



Spring at the Adelaide! Our resident led community garden is ready to grow!



Celebrating 35 Years

NeighborWorks®  
ALASKA



June 2016



The Adelaide

201 East 9th Avenue, Anchorage

Purchased: 1996

Purpose: House previously homeless individuals

Units: 73 Single Room Occupancy units

The Adelaide is located in downtown Anchorage, close to bus routes, shopping, the Park Strip, and houses 71 previously homeless individuals.

## Community Engagement on the Move!

The Community Engagement team has recently added two staff members, and we're excited to increase our efforts to assist local leaders and help community minded residents to better engage and participate in the places they live! Many people know about our housing and homeownership work, but you may not know about our equally important efforts in community development.

employment and quality housing, facing homeless young adults in Alaska.

Other areas we're working intensely on are prisoner reentry and homelessness. Recidivism costs Alaskans money, and costs Alaskan lives. We are facilitating and coordinating outreach for the

**Anchorage Prisoner Re-entry Coalition** to assess the gaps in support services

for people exiting correctional facilities. We are also working with the **Anchorage Continuum of Care** to ensure the more vulnerable residents of our communities are not forgotten.

We're passionate about Alaska, and want to draw on the knowledge and expertise of our local communities to develop solutions to our problems. We do this by empowering the incredible diversity of our neighborhoods and providing tools and access to the resources they need. Contact Chantel Welch at [cwelch@nwalaska.org](mailto:cwelch@nwalaska.org) to learn more about what we do and how you can help!

ACCESS TO SUCCESS



### What do we do?

Part of our mission is to **strengthen neighborhoods**. Whether it be developing community clean-up initiatives, creating community gardens, revitalizing parks, providing advocacy training opportunities, building collaborative partnerships to address public safety issues, or land development proposals, we are here to help provide residents with the tools they need to identify resources and successfully navigate complex bureaucratic and regulatory systems.

One way we do this is through **Community Leadership Training**. This year we're sending a team of eight local leaders from across the state to Ohio for a three day workshop. There, they will meet and collaborate with national experts to create an action plan to tackle the barriers, including stable

Your Giving Supports:

- Leadership Training
- Neighborhood Beautification Projects
- Community Building Events like our Winter Pop-up Market!



With the help of our Rotary partners & the Anchorage School District we revitalized Williwaw Elementary School's Ice Rink. We also painted 5 homes in Anchorage and the Palmer Museum & Visitor's Center all for National NeighborWorks® Week! Follow our Facebook page for a full recap of this year's events!



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NeighborWorks®  
ALASKA

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Pick.  
Click.  
Give.

Stable Housing  
Thriving Families  
Strong Communities



Did you know that we have over 160 single parent families?

"Give what is meaningful to you, that's what makes the act of giving special... it's important to show up, stand up, and speak out if we want to bring about positive change in our community!"



## The Complete Package Donor Spotlight

Interview with Darrel Hess, Ombudsman for the Municipality of Anchorage, former board member, and Legacy Donor

**How did you get involved with NeighborWorks® Alaska (NWA)?** It was 2002, and Celeste Benson was terming off and I was invited to join the board. I loved NWA's focus on community engagement, and was intrigued by the investments NWA was making in providing advocacy and leadership training to its residents and to people involved in community council activities. I had to leave the board after three years when (then) Mayor Begich appointed me to serve on the Housing and Neighborhood Development Commission. I still continue to be engaged with NeighborWorks® as a volunteer and donor.

**What were your first impressions and fondest memories?** My first impression was that NeighborWorks® was the complete package – not only providing affordable

housing, but also home ownership assistance and community engagement training. Unlike the average housing organization, when NeighborWorks® engages with a neighborhood, they stay long after the project is completed – NWA really works to become part of the community. My fondest memory is working with residents from our Adelaide property (a single resident occupancy property for individuals previously homeless) at the annual Project Homeless Connect event. It is an opportunity for residents, who themselves have experienced homelessness, to get out in the community and give back. It is so powerful.

**If you were CEO for a day, what would you do?** I am about community and I think it would be great to organize community volunteering for NWA residents in the neighborhoods around NWA's properties. Find projects, and work with the local community councils to advocate on issues of concern in their areas. Stable housing is the foundation for a stable workforce, for a healthy population, for strong neighborhoods, and for a vibrant community.

**Why does this matter to you personally?** Home Matters, it matters to employment, to education, to health, and to people's self-respect. We talk a lot about wanting to be the #1 Community in the U.S. to Live Work and Play. We won't be that community if we don't deal with this housing crisis head on – The NeighborWorks® complete package approach – the combination of housing, homeownership, and community building, is uniquely poised to help us get there!

**Why is it important to give?** People struggle with different challenges at different times in their lives. What would have happened if the agencies who have provided people assistance hadn't received support from the community? For almost 4 decades, NWA has been providing housing, homeownership, and community empowerment help to thousands of Alaskans -- what would have happened to those folks without NeighborWorks? Give what is meaningful to you, that's what makes the act of giving special. But, don't stay on the sidelines, become engaged - it's important to show up, stand up, and speak out if we want to bring about positive change in our community!

www.nwalaska.org





## Welcome to the Kitchen Table!

Welcome to our Kitchen table! The idea for NeighborWorks® was born 35 years ago at the kitchen table of Faye Connolly. For Faye, the kitchen table was an important place for families to come together and share stories about their day. We invite you to sit down at our table and see what's been happening the past year!

## All in the Family, All Year Long! Resident Services Corner

Beyond the Bricks has been our motto the past few years as we've worked to build stronger community environments at our properties. We know access to quality services and activities is just as important as providing quality facilities and grounds that are affordable. This is why our Resident Services team is constantly cooking (sometimes literally) up new ideas throughout the year to connect our residents to educational and fun opportunities. Over the holidays, more than 200 families joined us to enjoy this year's inaugural Winter Celebration at our multi-family properties. They enjoyed sleigh rides, pictures with Santa, holiday songs and more.

Keeping the momentum going, we hosted our first-ever Spring Break event in March. We wanted to provide fun and educational options for kids (and help parents with child care!) during the week off from school. Events included an art workshop, a music instrument zoo, an earthquake safety class, and free haircuts.

...none,  
and I do mean  
none, compare to  
NeighborWorks®

"I wanted to let you know how special it was for my kids and I. We loved the sleigh rides... and we loved the carolers as well and the cookies. I can't thank you enough! (We) love NeighborWorks® so much. I have lived in many apartments in my life and none, and I do mean none, compare to NeighborWorks®. My apartment at Spruce View is the first time that I feel like my kids and I have a home."

- Participating Resident Family

Altogether, we had over 50 children participate. This was a great way to bring parents and children together and strengthen the overall community atmosphere.

We always have a lot of activities going on at our properties. Cooking classes, after school homework hangout programs, resume and job training seminars, and talks by experts in our community on health and nutrition are just a few examples of what our residents enjoy. Watch our Facebook page to follow what's happening in our neighborhood or contact our Resident Development Manager, Arnold Hague at [ahague@nwalaska.org](mailto:ahague@nwalaska.org).

Board Chair Tony Piper, Executive Director Debe Mahoney, and Mayor Ethan Berkowitz cut the ribbon at our 2515 A Street Open House!



## People who wouldn't take "no" for an answer

### 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Feature

Anchorage in the early 1980's was a very different place from the one we know today. The population was 174,000, Alaska had 4 times zones, the price of oil was over \$100/barrel, mortgage rates were well over 15%, more residential units were permitted for construction in 1983 than 2002-2012 combined, and the Grateful Dead was playing at West High. As we look back on our past 35 years, we thought it would be a great idea to talk with one of our original founders, Allen Thornhill, to get a sense of the spirit that first launched NeighborWorks®. Allen is currently the Vice President of CWM Industries and for 40 years has been an active member of the Spenard Community Council (SCC).



In the early 80's Spenard was a growing neighborhood with lots of families with children, but without many parks or places to play. For people like Allen and Faye Connolly (the leader of our founding group) that simply wouldn't do. The people of the community came together, secured funding from the state and the city and built

"We weren't strangers anymore, we'd become neighbors."

a baseball field. It was a spirit of "can do" and "won't take 'no' for an answer," says Thornhill. At the time, NeighborWorks®, known then as Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services (ANHS), was a very small group of people working out of a small office in Spenard and refurbishing homes for seniors and folks in the area who didn't have the means to take care of their home repair and maintenance. While ANHS wasn't very big in size, the hearts of the people involved were huge. There were many wonderful programs in those days like *Christmas in May* where ANHS, SCC and others would get together to fix homes and take care of other property needs for those neighbors who were struggling to make ends meet. According to Allen, that's the way community was and should be... *Neighbors helping neighbors*. When we reach out to help someone else, we make a connection, and that connection starts the beginning of a relationship. "I recently moved to a new neighborhood, and one day it snowed. I noticed my neighbor wasn't there and decided to shovel his driveway. I wasn't looking for anything in return, but when he came by later in the week to thank me, that started a conversation, and that conversation created a connection. We weren't strangers anymore, we'd become neighbors."

Faye Connolly used to say that "the best way to get something done was to begin." That's been our philosophy since our early days, something we like to call "The NeighborWorks® Way." In our conversation with Allen, it wasn't about just giving something away or coming into a neighborhood and imposing solutions without communicating with the community. Allen's philosophy is built on respect and hard work; you respect your community, the place you live, and the people around you. Without respect, it's hard for any foundation to stand. Those are values that continue to sustain NeighborWorks® today. At this past February's NeighborWorks® National Training Institute Conference, there was a powerful anonymous testimonial delivered about the dangers of uninformed good intentions: "You come into my yard, uninvited, you pull up weeds and you don't even know they're plants." Allen, Faye and the rest of the original founders; Bill Gee, Jim Cash, Mary McKinnon and Myron Igtanloc, rolled up their sleeves, and wouldn't take no for an answer. But, their work was all started, first and foremost, by talking to and working with the community. *The NeighborWorks® Way*.

**2015 HIGHLIGHTS**

- HOSTED 100+ EVENTS
- ENGAGED 1000+ RESIDENTS
- CHANGED NAME NeighborWorks ANCHORAGE ALASKA
- EXPANDED MISSION STATEWIDE
- NEW HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM
- 167 CUSTOMERS SINCE AUGUST
- OPEN FOR BUSINESS
- NEW BRANCH IN PALMER, AK

Our vision for Alaska's future is a state where everyone has a place to call home. We provide Access to Success – by offering affordable housing options, maintaining top quality properties, equipping aspiring homeowners with loans and financial management tools, and collaborating on neighborhood revitalization projects. We are committed to building vibrant communities statewide!

Since 1981, we've walked thousands of Alaskans from vulnerability to security. Housing is the driving force for transformational change in our communities. All people need are the right opportunities. We are looking forward to 2016 by providing more access to housing for all Alaskans!



A stylist from Appearance Center cuts the hair of a resident at one of our multi-family properties during our Spring Break Events.



## Keep the Change Travels North

We started *Keep the Change*, our financial capacity building program, in 2014 because we wanted to give Alaskans more tools for achieving homeownership. Our program teaches practical strategies for budgeting, saving, banking, and managing credit. Little did we know how quickly our efforts would spread, and within a year we began a partnership with

Arctic Slope Regional Corporation subsidiary, Alaska Growth Capital (AGC), to bring *Keep the Change* to the North Slope! Thanks to AGC, we met with village representatives, developed a customized curriculum, and agreed to visit all member villages. Since 2015, we have visited 10 villages, attracted 42 participants, engaged 18 in counseling and received reports that most have reported improvement in their savings and credit management. We are now moving thoughtfully to build long-term relationships with our regional sponsors and village leadership groups so communities trust our commitment to collaborate for the long term. In the course of our travels, we've learned a lot about logistics planning and creating culturally relevant course materials. These experiences collectively

taught us the importance of increased coordination and the need for good contact points in the communities we are serving. Executive Director, Debe Mahoney, is passionate about the next steps: "All Alaskans should have equal access to affordable housing. However, they also need the tools to take advantage of that access. We are committed to bringing those tools to our neighbors in rural Alaska." We know we need to utilize examples that more closely reflect the unique challenges of a subsistence lifestyle. As we spend more time understanding the challenges of life in rural Alaska, we will continue to apply better true-to-life examples and improve our ability to connect with and increase the financial capability of our rural neighbors. To learn more about our HomeOwnership Center, go to [www.nwalaska.org](http://www.nwalaska.org).

