marketing manager at PNC Bank. “I love what these guys (CHN) are doing around here.”

Edwin Harlin, director of housing investment for MSHDA, one of the development’s major sponsors, also offered remarks. “We’re building communities. These are the types of projects MSHDA wants to be involved in, revitalization of communities, clearing blight, making sure that families move into housing bringing jobs, bringing economic development into communities.”

The Unity Park Rentals development is “a very exciting opportunity for the city of Pontiac,” said State Rep. Tim Greimel. “It builds communities, strengthens families and stabilizes neighborhoods for years to come.”

For rental information, call Piper Management Group at 810-767-4890. For information on the special needs units, call 248-824-7380.
“Welcome to my home.” That greeting is very special to those who at one point or another did not have a home to welcome anyone. This year’s Bring it Home event will feature participants in our programs who have worked hard and now have a place to call home.

Their stories will be a part of our annual fundraising event, which this year will be Thursday, October 16, 6-9:30 p.m. at The Royal Park Hotel in Rochester.

Bring it Home offers networking, appetizers, an open bar, a sit-down dinner and live and silent auctions. One person who now is able to offer the greeting, “Welcome to my home,” will be honored with the fourth annual Emmett Jones Memorial Award. This annual award is presented to a program participant who has successfully come through one of our programs. In 2013 it was presented Felicia Jackson. For the first time ever, we will honor someone with the James C. Merritt Volunteer Service Award. This recipient is an individual who has gone above and beyond volunteering for CHN, showing an extraordinary level of commitment in supporting our mission.

Here at CHN, our mission is much more than providing people with homes, but about providing necessary housing resources as well. We hope you can join us as we engage in the opportunity to provide necessities for people who are homeless, people living with a disability and others in need in Southeastern Michigan. “This really is such a fun, heartwarming evening,” said Hailey Noonan, resource development coordinator. “It’s a big step forward when it comes to raising funds for CHN.”

Last year, Bring it Home raised more than $100,000 in revenue and more than $50,000 in goods and services. $19,000 of this went to the Adopt a Family event.

A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available. CHN is always seeking new sponsorships along with fun, unique auction items.

If you are interested in sponsoring or donating an auction item, please contact Hailey Noonan, resource development coordinator, at HNoonan@chninc.net or 248-824-7313 for more information.

Audra Westberg, right, presented the 2013 Emmett Jones Memorial Award to Felicia Jackson.
Five new homes offer accessible housing for 15 people living with a disability

Laura Grassi kept smiling on the day she signed the lease for her new home. She is one of 15 people living with a disability who will soon be moving into five single-family supportive housing homes we have just completed throughout Oakland County. This is our fourth Section 811 grant development, supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

With a total development cost of $2.6 million, the Independent Supportive Housing Oakland III (ISHO III) scattered-site model is designed to provide integrated housing within our community for those living with a disability.

“It gives people with disabilities the opportunity to live next to other folks with different life experiences, and they become a true part of the community,” said Kirsten Elliott, CHN’s VP of Development.

All the homes, two located in Southfield, two in Auburn Hills and one in Rochester Hills, are fully accessible. Each offers three bedrooms, wide hallways, large, accessible bathrooms with roll-in showers, accessible appliances and a sidewalk all the way around the house. The houses range between 2,400 to 3,400 square feet, depending on the size of the lot and layout.

The development also has a retention period of 40 years and includes a rental assistance program, which ensures long-term affordability for the individuals living in the homes. The total housing cost including utilities and maintenance is 30 percent of the person’s adjusted gross income. “It truly is affordable housing,” Kirsten said.

Young professionals gather for Connecting for a Cause

Young professionals interested in giving back to the community got together in May for Connecting for a Cause, a new event sponsored by Community Housing Network.

In a fun environment, guests were able to network and hear from the brilliant Don Jones, senior consultant to the New Economy Initiative for Southeast Michigan. Don spoke about entrepreneurship and opportunities for being an involved community member.

Guests enjoyed appetizers, drinks and the beats of a DJ during the evening centered around making an impact in creating sustainable communities.

“This was the first time we’ve ever done an event like this,” said Hailey Noonan, Resource Development Coordinator. “It was great to provide a place where young professionals could meet and talk about revitalizing our communities.”
Marc’s Message

Dear friends,

Being a part of a neighborhood was important to me even when I was growing up. It was where I felt accepted and loved, and without question, knew I was a part of all of it. There were other kids to play with, a little market we could walk to, and a home where I knew I belonged.

Creating developments with that sense of neighborhood and belonging is among the work that we have been doing. You can read about the Unity Park Rentals development and our just-completed ISHO III development elsewhere in this newsletter.

Every day we see people who have lived through a variety of circumstances and for one reason or another, don’t know the sense of belonging. Because of the generosity of our donors and supporters, we are able to offer that opportunity to dozens of people each year. We have found through the years that sticking to our mission, as difficult as it may be, works.

This year’s Bring it Home event will celebrate those who are now able to say “Welcome to my home!” You will be able to “meet” many of these folks at this year’s celebration. More information is on Page 2.

As always, thank you for all the ways you contribute to our work providing housing and housing resources for those who need it most.

Marc Craig
President