

THE

Neighborhood Minute

The Newsletter for NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester

Dear Friends:



As we all know, these are very trying economic times. Each day we are bombarded with stories related to this country's economic situation and the stark realities we face. Each week NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester receives phone calls from homeowners who are in danger of losing their homes and facing financial ruin. These are not necessarily people who have become victims of the mortgage lending debacle. Rather, they are people who have lost a job, lost wages, or experienced another unexpected financial burden as a result of the economy.

As an approved housing counseling agency, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester provides the educational supportive services that help people navigate through the complexities of their situations and the troubled market. We help individuals and families develop plans of action to stabilize their situations and increase the likelihood that they remain in their homes. We continue to tell those who seek our assistance that the worst thing to do is ignore the problem and hope it will go away.

NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester is a community resource, and we continue to be here to provide housing solutions for those in need. Demand for our services has increased as a result of the economy, and we have adjusted accordingly to the increased demand. And unfortunately, we do not see this increased demand abating anytime soon.

Our work cannot be done without the generosity of the community. For those of you who continue to support us, we remain immensely grateful. For our friends who have not yet joined in support, I ask you to consider a nominal gift this year to help us continue to ensure that our neighbors can remain in their homes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MSJ'.

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West Granite Home Owner Holds On

When Claude Venne moved to the West Granite neighborhood in the mid-1950s, he said the area was quiet and populated primarily by owner-occupants. He can't say that anymore.



The neighborhood's character began to change, he said, during the economic downturn of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when a national recession and local bank turmoil combined to send the city's housing market into a tailspin. Sensing opportunity, investors were attracted, buying and flipping many of the neighborhood's multi-family homes.

In the years since, the neighborhood has become more than 70 percent absentee-landlord owned, a fact with which Venne isn't particularly pleased, and a trend he hopes NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester can reverse.

"Owners take better care of their buildings. Most of those absentee owners don't do anything for their buildings at all," he said. "And there's a lot of tenants moving in and moving out, coming and going."

But the neighborhood's decline hasn't - and won't - cause Venne to move elsewhere.

"I've been here a long time," the 77-year-old said. "I'm not moving. I like it here - I do. I could move to Florida if I wanted, but I'm staying right here," he said.

One of the aspects of the neighborhood that Venne particularly likes is its diversity.

At the time he moved there in the 50s, the neighborhood - known at that time as the 'Squog - was populated by mostly Germans and Belgians, he said, with a scattering of Irish, Poles and other nationalities. In recent years the neighborhood has given way to Somalis, Nepalis, Ukrainians, Filipinos and Puerto Ricans.

An immigrant from Canada himself, Venne and his wife do what they can to help the newcomers with food and clothes.

"The neighborhood is about as diverse as you can get, and it's getting more so every day. It's a great neighborhood," he said.

NeighborFest 2009: A Continued Focus on the West Granite Neighborhood

NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester is gearing up for our annual NeighborFest celebration on June 6, 2009. Again this year, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester will focus on the West Granite neighborhood as part of a larger focus on the revitalization of this West Side neighborhood. Once a vibrant Manchester residential neighborhood, with a strong rate of homeownership and owner occupancy, the West Granite neighborhood has deteriorated in recent years. Although a residential component still exists, the neighborhood is rife with neglected properties, absentee landlords, a high rate of vacancy, and, increasingly, foreclosed and abandoned homes, all of which have helped to create what is arguably the most troubled area of Manchester.

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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

David P. Goodwin, 2008 Outstanding Neighbor Award Recipient

David P. Goodwin, long time Manchester resident and Trustee of NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester, was the recipient of NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester's Outstanding Neighbor Award in November 2008. Established to recognize individuals or entities who have provided outstanding support to NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester in a variety of ways, David received the award in recognition of his long-time involvement with the organization. David P. Goodwin was one of those residents willing to get involved to help improve Manchester neighborhoods and the lives of those at an incredible disadvantage. Foremost, was the need to have community residents involved in the process-advocating for the need for an organization such as Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services (our founding name) in our community and helping to raise the financial support and good will needed to establish the organization. David joined together with then Mayor Raymond Wieczorek and other community

residents and leaders to raise the support needed to establish Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services in the early 90's.



*David P. Goodwin accepts the Outstanding Neighbor Award from former Mayor Raymond Wieczorek and executive director Robert Tourigny.
Photo by David Lane, reprinted with permission of the UnionLeader.com*

David's commitment to our cause did not end once Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services set up offices and began addressing the revitalization needs of the Center City neighborhood through the acquisition of problem buildings. David became a Trustee of this organization, an association that has continued for 17 years. As a Trustee, David has lent his time, guidance and support and has helped this organization grow in service and scope.

In addition to his own personal generosity which helps to sustain this organization and our services on an annual basis, as a Trustee of the Cogswell Benevolent Trust, David was instrumental in ensuring resources needed to support our programs. The Cogswell Benevolent Trust has provided over a quarter of a million dollars of support to this organization. David P. Goodwin has provided invaluable leadership, support, and a true commitment to helping others have better housing, and we were honored to recognize him with our first Outstanding Neighbor Award.

Responding to the Need for Foreclosure Assistance

In response to the increase in number of homeowners facing financial distress, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester has increased its outreach in the community. "The need to get the right information to homeowners in danger of foreclosure is critical," says Kellie Ann Coffey, HomeOwnership Manager. "We are bombarded daily with information about the economy, mortgage crisis and stimulus package, and we want to make sure homeowners are educated on things that they can do to avoid losing their home." NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester recently announced the addition of free Foreclosure Intervention Workshops to be held weekly at our offices at 20 Merrimack Street. For more information, please contact Kellie Ann Coffey at 626-4663 ext. 11 or kellieann@nwgm.org.

NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester Updates Facilities

New Donor Wall Recognizes Charitable Support

Thanks to support from the Samuel P. Hunt Foundation, The McIninch Foundation, and The Agnes M. Lindsay Trust, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester recently completed several interior improvements to our seminar and office space located at 20 Merrimack Street. More than 5,000 clients, volunteers and other members of the community frequent our facility on an annual basis. Support received from these foundations allowed us to install new carpet, repaint walls, and purchase new furniture in our client reception area.

As part of our “sprucing up,” we have installed a new donor wall in our lobby area. Designed in the form of a house, our donor wall recognizes individuals, foundations, corporations and other entities whose financial support helps to support our community development activities, including affordable housing rental development, home ownership education, and other neighborhood revitalization initiatives.

The names of individuals and entities that make a financial contribution to the organization are listed on a “brick” that replicates those at our Silver Mill building in Manchester, helping us to recognize those who are helping to ensure affordable housing in our region on an annual basis.



Thank you to these funders for helping us complete needed updates to our facility. And please make a contribution to NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester in the enclosed envelope to be included on our donor wall!

Housing for Everyone Award

In recognition of NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester's work to create affordable housing in the Greater Manchester region, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester was selected as a recipient of the 2008 Housing for Everyone grant competition from TD Banknorth. NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester received a \$15,000 grant from TD Banknorth to further our efforts in developing affordable housing in the region. TD Banknorth President & CEO, R. Scott Bacon, and Executive Vice President Steven Webb, present the award to NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester. Thank you TD Banknorth!



Pictured left to right are: Steven Webb, Jennifer Vadney, Robert Tourigny, Michelle Caraccio and Scott Bacon.

Last year, more than 250 residents, volunteers and dignitaries, including Governor John Lynch, Mayor Frank Guinta and U.S. Senator John E. Sununu, joined in a day-long cleanup and block party to bring focus to the needs and potential of the West Granite neighborhood, which borders or is very close to several major West Side sites, including West High School, Catholic Medical Center, and the William B. Cashin Senior Center.

Participants will spend the morning picking up trash and other debris, sweeping streets, and planting flowers, and then enjoy a block party in the afternoon that includes kids activities, music, dancing, and barbecue. It is neighborhood cohesiveness at its best!

"It is a great day in this city," says Will Stewart, Community Services Specialist at NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester. "Neighbors come together to clean up their neighborhood and enjoy each other's company-a true demonstration of the pride and enthusiasm that exists in our community."

Thank you to this year's event sponsors: Sheehan Phinney Bass & Green, St. Mary's Bank, Bedford Wal-Mart, NeighborWorks® America and Grace Haven Baptist Church. For more information about NeighborFest 2009, please contact Will Stewart at will@nwgms.org or 626-4663 ext. 12.



Joe and Jeff's Christmas Bash

For the second straight year, the holidays were made a little brighter because of the efforts and kind hearts of Manchester residents Joe Venturini and Jeff Moynihan. This past December 19 at the Derryfield Country Club, Joe and Jeff hosted their annual Christmas party to benefit needy children. Despite a raging snow storm, more than 175 people enjoyed an evening of music and spirits, bringing an unwrapped toy, article of clothing, or gift card as their cost of admission. All of the items were distributed to tenant families on the following day-in time to give to their children at Christmas. Items donated included bikes, electronic toys, dolls, winter jackets, hats and mittens.



After an exhilarating ride down the tubing hill at McIntyre Ski Area, Emina Smajlovic enjoys being pulled back up the hill for another run.

Event sponsors were: Derryfield Restaurant, Amoskeag Mortgage Company, Bostonian Solutions, CGI, KBACE Technologies, New Hampshire Irrigation, Roxo Realty/EZNNHOMES.com, Rick Wenzel Oil Company, Joan and Charles Neal, Jacqueline & Maurice Raymond and the Venturini Family. Raffle donations were provided by: Boulevard Limo, Eden Restaurant and Lounge, The Manchester Monarchs, NewEnglandPicture.com, Radisson Hotel Nashua, and Michael Thomas Salon. In addition, NewEngland.com donated proceeds from the evening's silent auction to NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester.

In addition to the items donated to families at Christmas, proceeds from the Christmas Bash allowed NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester to take a group of youngsters to McIntyre Ski Area during February break for a day of tubing. It was a real treat for these kids.

Our continued thanks to Joe and Jeff - and all those who helped to make this year's event a success!



Friends Naima Rodriguez, Amra Isak and Dolmari Ventura are all smiles as they stand in line for another tubing run.