



# NEWS FROM HOME

SUMMER 2017 NEWSLETTER | A YELLOW SPRINGS HOME, INC. PUBLICATION

## HOME, INC. LANDS NEARLY \$900,000 TO BRING AFFORDABLE RENTALS TO YS



FINAL RENDERINGS OF HOME, INC.'S NEWEST AFFORDABLE RENTAL PROJECT, FOREST VILLAGE HOMES

In April Home, Inc.'s pilot rental project Forest Village Homes received approval from the Ohio Housing Agency (OHFA) board of directors for half a million dollars in funding, completing the fundraising for the Forest Village Homes pilot rental project. This funding will make six apartments affordable to seniors and special needs households making less than 50% of area median income—currently about \$20,850 for a single-person household. The funding is Home, Inc.'s first multifamily award from OHFA.

The Housing

Development Gap Financing program was one of the longest and most difficult grant applications Home, Inc. has prepared to date. Two application phases ending in December 2016 and then in March of 2017 tested the capacity of Home, Inc. staff. According to executive director Emily Seibel: "Everyone contributed leadership to the applications, including Miller Fellows. It was a true team effort." Forest Village Homes was one of only two applications funded by OHFA in the December 2016 round. The Ohio State Controlling Board issued final approval of the funding reservation

on May 22nd. The \$500,000 OHFA award completed fundraising to make the \$1,019,000 project possible. Additional funding commitments include \$249,999 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati and \$30,000 from the Ohio Community Development Finance Fund. A \$116,000 award from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities will result in one unit of the six-unit project reserved for a tenant with a developmental disability, the first partnership of its kind in the state. The Greene County Department of

Development provided nearly \$10,000 in in-kind demolition funding, and long-time member Jane Baker generously donated a property to the project.

The garden cottages, located on two sites on Dayton Street, will be one-story, accessible units with highly energy efficient features. One- and two-bedroom units are planned.

Home, Inc. is finalizing plans and anticipates starting construction this year.

## HOME, INC. HOMEOWNER LOBBIES IN D.C.

Home, Inc. homeowner Cathleen Tong recently returned from Washington D.C., where she spent time lobbying for affordable housing in the offices of Ohio congressional representatives and senators. She went

as part of a small Ohio delegation assembled by the Grounded Solutions Network, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and advocating for affordable housing.

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# WHEN A TREE FALLS IN YELLOW SPRINGS

## HOW MANY VILLAGERS WILL CALL HOME, INC.?

The American elm tree was once a distinctive feature in the Miami Valley. These sprawling, stately trees have all but disappeared in Yellow Springs due to the perilous Dutch Elm Disease. Among the few surviving trees was the large, shady elm tree located near Home, Inc.'s rental property. A powerful wind storm on the evening of Wednesday, March 1st would change that.

Knee deep in a \$500,000 grant application, staff left the office late Wednesday night. In the early hours of Thursday morning the calls, texts and Facebook messages came rolling in. The American elm had cracked in half, crushing the corner of the rear rental unit. Miraculously no one was home, no cars were parked in the drive and no interior damage was suffered. By 7 a.m. Home, Inc. staff arrived on the scene and quickly enlisted Enoch's Tree Service to remove the giant arbor by crane.

Unfortunately the elm was lost in the process. The house, however, survived. An engineer designed repairs for the trusses and the new roof and siding was installed in April. No sign of the damaged exterior remains. We are grateful to have neighbors who care about the well being of one another in Yellow Springs.



A LARGE, BELOVED DUTCH ELM LIES ON THE CORNER OF ONE OF HOME, INC.'S XENIA AVENUE RENTALS, LEADING TO THE NEED FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE ROOF.



A CRANE WAS REQUIRED TO REMOVE THE DUTCH ELM THAT FELL UPON THE XENIA AVENUE RENTAL IN MARCH.

## HOME, INC.'S CHRIS HALL HOSTS FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT WORKSHOP



In April, Home, Inc. hosted a workshop titled *Power to the People!: Financial Empowerment and the Cost of Housing*. This free workshop was designed to provide information to answer various questions about mortgages, foreclosures, and affordable housing, with an additional focus on energy efficiency and tips on saving money and energy at home. There was also a brief introduction to the Home, Inc. program, and attendees had the opportunity to schedule one-on-one appointments with our Program Manager, Chris Hall.

## A VERY FOND FAREWELL

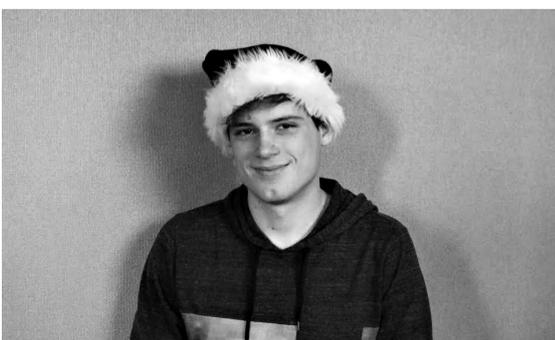
### HOME, INC. SAYS GOODBYE TO TWO OUTGOING MILLER FELLOWS

At the end of June, Home, Inc. said goodbye to two wonderful Miller Fellows: Monika Perry and Nate Meehan. These individuals played a huge role in various projects at Home, Inc. from helping with a number of grant applications to property management.

Monika completed a co-op with Home, Inc. in December and has continued to work part-time since. After graduating from Antioch College, Monika will spend some time traveling to Berlin before moving back to her hometown of Toledo, Ohio where she will look for work while volunteering at a community garden. She has exciting plans to build an off-grid straw bale house, which is currently up for review by the City of Toledo. Once this is passed, she will join with two friends to begin the work on land they purchased in November. She also plans on reading a lot of books that she put off while she was in college.



Nate Meehan has been with Home, Inc. since October and will be heading to Queens, New York this September to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA with SBP. SBP has several locations across the East Coast where they work to rebuild homes destroyed by natural disasters. Nate's work will mainly focus on rebuilding from damages caused by Hurricane Sandy. After AmeriCorps, he plans to go to graduate school to pursue either law or nonprofit management.



NEW BOARD MEMBER ELISABETH VOIGT

## HOME, INC. WELCOMES NATIONAL HOUSING POLICY EXPERT TO BOARD

In her first year out of college, new Home, Inc. board member Elisabeth Voigt was a social worker in East Brooklyn. The mothers she worked with weren't sure whether to view her as a threat or a resource as they feared being charged with child neglect. "That year I learned I didn't have a lot of tools to help improve their lives." In the many years since that difficult time, Elisabeth Voigt has acquired the right tools as a lawyer, community organizer, and policy advocate for affordable housing issues.

In that first year, Elisabeth saw how critical housing was for these families. "It was classic disinvestment; severely limited housing isolated them from work opportunities and community." She wanted to help create change at the systemic level and to do something concrete. So when she went to Law School at U.C. Berkeley, she chose to work with legal services helping clients with eviction cases. "I remember this girl who would always sit under my desk. Her mother would come back each month needing our legal support because the whole housing system worked against her."

Later, after working on immigration appeals, Elisabeth earned a fellowship for Public Advocates working on impact litigation and policy change

for equitable housing. This policy work led her to collaborate with community groups in Oakland, California organizing to prevent gentrification. "It's then I learned that it can't just be lawyers; it must also be community members—you need both. It's about educating residents and engaging people."

Due to her work on the Obama election campaign in 2008, Elisabeth was hired as special assistant to the General Council at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Eventually, this work led to her current consulting work as a facilitator and policy advisor for foundations advocating for fair housing and equity assessments. She brings together fair housing lawyers and community organizers. "I'm more like a family therapist, listening to people who come from different perspectives and often disagree."

For all this experience, Elisabeth has never worked on an individual housing development project and is excited to bring her expertise to this process as a Home, Inc. board member. "It's amazing how a small program in Yellow Springs can relate to the larger ecosystem of equity-building and anti-poverty," Elisabeth says.

# ANTIOCH ALUM JOINS BOARD



BOARD MEMBER ALEX SCOTT

As our youngest board member Alex Scott provides a unique perspective on the housing challenges of her generation. She knows how difficult it can be to find good housing in Yellow Springs when you're just starting out on a low income. As special events coordinator for the Yellow Springs Chamber of Commerce, Alex also knows the concerns of many local businesses. She often visits the Spirited Goat Café on Dayton Street and participates in many poetry slams in Columbus cafes. So she hears the concerns

of her generation. "Everybody should be heard, listened to, understood," Alex asserted.

Growing up with a single mom in Columbus, Alex always had a strong sense of fairness. She was bullied in middle school, and some other African American kids often asked "why do you act white?" when she would aim to succeed in school. She also came to question gender expectations, asking "how come guys can do this, but not girls? Why did my grandmother want

to train me to laugh a certain way?"

In high school, Alex attended a humanities and arts program which led her to Antioch College where she fell in love with Yellow Springs' devotion to inclusion, the arts, and social justice. "I want to help the town which has helped me so much." When she attended Antioch, Alex worked as a student events coordinator, created an arts directory for the Yellow Springs Arts Council, and helped coordinate a micro-lender operation for Columbus food

trucks. "I used to have terrible phone anxiety," Alex recalls, "but not anymore." Alex plans to help recruit and coordinate business sponsors for the Home, Inc. Progressive Dinner.

Executive Director Emily Seibel appreciates Alex's skills and her "voice that makes our community-focused mission stronger. Alex is authentic, sharing her thoughts on social justice, equity and inclusion. She is a delight to have on the board."

Yellow Springs  
Home, Inc.

## PROGRESSIVE DINNER 2017

Saturday, November 4th 6PM  
The Wellness Center at  
Antioch College

Please remember to  
**SAVE THE DATE**

**ADVANCE  
TICKETS  
REQUIRED  
LIMITED  
AVAILABILITY!**

Tickets: \$65

To learn about event sponsors, appetizers, desserts, and wine selections or purchase tickets please contact Brittany at **937-767-2790** or [brittany@yshome.org](mailto:brittany@yshome.org)

**CHILDCARE  
AVAILABLE FOR A  
SMALL SUGGESTED  
DONATION**

Yellow Springs  
Home, Inc.

# HOME, INC. HOMEOWNER LOBBIES IN D.C.

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The various state delegations included “resident ambassadors” — meaning individuals living in affordable housing. “We were there to put human faces on the issue,” Cathleen explains. “My job was to tell my story — how I got involved, what the obstacles were, how Home, Inc. helped,” she said. “I’ve never been a particularly political person, but it was a great experience and I learned a lot.”

Cathleen graduated with a degree in psychology from Ohio University some 30 years ago and thought about going on to graduate school, but her sense of adventure got the best of her. She moved to Key West, fell in love at first sight with tall sailing ships,

and spent the next 10 years aboard—starting as a deckhand and ending up as a first mate.

Then there were five years in the wilds of Prince Edward Island, Canada, where her son Cayden was born. Although Cathleen grew up in Ohio, she had never planned to come back. But, in 2000, as a single mother with a small child, she had second thoughts. Her son needed stability, and she wanted to be nearer to her mom, now also single and having health problems.

She was not going to live in suburbia, she says, so she made a bee-line for Yellow Springs, settled into a small apartment with her son, earned

her masters degree in education from Antioch University, and secured a teaching job in Vandalia. Her next goal was home ownership.

“I’d been paying rent for 20 years,” she says. “I was tired of investing in other peoples’ futures and not my own.”

But looking for a house was one thing. Finding one was quite another. She simply couldn’t afford the village’s high priced housing on a teacher’s salary. She’d pretty well given up, she says, until one day she saw a Home, Inc. ad that began “Are you tired of renting?” Within six months, she and her son were spending all their spare time helping, where they could, to build her new three-bedroom,



CATHLEEN TONG POSES IN WASHINGTON D.C. WITH, FROM LEFT, SENATOR ROB PORTMAN, NETWORK STAFF, AND ADAM ABRAHAM, TWO-TIME HOME, INC. VISTA. ADAM IS CURRENTLY EMPLOYED WITH GROUNDED SOLUTIONS NETWORK.

two-bath Home, Inc. house.

“Home, Inc. was so amazing,” she says. “Marianne MacQueen, [then Home, Inc. director] not only walked me through all the banking and financial stuff I knew nothing about, but came to help with her hammer and saw. Lots

of people came to help . . . they put their hearts and souls and backs into it and asked nothing in return. I cried.”

In the years following, she herself spent many volunteer hours to help build other Home, Inc. houses. And when current Home, Inc. director Emily Seibel nominated her as a

resident ambassador to the Grounded Solutions Network, she gladly took time from work to advocate for the cause.

Cathleen, who currently teaches in an inner-city school in Dayton, moved into Home, Inc.’s third house in 2005. She’s been giving back ever since.

## HOME, INC. COMPLETES 27TH CLOSING

The Home, Inc. house on Center College Street that belonged to beloved second-grade teacher Frances Hurie, many years ago, has new owners thanks to Home, Inc. Tim and Julia Honchel closed on their first home in June, happily trading up from the small upstairs apartment in which they had lived for several years.

The Honchels are the third family to live in the Hurie house since it was donated to Home, Inc. by Sue Clauser. It’s seen considerable renovation since that time. Currently it needs some landscaping, which Julia and Tim will help with, to begin fulfilling the 100 hours of “sweat equity”

required of all Home, Inc. buyers. They plan to volunteer on future Home, Inc. building projects to get the rest of their hours.

Julia and Tim originally met at Asbury University in Lexington, Kentucky in 2012, where Tim graduated. Julia didn’t finish there, however. After studying abroad, she says, she became more aware of global issues and began looking for an education that would give her more hands-on experience.

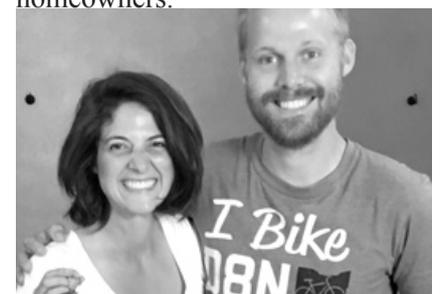
So it was not surprising that she found her way to Antioch College. Also, not surprisingly, Tim found his way to Yellow Springs after graduation from Asbury.

A business planning consultant, his clients include Community Solutions in Yellow Springs, where Julia, an environmental sciences major at Antioch, now also works full-time, chiefly in food-related programming.

The couple originally assumed their stay here would be temporary—three or four years, perhaps—so they spent time, on and off, looking around at small towns in which they might like to settle down. But it began to dawn on them how comfortable they felt right here in Yellow Springs; “we could see ourselves living here,” Julia said.

They were seriously interested in

home ownership, but like many young people, found that houses here were too expensive. A chance meeting with Home, Inc. Executive Director Emily Seibel solved the problem. “It didn’t take too long after that,” Julia says. Thanks to Program Manager Chris Hall who “held our hand and walked us through all the procedures,” they became Home, Inc.’s newest homeowners.





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# NEWS FROM HOME

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