



## A Long Time Coming... The Arrival of Vernon Senior Housing

When construction begins this fall on new senior housing in Vernon, it will mark a noteworthy accomplishment for a group of the town's residents. It has been a long road for Vernon Senior Housing, Inc. (VSHI), but a considerable amount of dedication, humor, and community support has allowed them to carry this project through to the place it is today — financing in place and construction set to begin on the 24-unit country-style facility in September.

VSHI chairman Carol Mikuski leads a group of Vernon residents who have devoted their energies for more than four years to the creation of rental housing for Vernon seniors. The seven members of VSHI offer a variety of backgrounds and levels of community involvement. However, they all share a deep dedication to the town of Vernon, demonstrated by their involvement in many community activities, including driving for the senior transportation bus and delivering Meals on Wheels. On average, the members have lived in Vernon for well over thirty years.

For member Fred Green, the self-described “new kid on the block” who joined the group four years ago, his involvement in VSHI is an acknowledgement of a widespread need for this type of housing in the community. With the same candor shared by the rest of VSHI, Green, a resident of Vernon for more than three decades, joked that a good portion of the town is “not getting any younger”. However, on a more serious note, he mentioned that while some of these residents are financially secure enough to continue living on their own, this is not the case for everyone. He cited the many Vernon residents who have worked hard throughout their lives, but not necessarily in jobs that provide retirement accounts or 401k's, as one reason he got involved in VSHI. As these people come into retirement age, it's important that they have options available to them, but at this time the choices for reasonably-priced rental housing in Vernon are extremely limited.

Issues associated with elderly residents living on their own have become increasingly apparent in the past two decades, as the population of Vernon residents over the age of 55 more than doubled between 1990 and 2000. From the difficulty and expense of home maintenance to decreased mobility to run errands and get to appointments, the struggles of the aging population living in single-family homes began to concern many community residents, including the eventual members of VSHI.

These struggles are compounded by the nature of the Vernon housing market, which is predominantly comprised of single-family homes. When seniors can no longer maintain these individual homes, the limited rental housing market creates a situation that forces seniors to look for rental housing elsewhere — usually in Brattleboro, a move that often creates further isolation from their original community. Currently 90% of Vernon seniors live in their own home — a 1997 Community Health



VSHI members l-r: Evelyn Edelson, Arlene Castine, Betty Bailey, Peggy Farabaugh, Carol Mikuski, George Brown, Brad Pfenning, Fred Green

Assessment found that half of this population worried that their housing situation would not work for them in coming years.

In light of these concerns, senior rental housing in Vernon is a welcome addition to the community — the support of the town was evident this March at Town Meeting as the VSHI's request for \$200,000 from the town's Town's Water and Sewer Fund was approved overwhelmingly by a ratio of approximately 4:1.

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## Projects Under Construction

### Whetstone Apartments

Rehabilitation work on the Whetstone Apartments is well underway, with 20 units of affordable housing expected to be ready late this summer. The renovations include structural and foundation work, lead and asbestos abatement and new kitchens and bathrooms. Upon completion, the buildings at 50, 58, and 64 Canal Street, as well as 42 South Main Street, will provide bright, attractive, and affordable one, two, and three bedroom apartments to area residents.

*General Partner:* Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust

*Equity Partner:* Charter One Bank

*General Contractor:* American Construction

*Architect:* Williams & Frehsee, Inc.

*Engineer:* Stevens & Associates, Inc.

*Development Consultant:* JD Kantor, Inc.

*Financing:* Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, HOME Program, Low Income Housing and Historic Tax Credit Program, Vermont Lead Hazard Reduction Program, Vermont Center for Independent Living, Efficiency Vermont, and Charter One Bank.

*Mortgage Financing:* Vermont Community Loan Fund



64 Canal Street



42 South Main Street

### Noyes House, Putney Cares

Planned renovations to the historic Noyes House, on Kimball Hill in Putney, took another step forward recently with a recent grant award of \$23,000 from the Preservation Trust of Vermont. The grant will specifically be used toward sill repair, siding, and the rebuilding of the south and west entries to the building.

These renovations are part of a major renovation project planned to get underway in August. The renovation will repair or replace various structural components, rebuild the south entry, relocate a handicap ramp, replace the furnace, install a sprinkler system, and upgrade many interior and exterior finishes.

The Noyes House has been operated by Putney Cares, Inc. as a shared housing facility for the past twelve years. Residents of the building—predominantly elders—have a private room, and share a furnished living room, dining room, and kitchen. The rent of \$325 per month includes all utilities.

Renovations of the property are scheduled to be complete in December, 2004.

*Building Owner:* Putney Cares, Inc.

*Land Owner:* Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust

*Architect:* Bannister and Greenberg Architects

*General Contractor:* To be determined by competitive bid

*Financing:* Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, HOME program, Preservation Trust of Vermont, Vermont Center for Independent Living, Vermont Community Loan Fund.



Putney Cares Board Treasurer Judy Morton and President Steve Haisley

**The Clark/Canal Street Association** would like to invite you to their monthly meetings, held the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 at the Agape Church on Canal Street. The group organizes positive community events for the neighborhood, including block parties and holiday celebrations. They are also currently discussing the reinstatement of a Neighborhood Watch. The mission of the association is to maintain a clean, safe, and nurturing neighborhood for the Clark/Canal area. Anyone interested is welcome to attend the Thursday meetings.

Although it is with this group's efforts that the long-awaited idea is finally becoming a reality, the members of VSHI are quick to give credit to the previous committee who invested time and effort into the concept of senior housing. Calling the original group's work "amazing", Mikuski's team has not forgotten the years of effort that preceded their own. In 1986 the Vernon Selectmen formed an Elderly Housing Committee to study the feasibility of affordable senior housing, with the specific purpose of promoting aging in place and preventing inappropriate placement in Brattleboro nursing homes. The group invested substantial effort in researching and planning for senior housing. In 1989, they were "ready to dig", but in an unfortunate turn of events, disagreements between the committee and the town arose and the process stalled.

It was more than a decade later that the efforts to create affordable, senior housing in Vernon were renewed. In 2000, a new group of Vernon residents formed to rekindle the idea — today that group is VSHI. Carol Mikuski decided not only to initiate these new discussions, but also volunteered to chair the current committee because she felt too many people had worked too hard on this project for it to fall by the wayside. This housing was too important to the town to not be seen to completion.

One of VSHI's first steps under Mikuski's leadership was commissioning a formal community survey four years ago. They received an extremely positive and supportive response. Green, recalling the "unbelievable" reaction in favor of the project, remembers many respondents who were eager to move into the housing that very day. At this point VSHI realized that their commitment and enthusiasm didn't override the fact they lacked skills crucial to completing the project — experience in housing development. They commissioned the development expertise of Tom Appel, project manager for the New England Management Company, to assist in planning their next steps, which led them to bring in Vernon resident Peggy Farabaugh for research and grantwriting, as well as serving as a liaison to the Selectboard. Finally, they initiated collaborations with Housing Vermont and Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust, two organizations with significant housing development expertise.

From this collaboration and the resulting progress on the project, VSHI's efforts will soon be rewarded as their eagerly awaited idea becomes more and more tangible. With designs now on paper for the Huckle Hill Road parcel, it is becoming easier to conceptualize this project which spent so many years as a distant plan.

Architect Jeremy Coleman designed the building to feel as homey as possible. With such a large structure — approximately 24,000 square feet — he felt it was important to break up the exterior scale by not having huge flat surfaces. As a result, the designs call for having set backs on the front of the building along with low porches and a broken up roofline. Also, the length of the building creates a sense of privacy in the back yard that is shielded from the road by the building and a hedge row of trees. This crafts a private niche in the back for residents to create garden areas and outdoor space removed from the public front of the building.

For the interior plan, Coleman continued to bring elements of home into his design. Upon entrance into the building, there will be a living room area to one side with a gas fireplace. Nearby, the design calls for a library nook with shelves and a

table. To the front, there will be a residential staircase and to the other side a "country kitchen" with a large table overlooking the back gardens. Additionally, the building will include offices for property management and social services, allowing an ease of access for the residents. Mikuski would like to see a wing of the building or an office dedicated to the original group, whose initial research she said has proved invaluable for VSHI's effort.

The anticipation for this project is evident by the waiting list maintained by Carol Mikuski, already numbering between 18 and 22 households, including some members of VSHI. For those members, the creation of Vernon Senior Housing will be especially rewarding. During the years that these people oversaw the designing, planning, and development of this project, there is no doubt that at times they asked themselves; "As I get older, how do I see myself staying in my community, in a place I can call home?" After many years of hard work, they will soon find their answer. ■

## Profile: Vernon Senior Housing

### *Project Timeline:*

Bidding – July 2004

Construction Start – September 2004

Construction Finish – July 2005

### *Total Cost:*

Approximately \$4.1 million

### *General Partners:*

Vernon Senior Housing Inc. (VSHI)

Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust (BACLT),

Housing Vermont, Inc.

*Architect:* J. Coleman + Co. Architects

*Engineer:* Stevens & Associates

*General Contractor:* To be determined by competitive bid

### *Project Financing:*

HUD 202 Program

HOME Program

Vermont Housing Finance Agency

Efficiency Vermont

Town of Vernon

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

### *Vernon Senior Housing, Inc.*

Betty Bailey

George Brown

Arlene Castine

Evelyn Edelson

Fred Green

Carol Mikuski

Brad Pfenning

# Windham County Youth Initiative — H.E.Y!! Help Empower Youth!

By Julia Hampton, Youth Initiative Coordinator, United Way of Windham County

Imagine what it would be like if families were stable and supportive, if youth were empowered, if every young person chose healthy behaviors and had the tools he or she needed to become a productive contributing adult. These are the outcomes the Windham County Youth Initiative is striving to make a reality. United Way of Windham County began this initiative after analyzing data from our region. Substance abuse, participating in after-school activities, and completing high school are issues that our young people are having a harder time dealing with than their peers around the state.

In collaboration with many youth servicing organizations and community members in the county, the Youth Initiative is formulating a plan to increase the health, well-being, and long-term success of our young people. Through input obtained from at least 60 community members, the Youth Initiative determined that first-year activities would educate and mobilize the community to support the development of young people, increase the accessibility of after-school activities, and address the lack of housing available for older youth.

To accomplish this, the Youth Initiative is launching a public relations campaign that will give youth a voice and will encourage every adult to take on an active and supportive role in the lives of young people. Central to this campaign is a film featuring youth from around the county that will be aired on all public access stations. In addition, presentations on the Developmental Assets framework to positive youth development are available for any community group or organization.

Efforts to increase accessibility to after school activities has begun through the administration of a survey to youth and parents re-

garding what activities they would like to see made available and what barriers to participation need to be addressed. This survey data is being used to inform actions around the county to engage every young person in at least one after school activity.

A group of professionals that work in housing and/or with youth have been convened to determine how our community can best support those young people that find themselves in need of housing. Through increased communication within this group, three young men have already been safely housed through the Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust. A comprehensive list of housing options that could address the needs of youth in a variety of situations has also been developed, and from this list, those resources that exist in our community have been identified. A detailed chart explaining these resources has been created and will be distributed around the community in the coming months. Finally, a feasibility study is under way to determine the most effective program to develop in the Brattleboro area to support young people with housing needs. The Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust has been instrumental in the development and continuation of these efforts.

In all the efforts of the Youth Initiative, we strive to increase collaboration and participation of community members. We believe that young people grow up in communities, not programs and this means that it is every community member's responsibility to support the positive development of young people.

If you would like to become more involved in the work of the Youth Initiative, or would like to be on our email list, please contact Julia Hampton at United Way's office at (802) 257-4011 or [juliach@sover.net](mailto:juliach@sover.net). ■

## 2003 Donors

We would like to thank the following community members for their loyal and generous support!

### Individual Donors

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## We'll Miss You, Taft

The Laterre House and the Deerfield Valley community lost a wonderful neighbor and friend on March 5, 2004 with the passing of Taft Hamilton. This loss is felt by many in the Land Trust family of Wilmington and Brattleboro.

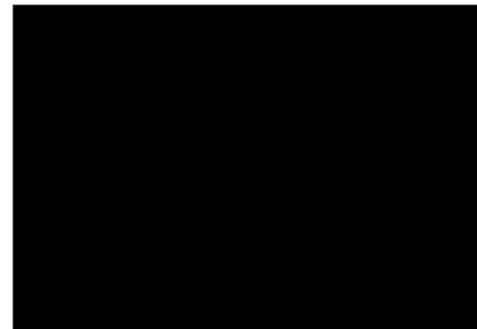
Upon completion of the renovations at Wilmington's Laterre House five years ago, the Land Trust was very fortunate to obtain Taft's services to maintain the outside grounds and to provide repairs for the tenants. At this time, Taft was establishing his business, Hamilton Lawn Care, and the Laterre House served as one of his first major accounts. The launching of Taft's business and the growth of a new Land Trust community coincided, creating a valuable partnership for both.

Taft's dedication to the Wilmington community stretched far beyond his care of BACLT's East Main Street property. Taft also was a member of the Wilmington Fire Department and a former member of Deerfield Valley Rescue, but most importantly he was a cherished father, husband, and son.

This summer, the Laterre House children will create a memorial garden to remember and honor Taft, a valued neighbor and friend.



## Horton Place Welcomes Jeremiah Dean



This spring, 21 Horton Place will welcome a new Resident Manager, Jeremiah Dean. Jeremiah has accepted the position supervising the single-room occupancy (SRO) house, comprised of seven single rooms with shared living space. Jeremiah, a New England native and Brattleboro resident since last year, has worked at the Brattleboro Area Drop-In Center since January. These days, in his position as Food Shelf Manager and Volunteer Coordinator, he works hard to keep the Drop-In Center stocked with food and the volunteers organized. There is no doubt that this experience, combined with his familiarity with local residents, will lead to a smooth transition for Jeremiah and the rest of the household. ■

Nancy Adams-Lentz & Russell Lentz  
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Latchis Theatre  
Leader Home Centers, Inc.  
McDonald's  
Millenium Pizza  
North Country Natural  
Outer Limits  
Price Chopper  
Sam's Outdoor Outfitters  
Turn It Up  
Walker Farm  
Yankee One Dollar Store

Please forgive any errors or omissions

## Staff and Children Reunite with AmeriCorps' Cris Nicole

BACLT staff and families enthusiastically welcomed back last year's AmeriCorps member, Cris Nicole, for two children's events this winter. On February 23rd, staff, children, and parents enjoyed a high-energy pizza party at KidsPlayce, which included arts & crafts and plenty of space for play and exploration.

In early March, BACLT staff and children had another opportunity to reunite with Cris as they enjoyed a Saturday of ice-skating and snacks at the Memorial Park rink. Despite the occasional spill, it was an afternoon of fun for beginners and veteran skaters alike!

Special thanks to the Brattleboro Recreation & Parks Department and KidsPlayce for the use of their facilities. We miss you, Cris!! ■



Young Land Trust residents on the ice



Budding musicians at Kids Playce

PHOTOS: PETER WRENN

### Membership Application/Renewal

**Yes,** I want to help BACLT respond to local housing need!

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron — \$500 +                | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner — \$250–\$499  | <input type="checkbox"/> Steward — \$100–\$249 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Members: Sustaining — \$50–\$99 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting — \$25–\$49 | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic — \$5–\$24      |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN/STATE/ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

New     Renewal     Is this an Address Change?

Payable to: **Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust**

Return to: 192 Canal Street, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

*Thank you! Contributions and pledges are tax-deductible.*



## What is the Land Trust?

The Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust (BACLТ) was organized and incorporated by a group of interested citizens in August, 1987 in response to increasing threats to the region's supply of affordable housing.

BACLТ's overall purpose is to enhance the quality of life of low and moderate income citizens; to preserve and revitalize neighborhoods; to foster diversity; and to improve the social, economic and cultural health of communities of Windham County. To accomplish this, BACLТ acquires, rehabilitates, and holds land and housing in trust, providing permanent access to decent and affordable housing for low and moderate income citizens of the county.

If you are interested in renting from the Land Trust, purchasing a home, making a donation, or participating in any way, please call or write to us.

### BACLТ Staff

Maggie Foley  
*Development Assistant*

Jennifer Gagliardi  
*Tenant Services Coordinator*

Sandy Garland  
*Director of Finance*

Phil Jones  
*Maintenance Mechanic*

Scott Newton  
*Maintenance Worker*

Morey Page  
*Maintenance Supervisor*

Martha Ratcliffe  
*Project Coordinator*

Connie Snow  
*Executive Director*

Elizabeth Szczesniak-Johnson  
*Homeownership/Technology Coordinator*

Katrina Willette  
*Bookkeeper*

Deb Zak  
*Director of Operations*

### BACLТ

192 Canal Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301  
Phone: (802) 254-4604  
E-mail: [baclt@baclt.org](mailto:baclt@baclt.org)

## HOMEOWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Do you dream of becoming a homeowner?

Is the down payment — or maybe the high cost of housing — standing in the way?

The Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust may be able to help!

Special VHFA financing  
Up to \$25,000 purchase assistance  
Pre and post homeowner education  
Shared appreciation with future homebuyers

Once pre-qualified you can shop for the home of your choice . . .

- Under \$170,000 in Windham County
- Structurally sound homes approved by BACLТ

### Give us a call!

(802) 254-4604 ext 102, [www.baclt.org](http://www.baclt.org), or email  
[esjohnson@baclt.org](mailto:esjohnson@baclt.org)  
to see if your household is income eligible.

### 2003–2004 Board of Directors

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Nicole Sanborn, *Brattleboro*  
Whit Wheeler, *Dummerston*  
Veronica Wheelock, *Brattleboro*  
Monroe Whitaker, *Brattleboro*

## HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE

No matter what size, every contribution is important. Your gift will enable the BACLТ to continue to provide affordable housing opportunities, revitalize neighborhoods and restore historic structures. There are many ways to contribute, and we offer technical guidance for all donors wishing assistance:

- Cash Gift** In any amount.
- Pledge:** A pledge of any amount and on any schedule may be made.
- Bequest:** Designate the BACLТ as a recipient of part or all of your estate
- Insurance:** Designate the BACLТ as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy
- Stocks:** By contributing stock, you may receive tax advantages.
- Memorial/  
Honorarium:** Honor someone living or deceased, or celebrate any occasion with a gift in the name of someone who has made a difference in your life.
- Employer  
Matching  
Plans:** Ask your employer if they would like to match your gift.

If you have any questions, please call the office (802) 254-4604. The BACLТ has been designated a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Gifts are tax-deductible.



BRATTLEBORO AREA  
COMMUNITY LAND TRUST  
192 CANAL STREET  
BRATTLEBORO, VT 05301

NON PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PUTNEY VT  
PERMIT 1

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For All BACL T Residents and Members

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# 17th ANNUAL MEETING & PICNIC



**Thursday, July 15, 2004 • Living Memorial Park • 4:30 to 7:00 PM**

**Please join us!**  
**Food, music and games**

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