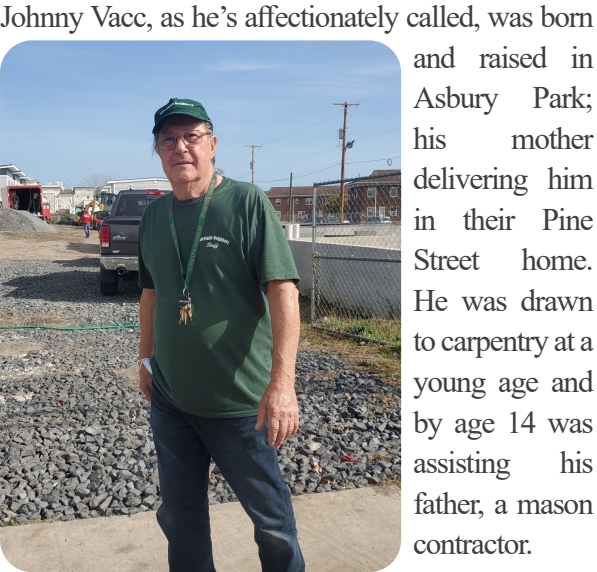


Neighbor Spotlight:
Johnny Vacchiano

“You’re late!” Johnny will say with an endearing smirk on his face if you walk into a 1:15 pm meeting at 1:17 pm. Most of the Interfaith Neighbors’ team knows a conversation with John Vacchiano comes with a healthy dose of witticisms; after all this man has been the brains and source of laughter behind our construction work for the past 18 years.



Johnny Vacchiano on the Parkview AP construction site.

and raised in Asbury Park; his mother delivering him in their Pine Street home. He was drawn to carpentry at a young age and by age 14 was assisting his father, a mason contractor.

“I built a tree house when I was 11 years old,” he said. “I built an underground fort at 11-years-old and covered it with grass; no one knew it was there.”

At age 19, he launched a brief house framing venture with his brother Frank. And through the years, Johnny garnered experience in numerous fields, including working under the tutelage of Mason H Marshall, doing bridge construction, and installing a pumping station.

“I had a lot of lucky breaks with qualified people,” he said. “I have never regretted doing what I am doing.”

Recruited by Bevin Irvin and founder Joe Marmora as a subcontractor, Johnny Vacc is multifaceted and was the perfect man to be IFN’s hands on the ground. While he has left an imprint on each of the over 55 affordable homes IFN has constructed, he’s served as the field superintendent on nine single-family homes, our two ‘Rights of Passage’ houses for homeless young adults, and the recently completed ‘Pathway to Homeownership’ residence - a two-unit rental that facilitates our rent-to-own program.

Johnny Vacc’s current project is Parkview AP - a homeownership program along Springwood Avenue. Each of the 10 lots features a three bedroom, two and one-half bathroom home and a one-bedroom apartment above the detached garage.

“It’s different from my usual projects,” he said. “Day to day, it is interesting because of the type of work. I’m used to doing single family construction. The project is under my control but there’s a lot of other people involved.”

Johnny said this project is important because of its size, which will enable a significant number of families and people to become homeowners. Although new obstacles come with a larger-scale project, he says overseeing it from start to finish and walking away marveling at what they built is his favorite aspect of this work.

“I have been in love with my business,” he said. “It was just something that intrigued me. It was in my blood and I knew more about building at (age) 17 than most.”

We at Interfaith Neighbors are lucky to have his knowledge and experience. We’re looking forward to more laughs and successful projects with Johnny Vacc.

Project Homeless Connect:
Helping Our Most Vulnerable
Neighbors

Each year, IFN works with the Monmouth County Homeless Systems Collaborative and the United Way to facilitate the Point-in-Time Count census, generating estimates of the homeless population in Monmouth County. Entitled Project Homeless Connect, the initiative links those experiencing homelessness with social services, healthcare providers, and necessities, such as food, clothing, blankets, and hygiene products. Due to limitations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year’s count will take place over the course of one week at area food pantries and feature a gift card distribution on January 29th in Asbury Park, rather than specific items.

IFN is seeking donations of small denomination gift cards to convenience stores, grocery stores or local food establishments. Gift card donations can be mailed or dropped off c/o Christie Cancro at Interfaith Neighbors, 810 Fourth Ave, Asbury Park, NJ 07712 by January 27, 2021. Questions? Call (732) 775-0525 ext. 204. We thank you for your generosity and support of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Want to get involved at Interfaith Neighbors?
There are lots of ways you can help!

GIVE • LEARN • VOLUNTEER

To learn more about the community issues we address or for more information about volunteering, joining our team, or ways to give, visit: www.interfaithneighbors.org or call 732.775.0525



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December 2020
Program Spotlight: Pathway to
Home Ownership

Asbury Park resident Carritta Cook, 32, has dreamt of becoming a homeowner ever since her 6-year-old son Jeremiah was born.

“I want a ‘forever home,’ somewhere he can grow up,” she said. “I want him to have the stability of knowing he will always have a home to come to.”

Her dream is on its way to becoming a reality due to Interfaith Neighbor’s (IFN) Pathway to Home Ownership (Pathway) program, which offers an affordable three-bedroom, two bath rental, while she prepares for purchasing a home. A percentage of Cook’s monthly rent will be placed in escrow by IFN, to be used towards her down payment, IFN’s Director of Real Estate Development Patrick Durkin said.

IFN recently completed construction of a new Pathway home on Borden Avenue. The home features



Carritta Cook tours her new apartment in the Pathway to Homeownership house.

two 3-bedroom apartments. Tenants generally occupy the home for a year to eighteen months to save for their downpayment, improve their credit, secure mortgage pre-approvals and find a suitable home for purchase.

Cook moved to Asbury Park from Union County after being ‘sold’ on the area and the local school district during visits to her godmother’s home. She is a single mother who is also fostering 18-year-old I’jhanee Silas, an Asbury Park High School senior, while balancing work at an oral surgeon’s office and the pursuit of a college degree.

Prior to participation in the program, Cook lived in a costlier apartment complex that offered little privacy and less square footage. She was astounded by how much IFN’s program offers - a way to accumulate a down payment, affordable rent, and pleasant and safe living conditions.

“This is more than I envisioned,” said Silas, who dreams of becoming a pediatrician. “This is the first time I will have my very own room.”

Cook loves the Asbury Park community and has



Cook with her family in front of the new IFN Pathway home.

IFN’s Parkview AP in mind or similar two-family home to purchase with a friend. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to create a forever home for her son and Silas through the Pathway to Home Ownership program.

Donor Spotlight: Neighborhood Transformation

“This is a state tax credit program that really works,” Interfaith Neighbors Executive Director Paul McEvily has said repeatedly.

His comment refers to New Jersey’s Department of Community Affairs’ Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program, a fundamental part of IFN’s development projects, and support of community initiatives in Asbury Park’s West Side neighborhood.

Established in 2006, the NRTC program encourages investment in distressed neighborhoods via a 100 percent tax credit for New Jersey corporations with a state tax liability. Over the past 12 years, IFN has received over \$8 million in tax credit investments to fund construction and programming focused on the West Side neighborhood of Asbury Park. IFN has allocated over \$1 million from this program to over 20 community initiatives led by other area non-profits. Investors in IFN’s NRTC projects include New Jersey Natural Gas, NJ American Water, M&T Bank, among others.

“The reason this program is a success is the leveraging opportunities it has created to attract additional capital to the Asbury Park community,” McEvily said.

They include the \$15 million in infrastructure improvements the City of Asbury Park completed in the Springwood Avenue corridor during IFN’s construction of the Springwood Center and the mortgage financing afforded to local homebuyers.

NRTC investments have supported our Kula Café and Kula Urban Farm social enterprises, as well as our SOAR workforce development program. Interfaith Neighbors was also able to support Community

Affairs and Resource Center’s (CARC) workforce program, the local Big Brother and Big Sister mentoring initiative, the Monmouth County Boys & Girls Club Junior Entrepreneur Program, Second Baptist Church’s Fine Art & Technology youth summer camp, the Women’s Hospitality Network’s support for females experiencing homelessness, and the popular Asbury Park Music Foundation’s Music Mondays in the Park free concert series.

IFN’s latest project to receive NRTC investments is the Parkview AP development. As a state-certified home developer, IFN has constructed over 55 affordable homes in the West Side neighborhood.

Parkview AP, a 10-lot project along Springwood Avenue, stands out among other affordable housing projects in Asbury Park because of its focus on homeownership and its income property component, said Patrick Durkin, IFN’s Director of Real Estate Development.

“Currently only 25 percent of people own their homes in Asbury Park,” said Durkin, who maintains that the best way to transform a distressed



Construction of IFN’s Kula Urban Farm and the adjacent Springwood Center were supported by the NRTC program.

community is by increasing the opportunity for its residents to become homeowners.

Each Parkview AP lot features a three bedroom, two and one-half bath single family home fronting Springwood Avenue and a



Architectural rendering of the completed Parkview AP homes.

one-bedroom apartment above the adjacent garage. The owner-occupied development affords one the ability to live in one home while renting out the other. And while this is a mixed-income housing project, primarily targeting low to moderate-income families and individuals, it also addresses a group often overlooked – middle market homebuyers unable to afford the rising market rate home prices in Asbury Park. The first home is projected to be finished in February with the next two following closely behind.

In October, the NJ Department of Community Affairs NRTC program announced a new funding program for small businesses located in NRTC neighborhoods. As many small businesses are struggling as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis restrictions, the agency has made funding available to assist small businesses with rent, utilities, and COVID-related expenses. IFN, working with the Asbury Park Chamber of Commerce applied for and received \$133,000 in funding for West Side neighborhood affected businesses. These funds are meant to keep them on their feet until it is safe to ease restrictions again, McEvily said.