

Our Community Development Housing Grant team (pictured here) continues fighting homelessness on many fronts. Last year they started housing programs for homeless & disabled individuals and families. They began managing a similar program with case management services through Catholic Social Services on October 1st, 2017. These programs allow the Housing Grant Team to work directly with over 223 homeless individuals in 203 households. We're excited to keep with our mission, creating new housing opportunities for Alaskans!



## CIM Survey Phase II - The Results are in!

Over three months in 2017 the Community Development department conducted Phase Two of the Community Impact Measurement (CIM) project in the Russian Jack neighborhood. Working with two classes from the University of Alaska Anchorage, the team completed observational surveys of over 300 residential and commercial parcels, and spoke with over 200 residents in a door to door survey. Questions asked were the same from phase one in 2014, and allowed for a direct comparison of community responses.



their community, noting which neighbors are working to fix up structures and landscaping. They have a high opinion of the local schools, and a good level of overall satisfaction. Respondents noted that the neighborhood is "close to everything", "quiet", "not far from the hospital", and "safe." They feel that Russian Jack Spring Park is a community asset, as are the smaller parks and green spaces.

What's next? It's time to reconnect with the community and to start on projects that address concerns and build on strengths, beginning with a

Winter Skate Night at Williwaw Elementary. We look forward to rolling up our sleeves and getting to work!

What did we learn? There's work to be done. Residents have concerns about safety, transportation, and crime. They cite a need for traffic control, safer streets, and snow removal. They're worried about what they see as rising crime rates, often tied to drugs.

But it's not all pessimistic, there are positives in the neighborhood, things we can build upon. Residents are optimistic about the role they can play in making their community better, and are looking for volunteer opportunities. They see the good in



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## Homework Hangout!

Homework Hangout has been hopping this fall at our multifamily properties. Thanks to our Resident Services team's ongoing partnership with CITC, kids have both been getting homework help and doing lots of fun activities, covering such topics as setting personal goals, keeping healthy, and bullying!



# NeighborWorks®

## ALASKA



## The Kitchen Table

November 2017



**Hampstead Heath**  
6641 Hampstead Drive / 907.349.3323

Built: 1995

Units: 88 two & three bedroom units.

Hampstead Heath is an apartment community with the look and feel of a single family neighborhood! It has large, light-filled two & three bedroom units. It's a great place for families, and hosts our Summer Youth and Homework Hangout programs! Large and well maintained grounds feature a sledding hill, playground, and open space galore!

## It Doesn't Have to be Scary!

Joni Wilm is a proud new homeowner! Here's what she had to say about working with our team:

**Tell us about yourself?** I am a 41 year old single woman who works as a Transportation Planner for the Municipality of Anchorage. I grew up in Fairbanks and have lived in Alaska nearly my whole life, except for the time I took to attend college outside of the state.

**There are many different ways to buy a home these days, what made you choose us?** I chose NeighborWorks Alaska because of the Down Payment Assistance Program. I wanted to figure out how I could pay for a new house without having to pay Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI).

**What's the scariest thing about getting started?** The scariest thing, hands down, was walking into my credit union to find out how much I qualified for. The second scariest thing was waiting for the final loan approval. So scary!!

**Once you started working with our team, did the stress levels go down? How did we help?** I worked with my bank as well as with Mary at NeighborWorks who was SO nice and made me feel SO comfortable about the process. I felt like she really cared about me and wanted to make the process as easy as possible. I really appreciated that. I'm so grateful for her and the NeighborWorks program.

**What specific areas are you now more confident about?** I'm definitely more confident about the home loan approval process. I also know a lot more about what to look for in a house. I'm so glad I bought the house I did and, thanks to help and guidance from NeighborWorks and my bank, Denali Alaskan, I avoided buying a house that needed a lot of repairs. That has been such a relief. You have no idea how much time and money goes into each house project until you have owned a home and tried to do your own repairs.



**What would you tell people about us? What will people get from working with our team?** I have already recommended the NeighborWorks program to several of my friends who are interested in buying their first home. I tell them about how nice NeighborWorks is to work with and that they can save you so much money by avoiding the PMI payments.

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# NeighborWorks®

## ALASKA

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Anchorage, AK 99503  
907.677.8490

Pick. Click. Give.

Stable Housing  
Thriving Families  
Strong Communities

Home Matters logo, NeighborWorks logo, CHARTERED MEMBER logo

Did you know we can help you buy a home with just 2% down?

\$250,000 / 2%  
Just \$5,000!?

"Thank you NeighborWorks! I'm so grateful for your help with my first house! I love being a home owner. It was one of the scariest things I have ever done, but also the most rewarding"

- Joni Wilm





## The E.D. Corner

The first time I visited Alaska was the summer of 1980. I was in the midst of graduate school at the University of Colorado when a friend invited me to drive the Alaska Highway with him and his dog in his white Chevy construction van. It didn't take me long to fall in love with Alaska and the beautiful wilderness, the long days, fun-filled adventures and great opportunities. The job market was burgeoning, especially for a person pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration. I headed back to Colorado, finished my degree, and returned to Alaska for good in 1982.

I didn't find a good administrative job right away, so I fell back to my carpentry trade that had sustained me for many years, working on the Sullivan Arena and other jobs. In 1983 I was hired into an ideal position for a newly formed non profit - Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services. As a Housing Rehabilitation Specialist the job was a nice blend of my education and construction background. ANHS was just a year old and working to revitalize the Spenard neighborhood. While I was not around Faye Connolly's kitchen table when the organization was formed, I did work closely with Faye and the other founders including Bill Gee, Jim Cash, Mary McKinnon, Jim Kubitz, and the first Executive Director Cynthia Parker. I stayed with ANHS until 1986.

Now, more than 30 years later, I'm now the new Executive Director of NeighborWorks Alaska, formerly ANHS. The organization has grown from eight employees to over 60, and our annual budget exceeds \$14 million. While the organization has expanded, it has not wavered from its mission of improving the quality of life for families and individuals by preserving homes, creating new housing opportunities and strengthening neighborhoods. Our Affordable Housing department now provides nearly 1,000 well maintained and managed rental units across Anchorage; our HomeOwnership Center provides counseling and lending to many first time home buyers; and our Community Development department manages housing programs for folks who have struggled with traditional avenues, and still continues our tradition of revitalizing neighborhoods. We have a committed Board and dedicated, professional staff.

I am devoting myself to continuing the strong history of this organization and to meeting the emerging needs for housing and community development in Alaska. I am proud of my association with NeighborWorks and am thrilled to be back!

*Donna Rasmussen*

Michaela Sisson, Director of Housing, retired after 11 years of dedicated service. Managing our biggest department, ten properties, and trying to take on close to 2,000 residents every day, is no job for the timid. We celebrated her last day with stories and one of the largest cinnamon rolls ever seen in Alaska!



## VISTA works to seed change

This November, we bid farewell to our year-long AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America), Armani Thomas. Armani came to Alaska from Chicago, bringing new ideas and a passion for improving food security among disadvantaged communities. Over the past year he worked on several local garden projects, started a Community Seed Library in partnership with the Mountain View Library, and worked to build equity in both practice and conversation among local programs. Before he returned to Chicago, Armani shared some insights from his experience here in Alaska:



"I started my work as an AmeriCorps VISTA with NeighborWorks Alaska last November, focusing on food security in Anchorage. From the beginning of my project, I quickly learned that Anchorage as well as greater Alaska as a whole needs locally grown food more than ever right now, with a local 12.7% food insecurity rate (37,940 people) and state rate of 14.7% (105,770 people). There was a lot of work to be done. I saw this issue to be larger than food insecurity, and more like food injustice. This could change if we invest in sustainable agriculture from small scale gardening to

large scale farms and become less reliant on food imports which is up to 98% of the food consumed. Back in the 1950s Alaska was providing 60% of their own locally produced food, so why can't it be continued to this day? Although the issue of food security seems daunting and hard to resolve, there is still hope. Thankfully there are some great programs and initiatives like Yarcucopia giving people access to land in order to grow food, and the local food movement known as Alaska Grown that pushes consumers to purchase food produced by local farmers. I also had the opportunity to impact the community in numerous ways, ranging from gardening with residents at the Adelaide and children at Hampstead Heath to starting a local seed library at the Mountain View Neighborhood Library. I was also glad to work with other VISTAs and organizations working towards the same common goals to alleviate food insecurity and build resiliency. If there was one thing I would want people to take away from me being here is that food insecurity doesn't have a defined look or common meaning among people, but it contains many factors that may cause people not to have access to food. Once those factors are identified then there must be work towards a solution because food should be treated as a necessity not as a commodity in a state where 1 in 5 children are food insecure."

We're excited to put Armani's research to good practice, will miss him and wish him well as he starts his next adventure.

Thank you for all your hard work!!

**Your Giving Supports:**

- Community Gardens
- Neighborhood Beautification Projects
- Youth Programs

## Commitment to Excellence!

Tim Fahey, our maintenance manager and miracle worker extraordinaire, celebrated 20 years (1997-2017) of dedicated service and outstanding work!



## Another Successful Paint the Town



It was a busy summer for Paint the Town 2017! With the help of community volunteers and corporate sponsors we painted four homes, gave a new coat to Williwaw Elementary School's ice rink and held a growing session for their community garden boxes, painted the façade of Catholic Social Service's Welcome Center, and held our annual flower planting with our awesome volunteers from Hope Community Inc. at the Palmer fire station. NeighborWorks® Alaska's Paint the Town is part of NeighborWorks® Week, a nationwide initiative that takes place during the first week of June every year. Community housing organizations across the United States partner with community groups, sponsors, and volunteers to perform neighborhood enhancement and beautification projects. NeighborWorks® Alaska is one of 250 community agencies participating this summer. Paint the Town is a neighborhood focused event designed to bring our community together! We believe that neighborhoods are the foundations of our communities. Paint the Town is our way of giving back to truly make a difference in the lives of our residents, creating stable housing, thriving families, and strong communities.

**Your Giving Supports:**

- House Painting for those in need
- Minor Home Repair
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Community Building

### Many thanks to our Paint the Town Sponsors

- Home Depot Foundation | Sherwin Williams
- First National Bank Alaska | Anchorage International Rotary
- Northrim Bank | Anchorage Russian Jack Rotary
- HUB International | Residential Mortgage | GCI
- NeighborWorks America | AlaskaUSA Mortgage Company | EMI
- FA Contractors | Subway | Alaska Stellar Designs | 1-800-GOT-JUNK

Thank you, Rasmuson Foundation! Our landscaping crew now has a new trailer and lift gate as a result of Rasmuson Tier 1 support. These tools have already helped our hardworking crew save tons of time on our landscaping projects. "Purchasing a dump trailer has filled a missing link in our equipment fleet. Having the right tools for the job makes us more capable of fulfilling our mission to those we serve."



### NeighborWorks

"We want to paint your house," they said.  
 "You'll love it when we're through!"  
 Oh my gosh! My plants? The cats?  
 Will they know what to do?

Will they watch out for baby plants?  
 What if they break a tree?  
 They'll get to see the clutter bug that lives inside of me.

I changed my mind - they changed it back.  
 A color change was done.  
 Now all these folks are in my yard it seems they're having fun.

Fourteen people in my yard?!  
 My gosh, I feel so torn...  
 Then hearts and hands collided  
 As NeighborWorks was born.



- "Pastor Toni"  
 2017 Paint the Town Recipient



Our 2nd Annual Preserve the Promise fundraiser was a big success this fall!

Many thanks to all of our fantastic sponsors!

Heartfelt appreciation to Wells Fargo for supporting our fundraising efforts with a \$5,000 matching contribution! You made an enormous

and immediate impact by helping our donors to double their contributions!

Kudos to the fantastic team at The Bridge Seafood Restaurant for ensuring our night was a great success! The food was amazing and the service was above and beyond - BIG thanks to Patrick & Ann Marie who made certain everything was perfect!

Finally, we can't express enough thanks to everyone who attended and supported our event!! Your giving will help preserve the promise of access to stable housing and strong communities for all Alaskans!

AlaskaUSA Mortgage Company | PROVIDENCE Health & Services Alaska | HUB | FA Contractors, LLC. | Law Office of James H. McCollum, LLC | Northrim Bank

Thank you!

First National Bank ALASKA | AlaskaWaste | Schilling Commercial Real Estate, LLC | RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE, LLC | SERVICE BUSINESS PRINTING | THE ODOM CORPORATION | AVISION

