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McCreesh Place is an Equal
Opportunity Housing provider.

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To Volunteer,
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Next newsletter highlights...

*Neighborhood Advisory
Council, construction update,
and more.*



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ST. PETER'S HOMES JOURNAL

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Dear Friends,

It is a delight to share with you the exciting news of Charlotte's first Single-Room-Occupancy (SRO) apartment community. Over the last five years, volunteers and committed service providers have worked diligently to bring an apartment community to Charlotte that will fill a gap in the housing continuum for the most vulnerable of the homeless—the disabled. Like many dedicated volunteers, **Reverend Gene McCreesh** (former pastor of St. Peter's Catholic Church) committed his time and effort to reach out and seek ways to help the homeless and our neighbors in need. We are privileged to honor his work by naming St. Peter's Homes SRO apartment community, McCreesh Place.

Thank you to the numerous groups and advocates that have helped St. Peter's Homes reach the long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony. The **City of Charlotte, City Council** and **Neighborhood Development Key Business**, sought to fill a priority recommendation from the Affordable Housing Implementation Team Report to assist in the financing of SRO housing. A capital loan request for \$1,025,542 was unanimously approved by City Council on May 13, 2002. The **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)** awarded a \$500,000 grant for construction and supportive services, as a component of Charlotte's Continuum of Care. The **Homeless Services Network** agencies not only made St. Peter's Homes a number one priority in the 2001 Continuum of Care grant application to HUD, but provide a tremendous amount of support and encouragement. **David Furman Architecture** worked tirelessly to ensure that SRO zoning exists and that the building is a dignified model for the first of its kind in Charlotte. **Summit Properties** has worked extremely hard to provide consultation for contractor services. In addition, **Saber Engineering** (mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineers), **Hunter Structural** (structural engineers), **Risden McElroy** (rendering design) and **Richa Graphics** (printing) offered their expertise as in-kind contributions to the project.

However, without the faith community's support throughout the process, beginning in 1989 when St. Peter's Homes was created by **St. Peter's Catholic Church**, there would not be a McCreesh Place. The board of directors is a hands-on working board committed to providing affordable housing for the homeless. These volunteers balance their own full-time jobs with their commitment to St. Peter's Homes. They bring a high level of expertise from a broad array of professions to selflessly contribute to the success of McCreesh Place. Many volunteers on the board of directors came to learn of SRO housing from their congregations. The congregations and organizations that comprise the **Jeremiah 29:7** group created the volunteer and financial support needed to bring the SRO vision into reality. **Myers Park Presbyterian Church, First Presbyterian Church, Myers Park Baptist Church, Myers Park Methodist Church, Christ Episcopal Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Providence United Methodist Church, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, St. Gabriel's Catholic Church, Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, Mecklenburg Ministries** and **United Way of the Central Carolinas** are the Jeremiah 29:7 members that supported St. Peter's Homes mission. In addition to a strategic impact grant award, United Way of Central Carolinas awarded St. Peter's Homes a focus area grant to develop a scholarship fund to serve qualified residents with temporary rental assistance.

In addition to the **City of Charlotte Affordable Housing Implementation Team**, chaired by **Velva Woollen**, the faith and business community's support, several task forces have brought Charlotte thorough reports outlining recommendations to increase affordable housing. The Homeless Community Action Plan recommendations from the **Task Force on Homelessness**, chaired by **Jerry Fox** and adopted by the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and City Council, also support the development of McCreesh Place. Numerous volunteers from the business, faith and human service community served on the Task Force. **Carol Morris** wrote the "Living in the Shadows" and "Out of the Shadows" report on homelessness for the Task Force, which outlines the



need for SRO housing. **U.S. Representative Sue Myrick** created a Task Force on Housing that included recommendations to develop Single-Room-Occupancy housing for individuals experiencing poverty. We trust that we will provide the model program the previous task forces recommend to fill a gap in the housing continuum.

I would especially like to thank **Villa Heights Neighborhood Association, Optimist Park Community of Shalom, Belmont Neighborhood Strategy Force, Habitat for Humanity** and the **Community Support Neighborhood Advisory Board** for their support and encouragement. I look forward to continuing our relationship as neighbors and as partners in our upcoming Neighborhood Advisory Council. Exciting things are happening in North Charlotte and it is your leadership and vision that are responsible for the revitalization of neighborhoods that savor diversity to remain vibrant and strong.

Hope Haven, Inc. and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, Inc. have provided a tremendous amount of guidance and support for St. Peter's Homes over the last year. Thank you for believing in our mission and selflessly giving your encouragement and technical assistance to ensure that McCreech Place is a success.

McCreech Place will be the first of many SROs in Charlotte. We hope you will be proud of the model program we are creating, in partnership with all of the St. Peter's Homes supporters. Absent your trust in us, we would not be equipped for success. Thank you!

McCreech Place—Addressing Charlotte's Affordable Housing Crisis

McCreech Place offers sixty-four apartments with on-site supportive services for formerly homeless, disabled men. The 21,000 square foot single-room occupancy apartment community is located at 2120 North Davidson Street in the Villa Heights neighborhood. Owned and operated by St. Peter's Homes, this residence is designed to help men exit the cycle of homelessness and enter a permanent housing community through an environment that is warm, supportive and designed for self-sufficient, responsible living. Weekly activities are designed to provide education, recreation and support to encourage each resident to reach and maintain his highest level of potential. Since McCreech Place intends to be a responsible participant in the four adjacent neighborhoods, community involvement from staff, residents and volunteers is encouraged.

The key to our success will be the on-site supportive services and the improved quality of life of our residents. Because maintenance, property management, conflict resolution and on-going supportive services are everyone's job, the five full-time staff including two on-site case managers, live-in maintenance manager, receptionist, executive director and security officers, will all contribute to maintaining a dignified, affordable and supportive environment for the residents.

Residents of McCreech Place will be eligible based on income, disability, homeless status, and a national background check. Residents are expected to pay rent and a security deposit; they must not pose a threat to neighbors and agree to abide by rules in place for the community. These guidelines prohibit use of alcohol or drugs and ban weapons and overnight guests.

Warmest regards,
Terri Andrews
Executive Director

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History of St. Peter's Homes and Single Room Occupancy Housing

St. Peter's Homes began as a joint effort of several uptown Charlotte churches to address the needs of the homeless in the city. In 1989, **Father John Haughey** and **Father Gene McCreesh** of St. Peter's Catholic Church founded St. Peter's Homes. St. Peter's Episcopal Church became a partner in 1990. Both churches, located in the urban core of uptown Charlotte, have advocated on behalf of the homeless for many years and recognized the increasing need for affordable housing among people experiencing poverty.

St. Peter's Homes became a private, non-profit agency committed to assisting marginally homeless families successfully re-enter the mainstream of society by providing low-income housing. Originally the agency leased and refurbished housing through Housing and Urban Development. Homes were then rented to homeless families in need of a new start. Accumulated rent was either returned to the family when it exited the program or ultimately used by the family toward the purchase of the home. St. Peter's Homes worked through volunteers to ensure a positive, healthy relationship between struggling neighbors and families transitioning out of homelessness.

In 1996, the SRO Options for Charlotte committee located a site in the Cherry neighborhood, between Midtown and Myers Park that was accessible to public transportation, community amenities and employment opportunities. Bank of America owned the land and was willing to donate it so that Charlotte's first Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing could become a reality. However, community opposition and zoning difficulties made it necessary to find another site for SRO housing.

From 1998 to 2000, David Furman searched tirelessly for a viable site while working with the Planning Commission

of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to ensure that SRO zoning was defined in the zoning ordinance. At last, a zoning category was assigned to SRO housing in Charlotte.

In 2001, the release of an assessment on homelessness by Mecklenburg County indicated that the hardest population to exit the homeless system was employed, disabled men. The SRO effort determined to target this group for its first project in its effort to address homelessness in Charlotte. Later in 2001, HUD announced that St. Peter's Homes was awarded a bonus of \$500,000, in addition to the \$2 million granted each year to Charlotte to address homelessness.

Finally, after years of searching, David Furman located a piece of land on North Davidson Street that was zoned properly and was affordable. The Jeremiah group raised funds to purchase the land for St. Peter's Homes. David Furman donated his time and talent to design the building. All the pieces were finally coming together for so many committed, resolute people who cared about addressing the problem of homelessness in Charlotte.

The North Davidson site was the focus of some neighborhood resistance regarding its proximity to the NoDa arts district located one mile away. St. Peter's Homes understood some of the neighborhood concerns and addressed the fears to the community and City Council. On May 13, 2002, the loan request for \$1,025,542 was unanimously approved. The dream and vision of providing SRO housing for the most vulnerable of the homeless will become a reality with the grand opening of the SRO in summer 2003. The fruition of this project would not be in sight without the tireless dedication, commitment and vision from founders, **Barney Offerman, David Furman** and the **Homeless Services Network**.

TIMELINE

Construction is expected to begin in **December 2002**.

Hiring process for staff will begin in **June 2003**.

Resident application process will begin in late **June 2003**.

Following completion of construction and inspections, a grand opening is expected to take place by **August 2003**.