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Help Wanted! Looking for caring volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of CommonBond services. Help us build community as a CommonBond volunteer this year.

Upcoming opportunities:

Have some Summer Fun! Join the Summer Fun Volunteer Team that plans and leads summer activities for resident children.

Help our youth programs during the 2010-2011 school year. Just one to two hours a week can help resident youth get good grades and graduate.

Visit www.commonbond.org/volunteer to learn more and apply to volunteer at one of our communities.

Volunteers provided 63,000 hours of service last fiscal year. That's the equivalent of over 30 people working full time to create stable homes and strong futures for their communities.

CommonBond residents inspire music & free concert.

Mississippi Valley Orchestra and Chorus Polaris will present a concert event, "American Stories." Join them Sunday, June 6, at 4:00 PM at First Lutheran Church, 40th and Polk, Columbia Heights. This free concert is made possible through a grant from the McKnight Foundation and the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. Enjoy Copeland's *Old American Songs*, excerpts from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, and Alan Hovahnness' *Mysterious Mountain*. Journalist and Metro State University professor Carol Lacey has interviewed 10 residents at Parkview Villa about their lives. Their stories will be presented in an art show by artist Tom Wilder who will create a stunning montage representing what life in America means to them.

CommonBond Communities has served more than 35,000 people since 1971 and is currently providing 5,000 homes in 48 cities. The average household income for a CommonBond resident is less than \$14,500 per year.

Stay connected via e-mail.

For periodic updates about new developments and organizational highlights, e-mail info@commonbond.org to be added to our e-newsletter mailing list.

Comments or omissions?

Contact Deb Lande at lande@commonbond.org.

Wish to donate or include

CommonBond in your estate plans?

Contact Marilyn Peller Nelson at nelson@commonbond.org.



*Lolita and Beatrice at
Shingle Creek Commons*

*Built in 2002
4600 Humboldt Ave. N,
Minneapolis, MN*

Shingle Creek Commons serves residents 55 or older and adults with disabilities. The 75 units are a mix of homes for seniors who earn 60% or less of the area median income and market rate apartments.

Caring for grandma, caring for granddaughter: Beatrice and Lolita's story

IN A QUIET, WELL-LIT APARTMENT IN MINNEAPOLIS, two women are hunched intently over a sheet of paper. One is old, one is young. One is taller, and one bends with age. But they both huddle in the same manner, passing back and forth what has to be one of the most intense tic-tac-toe games ever played. All of a sudden, the younger woman cries out, "Grandma! You made an X! That's my mark!" The concentration is broken and the two women face each other to burst out into laughter.

An unlikely pair finds home

Grandmother Beatrice and granddaughter Lolita have had a long time to develop this easy companionship. They've been a pair for nearly 37 years, ever since Lolita's mother passed away and Lolita was diagnosed with developmental disabilities. Throughout the years, the two have gone to different cities and different homes. But at CommonBond, they have found a place to thrive. As Lolita's personal care assistant, Beatrice is able to help her live and learn basic skills.

Learning to live independently

Both go to bible study on Wednesdays and church on Sunday, and Beatrice gets help from Lolita for her weekly computer

classes. The lessons don't stop when Lolita gets home from her life-skills school either. From doing dishes to giving sewing lessons, the two work together on independent living skills. "I say to Lolita I'm not going to be around forever. You've got to be able to take care of yourself," Beatrice laughs. "And she always says, 'Grandma! I do almost everything by myself.'" Beatrice shakes her head wryly. "She does for the most part too."

Beatrice herself is no stranger to overcoming challenges. She remembers her father coming home from a long day as a farmhand and sewing flour sacks into blankets for her childhood bed. Through hard work, she was able to graduate from high school with honors. Earning a teaching scholarship, she helped high school students learn vocational skills. "They were tough years, but I really enjoyed it. I thank my parents for teaching me to have a good attitude.

Long term stability

With the help of their CommonBond home, both Lolita and Beatrice are far away from the tough years. Lolita is doing well caring for herself; and Beatrice is looking into buying a house for Lolita to live in after she's gone. Meanwhile they can continue to live independently in their CommonBond home.

Deeply rooted in the community, Cummins steps up to the challenge



*Left to right:
Property Manager
Laura Sheak,
Six Sigma Black Belt
David McGinty,
CommonBond
President and
CEO Paul Fate
and Cummins Global
Community Service
Leader Sue Piva
celebrate a sustain-
able practices award.*

In 2005, Cummins Power Generation employees hosted a barbecue, bingo night and cleaning day at Silver Lake Pointe, a CommonBond senior community in Mounds View. Since then, the company has stepped up their giving and their engagement at nearly every level. The international company, with its headquarters in Fridley, designs, manufactures and distributes power generators. Their most recent effort includes sponsoring an Advantage Center at Norwood Square Apartments, a CommonBond senior housing community in Fridley. In February, Cummins supported the senior residents of Norwood Square by providing the funding for much-needed on-site services. “The gap in funding for resident services at Norwood Square is nearly \$13,000 annually. Cummins has taken on the challenge of erasing that deficit and we hope other CommonBond partners will follow Cummins’ example,” said Paul Fate, President and CEO of CommonBond.

The Cummins partnership is much deeper than just providing cash contributions. Hundreds of their 1,500 local

employees have been fully engaged in direct services for residents as well. Employee David McGinty, who often shows up at resident holiday parties dressed as Santa Claus and flips burgers as the king of barbecue, took on a major sustainability project this year. Global Community Service Leader Sue Piva, said staff don’t just talk about building community, they swing the hammer, pull out the party trays and take action. Cummins employees have participated in over 20 group

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volunteer projects in the last four years including product drives, deep cleaning residents’ apartments and hosting holiday parties. One such effort has received international acclaim. This year, Cummins Power Generation won a prestigious corporate award and grant to support sus-

tainable practices at Parkview Villa in Columbia Heights. Cummins partnered with CommonBond and RISE Inc, a non-profit that provides jobs for individuals with disabilities, to reenergize Parkview Villa’s recycling program. Parkview Property Manager Laura Sheak stated, “the partnership and grant from Cummins helped CommonBond and the residents of Parkview Villa create a successful recycling program. We hope the program will set a great example for sustainable practices in multi-family housing across the Twin Cities.” Cummins is committed to replicating that program at other CommonBond housing communities.

CommonBond Communities thanks Cummins Power Generation for their commitment to building an authentic partnership between the business world and non-profit organizations.

If you are interested in sponsoring an Advantage Center, please contact Marilyn Peller Nelson at (651) 290-6254. Or visit www.commonbond.org/community_building to learn more about how we partner with the community.

Dear Friends of CommonBond,



Early last fall, CommonBond's board of directors and staff stepped back to chart our future. We did this while staring into the face of a Great Recession, constrained financing and funding and growing waiting lists for our housing communities. I am pleased to announce that we completed a new three-year strategic plan this spring; it will be our compass as we navigate an uncertain economy and sort through the "new normal." While we are not fundamentally changing our direction, we have sharpened our strategies, focus and growth parameters. The new plan builds on our history as an entrepreneurial, mission-driven organization with expertise in real estate development, property management and service delivery. We have also spent time "catching up with ourselves" from an operations, infrastructure and personnel standpoint this past 12–18 months. I believe CommonBond is strongly positioned to continue to grow and partner with communities to address their affordable housing and community revitalization needs and residents to achieve their goals for stability, advancement, and independence.

People are struggling now more than ever. This is no time for CommonBond to let up. We will remain focused on increasing and preserving the supply of quality affordable housing with services. We must further engage the community and continue to build the capacity of CommonBond in order to maximize our impact.

In this newsletter you will find further evidence of this commitment. Our current work in Milwaukee demonstrates our

expansion plans to a new market where we are engaging important and strong community partners. I am also pleased to report that we continue to raise support for our *Open 4000 Doors* Campaign, our campaign to build and preserve 4,000 affordable homes to meet the profound need for CommonBond's work. Toward this end, we have received a challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation. This award is a strong national endorsement of our work and leadership in the field. We are challenged to raise \$3 million over the next 11 months to leverage this grant from Kresge.

We also thank our volunteers and community members who give their time, talent and treasure to help CommonBond residents succeed. We feature Cummins Power Generation, for their exemplary volunteer leadership and overall contributions. We are constantly inspired by our corporate and individual volunteers and their desire to serve others.

The stories in this edition exemplify our commitment to our mission and what you can continue to expect from CommonBond in the future. I thank you for your partnership and I ask that you pass the word to others about how CommonBond builds stable homes, strong futures and vibrant communities.

Best regards,



Paul Fate, President and CEO,
CommonBond Communities

CommonBond plans for the future!

As CommonBond charts our future in the face of a Great Recession, constrained financing and funding streams and growing waiting lists for our housing communities, the organization announces a three-year strategic plan was approved in spring 2010. The plan does not change direction but sharpens strategies, focus and growth patterns. It also puts forth a new mission and vision. Thank you for your continued support of CommonBond's work.

MISSION: CommonBond builds stable homes, strong futures, and vibrant communities.

VISION: Every person has a dignified, affordable home that supports independence and advancement within a flourishing community.

Partnering for change in Milwaukee

Since 1971, CommonBond Communities has dedicated itself to building stable homes that lead to strong futures and vibrant communities. Over its 40-year history, CommonBond has served over 35,000 people including families with children, seniors, and people living with disabilities. After completing a historic renovation of the Teweles Seed Tower Apartments, 222 South Third Street in Milwaukee, CommonBond was asked to convert an old tannery site in the 30th Street Corridor to 55 affordable apartments. With the support of government and business leaders as well as committed partners like Holy Redeemer Institutional Church of God in Christ, CommonBond is now completing construction on Bishop's Creek Family Housing.

Bishop's Creek Family Housing transforms old tannery site.

As with all communities CommonBond serves, Milwaukee had unique housing needs. The 30th Street Corridor in particular experienced disinvestment when the factories that employed nearly half the neighborhood shut down. In collaboration with determined neighbors, the city of Milwaukee identified the Bishop's Creek development as "a key project in spurring the overall revitalization of the Corridor."

As part of a larger community development effort including revitalized office, retail, and hotel buildings, Bishop's Creek Community Development Corporation, the City of Milwaukee, WHEDA and others, are helping CommonBond create affordable homes and supportive services. As Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner of the Department of City Development stated, "CommonBond Communities is a valued partner in the City's neighborhood redevelopment efforts. The combination of bricks and mortar development and family



Bishop's Creek

support services will provide quality housing opportunities for Milwaukee families."

Services meet resident needs

Bishop's Creek residents have access to safe homes for the long term and the added support of CommonBond Advantage Services. These unique services help adults find and keep living wage jobs and provide healthy youth development opportunities so young people get good grades and do well in school. Advantage Services also provides computer access and links to area partners including the Daniels-Mardak Boys & Girls Club of Milwaukee and others. By collaborating with community partners we can accomplish our shared goals of stabilizing families and helping youth succeed.

These homes with services will serve families who earn 60% of the area median income (AMI) or less. More than 400 families applied to live at Bishop's Creek Family Housing earlier this year. Residents move into their new homes over the spring and summer of 2010.

As Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner of the Department of City Development stated, "CommonBond Communities is a valued partner in the City's neighborhood redevelopment efforts. The combination of bricks and mortar development and family support services will provide quality housing opportunities for Milwaukee families."

Thank you GrandeGala guests, volunteers and partners!

Thank you to everyone who joined us April 9th for the Twelfth Annual GrandeGala. Over 850 guests attended this elegant evening, raising over \$400,000 for residents of affordable homes, both event records.

See more pictures of this year's event at www.commonbond.org/grandegala. Thank you for your continued support. We hope to see you next year.

