Volunteers help launch new program at Lakeside Apartments in Concord

Thanks to the commitment and hard work of volunteers and donors, Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) has recently opened the doors of our newest Homework Club located at the Lakeside Apartments in the Monument Corridor. This complex, owned by our community partner, Resources for Community Development, provides 124 units of affordable housing. In addition to case management services, CCIH offers after-school programs, called “Homework Club,” at all its affordable housing sites. These have not only shown to increase academic proficiency (for example, 86% of students achieved two or more new California Academic Benchmarks at Garden Park Apartments last year), but also provides encouraging learning environments and dependable safe spaces for students.

The residents at Lakeside Apartments are predominantly low-income Latino families who are at high-risk for homelessness. Parents are mostly monolingual Spanish speakers and the children are English Language Learners. Learning a new language is often an extra obstacle that students face in their studies. Homework Club is designed to reduce these obstacles and to encourage students to rise above and beyond even their own expectations.

To jump start the program, Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club and Walnut Creek Kiwanis Club provided grants for needed supplies. Grace Presbyterian Preschool contributed healthy snacks. Volunteers were recruited, trained, and now provide essential “staff” support.

“The children at Lakeside Homework Club are engaged and anxious to learn,” says Nancy, a retired Orinda marketing professional and new volunteer at Lakeside, “It’s very rewarding to work one-on-one with them and see them ‘light up’ as we work through a difficult math problem or build out a story summary.”

Even as Homework Club winds down for the year, the students keep Youth Enrichment and Outreach Coordinator, Joe Golinveaux, busy with math questions or by regaling him with play-by-play of their latest soccer game. The relationship between CCIH staff and the Lakeside community is blossoming. “We’ve provided over 240 hours of homework support in March alone,” he said, “Volunteers provide the individual attention that creates an academic environment which encourages students to flourish.”

Our sincerest thanks go to the volunteers and donors who quickly responded to the challenge of getting Lakeside Homework Club off the ground! If you wish to be part of the dynamic volunteer tutor group, please contact us at (925) 944-2244.

“I want my child to succeed in school and have the chances that I never had, but I can’t help with her homework because I don’t understand the language.”

– Lakeside parent

Volunteer Roberta Miller quizzes a student eager to learn.
Several years ago, with strong support from the City of Pleasant Hill and Lescure Company, CCIH and Mercy Housing decided it was time to expand the size of the community center at Garden Park Apartments. Over the years, the robust programs and community participation rendered the original center inadequate. Hence, the City of Pleasant Hill, the CCIH Board of Directors, and Lescure Company decided to reinvest in this wonderful community by doubling the size of the community center and adding a two-bedroom apartment for another formerly homeless family. We are thrilled to report that construction has started!

The CCIH community is helping make it happen. Every CCIH Board member provided personal financial support to the project. Foundations, individuals, and faith communities contributed numerous generous donations as well. Volunteers helped coordinate two Ruby Slippers/Boots events that raised many more thousands of dollars. The City of Pleasant Hill has given substantial funding and technical assistance to the project and the Lescure Company donated significant dollars and labor to get us started. In addition, Mark Scott Construction and Gorny & Associates Architecture are helping to complete this project on time and within budget. Residents are cheerfully putting up with the noise and dust, while the youth have gracefully adopted their new Homework Club space in the portable trailer. Linda Worsham, Academic Specialist extraordinaire, and her awesome Homework Club volunteers have created a cocoon of learning in this small temporary space.

The new and improved community center will enhance the lives of residents and staff. More space for youth and adult learning, a designated computer room, and offices that offer privacy and dignity will be life changing for all. And another family will enjoy the benefit of a new 2-bedroom unit — for many years to come. Once again, CCIH’s community of volunteers and supporters are changing the lives of local families. Thank you.

BRICK BY BRICK: COMMUNITY CENTER EXPANSION BEGINS
BOARD MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN

Bricks and Shovels: (L-R) CCIH Board Members Christopher Long, Thomas Peeks, John McClure, Stephanie Bontempo, Mary Fenelon, Cherie Reed, Rabbi Roberto Graetz, and Greg Bayer celebrate the start of construction.

MUSIC FOR THE SOUL
ST. ANDREW’S CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
SUNDAY, JUNE 2, 3:00 P.M.

St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Dr. Pleasant Hill

For the past seven years, world-class volunteer musicians have come together quarterly to share their amazing talents at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. Volunteer Steering Committee Chairperson, Decky Thornton, an accomplished violinist, organizes the chamber music concerts to support the vital programs offered at CCIH sites. “It’s so wonderful that we can all make a difference while doing something we love,” she said, “While these talented artists play their instruments, audiences are touched, and lives are changed. We are thankful for the opportunity.”

For more information, please contact Decky at (925) 228-7731.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP
JOIN THE RUBY BOOTS COMMITTEE. Help make CCIH’s biggest annual fundraiser a rootin’ tootin’ good o’ time! Volunteers can help organize, solicit for donations, or provide event support. Join this fun group!

COLLECT ITEMS FOR THE SUMMER BACKPACK DRIVE. Collect school supplies to benefit elementary through college-age students in our Homework Clubs. Please call for a list of needed supplies.

PROVIDE A MEAL FOR A MONTHLY RESIDENT MEETING. Every month, Garden Park Apartments residents gather for a meeting and share a meal. Congregations provide a dinner for 35-40 adults and children.

PREPARE SNACKS FOR HOMEWORK CLUB, MAKE FOOD BANK PICK-UPS, PAINT APARTMENTS, the list goes on and on! For more information, please contact us at (925) 944-2244.

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OUR MISSION at Contra Costa Interfaith Housing (CCIH) is to provide permanent, affordable housing and vital support services to homeless and at-risk families and individuals in Contra Costa County.

OUR MEMBER FAITH CONGREGATIONS
- Christ the King Catholic Church
- Congregation Beth Chaim
- Congregation B’nai Shalom
- Congregation B’nai Tikvah
- Danville Congregational Church
- Episcopal Church of the Resurrection
- First Presbyterian Church of Concord
- Grace Presbyterian Church
- Hilcrest Congregational Church
- Hope Center Covenant Church
- Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church
- Lafayette United Methodist Church
- Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church
- New Hope Community Church
- Orinda Community Church
- Our Savior’s Lutheran Church
- Santa Maria Catholic Church
- St. Agnes Catholic Church
- St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
- St. Bonaventure Catholic Church
- St. Ignatius Catholic Church of Antioch
- St. Monica Catholic Church
- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church
- St. Perpetua Catholic Church
- St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
- St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church
- San Ramon Valley United Methodist Church
- Sufism Reoriented
- Temple Isaiah
- Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church
- Ygnacio Valley Presbyterian Church

“Our volunteers’ compassion and commitment have nurtured the growth of CCIH. Their gifts have infused our programs and communities with vibrancy and value.”

- Belinda Sullivan, Director of Outreach