

Returns

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NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND HOUSING INVESTMENT FUND REPORT

Campbell Creek Village TRANSFORMED HOUSING TRANSFORMS LIVES

Holly Stover knew that something had to be done. Like most residents of Boothbay Harbor, she was well aware of the dismal state of living conditions within the pair of low-income housing complexes in her town: Harbor Pines (for family residents) and West Harbor Pines (for elderly tenants). But Stover's professional life granted her an especially intimate view of what life inside that twin development was like. Her role as the *Maine Department of Health and Human Services'* Director for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault let her know that for many of these neighbors, every day represented another challenge simply to survive.

"The place was literally falling apart," said Stover. "Windows were broken, doors were missing, and the roof was so bad that rain



Collaboration and vision rebuild homes—and trust.

would fall directly into people's apartments. There were many vacancies, because not even the most destitute Boothbay Harbor residents would consider moving there. Anyone who had any means to escape the place had left it long ago."

Fortunately, Stover wasn't the only one paying attention to the problem. Boothbay Harbor Police Chief Bob Hasch, then Town Manager Carol Pilgrim, and then Code Enforcement

Officer Dabney Lewis wrote a joint letter to the property's mortgage holder. In their letter to the *US Department of Agricultural, Rural Development*, they voiced their deep concerns about the welfare of their

property's residents and the need for immediate action. The Boothbay Region Community Resources—an affiliate of local businesses, churches and volunteers—had also worked for years to help meet the needs of Harbor Pines/West Harbor Pines tenants. But this dedicated group knew that their efforts to sustain their neighbors'

basic human need for warm, safe shelter could only go so far.

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CAPITAL AND COMMUNITIES IN 2014

The Northern New England Housing Investment Fund is pleased to announce the creation of our 17th multi-investor fund: *Community Capital 2014*. We are actively marketing the Fund to investors.

For more information, please contact Bill Shanahan at 207 772 8255 or bshanahan@nnehf.org.



Residents who struggled to survive, now thrive at Campbell Creek Village.



NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
HOUSING INVESTMENT FUND

CATCH Neighborhood Housing

Buzzwords like “innovative” and “ahead of the curve” are ubiquitous in business, but for one New Hampshire non-profit, that’s exactly the way they do things. *CATCH Neighborhood Housing* started by developing affordable rental apartments. They now offer a full spectrum of services, including property management, home buying and ownership education, and foreclosure counseling.

In 1989, a group of community leaders in Merrimack County created *CATCH (Concord Area Trust for Community Housing)* in response to soaring real estate prices and a dearth of affordable housing for lower-wage workers. Its mission was to strengthen their communities by

creating opportunities for permanently affordable, quality housing for people otherwise not being served.

The organization became known as *CATCH Neighborhood Housing* in 2006. Rosemary Heard became President and CEO the same year. Heard brought with her more than 25 years of experience in the real estate industry, as well as the know-how to keep an organization growing. “Coming from the private sector, I truly know and appreciate that if there’s no money, there’s no mission,” she said. “We have an incredible commitment to our mission, and we know that we have to keep our doors open to fulfill it.”

Heard described a sea change in

the non-profit world several years ago, a time when real estate and the nation’s economy itself was being turned on its head. As funding sources began to shrink, many non-profits either disappeared, or were forced to adapt. Fortunately for *CATCH*, they were already in the process of self-examination, asking tough questions like: what exactly were they doing, for whom, and why?

Out of that assessment came the conclusion that *CATCH* was ready to change with the times. They created a long-term sustainability initiative that focused on partnering, improved service delivery models—and entrepreneurial ways to support

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Campbell Creek (Continued from the cover)

Stover rallied the *Boothbay Region Community Resources*, her neighbors and professional peers, to action. This group included *Community Housing of Maine (CHOM)* a non-profit organization with a strong record of providing advocacy, supportive housing, community inclusion, and stability to homeless and special needs populations across the state. Their efforts ignited a four-year initiative by *CHOM* to arrange the financing needed for a total rehabilitation of the Harbor Pines/West Harbor Pines complex that would transform it into the modern 36 unit development to be known as Campbell Creek Village.

As it turned out, *CHOM* had just the right mix of tenant sensitivity and industry expertise to get the job

done. “The biggest story about this effort was the paradigm shift this project inspired in the lives of the residents of this property,” said Cullen Ryan, *CHOM*’s Executive Director. “They’d been told time and time again that repairs and renovations would be made, only to wait in vain for work that was never performed. It was no wonder they were skeptical when we first met with them to outline our plans for Campbell Creek. We knew that trust would only be established when they saw that we actually carried through and did what we promised to do.”

That trust began with a phased, yearlong construction plan that ensured that no resident would be without a home during development. Existing housing was rehabilitated in groups of five units at a time, with temporary housing established for displaced residents on site in for-

merly vacant units. Every effort was made to insulate these tenants from the noise, debris, and disruption that are the unavoidable by-products of large-scale construction.

The story of one woman’s move reflects the extraordinary sensitivity that *CHOM* staff, contractors, and Boothbay Harbor municipal workers demonstrated. This resident was particularly dependent on the established order of her living space for her emotional security. Chief Hasch and an acquaintance from the woman’s church escorted her to lunch in town while *CHOM* staff moved her belongings into the temporary unit that would serve as her home until her new apartment was ready. During this meal, the *CHOM* workers acted quickly to photograph the exact arrangement of her furniture and possessions. The team then moved everything to carefully recreate the

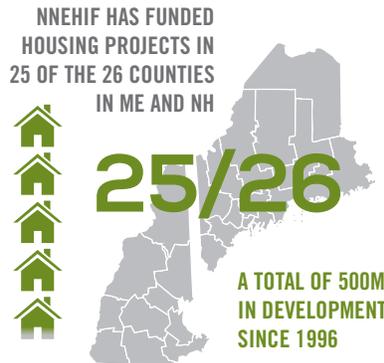
mirrored layout of the unit within the walls of the tenant's temporary home.

When it came time to move the woman a second time, the layout of her newly finished apartment prevented workers from performing the same trick twice. But by then it didn't matter, according to Ryan. "She no longer relied on the physical recreation of her living space for her comfort and security," he said. "The dignity and respect shown to her during the period of her new home's construction by the community of workers and volunteers that supported her through this transition granted her the peace of mind she needed."

Collaboration was not only the key to the success of Campbell Creek Village's construction and tenant relocations, but to the financing that made it possible in the first place. The funding that provided the lifeblood for the project was orchestrated primarily by *CHOM* Development Director Erin Cooperrider. It took four years to coordinate the package of loans, grants, and syndicated tax credits that were made available by *CHOM*, *MaineHousing* (the Maine State Housing Authority), the *US Department of Agricultural, Rural Development* and the *Northern New England Housing Investment*

Fund (NNEHIF) and its investors. That complex initiative relied on the continued effort and commitment of every one of these agencies for success.

Perhaps even more important was the long-term vision required to meet the demands of a small, severely disadvantaged group of residents in a remote location. "*The Northern New*



England Housing Investment Fund was the only investor who would take on a deal of this type and size in this location," said Cooperrider. "Without *NNEHIF* and their principal investor, *TD Bank*, we could never have completed this deal." Throughout it all, those partners never lost sight of the people they were working together to help. "This project literally saved lives," said Cooperrider. "Some of the tenants were living in squalor, with

nowhere else to go, and no one to help improve their situation."

Today, there is one woman who can bear witness to the way Campbell Creek Village has transformed the lives of its residents. Michaela Stone is a licensed social worker who serves as the Boothbay region's "Community Navigator," a position funded by a grant secured through the *Boothbay Region Community Resources*. Stone's presence is a direct result of the Boothbay community's refusal to simply ignore their neighbors' needs. "There are people living at Campbell Creek Village who had nowhere else to turn to — that includes three single mothers with no child support whose children wouldn't have a roof over their heads if it wasn't for Campbell Creek," she said.

The families in this new community aren't the only members whose lives have been turned around. The development's design now integrates elderly tenants more evenly among their younger neighbors. There's an entirely new spirit at Campbell Creek, one born from the comfortable, safe haven that everyone can now claim as home. Said Stone: "For the first time in this place, people are proud of where they live." ♦

INDUSTRY NEWS BRIEFS

OBAMA BUDGET TO SUPPORT HOUSING

On March 4, President Obama introduced his FY2015 budget, requesting a total of \$46.7 billion for *Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)* programs, plus significant policy proposals for improving the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program and a proposal to modify and permanently extend the New Markets Tax Credit.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Overview/>

AVESTA HOUSING ACTIVITY REPORT

Avesta Housing launched the inaugural edition of its Affordable Housing Activity Report, which provides data that show the demand for affordable homes in southern Maine. The report will be updated and released monthly, serving as a gauge for local need and bolstering the case for increased state and federal resources to provide homes for people with the lowest incomes.

<http://bit.ly/1geb998>

DIGITAL MAP SHOWS HOUSING GAP

A new interactive map shows the gap between the number of extremely low-income (ELI) households and the number of affordable and available rental units—underscoring that there is no county in the U.S. with a sufficient number of rental units for ELI households. *The Urban Institute* released the map on March 3, as part of its Housing Assistance Matters initiative.

<http://www.urban.org/housingaffordability/>

In the Next Issue of *Returns*

Discover how a phased development plan allowed families in 75 units to stay onsite during the development of Brookbend East and West in Keene, NH.

CATCH (Continued from pg 2)

their mission.

Several programs grew out of the sustainability initiative, including *HOMEteam* (in partnership with *NeighborWorks®* Southern New Hampshire), which provides consumer education for anyone who is seeking to buy or retain a home. The goal was to revamp the current service delivery model of similar programs throughout the state and create one member organization with a unified brand, which, according to Heard, “people have come to know as synonymous with quality.”

HOMEteam offers a host of resources, including classes at multiple locations in Southern New Hampshire and online: programs for consumers who are buying homes, foreclosure prevention for families, and seminars about home equity conversion mortgages for seniors who want to age in place. Soon they’ll offer post-purchase classes for homeowners who want to learn practical home maintenance, everything from basic plumbing to how to strip wallpaper. Local banks sponsor several of the educational programs, and *Citizens Bank Foundation* provided crucial seed support to *HOMEteam*.

Another *CATCH* initiative is *Alliance Asset Management*, a property management, financial management, and leasing company for residential

and commercial properties. *Alliance* was created in June 2013, out of the awareness that options for property management companies in New Hampshire were limited, as well as the possibility that *CATCH* might one day have no options at all. As it turned out, *CATCH*’s property management company ceased to provide services north of Manchester. “This is a classic example of anticipating what could happen down the road, so we were well-positioned for success,” said Heard.

While *Alliance* provides portfolio self-management services for *CATCH* clients, they also aimed to offer those services to other organizations. Their goal was to bring on their first non-*CATCH* client by the end of 2015. Their understanding of the property management environment was right on target, however, and *The Housing Partnership* in Portsmouth signed on in December 2013—less than seven months after *Alliance* was launched.

CATCH’s creative vision for its business hasn’t diminished the group’s primary purpose: to develop affordable housing. As of February, 2014, *CATCH* has developed 342 units: 306 units were developed as rental properties, 20 were developed for home ownership, and 16 were developed for others. They have raised \$51,495,092 million (initial project investment) for investment in

community improvements. As part of *CATCH*’s commitment to the communities they serve, full real estate taxes were paid on all properties.

In 2010, *CATCH* worked with the *Northern New England Housing Investment Fund (NNEHIF)* to develop Bow Highlands, a 20-unit family development in Bow, NH. It was *CATCH*’s first housing development outside of Concord, a significant achievement, according to Heard.

“These are complicated deals to put together, and it’s not always easy to find a community that’s close to centers of employment and welcoming to a new development,” explained Heard. “*CATCH* has gotten better over the years working with communities, and we were very fortunate to create a wonderful relationship with the town of Bow and its leadership.”

CATCH is now working with *NNEHIF* on raising funds for Bow Highlands II. They’re hoping to break ground in the spring.

Even as *CATCH* gets ready to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2015, the organization is spending more time looking forward than backward. Said Heard: “We’re planning a number of events throughout the year to acknowledge the impact we’ve made, but we’re more excited to talk about the difference we can make in the next 25 years.” ♦

WWW.NNEHIF.ORG



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The Northern New England Housing Investment Fund (NNEHIF) is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation that promotes housing and community development by providing equity capital, technical assistance and consulting to affordable housing developers throughout Maine and New Hampshire.