



# DOORWAY

Volume 7  
Issue 1

**BCHT: Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc.**  
(AKA Martin House)

December  
2019



*BCHT is a doorway to hope and opportunity, whose mission is to create safe, quality housing in Trenton that low-income people can afford to buy or rent and to support community action and development in at-risk urban neighborhoods.*



## ***New Tyrell Avenue Project Will Transform a Blighted Block***

BCHT is embarking on an exciting new project that will transform an entire block with new and rehabbed homes, and at the same time provide low-income families with the support they need to become responsible homeowners and civic-minded citizens.

In the one-block area of Tyrell Avenue, over one-third of the properties are abandoned. Many people who live there feel hopeless about their prospects for the future, and yet, this could become a model neighborhood for the revitalization of Trenton. Tyrell Avenue is located in the East Trenton Redevelopment Zone and is already seeing changes on the street at both corners. Businesses are being revitalized on North Clinton Avenue at one end of Tyrell, and there are plans to build a park on a reclaimed dumping site at the other end of Tyrell near Amtico Square.



Transforming this neighborhood will take more than just good housing. The homeowners must be exposed to the type of learning that will create new habits and attitudes that can make them capable of maintaining their homes financially and physically, as well as being productive, informed citizens of Trenton.

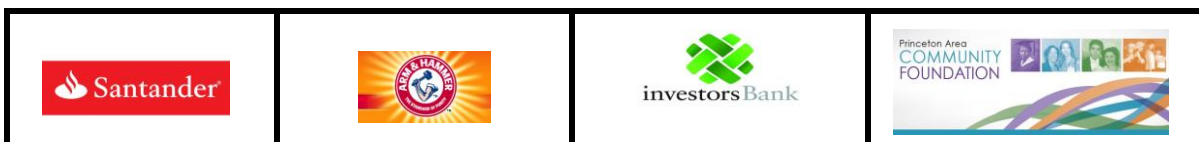
This will be accomplished by requiring prospective and new homeowners to do sweat equity before they move in and for 8 hours a month for the life of their Installment Sale Agreement (12 years). Sweat equity includes such things as work on building and rehabbing homes, work in the BCHT office, warehouse, and Thrift Store, and attendance at classes and community meetings and events.

BCHT is currently working with the City of Trenton to obtain city-owned properties and to obtain funding from government, corporate, foundation, and private sponsors. We expect to begin work in Spring 2020. We hope you are as excited about our new project as we are!

## ***Our Committed Sponsors Make Things Happen***

We could not pursue our mission without the support of caring people like you and the corporations and foundations whose values and goals complement ours. Thank you to all who make our work possible. If you are not already a donor, please consider our appeal on the last page where:

**You can be a Co-Creator in our housing and redevelopment plans.**



## ***From the Heart of the Director – Pressing Forward***

*By Pearleen Waters, Executive Director*

Each year BCHT's Board of Trustees seeks projects that will be worthwhile, as well as have appeal to our donors. This takes creativity and planning, and we always have that little fear that our donors and supporters will not like the chosen project, or that it will not move along fast enough to keep them interested.

Our Tyrell Avenue Redevelopment Project has actually been in the planning stage for over a year, as we press on to meet with city planners, developers, and funders. This project might be called a continuation of a project started on Tyrell Avenue in 1989. Back then BCHT helped four families gut rehab and move into houses on that street.



*Celebrating 1989 Rehabs:  
Pearleen (2<sup>nd</sup> from rt) w/  
neighbors & Martin Sheen*

I was one of those proud homeowners. It was for me the start of a relay race of getting homes built by BCHT. I took the baton in 2012 from Fr. Brian McCormick as we completed our 20 new homes on East State Street, and now I am running in the next leg of the race back on Tyrell Avenue, where I still live. There we plan to rehab two houses and build three duplexes on vacant land. This means **eight new families will have homes**.



This is only possible with the help of donors praying and believing with us that we can make a difference in a neighborhood as we live, work and play in the city. We also need the city to do its part by clearing the Tyrell properties and cleaning up Amtico Square and making it into a park and walk/bike path connecting to the Assunpink Greenway (left).

*To make our plans real we need to create a network of special people that can work together to help the poor and left out. We are looking to gather people in the trades for our rehab and building projects, as well as people with energy and creative ideas to help with our projects or become board members.*

**Can you help us?** Please contact [BCHTinfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTinfo@gmail.com) for more information.

***Wishing All of You a Blessed, Healthy, and Mighty Christmas and New Year!  
Thank you for your support!***

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### *Coat Drive by Millstone River and Village Schools*

Thank you Millstone River and Village schools students, parents, staff and teachers in West Windsor who, through Jehovah Jireh, have provided us with coats to give away for the 15<sup>th</sup> winter! The Wilbur and greater Trenton community are grateful to you for lending your hands and providing coats to keep our hearts (and bodies) warm this winter. This year you have provided 35 giant bags of coats for adults and children, along with some hats, scarves and gloves. Wow!



#### WISH LIST – Can You Help Us? – We Need:

*Trades people and creative people for a special new group as noted by Pearleen in her Editorial on pg 2*

*Christmas Sharing gifts for children as noted in Thrift Store News on pg 3*

*Leaders and mentors for CYO Girl Scouts to help with badges, crafts, camping, etc.*

*Doorway to Hope – refrigerators and stoves (new or used)*

Email us at [BCHTinfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTinfo@gmail.com) or use the mail icon on the website at [www.BCHTrenton.org](http://www.BCHTrenton.org)

Office 609-989-0271

## Doorway to Hope News

The Doorway to Hope building is currently closed, because DTH is working to redefine itself in a new way. Since the state no longer utilizes transitional housing for homeless families, Director Barbara Thompson is looking into other opportunities for funding and support to make DTH into a transitional housing and training facility, possibly for ex-offenders and/or veterans returning to the work force.



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## Thrift Store News

### A New Truck



A reliable truck is a necessity when running an organization such as our Thrift Store, which offers clothing, furniture, and appliances to local people at low or no cost. Goods are constantly being moved from our warehouse to the store, and we get several requests each week to pick up furniture that people wish to donate to us. Though our old truck served us for many years it was not reliable enough to do the long hauls. In June we were able to purchase a 2015 Ford box truck. Thank you to Martin House Community for Justice Foundation for the funds and Richard and Norman Diegnan for doing the legwork.

### Thanksgiving and Christmas Sharing

Each year the dedicated team of store volunteers, headed by Gloria Phillips, works to coordinate our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas giving project, which supplies 400 local needy families with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals as well as Christmas gifts for about 1,000 children.

**WE NEED HELP WITH CHRISTMAS GIFTS! Please call Gloria at 609-421-5413.**

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## In the Spotlight – Jayne Gordon of Tyrell Avenue

*“My Life Changed When I Became Part of the Better Community Housing Program”*



In 1989 BCHT helped four families rehab and move into houses on Tyrell Avenue. Back then Jayne Gordon was a young woman trying to get her life in order as a divorced mother of two. She is a wonderful example of how getting a truly affordable home from BCHT can change lives, not only of the homeowner but of others in the community. Below is a letter she wrote to BCHT founder, Fr. Brian McCormick, on the occasion of his retirement in 2012.

← Ms Gordon and children

*My life changed when I became a part of the Better Community Housing Program, the community which made it possible for a single mom and her two young children to become a proud homeowner. Having a truly AFFORDABLE home made such a difference. So I said to myself, “Self, what can I do to give back to my community?” I had two extra bedrooms, so I decided to open my home up to children in my community who needed one. You and your organization inspired me to become a foster/ adoptive parent. From that day on, my calling was to advocate, love, and nourish our youth. Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. made that dream a reality. The safety and well-being of children within my community is my passion, particularly those with disabilities. It is so important to give children a sense of love, safety, and self-pride. You have made a tremendous impact in my life and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. My children thank you and those to come thank you also. My home and my heart will always be a revolving door for out-of-home children. It’s the best feeling, try it you’ll see!!*

Ms. Gordon went on to get a Masters Degree in Human Services and to work for the Department of Community Affairs, Division of Women. She is the chairperson for Foster/Adoptive Family Services of Mercer County (Embrella), runs A Better Way food pantry, volunteers for an inner city drill team, and has sat on several nonprofit boards. Over 40 children have passed through her home, including seven that she adopted and five who currently live there. She says that it doesn’t matter how you come to be part of a family, it only matters that you have a family.

## Changes to Martin House Name/Charitable Tax Deductions and Bequests

**Martin House Name:** If you are naming Martin House in your will, trust, bank account, or life insurance policy, instead of “Martin House” please specifically designate the program you want your gift to go to, that is, Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc.; Doorway to Hope, Inc.; Martin House Community for Justice Foundation, Inc.; or for gifts intended for the Martin House Learning Center, the CYO of Mercer County. If you have any questions about how to do this, contact BCHT, and our attorney will gladly assist you at no cost.

**Tax Deductions:** Talk to your tax advisor about ways to continue to benefit from charitable contributions, e.g.:

- **Charitable IRA rollovers/Minimum Required Distribution** - If you are over age 70½, direct gifts from your IRA to Better Community Housing of Trenton, or your donor advised fund may help you continue your annual giving while excluding some retirement income from federal income tax;
- **Create a Donor Advised Fund** - This is a bit like a personal charitable savings account. You create an account (e.g. with Princeton Area Community Foundation) and make a contribution of cash, stock, or other assets and then take an immediate tax deduction for the gift. You then recommend grants from the fund over time to your favorite charities.
- **Bunch contributions** - Gifting 2x to your donor advised fund in one year, so you can itemize, and taking the next year off, all while recommending consistent year-to-year grants from your fund;
- **Contribute highly appreciated securities** - You can gift stock directly to BCHT or your donor-advised fund, and possibly save capital gains taxes and allow contributions over 20% more; and
- **Take advantage of new giving limitations** - For those who expect to itemize on their 2019 taxes, filers may deduct up to 60% of their Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for cash donations.

**Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. – Please Help Us Continue Our Mission!**

**In This Issue: Tyrell Ave Redevelopment Project, a BCHT inspirational story, Christmas Giving**

**YOU CAN HELP! WE NEED YOUR MONETARY, SPIRITUAL, AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

*I UNDERSTAND THE NEED AND WANT TO JOIN THE EFFORT:*

A **CO-CREATOR'S Pledge** of \$10,000 to support housing for the poor and community action in the inner-city  
 I/We pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over  1 year  3 years... in monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Starting on: \_\_\_\_\_ (DATE)

I/We want to support **BCH of Trenton/Doorway to Hope/the Thrift Store**. Enclosed is a gift of:

\$1,000  \$500  \$250  \$100  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (OPTIONAL:) Designated for: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT:

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ (Enclose matching gift form)

**Donate at [BCHTrenton.org](http://BCHTrenton.org) or mail to: BCH of Trenton, PO Box 298, Trenton, NJ 08602** (Make all checks payable to BCH of Trenton, Inc. \*)

\*BCH of Trenton, Inc. is qualified by the IRS to receive contributions that are deductible for federal income tax purposes. This charitable organization is registered with the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. Information may be obtained by calling: (973) 504-6215. Registration does not imply endorsement.