

A Home of Their Own (cont.)

NJNG has provided \$3 million in total over the years to Interfaith's economic and community revitalization programs by participating in the state Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program.

Kathleen Ellis, Chief Operating Officer of NJNG and a member of Interfaith's Board of Trustees, said she was representing the 900 employees of NJNG in being grateful for the "six adults and 11 children who now have a home to call their own, a bedroom to call their own, a place to call their castle."

The three DeWitt homes were built with subsidies from the Department of Housing and Urban Development through Monmouth County's Community Development HOME Housing Production Program. Newark Field Office Director Maria T. Maio-Messano was on hand to pay special tribute

to the new families for going through the process required to become homeowners.

The City of Asbury Park, another key partner in the Affordable Housing program, brought out Mayor John Moor and City Council Members Yvonne Clayton, Jesse Kendle and Joe Woerner to the dedication.

"We're here for a special, special event and I can't thank NJNG and Interfaith Neighbors enough for what they did in the past and what they'll do in the future," Moor said.



"It's a great start," said Patrick Durkin, Interfaith's Director of Real Estate Development, of reaching 50 affordable units. What it means, Durkin said, is that families now have a safe, well-built place to call home, a home that is their own, and a home where they know what their housing costs will be over a

long period of time, not subject to increases in rent when a lease period is up.

"And the intangible pride of ownership, which I still believe is a major part of the American Dream, is a value both to the individual families and to the neighborhood itself," Durkin said.

"When we were able to develop a concentration of new homes on one block as we have been able to do on DeWitt Avenue and on Borden Avenue, that's when you can really see an impact," Durkin said. "The three homes we completed on Stratford Avenue a couple of years ago are another example, as were the units completed by the Affordable Housing Alliance on Avenue A."

"We often refer to these concentrated areas of development as "micro-neighborhoods," he said.

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A Home of Their Own (cont.)

"As you improve more of these micro-neighborhoods and create more opportunities for homeownership, the collective impact positively affects the entire community."

The new DeWitt homeowners are Susan and Kenel John and their three children moving from Lakewood, Nahomie and Pierre Blanc and three children from Farmingdale, and Marie and Jean Delva and five children from Prospect Avenue in Asbury Park.

Direct from the Director

The harsh winter brought with it many challenges, and not all of them had to do with the weather.

Our Meals on Wheels program ran into an array of unexpected funding cuts leaving us with no other option but to create a waiting list. We always avoided this (except for a week or two to get caught up) in the past. Sad to say, our list has over 100 senior citizens, several over the age of 90. These meals are often what keeps people in their own home and out of a nursing home. We have requests into two funding sources and of course we always appeal to our private donors.

Our rental assistance program which is always in a non-stop mode slowed down during the extreme cold, snow and ice, but now has come roaring back. The number of families seeking assistance is overwhelming. We are now in our 27th year, and I have been here for all those years. The growing number of working poor concerns me greatly. Remembering how it was early on compared to the families requesting help today, we see far greater numbers seeking help. With rents much larger, the amount of assistance in dollars is greater. Needless to say, we have the will to continue. Your donations will give us the means. A wonderful partnership!

Joe Marmora, Executive Director

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Young Minds, Dedicated Mentors, Go Into Business



This February, Interfaith Neighbors launched the Junior Entrepreneur Training Program, also known as JET, in which seventeen Asbury Park students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade have been working with four business mentors during a 12-week after-school program where they have developed new businesses selling chocolate-covered snacks and colorful tee shirts.

The JET program saw the students showcase their Dip-a-Licious chocolate covered gummy bears, strawberries and churros and their SWEG Tees (Shirts With Extra Greatness) at the annual Made in Monmouth Expo at Monmouth University on April 11.

"It's really coming along" said mentor Mychal Mills, a food-sourcing manager at the FoodBank of

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SAVE THE DATE
Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Golf Outing

Monday, September 21, 2015

Deal Golf and Country Club
1 Golf Lane, Deal, NJ 07723

Schedule:

11:30 AM Lunch
12:30 PM Shotgun Start
5:00 PM Reception and Dinner

Golf and Dinner Fee:

Individual Golfers: \$300
Reception/Dinner attendees: \$75
(does not include golf)

Sponsorship opportunities are available!

Checks payable to: Interfaith Neighbors
810 Fourth Ave., Asbury Park, NJ 07712

Please Contact Marsha Falco
for further information:
732-775-0525

Young Minds (from front)



JET teams break the ice with 'human knot' exercise

Monmouth and Ocean Counties, during a session in March. “You can see a breakthrough with the kids. You can see some of our goals coming out—communication, team building and leadership.”

“I like meeting friends, meeting new people,” said Juquan Grier, an eighth grader at Asbury Park Middle School, shortly after he arrived one Thursday at Interfaith’s Kula Café, where the weekly sessions take place. “I like learning about promoting a product and I like brainstorming with the others.”

His mom, Pam Grier, said she has seen the program benefit Juquan, helping him to focus as he works. “He’s very excited,” she said. “He loves it.”

“It’s just one more example of showing the children of Asbury Park what is possible,” said Roger Boyce, who administers the program through Interfaith Neighbors’ Business Development Center. “By learning entrepreneurial skills, they’ll be able to make what’s possible a reality.”

Boyce commended the lineup of what he described as “profoundly skilled” mentors working with the children.

They include the program’s volunteer director, Charles Simmons, a high tech entrepreneur who lives in Freehold, Mychal Mills from the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean, Doug Eagles, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Monmouth County, and Asbury Park resident Robert Weiner,

a member of Monmouth SCORE which provides free business counseling to small business owners.

The mentors encourage and teach the students as they work together to come up with their ideas for a business plan and then collaborate on how to develop and then sell their products.

“I love the idea of empowering kids to think outside the box entrepreneurially,” said Eagles. “These kids will now think about what’s possible for their own lives, creating opportunities instead of waiting for opportunities to come to you.”

Diana Ramos, an eighth grader at Sisters Academy, agreed. “It’s a good opportunity to take,” she said. “It can help us out in life.”

Frank Syphax, president of Asbury Park’s West Side Citizens United, brought the idea to Interfaith Neighbors last year. JET is based on the successful Minding Our Business Inc. (MOB) program at Rider University where Syphax’s son Tracey Syphax, is chairman of the board. That program has helped over 3,000 students in the Trenton schools since 1997. Both the MOB and JET programs have added goals of encouraging youth to stay in school and focus on building their economic foundation at an early age.

The first class was recruited from the Asbury Park Middle School, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Sisters Academy with one student also coming from Hope Academy by way of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

The 17 students are: Johana Audelo-Riano, Avant Barnes, Jensine Benoit, Daniela Carpio, Brayan Castillo, Candice Christie, Daniele Delgado, Xavier Etienne-McLeod, Ann-Ysabelle Flynn, Juquan Grier, Carlie Herrera, Oscar Limon, Diana Ramos, Luis Cruz Romero, Nalah Tinsley, Micah Wright, and Eddeja Watts.

Spring Construction

The Kula Urban Farm is under construction with the new barn (wash station) going up over the winter and the 24x70 square foot commercial greenhouse currently being built.

The Kula Urban Farm Project is the latest social enterprise conceived by Interfaith Neighbors with the intention of further bolstering the economic outlook for Asbury Park. It is an expansion of the Kula Café Program which is a paid training site and workplace for young adults facing significant barriers to employment, but who have the desire and willingness to create change in their lives.



The produce in the greenhouse will be grown using aeroponic and hydroponic techniques to create a year round growing environment. Also, during the non-winter months 4 by 8 foot raised beds will be cultivated. Affordable fresh fruits and vegetables will be grown for sale to area restaurants and the local community, generating revenue for long term sustainability.

A Home of Their Own

As the new house at 32 DeWitt Ave. was filling up with families and officials for a celebration, 13-year-old Kenndiny John and his brother, 6-year-old Kensley, looked out a side window at another brand new house next door, soon to be their own home.

Then they turned away and joined the party held for three families about to be homeowners at 32, 36 and 38 DeWitt Ave. in Asbury Park under



New homeowners Pierre Alix Blanc and Nahomie Charles Blanc and their children Rulsk, 21, Alexandro, 12, and Alexandra, 10 pose outside their new home with Asbury Park Mayor John Moor, City Council Members Jesse Kendle, Joe Woerner, Yvonne Clayton, and behind family are NJNG COO Kathleen Ellis, HUD Field Office Director Maria T. Maio-Messano and Interfaith Neighbors Associate Director Paul McEvily

Interfaith Neighbors’ longstanding Affordable Housing program. Each of these two-story homes consists of four bedrooms, two and a half bathrooms, and cost \$125,000, giving low-to-moderate income families the chance at homeownership.

The March 18 dedication also saw Interfaith Neighbors and New Jersey Natural Gas take time to mark a collaboration that began with a \$25,000 donation from the gas company in December 1996 and has seen NJNG partner with Interfaith in building 38 new homes in Asbury Park’s west side community.

“Let’s all give thanks for this day, for this opportunity, for the professionals who designed and built this house,” said Interfaith Neighbors’ Associate Director, Paul McEvily.

He said Interfaith’s total number of affordable housing units has now reached 50 and noted that

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