



Rural Delivery

Rural Housing Coalition of New York's Quarterly Newsletter

SPRING 2022

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McNeil Park Apartments in Copenhagen is a fifteen-unit housing complex occupied by low-to-moderate income senior citizens and adults with disabilities and the recipient of CARES Act funding for \$430,550 through Lewis County and through the efforts of Snowbelt to repair several health and safety deficiencies including ADA accessibility, emergency alarms, HVAC deficiencies and sidewalk and roof replacements.



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Snow Belt Tackles Homelessness in the North Country

It is often difficult to know just how many homeless people reside in the North Country. Ranging from several hundreds to several thousand on any given day, it is clear homelessness is a critical housing issue in the region and the solutions are challenging.

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MARK Project Repurposing Iconic Main Street Building

By Sharon Reynolds

The MARK Project has embarked on an adaptive reuse project of an iconic main street historic structure in Roxbury, New York known as the Inn at Kirkside.

“The magnificent Georgian style mansion was transformed from a modest farmhouse in 1896 by Helen Gould Shephard, daughter of railroad magnate and Roxbury native son Jay Gould,” said Peg Ellsworth, Project Director. After being converted into a

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Rural Delivery

Rural Delivery is published by the New York State Rural Housing Coalition, Inc. The Coalition is a non-profit statewide membership organization dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing rural New York by assisting housing and community development providers.

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Rural Housing Coalition of New York



RHC Executive Director Michael Borges speaks at press conference at state Capitol on funding for rural housing initiatives.

Executive Director Update



Spring has arrived and with it warmer weather, reduced COVID counts and the state budget process ramping up to a projected budget adoption by April 1st. The state budget process got underway in January with the release of the State of the State and the Executive Budget by the Governor, followed quickly by the RHC and Advocates testifying at legislative budget hearings, meetings with state legislators and staff, and the launching of a new email advocacy campaign via RHC's website.

In addition, to the email campaign and RPC meetings with legislators in their district offices, I also participated in a roundtable discussion on rural housing issues hosted by the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and spoke at a Capitol press conference on housing funding organized by Senator Michelle Hinchey, Chair of the Agriculture Committee.

All of these efforts resulted in both the Senate and Assembly including our top budget priorities in their one-house budget proposals. Hopefully, by the time this newsletter gets published, a final adopted state budget will include this requested funding.

In addition to advocacy, RHC has been securing new funding from a variety of sources, including a NYSERDA workforce training grant to educate property management and maintenance staff on energy savings best practices and a Five Star Bank grant to fund leadership training for RPCs.

The Lake Ontario Event and Conference Center has been selected as the site of our 2022 Annual Conference on September 26-28th and staff (Sharon Reynolds and I) are busy reaching out to potential speakers and fleshing out session topics.



Member In Focus

Elisha Barlett



The Member in Focus feature of the newly revamped quarterly newsletter Rural Delivery provides an opportunity to get to know your colleagues and fellow RHC members.

Elisha Bartlett is the Executive Director of PRIDE of Ticonderoga, a rural preservation company located in Ticonderoga, whose service area includes six towns located in southeastern Essex County and the northern portions of Warren and Washington Counties. PRIDE of Ticonderoga was founded in 1984 through the joint efforts of the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County, the Essex County Planning Department, and the Ticonderoga Chamber of Commerce. Elisha became Executive Director in May 2020.

PRIDE has four pillars that drive its mission driven work. The first is downtown revitalization. PRIDE is currently administering a NYMS Anchor project but has completed an estimated 37 building restoration projects funded by NYMS Target Area grants. PRIDE works to provide regular, low-income home repair services through RESTORE, HOME and AHC and offers a mobile home replacement program. PRIDE also provides historic preservation assistance and is very active in community development efforts. PRIDE serves on the Economic Development and Parks & Recreation Committees for the Town as well as serving as an advisory board member to the Downtown Main Street Business Partners and the design committee.

Elisha originally hails from Connecticut (like her colleague to the north Bruce Misarski), but grew up in Old Forge, located on the western side of the Adirondack Park. She moved to Colorado to attend the University of Colorado and graduated with degrees in Environmental Studies and Geography. After graduation, she went to work for a surveying company where she worked her way from the ground up to be a lead drafter

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Five Star Bank

Snow Belt continued from page 1

Jaylyn Yuhas-Heames, Executive Director of Snow Belt Housing Company, Inc., and member of the Points North Housing Coalition, not only understands the extent of the growing number of homeless people in the three counties that the Continuum of Care serves, but also recognizes solutions can only be accomplished with strong partnerships between municipalities and non-profits working together toward a common goal of preventing homelessness.

“We have a strong Homeless Assistance Program in place at Snow Belt utilizing funding from several different sources to support the most vulnerable residents in Lewis County,” says Jaylyn. “Programs like Solutions to End Homelessness (STEHP), Emergency Solutions Grant/CARES (ESG-CV), and Emergency Assistance Program (ERAP) help individuals and families with rental and utility arrears, temporary shelter, and case management services.”

Having established a close relationship with Lewis County government and being the primary resource for helping the homeless population, has provided the opportunity for Snow Belt to take the lead on finding a permanent solution to the temporary housing problem.

“Snow Belt, county government, clinical providers and interested community partners are currently developing a comprehensive plan that outlines short-term shelter options, med/long-term affordable housing options and identifying the current barriers that exist under both scenarios,” states Jaylyn. “We are diligently working to identify resources available that will support the purchase and renovation of a building, pinpointing a location for a proposed shelter, and identifying the key partners who need to be involved with the solution to guarantee long term success. One of the greatest strengths of the North County is the ability to all work together for the betterment of our communities, so I believe that going forward we can make it happen.”

Of course, a comprehensive plan is essential to articulate the solution to any problem, but it is the work accomplished after the plan is presented to all constituencies that is the primary goal. This involves bringing entities together – municipal staff, non-profits, concerned residents, supportive and clinical services – to build consensus as to the importance of finding an effective and meaningful solution to end homelessness in the region.

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“We believe that building a safe and temporary shelter option, which is capable of integrating services that address both the broad and specific needs of our rural population is the most effective way to serve our community as a whole and successfully return people to stable housing,” says Jaylyn. She acknowledges one of the major hurdles to the success is educating our partners on the current need in our community, reducing the stigma associated with homelessness and building momentum for this effort.

According to the 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “A chronically homeless person costs the taxpayer an average of \$35,578 per year. Costs on average are reduced by 49.5% when they are placed in supportive housing.”

For more information on Snow Belt Housing Company visit www.snowbelt.org.

MARK Project continued from page 1



retirement home, the mansion will once again be transformed into a hotel and restaurant with an integrated educational program that provides experiential learning to aspiring professionals in the hospitality and tourism industries while cultivating entrepreneurship, serving as a model of green technologies, and supporting local food production.

The Kirkside Project was developed over three years and a series of all-day gatherings of residents. The result of this extensive planning process of bringing a broad coalition of community members together was full endorsement of the Project. Today, the feasibility study, the schematic design, and construction cost estimates have been completed including input from a regenerative design specialist, a commercial kitchen specialist and sustainable food system specialists.

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“Our outreach efforts with SUNY Delhi Hospitality Program and the Director of Culinary Programs at ONC BOCES have created strong partnerships with these educational institutions and we value the breath of expertise they will bring to the hospitality and educational arm of the Inn at Kirkside,” says Peg Ellsworth.

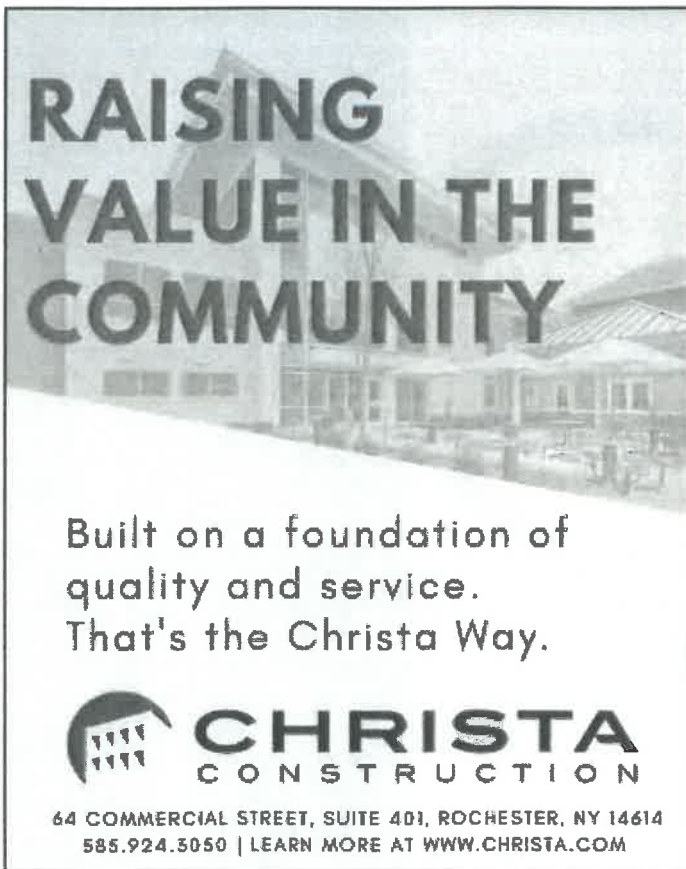
When the property was still operating as a retirement facility, MARK stepped in to help stabilize the structure through a 2014 New York Main Street Grant and in 2018 the property was deeded to MARK after closure of the retirement home. MARK has been maintaining the building in anticipating of the Inn at Kirkside becoming a reality.

For more than 40 years the MARK Project has worked to build resilient rural communities by focusing on the small towns of the central Catskills with a depth of programs ranging from housing and economic development to civic planning and downtown revitalization. “We work on economic development across a broad range of business and social activities to support and sustain our interconnected communities,” says Katie Camillone, Executive Director of MARK. “The Inn at Kirkside Project mirrors what we have been accomplishing through our current programs from small business development to Homebuyer programs.”

The Inn at Kirkside will operate as a single member LLC, a revenue generating business entity performing mission related activity under the umbrella of the MARK Project.


Though the fourteen-million-dollar project is a huge undertaking for MARK Project, the extensive planning, the community involvement, communications with both private and public officials and funders, and the passion exhibited by project director, Peg Ellsworth and the Inn at Kirkside Advisory Board, the MARK Project Board of Directors, and Executive Director Katie Camillone.

For more information about the Inn at Kirkside Program visit www.INNATKIRKSIDE.ORG and the MARK Project at www.markproject.org.



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Member in Focus

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and junior crew chief. In her late 20's she went back to school and got two graduate degrees in Urban and Regional Planning and another in Public Administration from the University of Denver. While in school she interned at the Jefferson County Planning & Zoning division, working into a full-time position by the time she graduated.

A year after graduating, Elisha moved to Europe with her boyfriend and subsequently spent 3 years living, working and traveling. She returned to Colorado to work as a Flood Recovery Planner for Boulder County Land Use & Transportation Divisions to assist the County in its State and Federally funded flood recovery effort. Elisha finally made her

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Member in Focus

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way back to New York when she accepted an offer to work at HAPEC as its Community Development Director in Essex County. This additional 2.5 years of experience in program administration gave her the impetus to apply to be PRIDE of Ticonderoga's Executive Director and get to apply all her skill sets at once to pursue her passion more fully in Community Development.

I asked about the challenges and opportunities facing her RPC and she replied, "There is a lot of demand for our services, but not always enough grant money or staffing to address it, so my work is a constant balancing act. Rural Preservation Partners try as best as possible to maintain a healthy work-life balance to avoid burnout, but this is a more difficult task being a small organization with limited funding, and so many different duties to cover at once. We have the opportunity to be leaders in our community, and assist the community to achieve new heights, and that keeps us wanting to show up and do as much as we can for the communities we serve."

Since its inception, Pride had always been a member of the Rural Housing Coalition, so Elisha said there was no question as to whether to continue as a member. I asked Elisha what the Coalition does or could do to better assist her organization and she said, "The RHC does a lot already and you are a small staff. To me the most important part of RHC is that you are an email or phone call away. You provide us the moral support, and a little extra guidance, connect us to the greater RPC network which allows us to do more. RHC has a greater presence now than it did 2 years ago. For this I feel that the RPC's can be greater than the sum of our parts. Thank you!"



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RHC MarketPlace

The Rural Housing Coalition has created a page on our website called the [MarketPlace](#) where you can find various service providers like architects, engineers, HR, accountants and financial institutions, etc.. I would appreciate it if you could send me at mike@ruralhousing.org the names and contact information of some of your vendors to add to this page, because the more vendors listed the more useful the page will be.

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Rural Housing Coalition of New York's 2022 Annual Conference

September 26-28th, 2022 www.lakeontarioecc.com