

# Minute NEIGHBORHOOD

THE NEWSLETTER FOR NEIGHBORWORKS® SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE

## Finding Peace and a Home to Call Their Own



**A**fter enduring sacrifice due to years of uncertainty, separation and even violence, Mosses' and Ayen's homeownership story is not just a celebration of personal achievement. Their story is also a reminder of the economic challenges and opportunities associated with homeownership. Studies have shown that homeownership is the fastest way to build intergenerational wealth.

Their journey began in 2006 when Ayen emigrated to Baltimore with four young

children. At that time, she and Mosses had been living in Ethiopia for ten years, having fled to that country after enduring civil war in Sudan, a war that lasted twenty-one years. Mosses remained in Ethiopia for twelve more years. In 2008, Ayen moved to Manchester to be closer to friends and Mosses finally joined his family in 2018.

Both Ayen and Mosses have worked diligently and successfully in full-time factory jobs since their respective arrivals in this country. Mosses recently joined the staff of Easter Seals where he works as a residential instructor, a job he enjoys very much. They are appreciative that their children were able to experience the benefits of a formal education. And one of their daughters is enrolled in college today.

The concept of homeownership was familiar to them in their native country but not attainable. Only people who can pay fully for a plot of land and build over time or purchase a home outright are homeowners. Both involve having cash on hand, as a formal mortgage system does not exist. Owning a home of their own was nothing more than a dream. Setting themselves up in a totally new country and supporting four kids dampened their confidence in purchasing a home.

After seeing a flyer listing a home for sale, Ayen and Mosses took a step to realizing their dream. The listing realtor introduced them to Ryan Tufts at HarborOne Mortgage who connected them to Dick Patterson, a HUD certified HOMETeam counselor. They were able to complete HOMETeam's online homebuyer education course at their own pace and, when finished, began working one-on-one with Dick. Due to the COVID pandemic and thanks to technology, they were able to meet virtually to map out an action plan specific to achieving their goals. Dick helped them develop a realistic household budget that enabled them to increase savings. The budget included making "practice mortgage payments."



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ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ON PAGES 1 AND 2 BY CROSS PHOTOGRAPHY



**D**uring this special time of year, we feel it is especially fitting that we share with you the story of Mosses and Ayen. They have worked hard and achieved homeownership, something they did not envision for their family when they first arrived in our country.

The pandemic continues with encouraging signs for sustained improvement, but our work to help people realize their dream has continued throughout this period. I encourage you to not believe stories or other information that families today are uninterested in homeownership. Demand for first-time homebuyer and financial wellness education and counseling is robust. But challenges exist for housing affordability and supply.

HOMETeam continues to be a resource, helping families meet the challenges but do so in a financially prudent way. While we are grateful to all supporters and volunteers of this organization, I encourage you to look more closely at the logos, names, and photos associated with our HOMETeam program in this issue as their financial support assures our capacity to provide homeownership services that benefit families and communities.

We enjoyed taking supporters and volunteers on the trolley tour to see the impact our rental properties have on neighborhoods and what safe, quality workforce housing looks like.

And if you are considering making a charitable contribution at this time of year, I encourage you to consider a gift to NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire, where your contribution will help others seeking to have a home of their own or rent a quality, affordable apartment.

All of us at NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire wish you and your families the very best this holiday season.

Sincerely,

*Robert Tourigny*  
*Executive Director*

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After four months, Ayen and Mosses were pre-approved for a mortgage. Through their experience in education and counseling, they learned about special loan programs, such as New Hampshire Housing's Cash Assistance Mortgage. Additionally, HOMETeam was able to qualify them and provide additional assistance

for their down payment and closing costs in the form of a non-interest bearing, zero payment mortgage, which is due upon sale or refinance. Their real estate buyer agent knew of a home that was going on the market and guided them on making an offer. Their offer was accepted, and Ayen and Mosses became Manchester homeowners this past March.

"I am thankful that HarborOne Mortgage has access to the expertise, guidance, and programs provided by HOMETeam. It made all the difference for Mosses and Ayen. I am very happy for their family," says Ryan Tufts.

Mosses and Ayen have realized their dream in America. "This is our home in a community we love," says Mosses. "We look forward to celebrating our first Thanksgiving holiday in it with all of our family."



# Taking a Trolley Around Town

**O**n a bright, sunny September day we had the pleasure of hosting donors and volunteers on three separate trolley rides through Manchester and Goffstown to see our properties. Guided along the way by Robert Tourigny and Jennifer Vadney who relayed information, facts, and anecdotes about the properties in the context of the history of our organization and our approach to building community, the tours provided a visual reminder of the positive impact of investment in quality housing that started in 1992 and continues today.

The trolley rode past 15 properties in Manchester containing a total of 270 apartments, as well as the Cedar Street Family Park, which we created in 1992 as the result of the tear down of a notorious crack house. Guests visited 150 Spruce Street, a once run-down focal point of blight in the Center City and now home to Fresh Start Farms, a program of the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success. Guests also saw an apartment interior at Silver Mill Apartments, a 57-unit development in east Manchester that was once a former shoe factory.

The trolley then traveled to Abingdon Square in Goffstown, a 25-unit property located off Mast Road and our first development outside the City of Manchester, developed in 2010.

Financial contributions from the following businesses helped to make these trolley tours possible, as well as provide support for our Wellness Weekend event in the Center City in June:

**Sheehan Phinney**

**Northeast Delta Dental**

**Anagnost Investments**

**Enterprise Bank**

**Stewart Property Management**

**Otis Atwell**

**Craig, Deachman & Associates**

**Mutual of America**

**Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston**

**Lifetime Benefits Group**

**Mortgage Bankers and Brokers Association of NH**

**BerryDunn**



## Welcome New Funding Partners



### **Bangor Savings Bank**

*Left to Right: Robert Tourigny, Executive Director, NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire; Paul McLaughlin, HOMEteam Director; Jim Donnelly, Executive VP and Chief Commercial Officer; Bruce Ocko, Senior VP and Director of Mortgage and Consumer Lending; and Donald Sutherland, Mortgage Loan Officer, all of Bangor Savings Bank*



### **Cambridge Trust**

*Paul McLaughlin with Cambridge Trust group. Left to Right: John Sullivan, Senior Vice President, Director of Consumer Lending; Thomas Fontaine, Executive Vice President, Chief Banking Officer, President Cambridge Trust Charitable Foundation; Dina Scianna, Senior Vice President, CRA Officer, Director, Community Partnerships & Development; Paul McLaughlin, HOMEteam Director; Kaitlyn Gallagher, Senior Community Partnerships & Development Specialist; Fernando Rico, Vice President, Office Manager, Bedford, NH*

## and Renewed Funding Partners



### **HarborOne Foundation**

*Left to Right: Anita Wolcott, Marketing and Design Specialist/Community Outreach Coordinator 1, HarborOne Mortgage, with Paul McLaughlin*



### **NBT Bank**

*Robert Tourigny and Paul McLaughlin with NBT Bank group. Left to Right: Robert Tourigny; Joseph Culver, Senior VP & Director of Home Lending Sales; Diego Lebron Perez, Affordable Housing Loan Originator; Paul McLaughlin; and Michael Huot, Mortgage Loan Originator*

## HOMEdteam Community Partners

**W**

e are grateful for the support of our HOMEdteam Community Partners. Throughout 2021, we have provided homebuyer education and counseling to over 75 families and guided 17 of them through the successful purchase of their first home.



For more information about HOMEdteam, please contact Paul McLaughlin at [pmclaughlin@hometeam.org](mailto:pmclaughlin@hometeam.org) or 603.626.4663 ext.1100. To register for an upcoming financial literacy, home buyer, or landlord seminar, please go to <http://www.hometeamnh.org>

**Thank you to HOMEdteam's Community Partners!**



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Granite United Way  
NeighborWorks® America  
U.S. Department of HUD  
Mortgage Bankers & Brokers Association of NH

## NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire Welcomes New Board Members

**Rick Sawyer** serves as Town Manager for Bedford, New Hampshire, a position he has held since 2016. Prior to being named Manager, Rick served for ten months as Acting Town Manager, and before that for nine years as Planning Director and Zoning Administrator. Rick was Deputy Planning Manager for the City of Nashua for ten years prior to his positions in Bedford. A native of Stratham, Rick obtained an undergraduate degree from Rutgers University and also attended the University of Massachusetts. Rick is a Certified Public Manager who brings expertise and experience in municipal management, planning, and design.



*Rick Sawyer*



*Zachery Palmer*

**Zachery Palmer** is the Housing Cooperative Specialist at the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, since 2019. In this position, Zach interfaces with the organization's manufactured home park residents, as well as advises and consults with other manufactured home park cooperatives in the state. A graduate of Southern New Hampshire University, Zach credits his introduction to NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire's housing and community development mission to his childhood years in Providence, Rhode Island where he saw the impact ONE Neighborhood Builders, another NeighborWorks® America affiliated organization, has made in that city.

# Why a Home Inspection Matters in the Home Buying Process

P

aul McLaughlin, HomeOwnership Director, recently spoke with Ken Hynes, owner of All Views Home Inspection.

**Paul McLaughlin (PM):** Ken, can you explain what is involved in a home inspection?

**Ken Hynes (KH):** A home inspection provides an evaluation of the physical condition of the home, including its structure, construction, and mechanical systems. A qualified home inspection identifies items that need to be repaired or replaced, and also provides an estimate of the remaining useful life of major systems, equipment, structure, and finishes in the home. A home inspection evaluates the condition of the home for the buyer. This is different than an appraisal, which estimates the value of the property for the mortgage lender.

**Paul McLaughlin (PM):** We are hearing that some homebuyers are choosing to waive the home inspection contingency in order to have their purchase offer be more attractive and likely accepted by the seller. What does this mean?

**Ken Hynes (KH):** Waiving a home inspection often means that the homebuyer has outbid everyone else and, in turn, offered to pay more than the house is appraised for by the mortgage lender. But by waiving the inspection, the home buyer has no real idea of the condition of the home. It's not unlikely that soon after the home has changed ownership, or at least within the next couple of years, an unforeseen and costly issue comes up.

**PM:** What kind of costly issues could surface?

**KH:** You may discover that the roof was on the brink of springing a leak when you purchased the home, but now you have the financial responsibility for fixing or replacing the roof. Or, maybe the heating system is older than you thought and it cuts out on you in the first winter that you are in your new home. Or, the electrical wiring could be outdated or mold is discovered growing in the attic.

**PM:** Wouldn't a homebuyer see these issues at the time of making an offer so you could assume that the buyer knows what costs and inconveniences may be coming?

**KH:** Repairs to systems and structures are a necessary part of homeownership. But without a home inspection, a homebuyer can face repair and replacement costs that were not expected, or at least not expected quite so soon after purchase, yet need to be done right away. A home inspection will help a homebuyer plan for maintenance issues and needs. It gives the homebuyer a roadmap for the future.

**PM:** It is not uncommon for a home buyer to "stretch" a bit to purchase a home, especially in this competitive market. Why is waiving the inspection such a financial risk for the home buyer?

**KH:** If you have already purchased a home at the higher end of your budget or taken on additional debt to purchase the home, it is likely that you do not have extra cash on hand to address unexpected problems that arise soon after you purchase the home. In these situations, many homeowners pay for the repair with credit cards, which carry high interest rates. There is nothing like buyer's remorse to dampen the excitement of a new home. Are all of these "what ifs" worth losing sleep over, just to have the competitive edge when bidding on a home? If a seller won't allow a home inspection, there must be a reason - minor or major, there is a reason. Use your good sense and walk away!

**PM:** As a volunteer for HOMEteam's First-Time Home Buyer seminars, you provide a lot of helpful information about the home inspection process, based on many years of experience inspecting all types of homes and in various markets. Thank you for providing this introduction to an important aspect of home buying, and helping HOMEteam ensure that New Hampshire home buyers prudently purchase a home, one that they will enjoy and prosper in and not one that will be an unexpected financial burden.

## Summer Fun at our Rental Properties

Life seemed a little more normal for kids and their families this past summer as some familiar activities returned, especially for children and teens. Summer socials took place from June through early September at each development, with kids enjoying tie-dying t-shirts, painting, games, raffles, and pizza. Interested families also received “family summer fun bags,” which contained supplies to enjoy either a day at the beach or hiking in a state park. The bags included a state park pass, sunscreen, water, picnic lunch, and other relevant items.

Additionally, twelve youngsters were awarded scholarships to attend a week-long summer day camp of their choice. Camps attended included the Boys and Girls Club of Derry, The Farm at Joppa Hill, Salvation Army camp, basketball camp, Currier Museum Art Camp, and Southern New Hampshire Gymnastics Academy.



“These types of experiences are so special for kids and out of reach financially for many of our families, particularly camps,” says Erica Brooks, Community Building Manager. “We see growth in several ways, and the gratitude is always there,” she continues. As an example, one family wrote that their daughter is interested in attending camp at The Farm at Joppa Hill to “learn about nature and care for animals, as well as friendship and team building.”

Grants from DCU for Kids, KW Charity, Ella Anderson Trust, (BNY Mellon, N.A., Trustee), Queen City Rotary Club, and Bob's Discount Furniture Charitable Foundation helped to make these special experiences possible.

*PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIGHBORWORKS® SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE*

## Axuda: a Crowd Funding Loan Program for when an Urgent, Unexpected Need Arises



NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire recently partnered with Axuda, a non-profit organization created by Digital Federal Credit Union that provides interest-free emergency loans, up to \$600.00, to working individuals and families in New Hampshire.

As a participating sponsor, our Tenant Services coordinators and HOMEteam counselors help to identify clients who can benefit from an Axuda loan and have the ability to repay the loan. NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire is not a co-signer on the loan nor is our organization responsible for funding or repaying the loan. We simply serve as a bridge to help households with an unexpected need.

Once the loan is made, the client begins to make monthly payments over a twelve-month term. Each loan payment is returned to the lender account so that funds are available to other households in need.

"The process is easy and the Axuda team has been wonderful to work with to make sure everything runs smoothly," says Danielle Crowe, Tenant Services Coordinator. "This program has a great purpose and we look forward to assisting additional tenants in the future."

To date, we have sponsored eight Axuda loan requests for NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire tenants, four of which have been funded and are already in repayment. Loans have been approved to cover costs for dental work, purchase a used car, and address car repair costs.

"Axuda is a great resource for our tenants and others who are facing a small emergency financial issue," says Paul McLaughlin, HomeOwnership Director. "The loan does not affect their credit score and is interest-free. They repay it in a short time-frame so that funds can help others with similar needs," he continues.



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## Create Housing Opportunities for New Hampshire Families!

**T**he holidays are here, a time when many of us gather in our homes and enjoy special times together. Owning a home or living in a safe, quality apartment is not reality for everyone.

Your financial support will help NeighborWorks® Southern New Hampshire continue to guide families who seek to own a home of their own and create affordable rental housing.

Please consider making a gift of \$250, \$100, \$50, \$25, \$10, or any other amount. No gift is too small or too large! You may use the enclosed envelope to make your tax-deductible contribution. Or go to [donate.nwsnh.org](http://donate.nwsnh.org) and contribute through our secure website. A gift to recognize a special occasion or honor those you care about offers another reason to contribute.

Your contribution will impact the financial stability and overall wellness of those who have housing need, and communities as well.

**Thank you!**

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