

Playground to be Built At McKeithen Park

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Volunteer efforts are underway to revitalize the McKeithen Park playground, located on Lawn Avenue. The long-term goal is to help support play in cultivating healthy lives for children. Charter Oak Communities (COC) has partnered with the City of Stamford, the Lawnhill Terrace Resident Council, Family Centers, and KaBOOM! (the national non-profit dedicated to bringing active play to children) to install new playground equipment on August 28th. MetLife Foundation and Barnum Wealth Management have donated financial support and volunteers for the event.



Terrace. They thought it would be a way to connect community residents in private homes and rental apartments on Lawn Avenue to the Lawnhill Terrace community.

There has been a busy program of events planned for the Playground this summer. To launch the event, the Lawnhill Terrace Resident Council coordinated volunteers for a spring clean-up throughout Lawnhill Terrace and organized arts and craft activities for children while parents volunteered. The Council is working with the Friendship Baptist Church to coordinate community support and fundraising efforts, utilizing the church grounds for community tag sales and “Build Day.”

Family Centers was instrumental in organizing “Design Day” in June. Over 60 children and adults participated. The kids drew their dream playgrounds,

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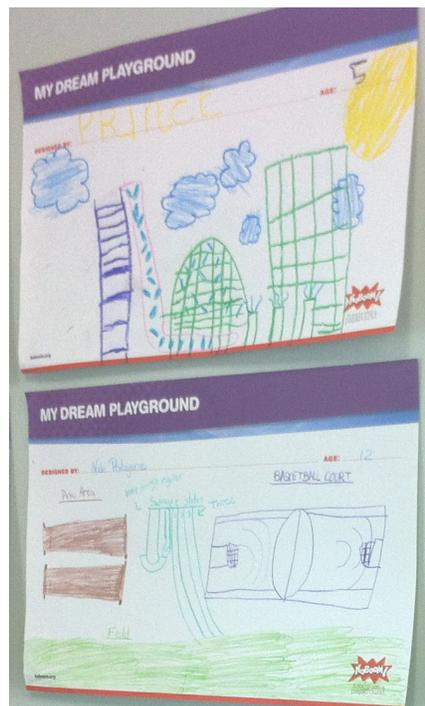
Board Meetings for 2015:

- August 26th
- September 30th
- October 28th
- November 18th
- December 16th

Meetings are Wednesday evenings and begin at 6:00 PM at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.

Procurement

Charter Oak Communities will be procuring Security Services and Architect and Engineer Services for Federal Developments in August and September.



The idea began last fall when COC and the City discussed redeveloping the Park in partnership with residents of Lawnhill



Get to know our new Property Management staff!



Pictured left to right: Jamie Perna and Cathy Peagler.

Cathy Peagler, property manager for Post House, Taylor Street, Clinton Manor and Quintard, and Jamie Perna, property manager for the East Side, began their careers at Charter Oak Communities in March 2015. Excited to be in their roles, they bring over 35 combined years of experience to the COC property management team.

Cathy and Jamie agree that the friendly atmosphere, support and assistance, good communication and staff collaboration are qualities that make working at COC enjoyable. Additionally, Cathy and Jamie also are excited about staff training opportunities. Training in tax credits, hoarding prevention and customer service, they say, will give them increased skills to provide residents with the best possible services. They consider the supportive services provided by the Family Centers' Resident Service Coordinators a great benefit to the residents. Also, they admire and respect COCs' vision of creating safe and affordable housing for residents and lower-income populations.

Cathy's experience primarily is in managing affordable housing develop-

ments. She worked with both large and small residences in New York City, Connecticut, New Jersey and Massachusetts. She has managed Section 8 buildings, Low Income Tax Credit Housing, and large affordable housing rentals and cooperatives. Prior to joining COC, Cathy was a regional manager for Wilder Balter Partners, and supervised a portfolio of tax credit and Section 8 properties. Cathy enjoys property management and is happy to be a site manager, ensuring that COC properties run smoothly and are well maintained.

Having lived in Stamford in the mid 1990's, Cathy has observed significant changes in housing throughout the City, and recognizes COCs' role in helping drive these positive changes. Cathy also compliments the development team at Rippowam for the attractive housing communities built over the years.

Jamie began her career in property management as an intern in high school. After finishing college, she worked at a newspaper, but realized she wanted to remain in the property management field. Jamie worked in Manhattan for years as an assistant property manager for a portfolio of luxury buildings. Prior to her position at COC, she managed a portfolio of rent-stabilized apartments in the Bronx.

Jamie has adjusted well to the public housing sector. She says she appreciates that COC adheres to the rules and regulations of public housing seriously while always striving to assist residents. In Jamie's short time at COC, she was

particularly excited to see one of her residents purchase his own home in the Stamford area. "That kind of transition is what helps make this job rewarding," Jamie exclaims.

In her eyes, what makes COC unique, Jaime says, is how the residents and area organizations have partnered in community activities. She is proud to be involved in the renovation of McKeithen Park on the East Side, a project she is spearheading. Her current goals are to continue working collaboratively with the residents, Family Centers and the Lawnhill Terrace Resident Council to hear concerns and to get to know residents. In addition, she is working with the City on an Electronics Recycling collection effort.

With all COC has to offer employees and residents, Cathy and Jamie agree that COC is a great place to work! Please welcome them to the community at our "Open House" receptions at Post House and the East Side August 18th!



KaBOOM! Project Manager Katrina Hill and Jamie at the East Side management office on "Design Day."

Update on COC Projects

With the completion of the **Ursula Park Exterior Renovations Phase I** project, attention is now focused on **Phase II**. Work is anticipated to begin in August for **Phase II**, which includes 160, 162 and 164 Ursula Place.

New projects are also being planned with the **2015 Capital Fund** grant. Architect and Engineer RFPs will solicit plans and specifications for storm door replacement, stairwell improvements and the fire panel upgrade at **Stamford Manor**. A new roof and furnace replacement are being planned for **Sheridan Mews**. COC has received approval for the design on the carpet/flooring replacement at **Rippowam Manor**.

Work is being planned for **Scofield Manor**. This includes the soffit, fascia and gutter repair, emergency generator replacement and the replacement of the interior handrails. A new fire panel, alarms and strobes are being installed at **Wormser Congregate**.



Resident Corner: Buffert Brooks



Buffert Brooks has been a resident of Quintard Manor since 2007. He previously resided at the former Fairfield Court complex. Born in Gastonia, North Carolina, Buffert's favorite hobby is fixing cars -- from changing spark plugs and transmission fluids to working on brakes -- his specialty.

Coming from a family of 14 siblings was not easy. Only Buffert, his two brothers and one sister remain living. Reggie, his one living son, resides in North Carolina and has one daughter. Buffert has five grandchildren in Connecticut ranging from five to 24 years of age.

Buffert enlisted in the U.S. Army at the age of 17 and completed basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. A veteran of the Korean War, he was stationed in Austria and Germany near the end of the war, and then served in Colorado as part of the 254th Battalion. His responsibility as a gunner included lining up the artillery for firing guns and missile launchers as well as pumping gas for vehicles.

Upon discharge from the Army, Buffert became a jack-of-all-trades. He worked for

his brother in construction and then a chrome/plating company in New York City. He also worked in maintenance for CBS in Stamford. Working as a tree surgeon in the area, Buffert had an unfortunate accident that broke his pelvis and crushed his right foot, which resulted in the amputation of part of his right leg. With Buffert's great attitude, he refused to let it get the best of him.

At the age of 79, Buffert is a very active veteran and spends much of his time helping disabled veterans. He is the Chaplain/Commander of the Disabled Veterans Stamford Chapter #13. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday every other month at the Stamford Government Center and organize donations of various items to veterans in the area and for the Walter Reed Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland. They also take veterans on outings such as baseball games, cookouts and fishing trips. He is an advocate for all veterans and looks out for those unable to help themselves. For fun, Buffert meets up with local veterans and attends annual conventions, holiday dinners and fishing trips.

Good natured with a great sense of humor, Buffert can be found joking around with the residents and COC staff. He is watchful of the residents and visitors coming in and out of Quintard Manor, and declares, "I watch the building as if I were on the payroll!" Happy with the recent renovations to the building and the great staff, he is grateful to be at Quintard Manor.

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which the adults reviewed for feasibility. Designs were voted on along with colors and type of equipment. The COC team is ensuring all playground signage is printed in English, Spanish and Creole.

The Playground needs volunteers! "Preparation Day," **August 26th**, will be for the delivery of the equipment, storage containers, garbage dumpsters and tools. Team leaders will meet and assist volunteers in area preparation. "Build Day," **August 28th**, will be for playground assembly. There is still time to sign up and volunteer! Both days will include music, food, drink and activities for children and volunteers!

Please call Jamie at (203) 977-1492, Brianna at (203) 977-1400 Ext. 3504, or Sam at (203) 883-8462 if you are interested in helping out.



Volunteers assisting children with their dream playgrounds at "Design Day."



Below are tips to get your kids off to a great start for the upcoming school year:

- **Immunizations and other health requirements** should be taken into consideration before school starts. Most schools require up-to-date immunizations and may need documentation.
- **Homework help** can provide many benefits for children. It can improve memory and comprehension, develop study skills, improve self-esteem and teach children how to manage time more effectively.

You can assist by making sure your kids have a quiet, well-lit place to do homework, clear expectations and deadlines, and provide assistance, but not complete answers.

- **Healthy eating and nutrition** are important factors for academic performance. Studies have shown that children who eat healthy, balanced breakfasts and lunches are more alert throughout the day and earn higher grades than those who have an unhealthy diet.
- **Physical fitness and exercise** are important parts of a child's health. Physical activity helps build muscle, promote strong bones and control weight. Promote an active lifestyle with toys that encourage physical activity such as balls, bikes and jump ropes; allow children to join a sports team or try a new physical activity; limit TV and electronics time; take the stairs instead of the elevator; walk around the block after eating; and facilitate a safe walk to and from school.



Tips to Eliminate Bugs

Limit where you eat - The fewer areas that have been exposed to crumbs and food residue, the less risk of invasion you'll have.

Clean the floor daily - Whether you choose to sweep or vacuum, food needs to be removed quickly so that bugs won't be attracted to the mess.

Wipe spills quickly - Spilled areas throughout the kitchen can beckon to bugs. Be sure to move and clean under furniture to be sure all the residue of the spill has been cleaned.

Wash dishes - Waiting to wash dishes isn't a great idea. When dishes are washed, be sure to drain any water and wipe down the sink.

Clean out the recyclables - Be sure to rinse out plastic, glass and metal containers that are being recycled.

Father's Day Celebrations

By Marisol Rivera, MSW

Manager of Self Sufficiency and Independent Living Programs
Family Centers, Inc.

In 2010, Housing in Urban Development (HUD) instituted the "Reconnecting Families and Dads" initiative, inviting public housing authorities throughout the country to host activities that would highlight fatherhood, parenthood, families and communities. For the past five years, Family Centers' Resident Service Coordinators have partnered with Charter Oak Communities to host different events such as ice cream socials, barbecues, and an art exhibit.

With the help and involvement of the community, events were held in June throughout Stamford. Residents from Post House, Stamford Manor, Glenbrook Manor and the West Side (including Westwood, Fairgate, Palmer Square and Greenfield) enjoyed "Family Day" celebrations within their community to highlight family, fathers and neighbors. Families living on the East Side enjoyed a family photo session by a professional photographer, along with a catered meal by one of their very own community members, Christie Metellus, who is a recent graduate of Norwalk Community College and certified in Culinary Arts. Residents of Rippowam Manor gathered and listened to live music performed by their neighbors. They participated in sing-alongs as they enjoyed dessert and coffee, and read poems celebrating fathers.

As we continue to highlight families and communities throughout the summer, take notice of other family-oriented activities in your neighborhood. Check your monthly calendars and don't miss out on the fun!

Everyone is encouraged to come out and participate.

Photos courtesy of Taylor Lenci Photography

