



## Stabilizing Lives in Times of Need

*“Home is where my family is. It is a place where I feel safe and my kids are safe and there is a sense of community. We all help each other here. I am honored to call this my home.”*

Her youngest child was three years old when Kelly turned to the staff at Maple Hills Apartments in Red Wing, Minnesota for help during a life-crisis. Struggling through a divorce and trying to stabilize their lives, Kelly said, “It was a time when I needed help and I cringed asking for it.” Kelly is grateful for the stability that an affordable home created for her and her two children.

### Bringing Homes back to Life

Maple Hills was developed in 1971. The 96 homes provide a critical housing option for people living on fixed incomes like Kelly. After 40 years, Maple



Hills was ready for a complete remodel. Innovative financing allowed CommonBond to reinvest nearly \$43,000 back into each unit. One by one, Kelly and all

Nick, Kelly and Brandy in their home



the residents watched their old kitchen cabinets, their floors, windows, doors, and appliances get hauled out and replaced with all new items. “CommonBond even added air conditioning units,” Kelly raved. “The remodel brought new life to the property.”

Over the years, thousands of people still live in homes they can afford because CommonBond strategically preserved 2,700 apartments and townhomes for people like Kelly. In the Twin Cities, preserving Skyline Tower in St. Paul saved over 500 homes and nearly 1,000 people from being displaced. And, nearly 200 residents of Glenbrook Apartments in Milwaukee, Wisconsin saw their homes get renovated and their community revitalized this year.

### 95% of youth graduate from High School!

Families who can find affordable homes do not have to move due to unstable housing situations. Their children, as a result, do better in school and have better odds of success in life. Ninety-five percent of the young people who participate in CommonBond youth programs will graduate from High School. Compare that number to Minnesota and Milwaukee average graduation rates at 68.2 and 67.2 percent respectively and you can see how homes with services make a difference.

### Seeing Youth Succeed

Kelly’s children Brandy and Nick go to CommonBond Advantage Services for a little extra help with school work. They are regular participants in the Homework Center program and they use the computer lab too. “I know attending CommonBond programs and activities has helped my children improve their grades,” Kelly states. •

# Volunteer: The right thing to do

*“When I was first introduced to CommonBond the thing I was most impressed with is that it is more than housing. Advantage Services are trying to make a difference long-term.”*

A CFO for 25 years, Bill Smith made the decision in the fall of 2009 to share his expertise and time with the youth of CommonBond as a Study Buddy in the Westminster Advantage Center.

## Offering guidance and support

Matched with an active and exuberant 4th grader, Bill describes his first experience as fulfilling and eye-opening. Whether helping provide homework solutions, or offering guidance and support through life issues, Bill says every Thursday at Westminster was different from the next.

“[Being a Study Buddy] has been very rewarding. I’ve enjoyed getting to know the individual kids...helping them improve in the classroom, and building relationships with them.”

When making the decision to return as a Study Buddy for a second year, Bill asserts it was a very easy choice.

“I was going to make it work – one way, shape, or form – because it’s the right thing to do.”

While Bill admits he may never know the life-long impact his time will have on the youth he mentors, he believes the influence that volunteers and the Advantage Center have on youth is invaluable, and is a critical steppingstone in building strong futures.

“The kids in the Advantage Center are enthusiastic, and clearly excited to be there with their study mentors,” said Bill. “They’re bright as a whip, and you can just see and feel their potential success.”

## Home is unconditional love

Being welcomed as an integral part of the Advantage Center has helped make Bill’s experience even more special. He describes a strong sense of community within the Advantage Center that is shared between CommonBond staff, residents, and volunteers, alike.

It is in this community that Bill contributes more than simply his experience, but a spirited devotion to sharing his idea of home with the youth of CommonBond.

“Home to me is equated with family. It’s a safe place for a family to be together; to help kids grow up, and be supportive of whatever they do. Home is kids knowing they have a place that is theirs. It’s family, it’s safety, it’s nurturing. Home is unconditional love.” •



Volunteer Bill Smith tutoring Mohamed as a part of CommonBond’s Study Buddy program.



## Dear Friends and Partners:

It has been a very productive year at CommonBond in spite of a challenging economy. We have opened seven new housing communities, representing nearly 400 units of dignified affordable housing, since the beginning of 2010. There is not a more important time than now to redouble our efforts to support the growing number of people struggling to make it in extraordinarily difficult times.

CommonBond is only as successful as our friends and partners. Every day I witness the amazing work of our volunteers, supporters and partners demonstrating their remarkable commitment to our mission. You are the reason we can continue to build stable homes, strong futures and vibrant communities.

For 40 years, CommonBond has been working to create new, and preserve existing, affordable homes for those most in need in our region. You may not know that CommonBond is a national leader in the preservation of affordable rental housing. Of the 5,000 homes CommonBond currently owns and manages, nearly 2,700 of these homes were acquired and rehabilitated to preserve at-risk affordable housing. Unfortunately, for every affordable home we preserve, two are lost nationally to market rate conversion or demolition.

This truth makes me ask once more for your consideration of a gift to our *Open 4000 Doors* campaign. We received a challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation to support this effort, and we need your help to raise an additional \$1.2 million dollars between now and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 to leverage funding from this prestigious national foundation. I invite you to use the enclosed envelope or go to [www.commonbond.org/donate](http://www.commonbond.org/donate) to make a contribution to CommonBond.

Please spread the word, get more involved, and help us build hope and homes. Thank you for all you do to support our mission and work. We simply cannot do what we do without you.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Fate". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Paul Fate, President and CEO  
CommonBond Communities

## Unity Square

On November 10, community leaders and members of Waterloo, Iowa gathered with CommonBond staff to celebrate the grand opening of Unity Square.

The development, located at 100 Unity Square in Waterloo, converts an underutilized three-acre parcel of land to 40 high-quality, large family townhomes with comprehensive service programs. The housing and on-site Mercy Advantage Center will provide stability for working families and their children so they can maintain employment, advance their education, and increase the economic vitality of their families while adding to the vibrancy of the surrounding neighborhood. •



Unity Square—Waterloo, IA opens its doors

# Passion from personal experience

*“Everyone has that acquaintance that you don’t see often, but each time you do, you become more and more impressed with who they are, what they believe, and how they live their lives. For me, that acquaintance has always been CommonBond. This has made it consistently easy for my wife, Kris, and me to support CommonBond through our charitable giving.”*

## Revitalized communities

During more than ten years of service to CommonBond Communities, Tom Hauschild has made an impact on the organization in nearly every way possible. As a volunteer, donor, board member, and now as Chair of CommonBond’s Board of Directors, Tom has demonstrated great commitment to the mission of CommonBond.

Much of his passion is a result of Tom’s uniquely intimate experience with CommonBond’s Skyline Tower in St. Paul. Prior to CommonBond’s ownership of Skyline, Tom and his college

roommate were residents of the building. “In the 1970’s, it was not a place you would want your grandmother or your children living,” Tom said.

With his first-hand experience of what Skyline was like before CommonBond, Tom describes a certain “surprise and delight” when he witnessed the revitalization the organization brought to the building and community. “CommonBond stabilized, expanded, and improved Skyline. They transformed it from the challenge that it was to the community, to the asset it now is today.”

## Lives transformed through mission

Tom’s interest in CommonBond expanded even more in 1998 when he became an English as a second language (ESL) volunteer at Seward Towers.

Tom recalls many experiences from his years as a CommonBond volunteer, but notes one couple in particular that he feels represents the true mission of CommonBond.



**Tom Hauschild at home with his wife, Kris.**

“Oromo was a quiet young woman from Ethiopia. While tutoring her, I watched Oromo and her husband find jobs...then find better jobs...and then buy their very own home,” said Tom. “I know it was CommonBond that stabilized their lives and enabled that process to happen.”

## Home is the foundation for everything

“Kris and I continue to give financially because we continue to see good work done by CommonBond. I can’t drive in any direction without seeing their impact, and further proof of the good stewards they have been with our financial resources.”

Whether through his volunteer, donor, or leadership contributions to CommonBond, Tom acknowledges that it all comes back to one central theme: home.

“Every time I visit a CommonBond property I think back to my home growing up in Southern Minnesota; friendships, education, a gathering spot for friends and family, music, food, changing seasons. Home is the foundation for everything.” •

# Bishop's Creek

On Thursday, October 14 the Wisconsin Commercial Real Estate Women (WCREW) – a national organization of commercial real estate professionals–recognized Bishop's Creek at their annual Showcase Awards.

This fall, Bishop's creek received the "Vision Ingenuity" award.

CommonBond Senior Housing Development Manager, Amanda Novak said: "CommonBond is honored to be recognized by the WCREW association for the foresight and passion that was demonstrated in making the Bishop's Creek Family Housing community a reality. As a beacon for the 30th Street Industrial Corridor, the Bishop's Creek Family Housing Community will continue to encourage resident, neighborhood, and greater Milwaukee investment." •

**Bishop's Creek wins WCREW award**



## Mission, Vision, Values

### 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.

### VALUES

These values guide CommonBond's work within our organization as well as with the people we serve and our partners.

**Respect:** we value all persons, treat others with dignity, and conduct our business with honesty.

**Hope:** we believe nothing is more important than hope in the future and opportunities to realize dreams.

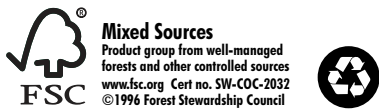
**Innovation:** we encourage an entrepreneurial approach to challenges.

**Partnership:** we forge long-term relationships at all levels to broaden and deepen our impact.

**Stewardship:** we assure excellent results with limited human capital and financial resources.

**Justice:** we work to advance social and economic justice for all.

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**FRONT PAGE:**  
Kelly  
Mittlesteadt's  
story



**INSIDE:**  
Volunteer  
Bill Smith



**INSIDE:**  
Donor  
Tom  
Hauschild

For 40 years, CommonBond has been building stable homes, strong futures, and vibrant communities. What began as a social justice concern for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis has grown to be the largest nonprofit provider of affordable rental apartments and townhomes with life-enhancing services in the Upper Midwest. From its humble beginnings, CommonBond has made a dramatic impact on the lives of more than 40,000 people in the past four decades.

**Stay connected via e-mail**

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

**Comments or omissions?**

Contact Nicole Smith at [nicole.smith@commonbond.org](mailto:nicole.smith@commonbond.org)

**Wish to donate or include CommonBond in your estate plans?**

Contact Marilyn Peller Nelson at [nelson@commonbond.org](mailto:nelson@commonbond.org).

2011  
*there's no place like home*  
**Grande Gala**

**FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 2011**  
6 PM – Cocktails  
8 PM – Dinner & Entertainment  
Saint Paul River Centre  
175 West Kellogg Blvd.  
St. Paul, Minnesota

**The GrandeGala** is CommonBond's signature fundraising event, and this year will also kick-off our celebration of 40 years of service to the community. This elegant evening, including dinner, entertainment, and a live and silent auction, honors affordable homes and the partners that make them possible. All proceeds directly benefit CommonBond Advantage Services for residents with low incomes.

For sponsorship opportunities, tickets or event information, please contact Brenda Ewing at [brenda.ewing@commonbond.org](mailto:brenda.ewing@commonbond.org) or 651-288-8693.

[www.commonbond.org/grandegala](http://www.commonbond.org/grandegala)

[www.facebook.com/commonbondcommunities](http://www.facebook.com/commonbondcommunities)

