



DOORWAY

Volume 2
Issue 3

BCHT: Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc.
(Formerly Martin House)

December 2014

BCHT's mission: to create safe, quality housing in Trenton that local people can afford to buy or rent and to support community action and development in at-risk urban neighborhoods.

Garden Projects Beautify Neighborhood and Bring People Together



Isles helps with plantings at BCHT E. State St. office



Planting ivy on an unsightly fence



Landscaping on Walnut Avenue

Beauty in one's surroundings is important to one's feeling of well-being. Author T.F. Hodge says, "What surrounds us is what is within us." Beauty can make an area a more desirable place to live, work, and play. BCHT has been working to make our area of Trenton more beautiful, with some help and tips from the Isles Urban Garden Program.

Community members have recently completed three garden projects at several BCHT sites, shown above, including our latest fix-up home (more on this in our next newsletter). While the volunteers were working, neighbors came outside to trim their own bushes and help clean up an alley. It was a good and rewarding effort by all, and we are looking forward to seeing results next summer and sharing them with you.



Moving into the alley to do extra work

Better Community Housing (BCHT) Joins Capital City Community Coalition

The Capital City Community Coalition (CCCC) has a vision of a better and safer Trenton through the cooperation and action of clergy, city and educational leaders, first responders, nonprofits, and other organizations. BCHT has decided to join this effort.

Two recent CCCC events brought the Trenton community together for food, learning, and safe fun. A **Community Informational Fair** on September 20 at Mill Hill Park featured exhibits, workshops and health screenings by the police and fire departments, churches, educational, and community organizations. (See picture at right.)

On October 30, **A Safer Way to Spend Halloween** was sponsored by the Trenton Police and Firefighters. This was a **Trunk or Treat** giveaway for the little ones in the Police Headquarters parking lot and a **Basketball Tournament** for teens. BCHT was one of the organizations that provided a trunk full of treats. Fun was had by all!



BCHT friends with mayor and staff

Next BCHT Community Meeting: Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 pm at 802 East State Street. Please come!

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: Christmas sharing, rehabs, Gregorian Youth Ministry helpers

Like BCHT on Facebook now!

Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT) www.BCHTrenton.org 609-989-0271

Executive Director: Pearleen Waters; **Board of Trustees:** Dorothy Holmes, President; Jacqueline Meyers, Secretary; Kellie Malloy Foerter; Annie Hodges; Chris Mazauskas; Tamika Young, LSW; Bruce M. Sattin, Esq.; **Founder:** Fr. Brian McCormick

Letter From the Director

By Pearleen Waters, Executive Director of Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT)

By the grace of God we can do the impossible. And for some people, including me, the grace of God can come in the form of BCHT. But as I see it, **we have an obligation to invite and enhance God's grace by having the right ATTITUDE.**

BCHT has an ATTITUDE that defies the prevalent thinking in our society. Our founder, Fr. Brian McCormick, would call our society one of "extortion, profit, and usury" because it promotes, or at least condones, large profits, high interest rates on loans, and benefits for the rich at the expense of the poor.

We, as individuals, also need a graced ATTITUDE toward life. I was a Rutgers College graduate with an income of \$13,000, employed as a Mercer County Probation Officer, when I first came to BCHT/Martin House. I did not blame society, nor those in it whose income was more than mine, for being "disadvantaged" and not having what others had. I just accepted the plans God had for my life at that time. But I knew I had to work and make sacrifices to get what I wanted in life.

God's grace, in the guise of BCHT, gave me the opportunity, when the bank would not, to purchase a home and a car. I was just starting my family, and I needed help. Now I own my home and my car because of the provisions of the friends of Martin House/BCHT helping Fr. Brian to help those in need.

So let's tell the truth and shame the devil by admitting that we need the grace of God to have the right attitude and do the right thing for ourselves, for others, and for society as a whole. And let's remember how much we have to be grateful for.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, AND A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

In Memoriam – Daphane (Dee Dee) Turner

Longtime Martin House/CYO preschool teacher Daphane Turner entered eternal rest on October 24, 2014. She came to Martin House over 30 years ago working with Sister Piper, Brother Joe, and Father Brian as they started a preschool for the local community. Dee Dee also recruited and worked with volunteers in other Martin House/BCHT endeavors including the Clothing Store, After-School Program, Girl Scouts, and Better Community Housing as a way of earning "sweat equity" to help her mother buy a BCHT/Martin House home. Our condolences go out to her family and friends. Dee Dee, you will be missed!

Doorway to Hope and the Thrift Store

Our sister program, **Doorway to Hope, has a new employee.** Reverend Michael Howard is now helping Barbara Thompson implement changes based on new state and county rules about re-housing. At the **Thrift Store**, Gloria Phillips and her community helpers are in their busy season, **providing over 300 families with Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas gifts.**

In the Spotlight – Jerell Blakely



Jerell Blakely

Jerell Blakely says that Doorway to Hope gave him and his mom a second chance in life. Jerell was eight years old when he and his mother became homeless. With the help of Barbara Thompson and the services offered by Doorway to Hope, they were able to get their lives back on a productive and hope-filled path. Jerell finished high school in Trenton, then went on to earn a Bachelor's and a Master's degree.

Jerell was the guest speaker at BCHT's community meeting in November. **He is now a teacher at Trenton Central High School, and he has big dreams for Trenton students!** Jerell has instituted a new program called **Leadership Civics** for juniors and seniors. This program will teach students the skills needed to be active and informed citizens in the world today. He says, **"I want to help plant the seeds for the next crop of leaders who are ready to find solutions to Trenton's most pressing challenges."**

Good work, Jerell! We are proud of you.

Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (609-989-0271)

YOU CAN HELP! WE NEED YOUR MONETARY, MORAL, AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Donate online at BCHTrenton.org or mail to: BCH of Trenton, PO Box 298, Trenton, NJ 08602 *(Make all checks payable to BCH of Trenton, Inc.)*

For questions or comments, email us at BCHTInfo@gmail.com or use the email icon on the website at www.BCHTrenton.org

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