SEPTEMBER '09

# MHC NEWSLETTER

## Affordable Housing Trust Fund: We're getting the Ball Rolling Again!

The local Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) is back on track thanks to the Local Government Accountability Committee of the Louisville Metro Council. The Committee was concerned that no action had been taken on the ordinance passed over a year ago and that the $1million allocation to the AHTF was languishing. They asked for a progress report at their August 26 meeting; so we started planning! Thanks to the hard work of Councilwoman **Tina Ward-Pugh**, negotiations with the city Department of Housing proceeded with **Tina Heavrin** and **David Howard**. Maria Hampton convened the Mayor's AHTF both in person and telephonically to get full input. Rachel Hurst represented advocates in this negotiation. So there are a lot of people to thank.

There were about 25 advocates attending the Committee meeting, all sporting yellow signs that read, "The time is now!" Trust me, this did not go unnoticed by present Committee members, co-chairs Kelly Downard and Jim King, Tina Ward-Pugh, Brent Ackerson, Kevin Kramer and Bob Henderson. Reflecting the importance of this issue, the chairs who planned on discussing the AHTF for 10 minutes, gave the topic 50 minutes.

The main negotiated change is that, instead of having the city Department of Housing administering the AHTF, the AHTF will be a non-profit independently administered. This is at the request of the Department of Housing and is supported by community advocates.

Next steps are the introduction of an ordinance that amends the original ordinance passed over a year ago. This will be done at the next meeting of Metro Council's Health & Human Needs Committee, chaired by strong supporter Mary Woolridge. **Please come to this meeting on Wednesday, September 2 at 3:00pm in the Council Chambers. Hope to see you there!**

## Where Do You Live?

***Louisville's Homeless Children and the Affordable Housing Crisis***

On Wednesday, August 19th, MHC held a Press Conference to release our newest issue paper, *Where Do You Live? Louisville's Homeless Children and the Affordable Housing Crisis*. More than 75 housing advocates, homeless advocates, elected officials, Jefferson County Public School (JCPS) staff, community members and MHC supporters packed the room, indicating the great need for research and community dialog about the housing crisis' heartbreaking impact on our most vulnerable population – children.

**Here are the key findings of this report:**

- 8.8% of Jefferson County Public School students (pre-K – 12th grades) were homeless in 2008-09 – 8,582 students
- The number of homeless students has risen 50% over 5 years (from 2004 to 2008).
- Last year nearly half of homeless JCPS students (4,130) were living "doubled up" with friends or relatives, often in overcrowded conditions.
- JCPS reports that 583 students had previous addresses in homes that were foreclosed on (during a 15-month period).
- 44% of homeless students changed schools at least once after they started school last year, with nearly 2,000 homeless students changing schools two or more times.
- Reading scores for homeless students lag behind those of all JCPS students. Among 3rd graders, just 37% of homeless students are reading at a proficient level, compared to 67% for all JCPS 3rd graders.
- There is also a math achievement gap for homeless students at every grade. By high school, just 15% of homeless eleventh graders are proficient or above in math, compared to 42% of all JCPS eleventh graders.

All current MHC members received a copy of the report, but we urge you to pass the electronic version on to interested organizations and people that you know. It can easily be found under the "research" tab on our website.

Thank you again to our sponsors **Making Connections Louisville and PNC Bank**. Without your support, this report would not be possible. Also, thank you to **JCPS** who worked with researchers **Valerie Salley and Fran Ellers** and filmmakers **Laura Crawford and Lavel White**.

Making Connections WORKS

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# Consolidated Plan Planning with NHA

On August 18, the Nonprofit Housing Alliance (NHA) held a half-day meeting, at **New Directions Housing Corporation**, facilitated by former MHC Executive Director **Jane Walsh**, on the five-year Consolidated Plan for spending federal dollars for Louisville Metro Government. The meeting began with Ginny Peck and Rich Knight speaking about HUD's general view of the Consolidated Plan process and its importance for the metro community in determining affordable and supportive housing needs. The comment period on housing needs has begun with several Metro Council District meetings and an online survey available at www.louisvilleky.gov/housing.

A Consolidated Plan is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to receive entitlement grant funds to carry out activities that revitalize neighborhoods, increase economic development, furnish decent housing and a suitable living environment, reduce homelessness and provide improved community facilities and services.

Louisville Metro must prepare a five-year Consolidated Plan for the years 2011-2015. The plan must detail our community's needs, priorities and action steps in four program areas: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG).

For 2009, Louisville Metro received funding at the following levels:

- $11,894,234 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- $ 4,028,623 HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME)
- $ 522,171 Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and
- $ 502,511 Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS
- **$16,947,539 TOTAL**

Consolidated planning represents substantial investments in Louisville Metro (85 plus million dollars over 5 years).

Once the Needs Assessment of the Plan is prepared, the community will have another opportunity to comment on the draft. The final Plan is due to HUD in May. In each of the five years, Louisville Metro must also prepare an Annual Action Plan. Therefore, there will be an Annual Action Plan for 2011 filed simultaneously with the Five-Year Consolidated Plan.

NHA will continue having internal discussions on all aspects of this planning process and hopes to gather more information and opinions by facilitating conversations with others, especially neighborhood organizations and activists. Please join us in this endeavor to create rational, achievable housing goals and production numbers. Call the MHC office at 548-6858 to get involved.

# Volunteers Needed to Support New Process for Foreclosure Work-Outs

In our newsletter last month, you might remember the article about the new process for foreclosure work-outs that Jefferson County Circuit Courts has set up. Basically, the Jefferson County Circuit Court has implemented a Conciliation Conference process available to homeowners in foreclosure. This process brings the lenders and homeowners together to talk about alternatives to foreclosure even though a foreclosure action was filed.

The owner will be notified of this opportunity when the foreclosure is served, but to ensure that homeowners truly understand the benefit of this process community-based groups, such as **Making Connections Network**, are also going door-to-door letting owners know about the process.

Once the owner opts-in to the Conciliation Conference process they must work with one of the foreclosure counselors at the Housing Partnership or the Louisville Urban League to complete a detailed financial packet and provide it to the lender. Legal Aid Society is training volunteer lawyers to help the owner at the Conference so the process is FREE to homeowners.

The good news is since volunteers started going door-to-door, the program has seen a spike in positive impacts. In the three month experimental period, up to 40% of the Conciliation Conferences resulted in some compromise. This process helps avoid homes being lost and homes being left vacant.

**The bad news is that with a projected 5,000 foreclosures to be filled in Jefferson County this year, we need more and more people to volunteer. If you are interested please call Dakesha Sanders, at Making Connections Network (502) 618-5980**

If you are in foreclosure and need help, contact the Protect My Kentucky Home hotline at 1-866-830-7868 or the Legal Aid Society at 502-584-1254.

**FYI:** Through Louisville Metro Human Services, the **Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program** will begin on September 1, 2009. Under this program, low-income people can get assistance with paying rent, utilities, security deposits, moving costs and financial counseling if they meet income criteria and are homeless or in immediate danger of being homeless.

**For more information check out www.louisvilleky.gov/HumanServices**

# Schedule of Events

**September 6** - Carla Wallace's Lawn Party for the Fairness Campaign and the Kentucky Alliance, 5-8 PM, Celebrate community and our work for a better world at this annual event. Call 893-0788 for more info.

**September 11** –Center for Neighborhoods is announcing their first annual Grassroots Gala for neighborhoods to come together and celebrate empowerment with a unified voice! All neighborhood associations are invited to participate! Visit www.thegrassrootsgala.org for info and volunteer opportunities.

**September 12** - 2009 Homeward Bound 5K Race/Walk/Run to End Homelessness on September 12, at 9am, Cherokee Park Scenic Loop. The starting point is Cochran Hill Dog Park. Contact Info: bwinchel@louhomeless.org

**September 12** - Driving While Gates, Saturday Academy, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., Park DuValle Education Center, 3610 Bohne Ave. The fact remains that Henry Louis Gates Jr., a prominent black scholar, being arrested in his own home is a chilling moment in the American experience. MHC endorsers this public forum.

**September 15** – Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign Meeting. Presbyterian Community Center, 701 Hancock, 5:30-3:00 p.m.

**September 15** - Environmental Justice Tour, 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Starts at St. William Catholic Church at 13th and Oak Streets. Speakers and bus tour guides include: Tom Fitzgerald, Dr. Adewale Troutman, Tom Owen and Russ Barnett. Registration Info: 452-2749 or earthandspirit@passionist.org.

**October 1** - ACLU Bill of Rights Dinner. Save this date! More details to come. Keynote speaker for this annual event will be Morris Dees from the Southern Poverty Law Center.

**October 18** - Dare to Care Hunger Walk on Sunday, October 18 at Waterfront Park, Festival Plaza. Festivities start at noon; the walk starts at 2:15pm. For more information about this event, please go to www.thehungerwalk.org.

**October 20** – Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign Meeting. Presbyterian Community Center, 701 Hancock, 5:30-3:00 p.m.

**October 28-29** - Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) presents 2009 Kentucky Affordable Housing Conference on October 28-29 at the Hyatt Regency and Lexington Convention Center. For sponsorship opportunities or for more information about this conference, contact Mary Kay Meagher at 614-224-8446 or email mmeagher@occh.org.

**December 1-3** - 11th Annual Ending Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Conference on December 1-3 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington. Sponsored by Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs (KASAP), Kentucky Domestic Violence Association (KDVA), Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Division of Violence Prevention Resources, and others. Call Tana at 502-226-2704 x 300

## Phil Tom & Gabe Fritz

After 2 years of service as MHC Board of Directors President, it is now time for **Phil Tom**, of PCUSA, to hand the reins over to another leader. Phil has definitely left big shoes to fill, but we are confident that our new President, **Gabe Fritz** of Housing Partnership, Inc., won't miss a step in the transition. MHC is also lucky that Phil will still serve on the board as a general member to help support all of our new leadership.

In fact, Gabe has already had a chance to step up as the MHC Board President at the *Where Do You Live?* Report Press Conference where he opened the event with compassion and thoughtfulness.

**Phil Tom - Thanks for your leadership, dedication and continued service to MHC!**

## Board of Zoning Adjustment Update

The Board of Zoning Adjustment (BOZA) was confused. By their own admission, BOZA did not know what they ruled or the implications, when BOZA totally banned homeless shelters from Jefferson County. The lights on the BOZA intellectual dashboard were not shining much brighter during BOZA's reconsideration of the decision. BOZA left a ban on homeless shelters in the OR3 classification, and left confusion about what happens in other zoning classifications. This case arose because Wayside Christian Mission was looking at the old Mercy Academy for a shelter for homeless women and children. The Original Highlands Neighborhood Association (OHNA) did not want these children and women.

Wayside Christian Mission has sued BOZA, the OHNA, Metro government and the owners of Mercy Academy to overturn BOZA's (quoting the complaint) "…erroneous, arbitrary and capricious, unreasonable…." ruling. Since this ruling affects all shelters, MHC hopes that BOZA and Metro government act expeditiously to ensure that shelters are allowed, by law, to have shelters for families in residential areas where people can live in neighborhood settings and where they have access to services and transportation.

# MHC NEWSLETTER



## What MHC Has Been Up To?

### Consolidated Plan Planning!

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*MHC's monthly Newsletter is underwritten by a generous grant from*

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