



# the gnc Advocate

A PUBLICATION OF GREENSBORO HOUSING COALITION

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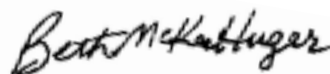
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**From Beth's Desk**

You have the power to make housing safe, affordable, and green, in strong inclusive neighborhoods. In a time when so much seems outside our control, that statement may seem ridiculous. It's true that you cannot do it by yourself and it will not happen overnight, but when all of us work together for the long-term, we see better housing start to emerge. Sustainability is within our grasp. I am deeply grateful as I read the surveys and evaluations from the Summit, giving me the opportunity to see the range and depth of your ideas and commitments. The first task is passing on to others what you learned at the Housing Summit (or, if you missed the Summit, what you read inside). The next step is adding at least one new approach: walking or riding the bus where possible, getting an energy audit of your home (and rental property), giving input on [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov) and at public hearings about Greensboro's Consolidated Plan, welcoming people different from you into your neighborhood, talking with your tenant (or landlord) about ways to cooperate in maintaining the home. The third step is expanding the scope of our community resources and starting some new ones that reflect the best research of what works. The old ways may have seemed to work for the short-term but fall apart in tough economic times; for sustainable housing and communities, we are on the path to new ways that last.

Join Greensboro Housing Coalition and come with us to a future that works for you and our whole community.


**In the past quarter because of YOUR support of GHC:**

- 68 people complete home buyer education, money management, and/or Ready to Rent classes
- 66 homeowners were counseled to prevent foreclosures
- 47 homeowners were assisted with home repair applications, utility referrals and other questions
- 397 tenants were counseled about searching for housing, resolving disputes and preventing eviction
- 78 homeless individuals and families were given access to shelter and necessary services

## 2010 Housing Summit participants share their ideas for safe, affordable and fair housing

*Housing Summit participants engaged in a lively break out session. This interactive session resulted in a variety of valuable suggestions. As always, GHC takes each of these ideas into account, examines them and if they are workable, implements them. The following are the subjects discussed, the questions posed to the participants and the resulting ideas from each group.*



**Transportation choices for getting from home to work, school, shopping, and play.** *To save travel time and dangers, energy and costs, how shall we plan housing location, walking/biking, and public transportation?*

**Your ideas:**

- Build sidewalks.
- Expand bus service (especially near senior housing and multifamily).
- Create bike paths within 5-10 minute bike ride of all housing, with storage and shower facilities.
- Build up, not out (especially near employment centers).

**Affordable housing opportunities where mortgage or rent plus utilities and transportation fit household budgets.**

*To reduce the growing number of families paying much more than 30% of their incomes for housing costs, how shall we make housing energy efficient and close the gap between income and housing costs?*

**Your ideas:**

- Advocate for tax credits and incentives for making housing energy efficient, both rental and owner-occupied.
- Create a sliding scale for each family unit that's workable.
- Market houses as energy efficient.
- Increase subsidized apartments.
- Educate future homeowners about conserving energy, about home buying, about rental responsibilities.
- Subsidize land costs for new affordable housing developments.

**Economic development for people to find work and develop businesses improving their communities.** *To grow local jobs, how shall we prepare for green jobs and encourage new markets?*

**Your ideas:**

- Support green entrepreneurs.
- Utilize GTCC to teach green jobs doing energy retrofits and provide apprenticeships.
- Teach sustainability skills from K-12.
- Expand the market by raising awareness of green issues so to build higher demand within Greensboro.

**Support for existing neighborhoods to be safe, inclusive, and diverse.** *To reduce the disparities in housing opportunities and neighborhood safety, how shall we go about making all communities safe and welcoming?*

**Your ideas:**

- Use Building Stronger Neighborhoods coalitions to build a sense of community.
- Encourage community gardens, neighborhood festivals, block parties or education sessions on housing and safety to bring communities together.
- Teach fair housing rights and responsibilities – and consequences of discrimination.
- Educate the public about different cultures or populations they are opposed to.
- Upgrade the quality of rental housing so that all neighborhoods are safe.
- Achieve diversity in neighborhoods through intentional planning and integration of cultures and sides of town.



*Join us to make housing healthy!*

# housing fact:

Over 17,000 households in Greensboro can afford less than \$400 for rent. Most are paying more than that, so they are at risk of losing housing every time unexpected expenses arise or work hours are cut.



**Homeless prevention to keep people from losing their homes.** *To reduce foreclosures and evictions and to provide a safety net for those who become homeless — how shall we counsel about rights and responsibilities, provide shelter and temporary rental assistance and mentoring for those in crisis, plus housing with supportive services for those with long-term disabilities?*

#### Your ideas:

- Create an endowment/safety net system, rental assistance for homeless individuals.
- Hold round table discussions with homeless population for their input on what is needed to increase their stability.
- Encourage lending institutions to provide modifications to mortgages as needed.
- Need more single room dwellings, more substance abuse counseling, and more mental health services.
- Open day center with comprehensive services.
- Start teaching school-age kids about self-sufficiency and problem solving and coping skills.

**Housing quality that is healthy and energy efficient.** *To reduce lead poisoning, asthma triggers, and other housing-related health risks — while at the same time conserving water and electricity — how shall we provide incentives and enforcement for healthy homes?*

#### Your ideas:

- Continue RUCO and encourage good relationships and compliance in a positive way; create tax incentives for repairing rental homes.
- Provide education about hazards and the principles of a healthy home.
- Advocate for incentives for conserving water and energy.
- Take legal action when homes are toxic.
- Require homebuilders to make homes energy efficient.
- Educate tenants on healthy housekeeping and reporting issues to the manager.
- Present awards to landlords for outstanding efforts to provide healthy homes.



## Opportunities!

### How much are YOUR utility bills?

Having trouble paying your mortgage or rent because your gas or electric bills are high? If your annual income is less than \$44,100 for a household of four, you can get a free home energy audit and weatherization services to insulate and seal air leaks! There is no cost for eligible homeowners and tenants; landlords pay a nominal administrative fee to improve their rental properties for tenants eligible for the program. (The landlord fee is waived if the tenant has Section 8.) Contact the Weatherization Assistance Program at 279-8184, 122 N. Elm St. Suite M-4, for applications and more information.



### Remember: return your Census form!

You count! Every resident counts—so fill out your Census 2010 form and put it in the mail. A full and accurate census count helps the federal government determine how \$400 billion in funding is distributed to communities across the country for programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, community development, and school lunches. Historically, African-Americans, immigrants, children, the elderly, college students and those experiencing homelessness have been undercounted in the Census. Saturday, April 10, 2010, over 100,000 volunteers across the country will host "March to the Mailbox" events to increase participation in the decennial Census. To volunteer and share outreach ideas, contact Karen Markovics (336) 412- 5759 or email her at [karen.markovics@greensboro-nc.gov](mailto:karen.markovics@greensboro-nc.gov).

Address correction requested

## Thanks...

### Thank you to new and renewing individual members:

Irene Agapion-Palamaris, Jack and Helen Alford, Dyan Arkin, Tommie Arnold, Trudy Atkins, Skip and Denny Crowe, Esther Dallmann, David Dalton, Katie Dorsett, Wes Early, Ray and Beth Huger, Stephen Johnson and Marnie Thompson, Jim Keith, Bob and Jolyn Kelley, Brett Koceja, Joel Landau, David Levy, Anne McKee, John McLendon, Erica Moore, Larry and Claire Morse, Linda Nelson, Donna Newton, Robert Nunn, Bill and Nancy Poulos, Jim and Muriel Prevatt, Betty Priestley, Frances Rankin, Mary Reaves, Maurice and Genie Schwartz, Mary Nelle Smith, Larry and Glenda Standley, Sheron Sumner, Phyllis Tally, Catherine Von Furstenberg Dussmann, Charles Ward, Wendy Wheeler, Michelle Wright

**Thank you to new and renewing organizational members:** Craft Insurance Center, New Creation Community Presbyterian, New Garden Friends Meeting, Shugart Family Foundation, Toleo Foundation.

**Thank you to sponsors for Housing Summit 2010:** City of Greensboro, HUD Field Office, Affordable Housing Management, Environmental Solutions Group, Greensboro Neighborhood Congress, Gregory Pest Solutions, Self-Help Credit Union, Southern Evergreen, Wachovia - a Wells Fargo Company, Wynnefield Properties.

The Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina Foundation has approved a grant for healthy homes, to do housing assessments and help residents address conditions that expose their children to asthma triggers. Through education, advocacy, and connecting homeowners and rental property owners to repair resources, we will make a measurable difference in asthma!

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church made a grant for GHC to work with faith organizations to serve people facing difficult housing challenges.



## **ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!**

Planning to repair or paint a home built before 1978? Because many older homes have lead paint under the newer layers of paint, North Carolina has a new Renovation, Remodeling, and Painting Rule (RRP) that went into effect January 1, 2010. The basic requirements are:

- 1.) Warn occupants by giving the booklet "Renovate Right" and logon to: [www.healthyhomestraining.org/LSWP/Renovate\\_Right\\_Pamphlet.pdf](http://www.healthyhomestraining.org/LSWP/Renovate_Right_Pamphlet.pdf) and by posting signs to keep people out of the work area.
- 2.) Contain the work area to keep dust from spreading in the home and surrounding neighborhood.
- 3.) Don't use machine sanders, heat guns, or torches.
- 4.) Safely store and transport waste from the work area.
- 5.) Clean the work area until no dust or residue remains.

Workers must be certified to do this work in pre-1978 homes and child-occupied facilities. To get certification training, and for a list of approved training providers, visit: <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/asbestos/healthaz.html>.

## Creating sustainable housing and communities

When we integrate housing, transportation, and environmental initiatives, we can create sustainable housing and communities — where people can afford to live safely for the long-term. The federal government is committed to Six Livability Principles (see them below) and will target funding to communities that can demonstrate measureable outcomes towards reaching goals for decent housing, smart growth and transportation, environmental justice, and social equity. Greensboro can compete successfully for federal funding and private investment because so many groups collaborate to make housing green and healthy, to end homelessness, and to promote green jobs, biking and walking, fair housing and strong neighborhoods.

### The Federal Government's Six Livability Principles

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing (energy efficient choices for all incomes, races, ages)
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods



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*"Greensboro has come a long ways towards a green healthy affordable fair future — but we have a long way to go. We are ahead of other cities — we can do it!" — Senator Katie Dorsett, pictured above*

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### Heard at the Summit

- Greensboro is proactive and on the right track but much more to do.
- So few homes are energy efficient.
- Greensboro is putting forth huge efforts to improve situation for the homeless and substandard housing.
- Housing is a critical component of a healthy Greensboro.
- The greenway connects neighborhoods; greenway as transportation.
- Transportation is part of the solution.
- Living choices for all people
- Sustainability is within our grasp; we need to continue to work together.
- HUD wants input; Dept of Transportation, Environmental Protection Agency, and HUD are working together.



*Greensboro Mayor Bill Knights confers with Summit keynote speaker Shelly Poticha of HUD.*

### What we can do to improve things in Greensboro?

- Do energy retrofits.
- Provide quality affordable housing.
- Bike more.
- Give HUD input.
- Move forward with plan for supportive housing.
- Develop sustainability course.
- Educate clients about healthy homes.
- Educate about housing rights and fair housing.
- Support the "Housing First" emphasis.
- Reuse, recycle, renew, redo.
- Research housing quality for refugees.
- Represent low-income tenants to keep them in safe, fit, and habitable housing.
- Market green, sustainable homes to home buyers.
- Provide training opportunities for underemployed and downsized.
- Promote mixed income housing in all parts of the community.
- Help immigrant mothers improve their housing quality and education.
- Build social capital between neighbors, coworkers and the city.
- Commit to be a zero waste and no carbon footprint community.

## Awards

Thank you to Representative Pricey Harrison for presenting awards —and thank you to the awards selection committee and all those who nominated outstanding contributors to our community.

2010 Housing Summit Awards were presented to:

- Columbia Forest Products for “Building Healthy Homes”
- Homekeeping Mortgage Default Counseling for “Housing our Neighbors”
- Dr. Robert Charest for “Sustaining Neighborhoods”
- In recognition of his lifetime contributions to housing in Greensboro, we presented an award in memory of Jim Turner, which was accepted by Andy Scott on behalf of the Turner family.



*Left: Andy Scott accepts an award from Rep. Pricey Harrison on behalf of the Jim Turner family. Jim Turner was honored posthumously for his lifetime contributions to the cause of safe and affordable housing.*



*Right: Rep. Pricey Harrison presents Mary Tay, director of Homekeeping Mortgage Default Counseling, with the “Housing Our Neighbors” Award.*



*“About 209,000 homes in Guilford County are not energy efficient; wasting \$1 for each \$5 spent on heating and cooling. If we can save just \$17 per month per home, we’d have \$42.6 million to spend on other things!”*

*— Arnie Katz, Advanced Energy, shown at left*



*Thanks to The HR Group, and in celebration of inclusive communities, each Summit attendee received a “Diversity card” with an inspiring message inside.*

