

# The PARTNER

A NEWSLETTER from  
THE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Summer 2006

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## Mission Accomplished at The Park at Oaklawn



*Priscilla Wills, Wachovia Senior Vice President and Housing Partnership Board Chair; Pat Garrett, Housing Partnership President; and Representative Pete Cunningham, North Carolina House of Representatives.*

The Park at Oaklawn is truly built on hope. Hundreds attended a grand finale celebration on April 21 at which The Housing Partnership announced that its six-year role as master developer of the beautiful new HOPE VI community, located on the former Fairview Homes public housing site, is now complete. It was also the grand opening ceremony for the neighborhood's Anita Stroud Senior Complex, an 83-unit apartment building for senior citizens.

"This is one of the greatest accomplishments in Charlotte history and it is a role model for the rest of the nation," announced Mayor Pat McCrory. "It has been a decade-long struggle and taken a tremendous public/private team effort to transform the old streets of blight upon blight to this new neighborhood of hope and opportunity."

Located on a 32-acre site near the corner of Statesville and Oaklawn Avenues, the Charlotte Housing Authority received a \$34.7 million HOPE VI grant to redevelop this dilapidated former public

housing site. The Housing Partnership was master developer of The Park at Oaklawn, which is today a picturesque neighborhood with over 300 new rental and single-family homes. Other major collaborators were Crosland Development, SaussyBurbank Homes, the City of Charlotte, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Senior Centers, Inc., Wachovia Bank and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Housing Partnership President Pat Garrett welcomed dignitaries and guests from across the city and state to the event. N.C. House Representative Pete Cunningham spoke of Anita Stroud's legacy, recalling how through the years she taught hundreds of neighborhood children to read and write in her one-room apartment.

"The Park at Oaklawn is a human services success," said County Commission Chair Parks Helms. "You can build all the buildings you want, but this is an example of building lives."

*"While providing affordable rental housing for Charlotte residents is a core focus of The Housing Partnership, we are committed to helping tenants work toward owning their own homes and reaping the rewards of home ownership."*

# CMHP Gets A Makeover

"Extreme Makeover" is the theme of The Housing Partnership's 2005 annual report, referring to our neighborhood revitalization efforts throughout the Charlotte area. But this theme also fits what's going on in-house this year as we've recently updated our marketing brand and moved to new offices. "Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership" is now branded as simply "The Housing Partnership," which is reflected in a crisp new logo with fresh colors and a more up-to-date typeface.

Moving is never easy, especially after more than 10 years at the same address, but The Housing Partnership's beautiful new space felt like home even before the boxes were unpacked. We're now located right off South Tryon Street at the Charlotte Park Executive Center, a five-minute drive from



*4601 Charlotte Park Drive, Suite 350, is the new home to The Housing Partnership.*

our old office. The building is beautiful, and the offices are light-filled, stylish and spacious with plenty of room for growing. It's a makeover that does more than scratch the surface. It sets the tone for our future.

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## Wells Fargo Underwrites Homebuyer Education



The Housing Partnership has received a grant from Wells Fargo Home Mortgage to help fund homebuyer education workshops at our rental communities. At these workshops, families will learn all about the homebuying process, from qualifying for a loan and creating a family budget to closing on a new home.

"While providing affordable rental housing for Charlotte residents is a core focus of The Housing Partnership, we are

committed to helping tenants work toward owning their own homes and reaping the rewards of home ownership," said Pat Garrett, president of The Housing Partnership.

This \$11,500 grant from Wells Fargo is the latest in a series of grants the mortgage service provider has awarded The Housing Partnership over the past few years. Other grants have been used to upgrade technology, enhance customer service and launch a new Housing Partnership website.

# Reputation Touted In NeighborWorks® Review

The Housing Partnership underwent a full-scale review this spring by NeighborWorks® America, a longtime national partner, which covered the following six areas: planning, resource, organizational, financial, contract personnel management, production/program services and technical operating systems. Expectations were exceeded in five areas with many noteworthy achievements recognized.

“The Housing Partnership has clearly earned its reputation as the leading affordable housing provider in the state by sustaining a high level of performance in each of its major lines of business and has in effect revitalized an entire corridor of neighborhoods in its center urban area,” remarked R. Ellen King, management consultant for Neighborworks® America and a member of the assessment team. “The Housing Partnership has responded quickly to opportunities as they arise and has not shied away

from complex projects or those that stretch the capacity of the organization.”

In other news, the Housing Partnership was awarded a \$460,000 Neighborworks® grant to be used in support of a 192-unit apartment development in southwest Charlotte. South Oak Crossing on Arrowood Boulevard is scheduled for completion in late 2007 and will feature affordable one- and two-bedroom apartments.

Funds from NeighborWorks grants support other Housing Partnership programs as well, including homeownership education, neighborhood revitalization and community development. Founded in 1978, NeighborWorks operates through 240 community development organizations, providing grants to increase homeownership, produce affordable, high-quality rental properties, empower consumers through homeownership education, reduce foreclosures and revitalize communities.

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*“The Housing Partnership has responded quickly to opportunities as they arise and has not shied away from complex projects or those that stretch the capacity of the organization.”*



Not every person who applies to enter The Housing Partnership’s Homeownership Education program is deemed likely to be purchase-ready within a year. For these motivated customers, the Homeownership Center of Charlotte now offers the Avenues to Homeownership class, a bridge to formally enter the full program at a sooner than later date.

Avenues is a 1.5-hour information session that prepares participants for enrollment. After attending, customers receive a free copy of their credit report to review with an advisor. Upon completing assignments as outlined by the advisor, they are encouraged to re-apply.

Classes take place from 6-7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. Customers must apply and be invited in order to attend.

The following key issues are covered:

- > *Lender basics* - what lenders look for when approving a mortgage loan (i.e., employment, credit, debt, cash available, legal status).
- > *Credit* - what a credit report contains, the 3 major credit bureaus and their contact information, explanation of “credit score” and what determines it (i.e. payment history, amount of outstanding debt, length of credit history, types of credit, new credit)
- > *How to improve your credit score*
- > *Common credit problems and how to solve them*
- > *“Quick credit fix” scams and how to avoid them*
- > *Non-traditional credit for those who do not have any credit*
- > *Reducing the risk of identity theft*

# Job Training Program Launched At Tyvola Crossing

Wachovia Corporation chose Tyvola Crossing Apartments on the city's westside to roll out a special program that is bringing computer training and job skills to residents in neighborhoods throughout the area. The curriculum, called eCommunitiesfirst, is a series of six classes which focus on how to use a computer and the internet. It will be taught locally by Charlotte Enterprise Community (CEC) in their new "Career Cruiser," a state-of-the-art recreational vehicle outfitted with a dozen computer stations for teaching skills and providing resources to help people find and keep jobs.



*Representative Sue Myrick, United States House of Representatives; Mike Rizer, Wachovia Senior Vice President; Pat Garrett, Housing Partnership President; and Don Evans, Chief Executive, Financial Services Forum and former United States Commerce Secretary.*

The bank provided \$2 million to finance the construction of Tyvola Crossing which was developed by The Housing Partnership. The financial literacy program was created by Wachovia in 2004 and is distributed to nonprofit groups in states where it operates bank branches.

"Wachovia is committed to improving communities where we do business, to include teaching residents about technology and how it can be an important tool in finding a job," said Paul Grube, president for Wachovia's Charlotte-Metro region. "We're proud to partner with the CEC to provide this vital service to members of the Charlotte community."

For a schedule of dates and locations for all Career Cruiser stops in Charlotte, please visit [www.thecareercruiser.org](http://www.thecareercruiser.org) or call DeAnn Cunningham at 704/488-3168.

*Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, Inc. is a broad-based, private, non-profit housing development and finance corporation organized to expand affordable and well-maintained housing within stable neighborhoods for low and moderate income families in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County with a continuing interest in the ability of occupants to more fully enter the economic mainstream.*

4601 Charlotte Park Drive  
Suite 350  
Charlotte, NC 28217  
(704)342-0933 Main Line  
(704)377-4663 Home Sales  
(704)342-2745 FAX  
[www.CMHP.org](http://www.CMHP.org)

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4601 Charlotte Park Drive  
Suite 350  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28217

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