

# Minute NEIGHBORHOOD

THE NEWSLETTER FOR NEIGHBORWORKS® SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE

## NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire Statement on its Commitment to Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In the 1960s, community activist Dorothy Mae Richardson led a resident campaign for better housing in her Pittsburgh, PA neighborhood. Dorothy saw "...the solution was not to tear down the whole neighborhood...the solution was to fix the houses." These were the early days of what eventually became the first NeighborWorks® organization, now a nationwide network of 235 independent, community-based non-profits serving more than 4,500 communities throughout the country.

And here we are in 2020 when investing in our communities by providing access to quality, affordable housing services, revitalizing neighborhoods, and supporting opportunities for personal empowerment is more important than ever!

Decades of unfair housing policies driven by racism, including redlining, bias in lending, deed restrictions, and sales discrimination, have resulted in less wealth, fewer home ownership opportunities, limited availability of affordable housing, greater homelessness, higher unemployment, lower quality of life, and poorer health for people of color.

Yet we believe that everyone deserves access to safe, decent, affordable housing in quality neighborhoods and communities of opportunity. This is why we work to create access to housing choices that help level the playing field. We help thousands of people break the cycle of poverty and improve their financial stability through either home ownership or having access to quality and affordable rental housing. We lead the reinvestment and reinvigoration efforts in our most disenfranchised neighborhoods. We work with individuals and families so they may build financial assets, achieve greater economic security, overcome poverty, and become involved as leaders to preserve the quality of their neighborhood.

The communities we serve are disproportionately affected by some of the most pressing crises we are facing. As the demographics of these neighborhoods change, we recognize that we too must evolve in order to meet these growing needs and achieve our mission. Several months ago, we recommitted and reenergized our organization's focus on race, equity, diversity, and inclusion as a community partner, as a Board, and as an employer. We look forward to engaging our stakeholders to set new goals and take on a more purposeful and targeted approach to bring a more balanced representation to our governance, strengthen our partnership with the communities we serve, and improve our understanding of how we can best support our clients' needs.

We're up to the challenge to make a significant impact.

*Approved June 22, 2020 by the Board of Directors*



*Without Dorothy Richardson and countless other community leaders, then and now, we would not be able to effect the changes we need to address racism.*

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We recognize with gratitude the following individuals, foundations, corporations, businesses, and other entities for their generous financial contributions and volunteer involvement this past fiscal year. Such support is vital to our ability to carry out our mission.

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*We appreciate our supporters and volunteers. If we have misspelled or omitted your name, please accept our apologies and notify us at 603.626.4663.*



**D**espite the terrible health, economic, and societal events that are occurring today, our organization remains strong and able to continue to serve the needs of so many. Although our offices have remained closed since March 30 with our employees working from home, we have not furloughed anyone. Our team remains engaged with clients, and our Board of Directors, Trustees, and volunteer committees have continued to provide their essential support to the organization.

We remain engaged with our partners nationally, locally, and across the state in order to maintain the most up to date information and resources available. We expect this to continue for the foreseeable future.

As the COVID-19 crisis began to show how significantly it would impact households economically because of layoffs and unemployment, we began seeking donations to establish a rental relief fund for our tenants.

Thanks to the support of so many businesses, foundations, and individuals, we have raised over \$100,000 toward this cause. We braced for the financial impact of lost rent across our portfolio. The impact has not been as wide as predicted; however, the magnitude is deep for those households who were already struggling financially.

The looming burden of repaying three months of past due rent when it has been difficult enough to come up with one month's rent is devastating to a household. Although the financial crisis has not impacted our homeowners as severely as our tenants, we have assisted those in need with forbearance agreements and financial aid. We don't yet know what the future holds in terms of financial difficulties for our tenants and borrowers as the crisis continues beyond the expiration of supplemental unemployment benefits at the end of July.

Thanks to the support of Granite United Way, we have served as a regional hub for over 40 agencies, providing direct financial assistance and grocery store gift cards to more than 300 families in need. We are grateful to all those who have supported NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire operationally this year and for those who have given extra to support us through NH Gives and to supplement our rental relief fund. The charitable and volunteer support we receive is directly related to our ability to continue to be a resource for New Hampshire.

Gratefully,

Robert Tourigny



# Thank You to our 2020 Event Sponsors!

**W**e would like to make special recognition to the businesses and companies who sponsored this year's organization events. Just as we were ready to host our first major event of the year in March, the COVID-19 crisis developed and all our plans had to change. We communicated our dilemma and all of these event sponsors told us to allocate their sponsorship support where it is most needed now by the organization. Not one asked that their contribution be returned.

## NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire

P.O. Box 3968  
Manchester, NH 03105  
T: 603.626.4663  
F: 603.623.8011  
www.nwsnh.org

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# NEIGHBORHOOD Minute

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