

RENEWAL NEWS

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OF CARING
IN D.C.**

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VOLUME 26 ISSUE 2

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NEIGHBORS UNITE FOR NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

WWW.COMMUNITYRENEWAL.US

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COMMUNITY RENEWAL

CONNECTING PEOPLE • CHANGING LIVES • TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



52,455

MEMBERS OF THE WE CARE TEAM (PEOPLE CONNECTED TOGETHER THROUGH CARING)



3,500+

CHILDREN AND YOUTH HELPED THROUGH FRIENDSHIP HOUSE PROGRAMS



1,700

TRAINED HAVEN HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK LEADERS



161

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FRIENDSHIP HOUSE PROGRAMS IN 2021



150+

STUDENTS HAVE EARNED THEIR HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA AT THE ADULT RENEWAL ACADEMY



44%

AVERAGE DROP IN MAJOR CRIME IN OUR FIVE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE AREAS



10

FRIENDSHIP HOUSES LOCATED IN 5 TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS, WHERE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS, ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES ARE HOSTED

Community Renewal connects people from all walks of life to restore safe, caring and vibrant communities. We restore hope and renew the spirit of cooperation among neighbors, businesses, churches, schools and other groups.

We envision a world where every person is safe, loved and fulfilling their highest potential in the community.

HOW WE DO IT: We focus on three prime strategies:

RENEWAL TEAM: The team works citywide to unite individuals, churches, businesses, civic groups and others as caring partners building a stronger city.

HAVEN HOUSE: Volunteers unite neighbors on the block where they live. They place "We Care" signs in their yards and bring neighbors together through various activities.

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE: These are homes built in low-income areas and lived in by Community Renewal staff who help turn impoverished neighborhoods into havens of hope.

DONATE TODAY!

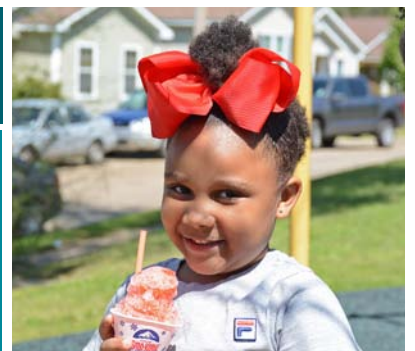
GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.COMMUNITYRENEWAL.US

and click on the **DONATE** link

OR

use the envelope in this newsletter to make your donation **TODAY!**





YOUNG LEADERS FIND HOPE, INSPIRATION IN COMMUNITY RENEWAL

Just a few years ago, Joe Nail sat in his dorm room with a few friends who all shared a common dream of healthy, vibrant communities throughout the country.

This year, Joe and his team brought some 100 young people from across the nation to Shreveport for in-person training as part of the effort to bring that dream to fruition. Why Shreveport? This is the home of Community Renewal International.

"We were on a mission to find the best models for community-building and we were introduced to Mack McCarter and Community Renewal. Everyone was inspired and then we came to Shreveport and knew this was a missing piece of the puzzle," he said.

"The core central piece of healthy, thriving communities is mutually enhancing relationships, the foundation of trust. When we came to Shreveport, we saw an actual model that can be replicated in other communities around the country."

Today Joe is CEO of Lead for America, which seeks to build a leadership force to address the nation's most critical challenges in every corner of the country. LFA has created 215 paid fellowships in 150 different communities. LFA started in 2018 and Mack McCarter spoke at the first training conference with 50 young community leaders in 2019 in Washington, D.C.

Maya Pace, 26, chief program officer, started Harvard Divinity School this fall. She has met others across the country who have

a similar mission, but said CRI is unlike any other organization she has encountered.

"From our inception, we have wanted to build stronger communities for everyone across the country. But something that became clear to us is that it's not just about infrastructure or local government; it's about the relational foundation that makes up the community," she said.



"We don't know our neighbors like we once did and we are seeing the cost of that across our society."

-- Joe Nail, CEO, Lead for America

"When we first learned about Community Renewal, we were deeply inspired. There is such passion and they are so dedicated. We want our fellows to be moral and ethical and dynamic leaders and being rooted in a strong sense of care-taking and love and community is essential.

"My hope for the future is that we live in a world in which every person feels like they matter and they belong and they have the resources they need to thrive and pursue their dreams."

Matthew Miller, communications manager, started with LFA in February and made his first visit to Community Renewal this year.

"Being in Shreveport and seeing what you do and the love you have for the community is so rejuvenating. Shreveport reminds me of my hometown in Michigan and seeing how people can come together is super inspiring," he said.

"When people come together from different backgrounds and different beliefs, that's how progress is made and that's how we make a better world. To hear and to listen and to love and to laugh and to cry with other people and to learn from them is so necessary if we want to create better communities and a better world."

Joe Nail said LFA wants to continue to learn from Community Renewal and show all of its students what it really means to prioritize loving your neighbor.

"We don't know our neighbors like we once did and we are seeing the cost of that across our society. Taking that concept of loving your neighbor as yourself, and developing that, is what is so unique about Community Renewal," he said.

"Our vision is a strong community for everyone. Ultimately, we want thousands of people in their corners of the country as ambassadors. How amazing would that be to have an entire generation of people leading from an ethos of love and care. We are certainly optimistic about the future. And you can't help but being hopeful and optimistic when you see the work already happening in Shreveport."

HIGHLIGHTING VOLUNTEERS

LOCAL CHURCHES & ORGANIZATIONS DONATE TIME & LOVE



Volunteers from Norris Ferry Community Church build a playground at a Cedar Grove Friendship House.



Teens from Broadmoor United Methodist Church paint rooms at a Cedar Grove Friendship House.

Youth from First United Methodist Church spend a morning cleaning streets in Allendale.



Celebration Church has a long history of service at our Queensborough Friendship Houses.

The YMCA again hosted swim lessons for our Friendship House kids last summer.



Norris Ferry Community Church gives back at a Highland Friendship House.



Johnson & Johnson employees participate in Janssen Cares Volunteer Days by painting at a Friendship House.

A BEACON OF LIGHT

Shining in Dark Places

By Tara Wicker
Civic Leader, Businesswoman, Pastor, Wife and Mother
Baton Rouge, LA

I was initially exposed to Community Renewal during my tenure as a young community organizer in the mid 1990s with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. A group of us from Baton Rouge came on a tour and went through the CRI Experience. My life was changed forever.

It was during this experience that I realized the importance of community connections and the value of relationships being at the core of transforming neighborhoods from the inside out. Baton Rouge has struggled for several years with violence, separation, despair and a loss of hope. It has sadly become a city that most Baton Rouge natives no longer recognize as home. Community relationships that were once enjoyed, valued, respected, and honored have been strained and in some cases even destroyed.

Since the 1990s I have had the opportunity to participate in two additional

CRI Experience tours, once with members of our church congregation and most recently with my husband Mike Wicker, Pastor of Lighthouse Christian Fellowship

Church. I know through seeing the power of creating strategic partnerships through caring, meaningful relationships, Community Renewal is the answer for the transformation and creation of a New Baton Rouge. I firmly believe that CRI is the key ingredient to restoring the hope and care that our city so desperately needs.

My CRI experience has taught me the value,

power, and potential of gaining, strengthening, and maintaining neighborhood relationships. These caring relationships become the foundational building blocks for rebuilding communities that have been destroyed and are in deep despair, much like Baton Rouge today. They become the centerpiece that serve as a guidepost in bringing neighborhoods, communities, and cities back from the brink. CRI to me personally becomes that beacon of light shining in dark places to give residents a blueprint of hope for restoring what has been lost. CRI reminds us of the simplicity and power of CARE in transforming lives and reviving neighborhoods into places that people once again love and enjoy.

The importance of knowing and being in relationship with your neighbors can best be described in an incident in my own neighborhood. One morning at 5:30 a.m. we were awakened to rapid sounds of explosions, only to look out our bedroom window

and in horror, witness our neighbor's home on the next street engulfed in flames. We ran outside to make sure that everyone was OK and suddenly realized that we knew our neighbor from passing conversations, but did not remember his name or if he had any other family members in the home. I remember thinking, only if I knew my neighbors better, I could give the firemen instructions on who

actually lived in the home. Thankfully no one was hurt, and we found out that the dad and mom were both out at work and their 14-year-old son had just made it out heading to the bus stop. My heart leaped in joy that they were OK, but sunk in sadness that I could have done more. That day my husband and I vowed to forever get to know our neighbors in a real way.

CRI to me can be summed up in five simple words that we have all heard many times, but often forget: "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself" (Mark 12:31). This is what has made the biggest impression on me through my CRI Experiences. I have left each CRI Experience with a different lesson, revelation, and nugget of wisdom to bring back home to share with others. I would encourage anyone interested in learning more about how to create change that makes a difference to visit and experience CRI up close and personal. Your life, like mine, will be changed forever.



"I firmly believe that CRI is the key ingredient to restoring the hope and care that our city so desperately needs."
 - Tara Wicker, Baton Rouge

SNAPSHOTS FROM NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

A man who once caused nothing but trouble in his neighborhood helped host a block party so that neighbors could get to know each other. A teen-age girl started a friendship with a classmate who lives right around the block. Police and firefighters shared meals with the residents they serve. Children played, barbecue grills sizzled and friendly conversation filled the air.

This was the scene during the 2021 National Night Out, with most block parties held on the evening of Oct. 5. The annual event brings together caring residents from all types of

neighborhoods to strengthen the bonds of friendship across the community. When neighbors know and care about each other, neighborhoods become safer, more caring places.

One goal at Community Renewal is for the spirit of National Night Out to keep going strong all year long. That's how we strengthen the foundation for safe and caring communities.



NIGHT OUT



GET INVOLVED

Serve your neighborhood as a volunteer block leader. We call those Haven House leaders and we regularly have training seminars to help you get started and then keep going. Give us a call at **318-425-3222** to learn more or visit www.communityrenewal.us.

WE CARE SCHOOLS INITIATIVE EXPANDS, BUILDS A CULTURE OF CARING

What will I do with retirement? A good question Tina Kendrick considered as she and husband Terri, a doctor, retired from their careers to live on Lake Claiborne. Among many possibilities, Tina felt a calling to bring Community Renewal to her newly adopted community, Homer, Louisiana. She signed up for the online Community Renewal Catalyst learning experience (one-hour per week sessions over 8-weeks).



During those Catalyst sessions Tina learned about a program emerging through the Community Renewal Institute -- We Care Schools. It was a light bulb moment. Tina could see a new path to replicate Community Renewal in Homer. Start with We Care Schools. Grow a school culture of caring as the foundation for learning and community. A successful career as an educator and administrator provided insight for Tina's Catalyst action plan and her authentic way of presenting Community Renewal.

Sharing the vision of Community Renewal and We Care Schools with the Claiborne Parish Schools Superintendent William Kennedy and his Administrative Team was Tina's first step. The next step: Experience our CR pilot We Care School. Touring University Elementary with principal Kasie Mainiero is inspiring and convincing. Randomly stopping a student or walking into a classroom, the power of caring

together shines. Superintendent Kennedy and his team now see the possibilities for all schools in Claiborne Parish becoming We Care Schools, starting with 400-student Homer Elementary during the 2021-22 school year.

Over the summer, Tina, with support from a CR Institute team, provided guidance for planning activities with Homer Elementary Principal Monica Morrow, Assistant Principal Alyson Perry, and Schools Administrator Mary Prior. The school year theme emerged from a song by Thomas Rhett, "Be a Light." A CR workshop and planning session expanded the core team to include teachers Laura and Doug Gryder, Ashley Wafer, Lisa Long, Tisha Featherston, and Lori Lewis.

Inspiring table decorations included small black boards with quotes like:

- *Students don't care what you know until they know that you care.*
- *We rise by lifting others.*
- *Kindness – it costs nothing but means everything.*
- *Kids won't remember everything you teach them, but they will remember all the ways you love them.*
- *Tell me and I forget, teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn.*

Homer Elementary We Care School started the school year with student "house" assignment celebrations and fanfare. Students are connected across grade levels in six conceptual houses that have colors, logos, T-shirts, caring themes, and mottos. "Caught-You-Caring" cards are bringing attention to caring acts, growing relational leader skills to see good in others. Tina is on campus weekly, encouraging educators and guiding their We Care School plan development. Tina is a true pathfinder, creating a new way to share the Community Renewal Model.

University Elementary is in the fourth year as the pilot We Care School. During the back-

to-school teachers Zoom workshop, Principal Kasie Mainiero emphasized that being a We Care School is more important than ever.

KATZ News is a new UES student video broadcast production that promotes and celebrates being a We Care School. Selected Caught-You-Caring cards are read to the student body as daily announcements. Increasingly students are writing the cards to recognize caring acts of their fellow students and teachers. Students are taking the cards home to share the school focus on caring with their families. Pathfinder Awards celebrate individual actions that increase each school's culture of caring. It is inspiring and hopeful to see the power of caring together continue to emerge through creative pathfinding in our We Care Schools.



GET INVOLVED

Contact us at 318-425-3222 to learn more about the We Care Schools initiative!

THREADS OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY ARE

Connected by Caring

By Bari Hochwald-Cagnola
Executive Assistant to the Founder/Coordinator
Director of Resource Development Capital Area Community Renewal
Washington, DC

I first visited Shreveport in 2015 after meeting Mack McCarter in Washington, D.C. We were introduced by a friend who believed our purposes were aligned and we should know one another. I had been working in theatre for many years connecting artists to neighbors on creative projects that brought attention to social issues. Our friend's instincts were correct of course since I am writing this seven years later, deeply steeped in the world of Community Renewal.

My journey is not as someone who comes from the same culture, or background as my friends and colleagues in Shreveport. Before I visited there for the first time I had never been to the 'Deep South.' I was born in New York City, grew up in Jersey, lived 25 years in Los Angeles and then five in Florence, Italy. In Italy I learned and then taught intercultural relationships. This level of sensitivity was necessary as I was a foreigner trying to create something new in a place that was not my home. I had to learn to listen and then to offer. I used those skills on my first trip to Shreveport. I was entering another world where there were cultural codes, assumptions and use of language that I had to navigate. What required no navigation in Shreveport were the kindness and loving hearts I encountered.

Being a theatre artist, the core values and purpose of CRI sit powerfully with me. Theatre artists, particularly and historically, have always been on the fringe of society. We are the misfits, the unwanted, the non-conformists who find one another and make a family of friends. We call attention to the human heart and condition, to our common narratives even though the details may be starkly different. We work together in love of something that remains both powerful and intangible.

When I began working with Mack to establish Community Renewal Capital Area in the heart of our nation, what struck me was the enormity of the task to transform what is considered one of the most segregated US cities into one of caring connectivity and intentional relationships. Given the fact that

all nations are represented here through both their governments and the vast number of international residents found in its streets and suburbs, it is clear that a common story, a common call of caring, is what can and will connect us. But we need individuals who are prepared to see the beauty of our international family of man and make that clarion call.



***"A common story, a common
call of caring, is what can and
will connect us."***

- Bari Hochwald-Cagnola

Life always offers opportunities that shift us from what we think our path will be to something wholly different and wondrous. I am deeply grateful to be working with Dr. Valentin Miao-Donfack and Teshome Wakene. Valentin is our Director of International Relationships and Teshome the International Community Coordinator. Through their work

both in D.C. and abroad, we will find how the vast diversity of human beings on this planet can find one another in connected caring and appreciation of our gorgeous quilt of cultural diversity.

As a part of establishing the Renewal Team here, Valentin and Teshome have launched the Partners In Caring initiative of the international community. Beginning with those of the African diaspora they have brought in local organizations focused on helping others to celebrate their work and create a network based in a foundation of Community Renewal - caring alone has value but caring together can change the world. The richness of caring found in these organizations and those who run them will allow CRI to take a deep step into the cultural narratives of this city and begin the work of connecting the neighbors and neighborhoods of our nation's capital.

LEARN MORE

To learn more about Community Renewal in
Washington, D.C., visit
www.communityrenewalcapitalarea.org



ARA GRADUATES MAKE US PROUD!



Congratulations to our small but determined Class of 2021 at our Adult Renewal Academy! We are so proud of our newest graduates and all of the 150-plus total graduates from the ARA, where adults of all ages can earn their high-

school equivalency diploma! Our numbers may have been down this year because of the impact of COVID-19, but the enthusiasm for learning was higher than ever! Thank you to everyone who helps support this life-changing outreach!



We expect our monthly tours to be back in full operation in 2022! Visit our website and follow us

on Facebook to check the schedule, then invite a friend and join us for an up-close look at Community Renewal!

CBS FEATURE ON CRI WINS TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS!

We are thrilled to share the news that CBS Sunday Morning is earning national honors for an in-depth feature on Community Renewal! The segment, which aired in July 2020, was named a recipient of the Wilbur Award by the the Religion Communicators Council. The Wilbur Award honors excellence by

individuals in the secular media for communicating religious issues, values, and themes. The Religion News Association named the CBS Sunday Morning story as one of the winners of the 2021 RNA Awards for Religion Reporting Excellence. Visit our website at www.communityrenewal.us to see the story!



YOU CAN HELP!

Your tax-deductible donation to Community Renewal helps support our Adult Renewal Academy, our 10 local Friendship Houses and all of our efforts to build the foundation for a safe and caring community! Turn to Page 2 for more on our local impact. Please use the enclosed envelope or go online at www.communityrenewal.us and make your donation today! Thank you!



FEEDING THE WOLF WITHIN US

By Mack McCarter
Founder, Community Renewal

As smart as whales are, I don't think that they can imagine the possibilities of becoming better whales as they live and swim around with their kith and kin. (They don't wish for an improved Uncle Robert Whale at their annual family thanksgiving fish-swallow!) I don't think that they dream of oceans unseen or yearn for new seas to conquer. None ponder the hope that a "someday" can bring. Nor do they stretch out for the "not-yets" of life's potential. None do. Save one creature: You and Me and all of Us.

We can dream. And we can become what we dream. We can picture and we can realize what we "see." And it is this capacity which is the shared possession of the entire human race. There is a higher, a better, a new, a repaired, a restored, a future within us. And isn't it marvelous in our eyes?

It is also the driving force of life itself for each and all of us.

You and I are born this way. We know that we can always be better and we deeply feel that we need to be better. It is life's trip to become a better person. Our journey on this earth is a quest of growing that never ceases. What is placed within us from the time we lay in our baby beds trying to reach up and catch the sunbeams dancing through the slats, to the day that we take that last breath still wishing that we "had or hadn't." We are beckoned and we are driven by the possibilities as well as the potentials of life.

And this inescapable reality births the essential question that Life asks of each and every one of us: How Do I Do It?

So, I want to share with each one of you some thoughts that may hopefully make sense to you about this "HOW." And it is my earnest hope that these very concrete steps can guide us to the world of truly joyful and abundant living.

To illustrate our quest, let me share the fabled Cherokee story of "The Two Wolves." There are two wolves living within every one

of us. One is the wolf of self-centeredness. It is absolutely ravenous to feed self and only self. It will devour all and even others in order to simply satisfy the desire of the moment. In each of us lives that wolf. But there is also another wolf which comes with us as we emerge from our mother's womb. And this is the wolf that is hungry for loving connection with others. It is starving for fellowship in joyful company seeking to serve with others. It knows that as we give our life then we find it. And if we try to live for our self then we will lose the essence of life in all of its abundance. These two wolves are in a pitched war within us seeking to dominate our everyday.

The Cherokee sages' question for you and me is "Which wolf will win?" And the ancient and trustworthy answer is this: "The wolf that you feed is the one which will prevail." We know another ancient seer who wrote, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that also shall he reap."

Our steps, every single day, literally reveal the wolf that we are feeding. They reveal the direction of our life no matter where we say we are heading. (This is why I always encourage everyone to leave their check stubs or their equivalent to their children! Your check stubs reveal what you love and the wolf you are really feeding. "Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart." I know we will want our children to see that we fed the right wolf.)

I am thinking that it is so critical for us to take those right steps. I know for sure that I am making this journey just one time. How vital it is to choose the right guide who has walked this path with conquering strides and who can bring us to the end of our journey with all of our flags flying high. There is a simple sentence out of the whole Bible that helped me more than I can possibly utter. It is found in the book of Acts when Peter was talking to the Roman Centurion Cornelius, who wanted to know about Jesus. Of all the descriptive soul and spirit traits, of all the doctrines and beliefs

he could have shared, he chose to summarize the Galilean this way: "...he walked around doing good...."

The Road of Life is walked out by "Doing Good." "Doing Good for All Others" is the name I have given to the wolf that I want to feed every single day of my life. And here are the three questions which I have asked and I have answered to keep me on the true Road of Life leading to Life Abundant, (I hope they will help you get and keep your bearings. Maybe put your name in the space where I have placed my own.)

- "Mack, are you willing to commit your life to caring for all others?"

- "Mack, are you willing to commit your life to caring together with others for all others?"

- "Mack, are you willing to grow and expand this caring group over all the world by...?"

Answering the first question, "Yes!" means that I now have my life direction. Answering the second question, "Yes!" means that I realize that I alone cannot care enough to change the world, so I must join a TEAM united by their common commitment to "doing good." And answering the third question, "Yes!" and then writing the end of that sentence orders my steps with my brothers and sisters united and connected by caring!!

So come one and come all!! We have dreams for kindness to fulfill, and a world to conquer with goodness, and a life to live in loving one another, honoring each and embracing all. Rich and poor, male and female, old and young, black and white and brown and all beautiful hue, and every democrat, republican, and independent come join together for renewing our lives and land. Join the We Care Team. Go to our website right now and sign up AND bring your friends: www.communityrenewal.us.

And as we walk together, we shall learn the ineffable mystery of how a wolf is changed into a lamb. And our lives and world will know Peace.



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INTERNATIONAL**

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A SIGN FOR OUR TIMES



Did you know that Community Renewal has a sign for our times?

**IT'S A SIGN
OF HOPE!**

It's simple and it's powerful!

We Care!

You've probably seen these signs in yards across Shreveport and Bossier City. They also stand in yards in Washington, D.C., Boston, Austin and other cities. You may have one in front of your house. If not, give us a call at 318-425-3222 or stop by our office at 838 Margaret Place and get your We Care yard sign today!

Please turn to page 11 for "A Word from Mack" and this issue's column "Feeding The Wolf Within Us."