

Babs O'Reilly and the Long Search for Home

Babs O'Reilly, now on her second stint as a Yellow Springer, knows all too well the housing difficulties facing prospective villagers. Homes to buy or rent are few in number, tend to be overpriced, and are quickly snapped up by a populace all facing the same shortage.

"Even when you've got the money," says O'Reilly, "it's hard because, once a place pops up, it goes, you know."

For six years, Babs scoured the housing market, adding her name to countless wait lists in



the village, county, and across greater Dayton. "I was just constantly applying and trying to get places," says O'Reilly. In that span, despite her best efforts, she received not one call saying that it was her family's turn for safe, affordable housing. After such a long struggle, she had more or less given up hope.

Enter Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood.

When the long-awaited call finally did come and Home, Inc. Executive Director Emily Seibel told Babs that she had won the lottery for a Glen Cottages rental, it came as a complete surprise — but not in the way you might think.

"To be honest, when Emily called me the first time to tell me they'd chosen our name," says O'Reilly, "I hadn't remembered that I'd applied."

For Babs, someone who doesn't "do cities real well" — even cities the size of Xenia and Fairborn — the village is a perfect fit. Only slightly smaller than her Northern Illinois home town, Yellow Springs embodies the connectedness she'd grown

up with. Both are places where "everybody knows everybody," she says, and they "rally around each other."

Better still is a brand new home in the intimate confines of a pocket neighborhood. An oasis within an oasis, Glen Cottages is "its own little community-within-the-community type thing," says O'Reilly. "I was talking to my daughter the other day. We used to do a lot of camping, and I said it almost feels like we're in a really nice campground with a really nice cabin, you know, because everybody's kind of great here."

Babs also truly appreciates the one trait she shares with every other member of Glen Cottage's diverse band of inaugural residents: "I think it's neat how we're all brand new at the same time."

Patti Dallas and the Irresistible Pull Homeward

Patti Dallas has always been history-adjacent. To name but a few noteworthy instances: a stint in San Francisco at the dawn of hippiedom, lunch with Caesar Chavez during the storied grape pickers strike, and participating in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legendary Selma march. Patti, it would seem, has a preternatural way of sniffing out the scenes that, decades hence, will be spoken of in reverent or celebratory tones.

"I feel like I've had the fortune to be in certain primal places at primal times," says Dallas.

Go as she might, Patti is no less subject to the yo-yo-ing gravitational phenomenon that weighs upon all native villagers. Though Yellow Springers are often compelled to travel far and wide, they are also equally and oppositely compelled to someday return. They simply cannot help it.

Patti's periodic homecomings have coincided largely with the blessings of family. Patti returned to the village in 1985 so that her daughter, Nathania, could be born here, and returned again ten years later so that Nathania could be a part of her grandparents' lives. Dallas' most recent return, in 2017, was to help Nathania, now 35, raise her own three kids.

"Nathania said, 'I don't want to raise my children without you,'" recounts Dallas. "Which is always music to my ears."

All of this, of course, has been a long-winded way of introducing the fact that, should you knock upon the bright yellow door of one dwelling in Home, Inc.'s brand-new Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood, you'll find Patti Dallas therein. Whether tinkering with one of her two primary instruments, banjo and flute, or baking cookies in expectation of a visitor, Patti is now fully situated, having found a permanent home where, just last year, there was but a lightly wooded lot and a dilapidated barn.

Given her ability to find and take part in the historically significant,

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Home, Inc. Secures Close To Half of a Federal Grant Allocated To Ohio For Home Repairs

Home, Inc. hit a jackpot for income-eligible Yellow Springs homeowners earlier this fall when it secured a \$200,000 grant for home repairs from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The funding, designed to maintain the health and safety of local residents, is intended to meet a great variety of needs. These may include new roofs and furnaces, insulation and accessibility ramps, electric repair, termite treatment, and much more.

And, Home, Inc. Program Manager Chris Hall emphasized, “the funds will be available for all eligible village residents, not just Home, Inc. owners.” To be eligible, applicants must own their own homes and fall into the 50%-of-median-income bracket.

This bracket is based on both income and household size, Chris explained. It would, for example, include one person with an annual income of \$37,850 or less, or a family of 5 earning up to \$50,000 a year. “But don’t hesitate to apply if you’re close,” Chris says. “There are often income deductions.”

Anyone wishing to apply for one of these grants should visit www.yshome.org/usda-interest to complete a short interest-form before the end of the year. Home, Inc. will get back to you in January. The number of grants to be awarded will depend on the kinds of projects for which applicants seek help.

In applying for the USDA money, Home, Inc. committed to awarding grants to very-low income homeowners. “That helped us score well,” Chris says. “What made us really competitive was a matching grant of \$12,000 contributed by the village.”

Home, Inc. plans to put bids out for the home repair projects early next year. “We strongly encourage local contractors to submit bids,” Chris says, pointing out that this is another way in which the grant will benefit Yellow Springs.

Distribution of USDA Housing Preservation Grants are a recurring nationwide event. This year, some \$460,000 was allocated for the state of Ohio. “We were really pleased that Home, Inc. qualified for almost half of that,” Home, Inc. director Emily Seibel says.

Patti Dallas and the Irresistible Pull Homeward *continued from page 1*

it’s no wonder that Patti is an inaugural resident of Glen Cottages. On a local level, this singular community is already making history and setting a precedent for economic design and permanent affordability in a village desperately in need of both.

The intimacy of the development was also a major factor in Patti’s decision to apply for one of the rentals. In a word, Patti is all about connection, and Glen Cottages thoroughly adheres to that principle.

“I really appreciated the uniqueness of it. And the connectedness. I’ve been enjoying getting to know the neighbors,” she says. “I really think it’s a nice way to create a neighborhood.”

Innovative solutions to housing are essential, Dallas says, for the betterment of the village. “Definitely, whatever we can do to enable lower income people to be a part of

the community — I think that’s really vital to the nature of the principles of Yellow Springs.”

With more neighborhoods like Glen Cottages, perhaps a smoother way home might be paved for other returning Yellow Springers, not to mention a diversity of new villagers who will strengthen our community.

Greater housing availability might even encourage current residents, like Patti, to stick around. This time, maybe, she is home to stay.



Meet New Board Member Shadia Alvarez

New YSHI board member Shadia Alvarez remembers community organizing from her childhood in New York City. “It’s in my DNA,” she says. Her dad was a union organizer and history professor, her mother organized on neighborhood issues, and they both worked for Puerto Rican independence. She recalls a picture of herself with a bullhorn at a high school walkout protesting police brutality. “I was standing right next to my geometry teacher.”

Alvarez believes her mentors at Antioch College inspired her leadership. As a student, she helped institute Antioch’s Racial Discrimination Prevention Policy. “At the time, someone hung a mannequin from a tree on campus,” possibly suggesting a lynching. She recalls that the campus community meeting became so heated that “I threatened to shut it down...though I really had no idea how to do that.”

Alvarez went on to become a social studies teacher and later a principal in the New York

City schools. As a teacher, she witnessed the effects of housing insecurity on students. “I could always guess who was going to miss the most classes and most need my help based on where they lived.”

When Alvarez thinks about affordable housing, she recalls her family’s first rental apartment in East Brooklyn. “No hot water in winter, sometimes no heat, not enough blankets to cover us. I will never forget the anger on my mom’s face.”

Today, as director of the Coretta Scott King Center, Alvarez believes that, “we can’t talk about the goals of Home, Inc. without the work of the King family and the concept of the Beloved Community.” In this way, she sees her work with the community land trust model as contributing to a greater democracy. “If a community is not diverse,” Alvarez explains,

“it won’t generate the creativity and problem solving that children and families need.”



New board member **Shadia Alvarez**

Outgoing Board Members



Left: Jackie Anderson, who joined the board in 2014, is Federal Financial Manager for the VC-25B program which is building the next Air Force 1. During Jackie’s tenure on the Home, Inc. board she served on the Projects Committee, was a member and eventual chair of the Governance Committee, served on the Capital Campaign Committee, and was Secretary of the Executive Committee.

Right: David Seitz, a professor of English at Wright State University since 1998, joined the Home, Inc. board in 2013. During David’s entire 9-year tenure on the board, he was chair of the Publications Committee, in addition to stints on the Executive Committee and the Capital Campaign Committee.

Far right: Alexandra Scott joined the Home, Inc. board in 2016. Alex, the former Interim Director of the Yellow Springs Chamber of Commerce after serving five years as Special Events Coordinator, served the Home, Inc. board on the Progressive Dinner Planning Committee and was chair of the Membership Committee. Alex’s time on the board might be over, but only because she now serves as the new Home, Inc. Outreach & Fundraising Manager.

STAFF MEMBERS

Emily Seibel
Executive Director
Brittany Parsons Keller
Development Coordinator
Christopher Hall
Program Manager
Alexandra Scott
Outreach and Fundraising Manager
Rachael Chromec
AmeriCorps VISTA

BOARD MEMBERS

Shadia Alvarez
Christopher Bongorno
Linda Cox
Anthony Fife
Angie Hsu
Artie Isaac
Lela Klein
Len Kramer (emeritus)
Tom Logsdon
Kevin McGruder
Steve McQueen
Jacqueline Radebaugh
Susan Stiles (emeritus)
Malte Von Matthiessen

In Remembrance – Barry Heermann

The late Barry Heermann, a former board member of Yellow Springs Home, Inc. was recruited to the board for his expertise in organizational development. As a board member, he had an



incredibly positive outlook on life and on the village, helping the board to see challenges as opportunities.

While on the board, Barry crafted presentations for board members and volunteers to use in the homes of friends to gain support for the organization and helped train board members and volunteers to take on this role.

Barry was also an inspiring mentor to Home, Inc. Executive Director, Emily Seibel, and coached her monthly for years after serving on the board.

“He made us believe we could be successful going into homes, churches, and businesses to tell Home, Inc.’s story,” Emily said. Through his work, Home, Inc. gained many supporters and expanded its base in the community.

Barry was such a positive force that his presence made meetings enjoyable. He had many special qualities, and believed that all of us had them too. Thanks to Barry’s support, belief, and work for Home, Inc., many villagers came to better understand and appreciate our work, and Home, Inc. became a better organization.

In Remembrance – Moya Shea

It is with heavy hearts that Home, Inc. shares the news of Home, Inc. homeowner Moya Dale Shea’s passing.

A cherished member of both the Home, Inc. and Yellow Springs communities, Moya’s enthusiasm was shared with all of those fortunate enough to spend time with her.

Her High St. home served as a gathering place for friends, family, and anyone looking for a good book from her Little Free Library. It was the highlight of many a staff member’s day to have an opportunity to visit with Moya and be welcomed into her home.



Although Moya’s passing is a loss to all who knew her, we carry forward with us her memory and a continued passion to make the world a better place.

Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood Progress Photos



What it looked like in March, 2021. Turn the page to see what it looks like now.



Site visit with (from left to right) Angel Harris (Miller Fellow), Kineta Sanford (then Outreach & Fundraising Manager), and Emily Seibel (Executive Director).



Site Visit with Angel and Gene Tartell.



Kineta, Emily, and Angel in the upstairs window.



Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood Ribbon Cutting Celebration!



Photo credit Angie Hsu

Photo credit Rachael Chromeck



Photo credit Alex Scott



Photo credit Angie Hsu



Photo credit Angie Hsu



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Please consider
us in your
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giving.

Photo credit: Angie Hsu



Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood Ribbon Cutting Celebration!

More photos of the Glen Cottages Pocket Neighborhood project and recent open house and ribbon cutting celebration are inside.

