

Andrew Younker
4.213 / Ecological Urbanism Seminar
Case Study

1] Title / Description

The Mountains of Friendship Court

This small collaborative design/build project involving Piedmont Housing Alliance, Public Workshop and UVA Facilities Management engaged the youth Friendship Court in the design and construction of a small social/play area within the larger redevelopment project of the community.

2] Location / Dates of Operation

Charlottesville, Virginia

Completed on May 24, 2019

3] Goal / Mission / Theory of Change

Design/Build Project [The Mountains of Friendship Court]:

“Our goal is to equip resident youth leaders with the skills to provide input for the redevelopment with a particular focus on activity areas, green space, and programming.”

Redevelopment Project [Friendship Court]:

“Friendship Court, like many similar communities in the United States, is the result of urban renewal efforts. As efforts were made in the name of removing communities that were seen as a blight on city landscapes, members of the community often found themselves isolated from resources and members of the larger community. This has been the case for Friendship Court.”

“Though rebuilding this community cannot alone redress the full history of structural racism and other systematized inequalities, the work of redevelopment is fully rooted in bending the arc of the future.”

Organization [Piedmont Housing Alliance]:

“Our mission is to create affordable housing opportunities and foster community through education, lending, and equitable development.”

"We take a holistic approach to community management, housing counseling and financial services and development looking at the many ways that a family or individuals can benefit from our services. All of this is done with acknowledgment that the housing space locally - as well as nationally - suffered for decades from unfair and unjust lending practices, discriminatory zoning laws and other practices that the systematic level that hindered progress."

"Everyone should have a place to call home."

"Piedmont Housing Alliance puts people first and they are at the heart of our community management, resident services, education and counseling services, and development efforts. These initiatives are just a few that speak to our mission and core values:"

"RACIAL EQUITY - PHA's board and staff are committed to disrupting the historical racial barriers in housing and the resulting inequalities in financial assets, wealth, and homeownership carried down across generations in the Charlottesville region. Our racial equity initiative is aimed at developing the tools and processes to challenge patterns of institutional power and to grow institutional equity."

"ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY - Economic opportunity is about meaningfully connecting people with resources that allow them to accomplish what they want but never knew they could. PHA works to meet people where they are - locationally and economically. We are uniquely positioned at our rental properties to provide safe, decent and well-maintained homes while also providing resources for our residents to grow in their dreams."

"STORYTELLING - PHA's impact throughout the community is shared in many ways - one of which is through the words of those who use our services, live in communities we manage or are part of redevelopment projects. The first person narrative is important to us and we seek to expand opportunities for those who we work with to tell their stories. This will be done through digital platforms, audio and video production."

4] Abstract / Keywords

The Mountains of Friendship Court is a partnership between Piedmont Housing Alliance, UVA Facilities Maintenance, and Public Workshop / Alex Gilliam. The project demonstrates the potential for community organizations, design firms and educational institutions to partner together in providing opportunities for youth to learn about their local community and lead the way in contributing to its future with tangible projects.

Home, Opportunity, Community, Respect, Equity, Youth

5] Size of Community

Redevelopment Project [Friendship Court]:

Friendship Court is a 40-year old Section 8 community in the heart of Charlottesville. Just two blocks from the downtown pedestrian mall, the community serves 150 households with an average annual income of about \$14,000.

Organization [Piedmont Housing Alliance]:

Piedmont Housing Alliance currently manages 11 properties in the counties of Albemarle and Nelson and the City of Charlottesville.

6] Origins / Organization / Operation

Redevelopment Project [Friendship Court]:

The Friendship Court Advisory Committee was formed in February 2016 through a resident election process with a clear mandate to represent community interest through the redevelopment planning and implementation process. The community representatives on the Advisory Committee provide expert guidance, advocacy, and insight as they co-design their future homes and community.

Organization [Piedmont Housing Alliance]:

Piedmont Housing Alliance is the successor organization to the Thomas Jefferson Housing Improvement Commission (TJHIC), which was founded in 1983 by Jan Saunier. TJHIC received designation as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) by the state of Virginia.

In 1996, TJHIC joined together with the Charlottesville Housing Foundation, which had been founded in 1968 by Francis Fife, Delegate Mitch Van Yahres, Thomas J. Michie, Jr. and Robert Stroud. CHF brought substantial assets to the alliance, including land. At that time the organization took the name Piedmont Housing Alliance.

19 -member Board of Directors with a portion made up of residents of our communities and individuals who have used our home buying services.



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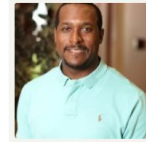
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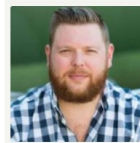
Caroline Brennan



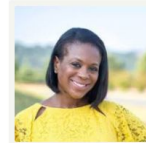
Ron Enders



Ken Shevlin



Hunter Smith



Roxanne Carter-Johnston

7] Programs

Design Build Project [The Mountains of Friendship Court]:

The Mountains of Friendship Court is a multipurpose area for and designed by Friendship Court youth, including members of the Youth Leadership Team.

Mountains of Friendship Court involved a partnership of Public Workshop, UVA Facilities Management and Piedmont Housing staff.

Alex Gilliam and Public Workshop facilitated the conversations around design and helped bring the youth's design goals to life.

UVA Facilities Management pre-cut most of the materials and youth from Friendship Court and other volunteers worked to put everything together.

Participants from the Friendship Court community were largely students in middle school and high school. Some of their duties included painting, putting the area together, beautifying the work area once the build was complete and of course testing out the new area.



Redevelopment Project Master Plan [Friendship Court]:



Community Programs [Piedmont Housing Alliance / Friendship Court]:

Housing Counseling Services
Down Payment Assistance Program
Homebuyer Classes
Newsletters
Lunch and Learn Series
Food Bank Distribution
Community Events [musical classes, movies, Easter egg hunt, yoga, etc]
Snacks
Meals
Job + Employment Fair
Mentoring Programs
Athletic Clinics
Financial Literacy Classes [with Mount Zion First African Baptist Church]
Field Trips

August 2019 newsletter [Piedmont Housing Alliance / Friendship Court]:



FRIENDSHIP COURT NEWSLETTER

Friendship Court Newsletter

August 2019

Friendship Court Apartments

418 Garrett Street
Charlottesville, Va 22902

Office Hours
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Monday-Friday

Contacts
Community Center:
Beth Kennan
(bkennan@piedmonthousing.org)

Leasing Office:
Latasha Collins
(lcollins@piedmonthousing.org)

On the Web
www.piedmonthousingalliance.org/friendship-court/



Facebook
@FriendshipCourt



Leasing Office Makeover a Success

It's been over a month since the community management at Friendship Court moved from Edgewood Management to Piedmont Housing Alliance. One of earliest and most noticeable changes made at Friendship Court is the new office layout.



Earlier this summer, the office received needed improvements to the space. Colors were added, walls were removed, and new staff populated the area. While it has only been a short time, we have seen an increase staff engagement with residents, who have welcomed the change stating that the office feels more welcoming and inclusive since the changes were made.



Please stop by when you have a chance to say hello or just take a look if you haven't already! The Community Management office is open Monday - Friday, from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you need assistance with repairs, please continue to call the office at 434.295.8005 during regular business hours. If it is a maintenance emergency and is after hours, please also call 434.295.8005 and listen for the prompts. Once received, a maintenance technician will follow up to address the concerns.



CALENDAR

Friendship Court Newsletter

August 2019

Upcoming Events

Unless noted, all programs are held at the Friendship Court Community Center

Friendship Court Events and Ongoing Programs

Wednesday, August 7 (5:00 p.m.)
Love the Court W/Partico Church

Wednesday, August 7 (Last Day for the Summer)
Violet Crown Morning Movie

Wednesday, August 28 (8:30 a.m.)
Food Bank Distribution

Thursdays (5:00 p.m. - 8 p.m.)
Afro Brazilian Drumming with Mr. Macaco

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (4:00 p.m.)
Charlottesville Paris & Reo afternoon enrichment program

Monday - Friday (2:30 - 4:30 p.m.)
Snacks Served

Tuesdays & Thursdays (5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.)
Warm meals served

Financial Education and Community Wealthy building Opportunities

Tuesday, August 6 (12:00 p.m.)
Lunch and Learn Series: Computers 1 on 1

Tuesday, August 13 (9 p.m. - 7 p.m.)
Employment and Financial Education Series

Tuesday, August 20 (12 p.m. - 1 p.m.)
Lunch and Learn: Google-Grow Business Series with Jefferson-Madison Regional Library

Pick up your card for August Community Wealth Building Bingo!

City of Charlottesville Events

Saturday August 17 (10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)
Charlottesville Schools - Sprint Pavilion (www.cvillebuskotoschoolbash.com)
If you haven't registered, you are encouraged to still attend.

Monday, August 19 (9 p.m. - 7 p.m.)
City of Charlottesville School Open Houses (Check with your school for specific times)

Wednesday, August 21 - First day of school for City of Charlottesville

Youth Attend Charlottesville Opera



Ms. Sheri and Ms. Jessica took a group of eight youth from Friendship Court to enjoy a performance of "Camelot" at the Paramount Theater on July 17.

While there, they enjoyed the show, got to meet the orchestra conductor and the star of the show, "King Arthur," ate pizza and participated in learning about the actual play, sang the songs of the evening, and received crowns and flowered tiaras afterward.

Save the Date

Be on the look-out for details for a Friendship Court Community Center Parents Meeting in September!

8] Financing / Resources

Redevelopment Project [Friendship Court]:

Any affordable housing development requires many, many layers of funding. Friendship Court will be no different, and each phase of Friendship Court will be financed independently.

The primary funding source is Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC).

Many other sources will need to come together, including contributions from the City of Charlottesville, foundations, and philanthropic donations.

The final gap will be filled with a mortgage. In the end, the goal of the subsidy from LIHTC, City of Charlottesville, etc. is to reduce the amount of the mortgage so that the income from rent (even though rent income is low) on the property can cover the cost of operations (maintenance, staff, etc.) and the mortgage payments while also building long-term reserves for repairs in the future.

9] Assessment

Strengths:

The design and implementation of the project provided an opportunity for the youth of the community to gain experience in leadership and become involved in shaping its future

The design project has increased excitement for the larger Friendship Court redevelopment

Provided a way for three different organizations (two local) to become engaged in a project together and build relationships and a tighter network

Weaknesses:

Isolated design/build project as opposed to an ongoing program or a series of projects that build momentum

Could have involved more leadership from the community/youth

Maintenance responsibilities unclear

Design participant not local / no ongoing relationship with the community

Opportunities:

An ongoing engagement with youth in a variety of hands-on projects on a regular basis over many years

Incorporation of education about history, context, forces at play in the community into similar projects

10] Lessons for West Philadelphia

Partnership between community organizations, design firms, universities and schools can produce project-based opportunities for students to learn about their local community and contribute to its future.

Potential for a long-term youth educational program that engages the student's local communities with a variety of hands on projects that build momentum toward change over time.

Smaller projects provide opportunities to partner with various other organizations throughout the area to establish new connections and a more robust network of people invested in the future of the community.

Potential partnership with Alex Gilliam and Public Workshop - currently located in Philadelphia.

References

"Friendship Court Youth Design: The Mountains of Friendship Court." Piedmont Housing Alliance, June 29, 2019.
<https://piedmonthousingalliance.org/news/friendship-court/friendship-court-youth-design-multi-purpose-space/>.

Piedmont Housing Alliance, <https://piedmonthousingalliance.org/>.