

Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation Newsletter

400 Selby Avenue Suite C
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July 17, 2014

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Exciting Developments

Exciting things are happening at Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation: new affordable housing, new staff, new programs and services for residents. This is the first of four brief newsletters that you will receive over the next two months. Each will highlight one or two news items. We hope you'll follow and invite you to support the vital work we're doing to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Twin Cities, promote the academic success of kids, and help families advance. Thank you for taking the time today to read about our accomplishments and plans.

New Reading Literacy Project in the Works



We are gearing up for a new high tech reading program for children at the Liberty Plaza and Calibre Ridge Resource Centers beginning this summer. Capstone, a major publisher of children's books, has made a new online library called myON Reader available to TCHDC. We will be using myON in our after school programs this coming school year. With 5,000 + children's books that are just a few keystrokes and a couple of clicks away, myON is a child-friendly online collection of books designed to promote a 'love of reading.' MyON does this by providing each child with

his/her own personal log-in so children can read anywhere they have access to the internet. This allows kids to own their own reading experience. Children get to choose their favorite subject matter and what books they read. They can even rate books and write reviews. Most of the books are illustrated and have an audio read-aloud feature.

MyON is not just a great children's library. It also helps struggling readers (and good readers, too) to move toward, achieve, and even surpass grade level reading proficiency. MyON has a built-in assessment function that tells us at what level children are reading. Each book in the library is rated for difficulty using a standardized framework called Lexile. From the start MyON helps each child to find books at his/her level of difficulty and in subject areas they want to read. Then every few books, myON assesses kids' current reading level (which we hope is always higher) and recommends new books at a new level of difficulty.

By the end of 2015, the myON Reader will be a fully integrated part of our after school programs, and we will be on our way to developing a new stand-alone homework tutoring program with a reading literacy focus at Liberty Plaza. More to come on this in future months...

New TCHDC Program Staff



Long-time Manager of Program Development, Mary Crowley, retired at the end of 2013. Mary left a strong foundation for sustaining the programs and services for residents offered by TCHDC at its Liberty Plaza and Calibre Ridge Resource Centers.

David Browne (above left) is the new Manager of Program Development for TCHDC. He has many years' experience in human services in the areas of mental health, ending homelessness, affordable housing and employment services. He also has been a public school teacher. Most recently, Dave was a

grants manager for both CommonBond Communities and Goodwill/Easter Seals. Dave has Master's degrees in Counseling & Psychological Services and Art Education. He brings a wealth of experience, compassion and commitment to his work with and on behalf of residents. Dave can be reached at dbrowne@tchdc.org or (651) 292-0211 ext. 227.

Kelly McSherry-Mesa, the Program Coordinator of the Resource Centers for 7 years, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on November 1, 2013. She was beloved by all who knew her. TCHDC and Kelly's family have established a special fund to honor her memory. We will share details of the fund in the next newsletter.

We are excited to have Caleb Williamson (above right) as the new Program Coordinator for TCHDC. Caleb comes to us from a stint in Kansas City as a community organizer. But he is not new to TCHDC or Liberty Plaza. A graduate of Hamline University, he was the lead worker for our McVay Youth VOICE program at Liberty Plaza in 2009-10. After graduating, Caleb joined the Peace Corps and spent his assignment in the Dominican Republic. Caleb is reconnecting with some of the older youth and young adults he's served and getting to know the younger children and our provider partners. Caleb can be reached at cwilliamson@tchdc.org or (651) 224-5303 ext. 6.