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Special points of interest:

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- Starksboro Resident Association holds very successful Green Up Day. Page 3.
- Loans, grants & other services! Pages 2,3,4.

CVOEO Mobile Home Project

THE MOBILIZER

June 2009 Volume 12, Issue 1

A Note from the Program Coordinator

A lot of changes have occurred at the Mobile Home Project since our fall newsletter was released. At the end of May we sadly said goodbye to our director, Corey Beach, as she took a position with the National Center on Family Homelessness in Boston. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the years of service she put in at CVOEO and the Mobile Home Project. She will be greatly missed.

I am excited to take on the position of Program Coordinator and will do my best to maintain the high level of professionalism and passion that Corey brought to the job. We are currently in the process of hiring a new Resident Organizer.

This winter and spring we have helped park residents form resident associations, address habitability concerns in their park and find funding sources for home rehabilitation projects. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more about the services we provide to mobile home park residents across the state. I hope that you enjoy reading the Spring 2009 issue of *The Mobilizer*!

-Sarah Weintraub

Mobile Home Project Funding Restored!

VERMONT- Last February the Mobile Home Project received word from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs that Governor Jim Douglas' proposed budget had eliminated all funding to our program. The funding that we receive from the State of Vermont is our core funding and all of the other funding that we receive is dependent on these monies. As a result, this major cut to our budget would shut the doors of the Mobile Home Project for good.

In response to this news, the Mobile Home Project staff launched a campaign to rescue our program. We collected letters of support from clients who we have worked with, resident associations we have assisted, and other non-profits and agencies who we have partnered with. In the end we collected more than 20 letters demanding that our funding be reinstated. In addition to distributing these letters, we met with members of the house and senate to discuss the importance of the services that we offer and gave testimony to the appropriations committees. Thanks to all of your help, the budget that was eventually jointly passed by the house and senate included a full restoration of our grant. When the Governor vetoed this budget and presented his new proposal, the Mobile Home Project's funding was slashed to zero once again. Luckily, this devastating blow was reversed again when the legislature voted on a historic override of the Governor's veto and secured our funding for the next year.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our clients and partners who supported us through this struggle. We also want to thank the members of the Vermont House of Representatives and the Vermont Senate who worked hard to pass a budget that included our grant.

Birchwood Residents Receive Help with Home Repairs

MILTON- As part of a special collaboration between The Mobile Home Project, ReCycle North's YouthBuild Program, and students from the University of Vermont (UVM), Lawrence Hill and Delberta Brace received a new porch roof and other minor home repairs.

Lawrence and Del first contacted the Mobile Home Project after they heard about it from UVM students from the department of Community Development and Applied Economics who were doing community surveys in Birchwood Mobile Home Park. Their porch roof was in desperate need of repair but no existing resources seemed to be available to help Lawrence and Del resolve the issue. In February, Sarah, along with a representative from ReCycle North and two UVM students visited the home to survey the damage and chat with Lawrence and Del. Over the next couple of months, the UVM students worked hard to find donated and recycled materials that we could use to make the repairs. Finally, at the end of April, volunteers from YouthBuild, along with the UVM students, repaired the roof, fixed the back porch roof, fixed the railing, and helped clear the yard at no cost to Lawrence and Del. Overall the project was a great success and The Mobile Home Project is grateful to Jessica from ReCycle North and the students from UVM for all of their hard work!

If your home is in need of repair, contact the Mobile Home Project to hear about our Housing Counseling Services.

Non-Profit Park Residents - Great Loan Opportunity!

USDA Rural Development has *one percent loans* available for mobile home repairs. Only homes in non-profit parks, co-operative parks, or on private land owned by the homeowner are eligible. Residents in these types of living situations may be eligible for a grant up to \$7,500 or a 1% loan up to \$20,000. There are some additional restrictions and requirements.

If you are performing needed repairs and need to borrow money, **you will not find a better deal than this.** Contact the Mobile Home Project to see if you are eligible, or with any questions.

Lakes End MHP to Challenge Lot Rent Increase in Court

MANCHESTER- Earlier in the Spring, the residents of Lakes End Mobile Home Park received notice that their lot rent was being increased by more than 50%. Under Vermont's statutes pertaining to mobile home parks, the residents have the right to petition for mediation if an increase surpasses that year's Consumer Price Index (CPI) for housing + 1%. This year's CPI+1% was 4.8% meaning that the Lakes End increase was well above the level needed for mediation.

With assistance from the Mobile Home Project staff, the residents signed a petition and prepared for mediation. On April 4th the residents, as well as Corey Beach from the Mobile Home Project, attended mediation with the park owners. After approximately four hours of mediation, no agreement could be reached between the park residents and the park owners. As a result, the residents have decided to pursue their right to challenge the increase in court. With the help of Arthur Hamlin from the Department of Housing and Community Affairs and Corey Beach, the residents are working with legal representation from Rutland Legal Aid. The residents and Legal Aid are currently preparing their argument for the Superior Court.

If your park receives notice of a lot rent increase that is above the CPI+1% and you are interested in contesting the increase through mediation, the Mobile Home Project is here to help! We can assist with drafting a petition and getting signatures, help you to prepare your arguments and understand the park owners arguments, and attend mediation with you for support and advocacy.

For more information contact the Mobile Home Project at (802) 660-3455 x204

Home Ownership Financing from Opportunities Credit Union

The motto at Opportunities Credit Union is, “we don’t say no, we say when.” This is especially true for people who want to own their own manufactured home. As Vermont’s only Community Development Credit Union, we offer unique and innovative solutions for people wherever they are on the Asset Path.

If you have a poor credit score or payment issues, you might start with counseling (Neighborworks Certified counselors). We’ll use tracker loans and negotiations to help you raise your score and become eligible for grants and 100% financing. We help you settle bad debt and move along the path toward ownership.

Our Home Buyer’s Education class is required for eligibility for grants up to \$15,000 to help with closing costs and down payments expenses. Opportunities Credit Union will craft a financing solution that is best for your individual situation.

If you own your own home now and want to re-finance or do an energy savings upgrade - we have several options available for you.

People choose Opportunities Credit Union because they want their money staying in Vermont and working for their neighbors. We will always service your mortgage and eliminate the stress of this volatile market. Get on the Asset Path today apply for your home ownership mortgage at Opportunities Credit Union! “We don’t say no, we say when.”

If you have any further questions about ownership opportunities please contact the Mobile Home Project at 802-660-3455 x 204.

Starksboro Resident Associations Making Great Progress

STARKSBORO- Since community meetings were held in all three of Starksboro’s mobile home parks in November of 2008, the Mobile Home Project’s Resident Organizer has been working hard to help interested community members form resident associations to build community, increase communication, and accomplish common goals in the park. So far an association has been formed in Brookside Mobile Home Park and residents of Lazy Brook Mobile Home Park are in the midst of the association process.

The Brookside Resident Association had a very successful all member meeting in April in which they elected a board and set priorities for changes and improvements they would like to see in the park. Since then the board has organized a parkwide Green Up Day, talked to the town about replacing street signs and lights, formed a welcoming committee to welcome new residents to the park, and is meeting with the park owner and manager on a regular basis to keep more open communication about what is going on in the park.

If you are interested in organizing a resident association in your park please contact Sarah at the Mobile Home Project (802) 660-3455 x105 or sweintraub@cvoeo.org

Shelburnewood MHP Update

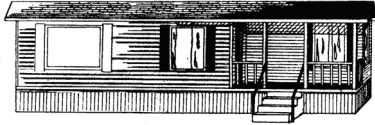
SHELBURNE- For the past four years the residents of Shelburnewood MHP have been living in limbo, waiting to find out if their park will be closed, sold, or developed into a multi-use housing complex that would include units for each of them. Green Mountain Development Group LLC has been trying to move forward with their development which includes affordable housing and senior housing along side with market rate housing on the downtown Shelburne village property. The plan also includes the conservation of about half of the 44 acres, mostly those that lie along the LaPlatte river. The project has been delayed for years now, in part because of changes in zoning regulations and requests by the Development Review Board to bring in a third party consultant.

For better or worse it seems that Shelburnewood residents will not have to wait too much longer to find out if the development will go through and they will be able to stay in Shelburne. The developers have announced that if they do not get approval from the DRB of at least the sketch plan within the next couple of weeks, they will be forced to pull out and the park will be closed.

The Mobile Home Project staff has supported Shelburnewood residents throughout this process and will continue to do so as the fate of the residents becomes more clear.

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Is your address correct? Please let us know if there are any changes.



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Core funding for the CVOEO Mobile Home Project comes from the State of Vermont and is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

CVOEO Weatherization



CVOEO WEATHERIZATION

CVOEO Weatherization is a free service for income eligible households in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle Counties. The program works with you to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of your home. After we have determined your eligibility, a home energy auditor will evaluate the needs of your home, and our professional crews will install the most cost effective energy efficient improvements based on the results of the audit. These may include insulation and air-sealing to help make your home safer and more comfortable year round. On average, weatherization saves 20% on fuel costs and many homes save even more. You can apply whether you own a home or rent, and we work year round so the sooner you apply, the sooner you will start saving! To request an application, please call us at 802-482-4180.

Housing Counseling Available to Mobile Home Residents (From the Mobile Home Project)

The Mobile Home Project offers housing counseling to all mobile home park residents. Although we do not offer any financial assistance directly through our program, we are able to connect you to organizations that will help you address your financial needs.
Call 802-660-3455 x 204 today!

The Mobile Home Project can help you with:

Credit/debt counseling

Pre-purchase counseling

Selling your mobile home

Back lot rent

Home rehabilitation

Loan/Foreclosure issues

Thinking of purchasing a mobile home in the Burlington area? Know a friend or family member who may be interested?

The Mobile Home Project has been notified by a client who lives in a Burlington park that they are trying to sell their home. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Sarah at 802-660-3455 x 105!