



DOORWAY

Volume 2
Issue 2

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

September 2014

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

“National Night Out” Unites Neighbors

Over 300 people gathered for food and fun at the second annual National Night Out held at Greg Grant Park – the largest gathering in the city! The party featured a water slide, face painting, DJ Nate the Great, and lots of good food. A visit by fire fighters with their truck was another treat for the children. The people who stopped by included Trenton’s new mayor Eric Jackson and his Chief of Staff, Councilpersons Verlina Reynolds-Jackson and Duncan Harrison, Freeholder Samuel Frisby, Fire Director Qareeb Bashir, representatives from local and State police, Fire Department, and Recreation Department, among others.

National Night Out gave Trentonians a rare occasion to gather with others outdoors for good fun and companionship. At Greg Grant Park children played together and people greeted old friends they hadn’t seen in years. Many are hopeful that more events like this can bring people together to help transform Trenton. Thanks go out to Dreama Darden of Fr. Brian McCormick Court HOA, Pearleen Waters of BCHT, and all those who made the evening possible. (See more pictures at www.bchTrenton.org.)



Mayor Jackson, Greg Grant and other policy makers



Community organizer, Councilwoman, Fire Director



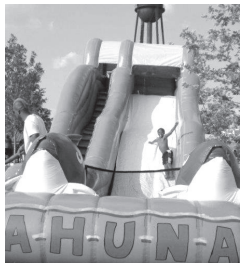
Neighborhood children



Fr. Brian, Pearleen, and friends



Serving the bounty



Thrills on the water slide



Family fun in the park



Face Painting



A picnic on the front stoop

Community Connections

An important part of BCHT’s mission is to support and encourage community action and development. We are happy to report that our bimonthly community meetings are spurring positive action in the community. Those who attend the meetings have the chance to create their own projects or join projects initiated by other organizations. For example:

Movie Night at Greg Grant Park – Three movie nights were organized by Tamika Young of BCHT and Dreama Darden of the Fr. Brian McCormick Court HOA. The efforts of Greg Grant, Jeff Borges, and other friends made the events possible. Because all went well, we hope to continue next summer. We will need to purchase our own projector and audio system to make this happen.

Trenton 250 Master Plan – With a new mayor, it is a perfect time for the people of Trenton to take part in the city’s direction for growth. And not just through political channels. Organizations like The Citizens Campaign have created various ways to help people become part of the process of change. **The Citizens Campaign’s Impact Trenton** program has enabled concerned citizens to work on task forces that address Education, Art and Economic Development, and Public Safety and Re-Entry. BCHT community members are actively working on the Safety task force, realizing that a safe Trenton is the first step to community and outside participation and support.

Isles Gardens Project – Led by Tamika Young, BCHT and community members have joined this project to make the city more beautiful. Several BCHT projects are planned for October.

Capital City Community Coalition – This newly formed coalition is an effort by the new administration to bring healing and hope to Trenton. By bringing together city officials, law enforcement, nonprofits, and places of worship, the coalition hopes to make Trenton a desirable and active place to live and work, a true Capital City for our state. BCHT is now an active member.

BCHT Homeownership Program

Homes that people of low income can actually afford to buy - this is the primary mission of BCHT. Our last project was 20 new townhouses on East State Street, now called Fr. Brian McCormick Court, which was completed in 2012.

Our newest project involves rehabbing some homes that low-income families of three or more can buy. As always, we rely on sweat equity, volunteers, and the generosity of vendors and contractors who discount their goods and services. For our current project at 31 Walnut Avenue, we are once again blessed to have wonderful people supporting us. Our contractor, Jeff Borges, not only runs the project, but volunteers many weekends to supervise sweat equity work there and on ongoing BCHT maintenance projects. Some old friends are also volunteering their expertise, including Deacon Chuck Moscarello and others from the churches of St. Gregory the Great and St. David the King.



A volunteer



BCHT and Citizens Campaign members at Trenton 250 Meeting

In the Spotlight – Sharon English



Sharon and sons

The Martin House connection has deep roots. Sharon English is a BCHT homeowner who has been connected with Martin House since she was a child. She had to enter the homeownership program three times before she got a home because of the difficulty of meeting the classroom and sweat equity requirements while working two jobs and raising a family.

Sharon attributes her tenacity and desire to succeed to her parents and the time she spent at the summer camps at Martin House, where her father drove the bus. Father Brian McCormick was very influential in her life and helped her get her first real job at Sovereign Bank. From there she moved up and on, and now works for the State of NJ in the Disability Claims Department.

Sharon has lived in her home for 16 years and raised her three children there. She says that owning her own home has provided the stability, peace of mind, and confidence she needed to earn a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Information Technology. Her garden has been a source of joy and pride. Sharon is now a grandmother and continues to do sweat equity for BCHT by offering her skills as a notary and helping Pearleen with clerical and database management duties. Congratulations, Sharon; it's wonderful to see a "Martin House kid" succeed!

Campers' Brunch and Show by HHC

Tynetta Howard of Howard's Healthy Choices (HHC) is a new BCHT collaborator that has been sharing space in our office at 802 East State St. This summer **HHC sponsored a summer camp and mentoring program teaching at-risk teens life skills** such as healthy eating, anger management, healthy relationship boundaries, and etiquette. As a final event, the campers prepared and served brunch for the mayor and other dignitaries and friends, after which they put on a show highlighting their achievements over the summer. The youth sang, played music, and read touching poems they had written about their life experiences.



Letting talent shine

Letter from the Director

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

Hope springs eternal, and we thank the Lord for that! Hope not only keeps us going in the bad times, it sparks the good times with even greater expectations and action. **In a time when our world has so many problems, I, personally, can only hope to affect a small part of my own world.** But I feel it is my duty to try. As Father Brian McCormick says, **we must CO-CREATE with God the world and culture in which we live**, a world that honors God and cares for others, without selfishness and greed. A tall order! So we start in our own lives, and we let our hope keep us from getting discouraged when things go wrong, become difficult, or just don't seem to change. When I look for hope, I can see it all around me. It is in our homeowners who are working to maintain their homes and family in a godly way, in our partners in the community like the Citizens Campaign who are working to make Trenton a better place to live and work, and in the efforts of our BCHT community to take responsibility and touch others by doing their part.

THANK YOU for your support and prayers as we CO-CREATE a better worldview.



At Nat'l Night Out

Doorway to Hope (DTH)

Due to changes in county and state funding, DTH is now operating as an "emergency family shelter" rather than "transitional housing." Although a family's length of stay is now limited to 90 days, DTH continues to help the heads of household address employment barriers and job readiness. They need your volunteer and monetary support.

BCHT and Facebook

Better Community Housing of Trenton is now on **Facebook** as well as on our website at BCHTrenton.org. Like us now!

Next BCHT Community Meeting: Wednesday, November 19 at 6:30 pm at 802 East State Street. Please come!

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

I UNDERSTAND THE NEED AND WANT TO JOIN THE EFFORT:

A **CO-CREATOR'S Pledge** of \$10,000 to support housing for the poor and community action in the inner-city

I/We pledge \$ _____ over 1 year 3 years... in monthly payments of \$ _____ Starting on: _____ (DATE)

I/We want to support **BCH of Trenton/Doorway to Hope/the Thrift Store.**

Enclosed is a gift of: \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 Other: \$ _____ (OPTIONAL:) Designated for: _____

PLEASE PRINT: First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Company: _____ (Enclose matching gift form)

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

*BCH of Trenton, Inc. is qualified by the IRS to receive contributions that are deductible for federal income tax purposes. This charitable organization is registered with the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. Information may be obtained by calling: (973) 504-6215. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Email us at BCHTInfo@gmail.com or use the mail icon on the website at www.BCHTrenton.org