



# DOORWAY

Volume 3  
Issue 2

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

September  
2015

*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.*

## ***1968 Diocesan Goals Still Relevant and in Tune With Pope Francis***

In 1968, the Priests' Senate and Bishop Ahr voted to start an **experimental ministry** in Trenton that would use Gospel values to challenge racism and poverty. They placed three priests in Trenton and supported their efforts to start **Martin House**, which became a symbol and a means for people of good will to **support and interact with the poor in two crucial areas of life – education and housing**. Fr. Brian McCormick joined the founding team in 1970, and two years later he was the only founder left in the ministry, upholding its goals until his retirement in 2012. His compassion and certainty about society's responsibility for the poorest of its neighbors is mirrored in Pope Francis' recent encyclical, *On Care for Our Common Home*. We celebrate Fr. Brian and the spirit of Martin House (in Better Community Housing, Inc., Doorway to Hope, and CYO East State Street) that continues in the work of stewardship of our Common Home, Mother Earth. We ask that our readers and supporters pray about finding their own way to bring about the changes needed for all to coexist in peace and caring in our Common Home, without the greed and selfishness that currently prevails.

## ***National Night Out (NNO) Promotes Police/Community Camaraderie***

The weather was beautiful on August 4, 2015 for the third **National Night Out** at Greg Grant Park. Hundreds turned out to enjoy a variety of games, food, and activities. In the spirit of community, the event was jointly organized by Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT), the Fr. Brian McCormick Court Homeowners Association, and the Congregation Masjidut-Taqua. The CYO East State Street Center, the Wilbur Branch of Santander Bank, and councilwoman Verlina Reynolds Jackson also contributed. The city provided T-shirts, food, police and fire presence, and street barricades. Greg Grant set up an exciting exhibition basketball game featuring local teams. The East State Street sponsors organized the event, including games, special food, a water slide and bounce house, much of which was made possible through a grant from the Princeton Area Community Foundation.



*Greg Grant and his team*



*Police with kids playing to win goldfish*



*Fun on waterslide*



*Councilman Alex Bethea with Fr. Brian & Homeowners*



*Kids and firefighters at the fire truck*



*Santander Bank gets Thank You Awards*

## ***Wilbur Teen Enhances Team of National Night Out***

**Our star NNO team member is a local teen, Amir Black**, who has a wonderful sense of community spirit and action. Amir organized and ran games near the Gazebo where children could win prizes through points gained by playing the games. He creatively used common articles such as tarps, ladders, hula hoops, and swimming noodles and turned them into games of skill and action. Amir and his family live in a BCHT home. He is a Boy Scout in Troop 257 at the CYO East State Street Center. Amir provides a fine example, and we are proud and happy to have him as part of our team.



*Throw-the-ball-through-the-hole*



*Amir hands out prizes*



*1<sup>st</sup> prize winner*



*3<sup>rd</sup> prize winner*

## ***Letter From Fr. Brian McCormick – On Care for Our Common Home***

*Founder of Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT) – Martin House*

### *Looking for Leadership, for the Lord*

In these pressing and changing times many of us are looking a little more closely, and with some anxiety, for the proper leadership to guide us to a fuller and surer life. The Lord seems far off. We are wandering. And it seems like wishful thinking to hold that God is with us, things are going in the right direction, and if we gather with Him all will be well.

The heart of the Lord is moved by our alienation. He sees and recognizes our uneasiness, our desire for Oneness and the assurance that we are His people and He is with us. He sees us as sheep without a shepherd, and so He sends us shepherds.



*Fr. Brian McCormick*

### *An Appeal to the World*

Our shepherd, Pope Francis, is sending an urgent appeal to all the world in his latest teaching, ***On Care for Our Common Home-Laudato Si'***. As his sheep, he asks us to look up! He asks us to **see what is happening to our Common Home**, the home of 7.2 billion people, on this gift of the Planet Earth where we live.

### *Taking Responsibility*

Pope Francis alerts us to how **we are abusing the earth in the way we are using it, organizing it, and living in it**. In this free-will process we have created a man-made crisis. The Holy Father reminds us that **all that occurs on this planet is inter-related, and we must face and take responsibility for our man-made dilemmas**. We must face our man-made technology, economics, politics, consumerism, and commercialism, and take responsibility for how it has been created and organized. That it has created our ecological disaster.

Simultaneously and equally important, we must see the grave human tragedy that **over 2 billion of our brothers and sisters are forced to live in subhuman abject poverty**. This planet was created to be the home for all of us, given for us by God our Father, saved by His Son, and blessed with His Holy Spirit. Earth is part of the Gospel of Creation for us, alerting us to the truth of the sacredness of dealing with all creation in its uniqueness and relatedness to all things. In the redemptive presence of the Risen Lord, entrusted to all of us is the creative joyful human task to make this happen in the One family of God.

### *One Flock Co-Creating the Emerging World*

Would you not agree that our Holy Father, Pope Francis, is alerting all of us to the great call to be of one flock? That is, His people together seeking to be fully alive in His world, creatively responding to one another and to all... to celebrate in living and using His world to express our life, living, and creativity in all that we do.

**With the Good Shepherd present with His entrusted co-shepherds, the total flock can redemptively break down the walls of enmity that separate us.** We can do this if we really feed on our faith and undertake the creative and redemptive works entrusted to us, with the Spirit of solidarity given to us. We can gather together and be mutually pastured in His great flock in this one world, to be co-creators with God in the healing of the earth and the Oneness of peoples.

### **BCHT makes this pledge in care of our Common Home. PLEASE JOIN US!**

Our goal is to uphold our mission in the coming year by rehabbing at least one house for a low-income family and by continuing to encourage and support our local Wilbur community by gathering neighbors together in acts of community development and action that will enrich our community in spirit and oneness and break down barriers of racism and division.



## ***BCHT Homes Receive Phoenix Award***

BCHT's 20 homes on East State Street, along with Greg Grant Park, were the reason the city of Trenton was given the 2015 Phoenix Award. The homes and park are on three former industrial sites that were contaminated with toxic products. The award recognizes **exemplary brownfield redevelopment and revitalization**. Project Partners for this effort included: Architects Michael Graves and THINKFORM's Russell DiNardo, Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (formerly Martin House); USEPA (Region 2); NJ Department of Community Affairs; NJDEP; Mercer County; Brownfield Redevelopment Solutions, Inc.; and members of the East Trenton Collaborative.

Photo Courtesy of Robert Salgado



## ***CYO East State Street***

BCHT continues to support the CYO East State Street (former Martin House Learning Center). This year we sponsored one of the 22 teams in its **Future Stars Basketball** league, and this summer we helped with volunteers for its **Summer Camp**.

**A record number of children attended summer camp at CYO's East State Street Center.** Not wishing to deny any child a place for safe summer fun and learning, the Programs Director, Robert Donaldson, opened the center's doors to 140 children in grades 1-6. Activities included life skills, swimming, 4-H, field trips, mindfulness, sports, arts, dance, academics, and enrichment activities. Organized by a BCHT Advisory Board member, 22 teens and adults from **St. David the King** in West Windsor and two Girl Scouts doing projects for their Gold Awards, volunteered on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to bring enrichment activities to the children. **Lisa Park** of Plainsboro and **Saachi Bedi** of West Windsor designed and taught programs to teach *Art Awareness* and *Sports and Team Activities*, respectively. The other volunteers did reading and learning activities with the children.

(CYO is separate from BCHT. Send donations to Mr. Donaldson, CYO E. State St. Center, 794 E. State St., Trenton, NJ 08609)



*Reading Fun*



*Saachi's Team*



*Lisa's student explains Monet*



*Grouchy Ladybug Clocks*

## ***New BCHT Homeowner Moves In***

Thanks to donors and volunteers, the home at 31 Walnut Avenue, Trenton, is now complete – inside and out. Our new homeowner moved in on August 1. Thank you all for your support! BCHT will be rehabbing at least one home in the coming year, depending on funding available.

Before and After →



## ***Caring Neighbors Remember the Children Lost to the Violence of the City***

Seeafilia Ellis sees the pain of her friends and neighbors who have suffered the unthinkable – losing a child to the violence that surrounds them in the city. With the help of BCHT, Seeafilia organized a Healing Brunch for eight of these mothers and their families who have lost a child over the years. On a beautiful day in May, they were treated to a sumptuous buffet at Jefferson Vincent Park. A blessing was given by Rev. Jonathon Smith, and mothers who felt so inclined told their stories. These moms and elder moms of the neighborhood were presented with memory plaques and flowers.



*Blessing of remembrance and healing*



*Mrs. Hutchinson (elder) and family*

# Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc.

## In This Issue



*Award Goes to BCHT Homes*



*Exhibition Basketball*



*National Night Out*



*Kids Make a Difference*

**Wish List:** BCHT needs workers on rehab projects, cleaners for office buildings/grounds, coaches and trainers for homeowners, office help with phones, and any support you are willing to give. For more information, contact Linda at [BCHTInfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTInfo@gmail.com).

### ***PACF Grant Means Movies in the Park***

An old-fashioned summer feeling accompanied the four movie nights at Greg Grant Park this summer. Three were sponsored by BCHT with backing from PACF, and the fifth was part of Trenton's Summer Movies Under the Stars. The movies provided a great way for families to spend an evening together. A grant from the Princeton Area Community Foundation (PACF) allowed us to purchase a projector, DVD player, and sound system to be used for movies and meetings. Thank you!

### ***Doorway to Hope Helps Ex-Prisoners and Their Families***

Our sister program, **Doorway to Hope (DTH)** is branching out to aid those re-entering society after being released from prison. Barbara Thompson and team, Michael Howard, Howard Thompson, and Cynthia Eutsey, are working to include ex-prisoners with families in DTH's mission of "homelessness to self-sufficiency" by providing short-term housing and assistance in finding jobs.

***IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:*** New Rehabs, Trunk or Treat, Thrift Store's Thanksgiving and Christmas Sharing

**Next BCHT Community Meeting: Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30 pm at 802 East State Street. Please come!**

**Email us at [BCHTInfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTInfo@gmail.com) or use the mail icon on the website at [www.BCHTrenton.org](http://www.BCHTrenton.org). Like BCHT on facebook now!**

### **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.

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