



Another Reason to Love MHC

by Cathy Hinko, Executive Director

MHC is an effective force in our community, giving you the research and infrastructure to advocate for fair and affordable housing. We follow the mission that you gave MHC and are seeing results. MHC exists because of your support, both in action and in giving.

As we look back on this year, MHC has added new activities that have gotten results. Our work on energy efficiency has netted big payoffs for people in Louisville. MHC's decision to be an Intervener in the Environmental Surcharge case before the Public Services Commission took us into new territory and we are grateful to Tom FitzGerald and the Kentucky Resources Council for representing MHC in the case. Among the negotiations, which led to less money being borrowed and a saner decision-making process on making improvements, was also a contribution of \$250,000 paid by the shareholders to support energy-efficiency work over two years.

MHC also alerted the new mayoral administration that over \$1 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds were returned to the state even though we know that people need help paying their utility bills. As part of a group review, MHC did an analysis of state policies which make it impossible for urban areas to spend their fair share. We are still advocating with the state and will fight for policies that let people in Louisville keep their utilities on despite lower incomes and higher prices.

Being able to say – “Here is \$1.4 million that we identified to help people in our community” is a new approach for MHC. But we extended that approach by bringing Daniel T. Kildee of the Center for Community Progress to Louisville for our 2011 Annual Meeting in May. In Flint, Michigan, Dan administered the government function of collecting property taxes in a way that made more money than before and was fair and humane. When MHC brought Dan here, he emphasized the need to end the forced sale of tax liens to the private market. Dan Kildee's visit has spurred continued organizing and advocacy around property tax lien reform.

MHC and several other local organizations were already addressing the effects of the privatization of tax lien sales. This group, Local Options for Kentucky Liens (LOKL), continues to meet and reach out to officials and stakeholders. This coalition also hosted self-help clinics, attended by over 90 people, to assist delinquent property tax-holders. The two clinics helped families address delinquent taxes by setting up payment plans with the County Attorney, taking their taxes off the list for private sale.

LOKL has begun discussions and meetings with local and state officials in how to change the state statutes to allow for local governments to purchase the tax liens. This is viewed as a first step toward re-invigorating the local Land Bank. In fact, the Louisville Affordable Housing Trust Fund (LAHTF) contracted with Dan Kildee and the Center for Community Progress to make an initial review of legislation and other issues regarding a possible campaign to change the statutes and consider what institutional structures need to be put into place.

MHC also has participated in the review of the Land Development Code (LDC), which began earlier this year. Our January 2011 report, *The State of Fair Housing in Louisville: Impediments and Improvements*, revealed that a major barrier to fair housing has been zoning- or the LDC- which prevented diverse housing types from being a part of most of Louisville. MHC has been advocating for more flexibility to bring diverse housing to areas throughout Louisville by adding more clarity to the LDC.

Neighborhoods have spoken: vacant and abandoned property is a high priority. MHC helps address this priority by convening the Louisville Vacant Property Campaign (LVPC). See Doug Magee's article on page 2 to learn more about the LVPC's work.

MHC is very proud of the results of prior work that continues today. *Where Do You Live?*, our 2009 report, revealed the tragic growth of families experiencing homelessness by looking at the number of students in public school who experienced homelessness. In September 2010, MHC helped produce a training event for over 200 people from major systems that interact with homeless children. That event led to an ongoing group working on children's homelessness. For this work MHC, the Network Center for Community Change and the Coalition for the Homeless, as well as other partners, were recognized by the Center for Non-Profit Excellence with the 2011 Pyramid Award for Collaboration

Another legacy of MHC's advocacy work is the newly formed LAHTF, which was specifically recognized by Mayor Fischer in his budget this year. We are working to identify permanent revenue sources for the fund.

These are just some of the benefits to our community emerging from MHC's efforts- another reason to love and support the work of MHC. And we need your help. We need your voice and we need your membership contributions.

Thank you for your past and continued support of our work!

Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign: The Year in Review

by Doug Magee, Program Director- Non-profit Housing Alliance

Vacant properties in Metro Louisville continue to be a vexing problem, but they also represent seeds to innovative opportunities. Over 2011, the Metropolitan Housing Coalition (MHC), the Louisville Vacant Property Campaign (LVPC) and others captured the current excitement regarding addressing vacant properties and helped move forward education and advocacy on the issue. LVPC has been meeting for over three years, even before the National Vacant Property Campaign held its national conference in Louisville in June 2009. Many citizen activists, elected officials and government employees attended that conference, where most of the citizen activists were from Louisville.

LVPC hosted a number of excellent speakers at meetings during the year. The speakers included: John Cullen, with Restoration Products, speaking about their new product, which encapsulates lead paint, and other environmental hazards found at vacant properties; Jeana Dunlap, Louisville Metro Community Revitalization Department, spoke about the Neighborhood Stabilization Program; Bob Dixon, Network Center for Community Change, spoke about mapping the study of a 10 square block area in the California neighborhood; and Jack Trawick, with the Center for Neighborhoods, spoke about the effects of vacant properties on our neighborhoods.

Other speakers and topics included: Dr. Jim Mims, Director of Louisville Metro Codes & Regulations, who spoke about his department; Adam Hall, Mortgage Bankers Association of Kentucky, and Tonya Mosley, Chase Homeowners Center, who spoke about the role of financial institutions; and a discussion was held concerning urban agriculture.

April saw several events regarding vacant properties. A forum on property tax liens, sponsored by LVPC, Legal Aid Society, Kentucky Equal Justice Center, California Collaborative and Network Center for Community Change, was held on April 12 and attended by over 60 people. LVPC spoke at the April meeting of the Neighborhood Roundtable on tax liens and the upcoming Housing Summit.

The all-day Vacant, Abandoned and Underutilized Property Summit was held on April 28. The Summit brought together over 200 people from local governments, for- and non-profit developers, neighborhood associations, community-oriented farmers and gardeners, and community activists. The day began with a call to action from Dr. Jim Mims. Following Dr. Mims were speakers regarding problems and challenges; code enforcement, court and lien processes; and the Land Bank Authority. These presentations were followed by small group discussions, focusing on ideas and solutions to be forwarded to Mayor Greg Fischer for policy consideration.

One session concentrated on preventive strategies where it was pointed out that the best way to prevent vacant properties is to keep the property inhabited. Various methods of prevention include homebuyer education, foreclosure counseling and prevention, not privatizing the sale of unpaid property taxes, and neighborhood planning and mapping.

Another aspect of prevention occurs after a property has become vacant, but before it becomes a neighborhood problem and eyesore. Some of these preventive strategies include retrofitting older homes for energy conservation and cost savings, organized and caring social networks such as neighborhood associations, specially-formed nonprofits, temporary green spaces and community gardens, private side-yards, public art, public or private parks and an active, strategic Land Bank with expanded staff and resources.

An outstanding outcome of the Summit was the creation of the Vacant Property Initiative, headed by Mary McGuire, with Louisville Metro Codes & Regulations. Ms. McGuire spoke about the Initiative at the LVPC meeting in October.

On Thursday, May 19, MHC was host to Daniel T. Kildee, Co-Founder and President of the Center for Community Progress, as the speaker for the successful 2011 MHC Annual Meeting. Kildee initiated the use of Michigan's new tax foreclosure law as a tool for community development and neighborhood stabilization. He founded the Genesee Land Bank – Michigan's first land bank, and a model for others around the nation.

While in town, Kildee also met with Mayor Fischer and aides, Metro Council members, Jefferson County Legislators, staff from Codes & Regulations, Economic Development, Jefferson County Attorneys, nonprofit housing developers, and activists from various groups, esp. neighborhood associations. Much of his time was spent explaining the need to strengthen the local Land Bank Authority and the need to end the forced sale of tax liens to the private market. This move would allow local government more control over decisions affecting delinquent tax payers, their property and neighborhoods in which these properties are found. Advocacy for this change is discussed in Cathy Hinko's article on page 1.

The Louisville Vacant Property Campaign (LVPC) sent speakers to meetings of various organizations on vacant property and tax lien issues and continues to meet, educate and work on innovative solutions. The next meeting of LVPC will be Tuesday, January 17 from 5:30-7:30 PM at Presbyterian Community Center, 701 S. Hancock Street. Join us the third Tuesday of each month for the LVPC meeting. For more information or to be added to the email distribution list, please contact Doug at doug@metropolitanhousing.org.

Schedule of Events

No December meetings of Fair Housing Coalition and Louisville Vacant Property Campaign

January 10- Fair Housing Coalition Meeting. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty Street, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

January 10- MHC Education & Advocacy Committee Meeting. New Directions, 1000 E. Liberty Street, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.

January 17- Louisville Vacant Properties Campaign. Presbyterian Community Center, 701 S. Hancock Street, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Now through January- Project Warm Service Activities. Project Warm Blitz helps seniors over 60 and those with disabilities prepare their homes for winter. Energy Management Workshops will teach people how to winterize their homes. For more information about these programs, call 636-9276 or email info@projectwarm.org. Volunteers are needed to assist with activities.

Applications now accepted for the Center for Neighborhoods Spring 2012 Neighborhood Institute. Sessions will be on Tuesday evenings, February 7th – April 24th from 6:00-8:30pm at Kosair Charities, 982 Eastern Parkway. For more information or an application go to www.centerforneighborhoods.org or contact Lisa at 589-0343 or lisad@centerforneighborhoods.org.

KIPDA Rural Diabetes Coalition (KRDC) Health Needs Survey in Bullitt, Henry and Shelby Counties. If you or someone you know lives in these counties and has a diagnosis of Type-2 Diabetes, and would like to be a part of the very important health needs survey, please have them contact Bonnie.Buchanan@KY.gov or call 266-5571. Participants will be asked to participate in bi-annual surveys until 2015 and receive a small stipend for participation.

December 10- Fuller Center for Housing Home Dedications. Celebrate the dedication of a newly renovated home at 118 Boston Court and two major home repairs at 132 Boston Court and at 108 Boston Court. For more information, contact Don Erler at 592-8858 or Don.Erler@svn.com. 100 Block of Boston Court, 11:00 a.m.

December 10- U of L Saturday Academy: Part II of "The African Diaspora in Kentucky: How Can We Build Community?" Features seven African immigrants as panelists speaking on this topic and an "open mic" discussion. For more information, contact Shameka Parrish-Wright at shamekapw@gmail.com or 435-6925. DuValle Education Center, 3610 Bohne Avenue, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

December 12- Bardstown Road Streetscape Plan. The Center for Neighborhoods will reveal the corridor plan for Bardstown Road from the Watterson Expressway to Hikes Lane. For more information, call 589-0343. Quality Inn Conference Room, 3255 Bardstown Road, 6:30 p.m.

December 13 & 15- Legal Aid Society Foreclosure Clinics. Attorneys will be on hand to answer questions about foreclosures and provide advice on alternatives to foreclosure. For more information, go to www.laslou.org. Legal Aid Society, 416 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd., 11:00 a.m. (Dec. 13). & 4:00 p.m. (Dec. 15).

December 13- Spalding U. School of Social Work BSSW/MSW Information Session. For more information, contact Susan Grace at sgrace@spalding.edu or 588-7183. Spalding U. Mansion East 2nd Floor Student Lounge, 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

December 13- Coalition for the Homeless Fundraiser. Just Creations will donate a percentage of sales to the Coalition for the Homeless. 2722 Frankfort Avenue, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.

December 13- Volunteers of America of Kentucky Real³ Journey. A tour that demonstrates how VOA helps real people facing real challenges to find real and lasting solutions. For more information, contact Claire Sheehan at ClaireS@voaky.org. VOA Family Emergency Shelter, 1321 S. Preston Street, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Real³ Journeys will also be held on **January 17**, 4:00 – 5:00 p.m. and **February 21**, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

December 15- Housing Partnership, Inc. Wilart Arms Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Please **RSVP by December 12** to Kim Happel at khappel@WeAreHPI.org or 814-2730. For more information, a brief video is available at <http://wearehpi.org/hpi-2011-moving-into-wilart-arms/>. Wilart Arms, 1797 Wilart Drive, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.

December 15- Housing Partnership, Inc. Holiday Hard Hat Reception. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be provided. Please **RSVP by December 12** to Kim Happel at khappel@WeAreHPI.org or 814-2730. St. Bartholomew's School. 2036 Buechel Bank Road, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

December 16- Last Day of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Subsidy Phase Applications. LIHEAP helps income-eligible Jefferson County residents with their utility bills. Appointments are required to apply. Go to <http://www.louisvilleky.gov/CSR/Community+Services/LIHEAP.htm> for eligibility criteria and information on dates, times, and locations.

December 22- Give A Jam to End Homelessness. See stars from the Louisville music and theater scene in short sets featuring everything from music to poetry slams to juggling. All proceeds from this event will help the Coalition for the Homeless move people living on the streets of Louisville into permanent, safe, subsidized housing. \$10 tickets available at www.cliftoncenter.org, at Carmichael's Bookstore, 2920 Frankfort Avenue, or by calling the Coalition for the Homeless at 636-9550. Clifton Center, 2117 Payne Street, 7:00 p.m.

December 31- KY Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression New Year's Eve Party. Features a potluck dinner and recognition of those who have moved our community forward in 2011. For more information, contact KA Owens at firstwave9@juno.com. Braden Center, 3208 West Broadway, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

January 5 - Family Scholar House Volunteer Orientation. For more information, please contact Julie Brown at 584-8090 x. 112 or jbrown@familyscholarhouse.org. Family Scholar House, 403 Reg Smith Circle, 5:00 p.m.

January 14- Remembering the Freedom Rides, 1961 and 2011: An MLK Birthday Celebration. A joint session of the Healing History Academy and the U of L's Saturday Academy. For more information, contact Amber Duke at agduke01@louisville.edu. DuValle Education Center, 3610 Bohne Avenue, 12:45 -2:00 p.m.

January 24- Louisville Metro Human Relations Commission 16th Annual Race & Relations Conference. Features several workshops and keynote speakers Mayor Greg Fischer and Lee Mun Wah, a renowned documentary filmmaker, author, and educator. To register or for more information, go to www.louisvilleky.gov/humanrelations, email HRC@louisvilleky.gov, or call 574-3631. Muhammad Ali Center, 144 N. 6th Street, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

January 25- 2012 Coalition for the Homeless Annual Street Count. Volunteers needed to compile a census of people who are living on the street. To volunteer or for more information, contact Susanne Binford at sbinford@sevendcounties.org or 589-8600 x.1280. Hotel Louisville, 120 W. Broadway. Volunteer registration- 5:30 p.m., Street Count 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Strengthen the United Voice for Fair and Affordable Housing in 2012

Join MHC or Renew Your Membership Today!

- **Every new member and every donation makes MHC's important research and advocacy work in support affordable housing possible.**
- **Consider giving MHC Membership as a holiday present this year. You can make our coalition bigger by donating in honor of a friend or family member.**
Contact Curtis Stauffer at curtisstauffer@metropolitanhousing.org or (502) 584-6858 about such a gift, and we will send a card to the recipient to notify them of your present.
- **Make a donation before the New Year to receive a deduction on your 2011 taxes.**

To make an online donation, visit us on the web at www.metropolitanhousing.org.

Mail your donation to:
Metropolitan Housing Coalition
P.O. Box 4533
Louisville, KY 40204-4533

Since Metropolitan Housing Coalition is a 501 (c)(3) organization, your contribution is tax deductible within IRS regulations.



Metropolitan
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