



# DOORWAY

Volume 10  
Issue 1

**BCHT: Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc.**  
(Formerly a Part of Martin House)

Nov/Dec  
2021

*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.*



## The Tyrell Ave Project

- **Transforming Blighted Areas with New and Rehabbed Homes**
- **Programs and Events to Widen Horizons and Community Responsibility**

### Tyrell Project Moving Forward

The Tyrell Redevelopment Project is helping to transform an entire Trenton block with new and rehabbed low-income homes, while at the same time providing families with programs and events that widen their horizons and teach a mindset of personal and community responsibility and awareness. We thank all of you for your patience as we deal with delays caused by COVID, as well as changes in city administration and regulations.



Clearing Land on Tyrell Ave

**The Problem:** Tyrell Avenue in East Trenton is a blighted block where nearly half of the properties were abandoned as of 2020.

**The Plan:** BCHT is addressing the blight in stages, starting with a renovation at 42 ½ Tyrell, which has already been purchased from the city, and continuing with the building of two new duplexes at 60-72 Tyrell – with more homes to come. We also hope to inspire homeowners and developers to work on other houses on the street.

**The Vision:** Tyrell Ave will become a welcoming gateway to the future Assunpink Creek Skate Park. We encourage families to form a responsible community with broad visions for the future and safe play spaces.

**What is Happening Now:** Bids are out for the renovation of 42 ½ Tyrell Ave. The townhouse has three bedrooms and 1 ½ baths. It will be sold to a low-income family for \$39,000, a fraction of the cost to build, with 0% interest on an Installment Sale Agreement held by BCHT. This is an example of BCHT's truly low-income housing. No one else does this! BCHT's homes will provide needy families with the stability to pursue good education, jobs, and family values.

Land is also being cleared (above) so we can start to build two new duplexes at the end of the street. All funding has been secured for the rehabbed home at 42 ½ Tyrell, and we are now asking for help to finance the first of the two new duplexes that we will build once the land above is cleared by the city and any environment issues have been remediated. PLEASE, we need your help to make this happen and continue our mission!

Watch the video about this project on our website at [www.BCHTTrenton.org/News](http://www.BCHTTrenton.org/News)

### We Thank All of YOU - Our Committed Donors and Sponsors



*Together we are making a difference*

SEE PAGE 4 TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN BECOME PART OF THE CHANGE FOR GOOD

Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT) [www.BCHTTrenton.org](http://www.BCHTTrenton.org) 609-989-0271 [BCHTinfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTinfo@gmail.com)  
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## ***Annual Planter Day Beautifies Stoops***

Flowers bring brightness and hope to neighborhoods where abandonment and blight once existed.

Residents of East Trenton gathered on May 22 to make their own personalized planters for their front stoops. Planter Day was brought back for the second year by popular demand. Better Community Housing of Trenton provided supplies and instructions for the residents, who designed their own planters and later proudly showed them off on their a tour of their stoops. The East Trenton Collaborative helped organize the event at George Page Park.



Planter Day at George Page Park



Flowers on a Stoop - Tyrell Ave



Grouping of Planters on Tyrell Ave

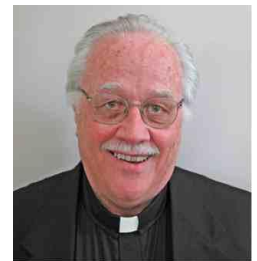
***In Memoriam*** – Our good friend and supporter Richard (Dick) Canning entered into Eternal Life this Fall. Rest in peace, friend. We would like to thank all his loved ones who sent donations to BCHT in memory of him.

## ***New Book – A Radical Heart***

*Commentary by Father Brian McCormick, Founder BCHT*

My Dear Friends,

It is a blessing to once again be able to speak to you through the ministry of Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. (BCHT). This is a banner year in that we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BCHT, as well as launch a new book about the work of its original umbrella organization, the Martin House (available by the end of December on Amazon.com).



I would like to tell you a little about the book and how it came to be. The book is titled *A Radical Heart, Making Black Lives Matter Through Faith in Action*. The author, long time Martin House volunteer Mary Callahan, wanted to write about the Diocesan Martin House, but the book evolved into a story about me and the Martin House and what was done in the name of all my fellow priests and the whole Diocese. Mary agreed that the book would witness the effect of the work of the Martin House as *she* saw and experienced it, and that I would only correct factual errors.

It all started in 1968 when members of the Priests Senate of the Diocese of Trenton called for an experimental ministry in the inner city. This ministry would fight racism and poverty, while better defining the role of priests in addressing these issues. It would be called the Martin House.

Three brother priests established this ministry in the Wilbur section of Trenton. By the end of two years, only one priest was left. I was then recruited by Fr. Joseph Procacci in 1970. I declined the offer twice before I prayerfully realized that the Martin House ministry was a direct call to express how priests should respond to racism and poverty as special representatives of the Diocese.

The book expresses Mary's opinion of what was done and learned, with the grace of God, by those who have participated in and witnessed the work of the Martin House in the areas of education, housing, and community life.

I would ask you to read the book so that you might internalize the Almighty's call to address racism and poverty as they affect our society. All of us, religious and laity, are called to make a more equitable society – to address the evils of racism, poverty, and greed in our everyday living – in our places of worship, our organizations, schools, and workplaces.

I salute all of you who support the BCHT ministry and heed the call to constantly create new tools for dealing with poverty and racism. My thanks and prayers are with you as we approach the challenges of a new year.

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**To get your copy of *A Radical Heart: Making Black Lives Matter Through Faith in Action*, go to Amazon.com**

**Come to the Book Signing on Jan. 16 - See our Website to learn more [BCHTrenton.org/New Book](http://BCHTrenton.org/NewBook)**

## In the Spotlight – *Breaking the Cycle of Poverty*



Diamond and Mom, Liz

Diamond was a teenager in 2013 when she moved into a BCHT home with her family. Her mother, Liz, was spotlighted in our August 2018 newsletter, which recounted the amazing story of her escape from Liberia and eventual connection to Better Community Housing of Trenton.

Diamond has a wonderful role model in her mom, and now, at 25, has her own special story to tell. When Diamond arrived here from Liberia she enrolled in Daylight/Twilight, an alternate program to obtain a high school diploma. After graduation, she got a scholarship to Bloomfield College, then transferred to Rutgers School of Health Professions, where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Medical Lab Science.

It was not an easy time. Her financial aid did not cover living expenses, and she would come home on the weekends to volunteer at the BCHT Thrift Store, where she got to take advantage of their gently used clothing, household goods, and food. She says the experience of volunteering at the store cemented her bond with the community and provided experience for her resume that helped her continue to get financial assistance and, later, a job.

Now Diamond works as a chemical lab technician at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, researching such things as COVID and other harmful viruses. She is studying for a Master's Degree at George Washington University. Her big news is that she is now engaged and has bought a house with her fiancé, Daryl. Diamond is so grateful to BCHT for the house her mother obtained and all the support she received from BCHT in helping her with her daily living needs in college and in applying for scholarships. She says the help her mom received from BCHT has trickled down to her and her siblings in many ways. She has definitely taken a huge step away from the poverty of her childhood. We are proud of Diamond for doing so much with her life, and wish her success and blessings to come.

## *Thrift Store News*

**New Phone** 609-222-5537 to schedule pickups

### ***New Hours***

**Thrift Store** 802 East State Street (clothing, household items)  
Friday 2 pm-5 pm, Saturday 9am-2pm

**Warehouse** 10 Ward Ave (furniture, appliances)  
Saturday 10 am-1 pm

Please be reminded that we do not make furniture pickups during the holiday season.

### ***Holiday Sharing***

The dedicated team of thrift store volunteers, led by Gloria Phillips, works each year to coordinate our annual Thanksgiving and Christmas giving projects, which supply local needy families with hundreds of Thanksgiving and Christmas meals and Christmas gifts for the children.

***Please call 609-222-5537 to donate gifts - or gift cards from ShopRite or Walmart***

**THANK YOU for your donation to us. It is a blessing!**



## *Tyrell Ave Cleanup*



Abandoned houses on Tyrell Avenue become victims of illegal dumping, littering, vagrancy, and drugs. Neighbors and friends got together in May and July to help clean up the mess left by others. They hope a clean, well-kept street will encourage people and give them pride in their neighborhood, while inviting others to care for their properties and streets.

← Work by Volunteers on Tyrell

# Better Community Housing of Trenton, Inc. *Be Part of Our Vision for Trenton!*

**In this issue:** New Book, Rehabbed row house, beautiful planters, family fun and activities

## *Bringing the Community Together – Open Streets*

BCHT recognizes that getting together for special events is important for community identity and solidarity. The East Trenton Collaborative (ETC) held *Open Streets* events on Saturdays in July and August, and BCHT joined them on July 25 at George Page Park. The East Trenton Collaborative, a community organizing and development initiative, instituted this program in 2020 to provide adults and children with focused and interesting ways to spend their Saturday afternoons and gather safely with neighbors.

Activities included a pop-up skate park by Freedom Skate Park, a bike repair station with Trenton Cycling Revolution, senior Bingo, and other activities and projects for all ages.



### Family Activity Kits

BCHT provided 30 family activity kits put together by the BCHT Advisory Board and friends, so that families could work together at home on reading, coloring, school prep, and puzzles. Included was a placemat with a map of the world and the US, along with a game to recognize and identify places on the maps.

← Pop Up Skate Park

Family with Activity Kits →



## PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE THE TYRELL AVENUE PROJECT!

Donate using the **DONATE** button on our website at [www.BCHTrenton.org/Contact](http://www.BCHTrenton.org/Contact)

Or mail donations to our return address below

Call 609-989-0271 or Email us at [BCHTinfo@gmail.com](mailto:BCHTinfo@gmail.com) for more information

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

Consider a **CO-CREATOR'S Pledge** of \$10,000 to support housing for the poor and community action in the inner-city

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

I/We pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ over  1 year  3 years... in monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Starting on: \_\_\_\_\_ (DATE)

I/We want to support **BCH of Trenton**: 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.

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