

RENEWAL NEWS

FALL 2019 EDITION
VOLUME 24 ISSUE 2

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25 YEARS OF CARING

SHREVEPORT SCHOOLS EXPAND CULTURE OF CARING

WWW.COMMUNITYRENEWAL.US

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COMMUNITY RENEWAL

CONNECTING PEOPLE • CHANGING LIVES • TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



51,600

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



2,079

VOLUNTEERS GAVE **39,398** HOURS IN 2018



3,500+

CHILDREN AND YOUTH HELPED THROUGH FRIENDSHIP HOUSE PROGRAMS



1,700

TRAINED HAVEN HOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK LEADERS



206

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FRIENDSHIP HOUSE PROGRAMS SO FAR IN 2019



132

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



52%

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.



GIVE TODAY!

GO TO OUR WEBSITE AT

WWW.COMMUNITYRENEWAL.US

and click on the **GIVE** link

OR

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





CARING NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE OF “ABSOLUTE FRIENDSHIP”

Jamien Johnson realized he had joined a special community when he stepped out of his house his first Saturday morning there and found doughnuts and coffee sitting on the doorstep.

“I knew this neighborhood was exactly where we should be. I’ve met a lot of the neighbors. They’ve let me borrow tools and I’ve done the same and it’s been great,” he said.

“I am a former athlete and some of my most memorable moments were not on the field, but it was the time we spent together off the field, building relationships and going through things that made us better together. I feel like us breaking bread together here does the exact same thing.”

Neighborhood block parties encourage that breaking of bread together as they help open doors in more ways than one. Through something as simple as a block party, large steps are taken in Community Renewal’s mission of connecting people, changing lives and transforming communities.

In Jamien’s River Road neighborhood in Southeast Shreveport, there is a wonderful diversity of residents who have bonded over their desire for a caring community. Longtime Community Renewal supporters David and Claudia Oliver serve as Haven House leaders there, meaning they give of their time to link neighbors. They host block parties, create a directory and make sure everyone feels welcome.

“I think of it like the old Coca-Cola commercial. If I can get all the neighbors on my block to hold hands and get to know each other ... eventually we will all be holding hands around the world. If you put your hands

together and you hold on, you are stronger than you are by yourself,” Claudia said.

“The Haven House model is putting neighbors together on the street where they live. It’s not brain science. It is just absolute friendship. And if we keep doing intentional caring acts, it makes a difference.”

Jamien moved from a much different neighborhood.

“I lived near D.C. for about eight years and I may have talked with my neighbors there twice. Here, it is dramatically different. The first day I was here, neighbors were at the house, introducing themselves and letting us know they were there to help. I feel comfortable here letting my 5-year-old go outside. It’s a safe environment and that’s a good feeling,” he said.

“It not only makes the neighborhood safer, but it is encouraging. If everyone could care and give and be understanding like the people in this neighborhood, we will be a great country. On this block we have a diverse group and I have learned a little bit from everyone. We have one neighbor from India and he gave me advice on cooking. Little stuff like that matters.”

Claudia knows a woman in her neighborhood who has been going through chemotherapy treatments and Claudia asked if she needed help with anything. And the

woman said, because she has met so many caring neighbors through the block parties, that she doesn’t have to ask. So many neighbors are coming forward that there is actually a waiting list of people wanting to help however they can.

“We have so many new neighbors and we need to get together. We have a lot of different nationalities that have moved in and it’s really kind of fun. We’ve kind of become a United Nations block party,” Claudia said.

“When you get to know your neighbors, you feel safer in your neighborhood. It’s fun on our block. We have lived here almost 30 years and it’s wonderful. We don’t intend to leave.”

Sopan and Lisa Tike moved into a house

near the Olivers about a year ago.

“It creates a greater bond when we get to know neighbors we might not have known otherwise. We already know more people in this neighborhood than we did in our previous neighborhood. And we lived there for 10 years,” Lisa said.

“The biggest thing that makes a difference for us is we feel more secure. We know our neighbors. Our neighbors know us. They realize when we’ve gone out of town and they keep an eye on our house. It’s good to know people are watching out for us.”



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– Lisa Tike

Philanthropy Roundtable Shines SPOTLIGHT ON SHREVEPORT

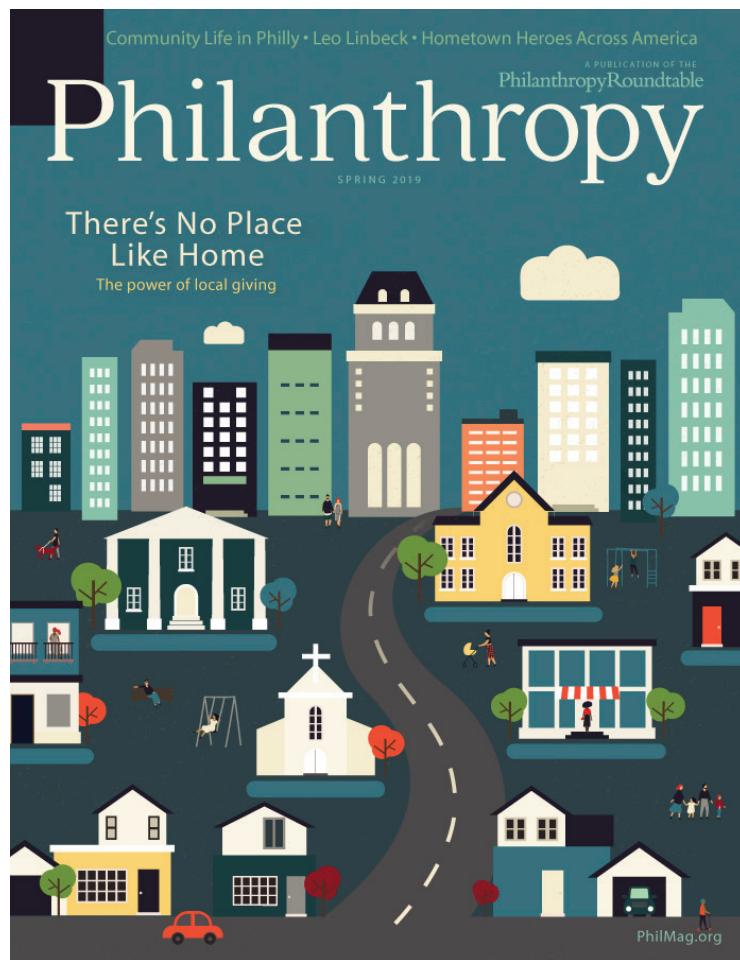
National publication features "Contagious Caring" created by Community Renewal

The Philanthropy Roundtable, based in Washington, D.C., seeks to foster excellence in philanthropy, protect philanthropic freedom and much more. Its award-winning magazine, *Philanthropy*, is published quarterly.

The spring issue featured the article "Contagious Caring," an inspiring overview of the work of Community Renewal, written by Anne Snyder. Visit our website at www.communityrenewal.us for a link to the complete article. You will be encouraged!



McCarter came up with a formula: Build community first, teach the skills of caring, and walk the talk with simple acts. Once people realize the power of relationships, he hypothesized, they can move their communities to higher levels of well-being."



"Community Renewal suggests that links among neighbors can be regrown, even in the face of corrosive factors like gangs, drugs, economic pressure, and racial baggage. We all know about character programs that stress individual growth. We also know of programs that have done major damage by trying to change individual behavior through group mechanisms. Community Renewal seems to be a rare alternative."





Tierney Turner was a perpetual wallflower until she started to find her way at a Community Renewal Friendship House.

"When I first started here I was very shy," she said. "But I made friends who encouraged me. If we didn't have Community Renewal and the Friendship House, I probably would not have any friends and I would probably still be very shy."

Tierney, a sophomore at Byrd High School, started at the Highland Friendship House in the first grade. Last year she was president of the Friendship House Youth Club. She is one of many Friendship House success stories of young people who have found hope and purpose in their lives. Community Renewal has 10 Friendship Houses in five low-income neighborhoods.

Operation HOPE Director Deidra Robertson finds great joy and great rewards in working with teenagers like Tierney Turner because she knows they can now become a benefit to the community as they gain confidence and maturity.

"It's so refreshing to see a young person grow and blossom into the adult that God has called them to be. To know that I had a role in helping them reach their potential is very fulfilling," she said.

"I've had students who are now juniors in college, getting ready to graduate, and that's why I do what I do. You don't want kids to

become a statistic and this is the way you do it. You have to be pro-active about helping them reach their God-given potential."

Deidra said Tierney is a star student.

"She is one of our most committed students and she leads by example. She even goes back and tutors at our Kids Club," Deidra said. "I've seen Tierney blossom from a shy kid and now she's ready to change the neighborhood and she feels empowered to do so."



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- DIEDRA ROBERTSON

"We have our kids involved in community engagement and civic engagement. We're trying to get them to take responsibility in the community. This is their neighborhood."

Tierney says that Community Renewal has not only taken her out of her shell, but has also taken her to new places. She and other Youth Club teens have attended the Kids Across America camp in Missouri and have been to fun places like Hurricane Harbor. Deidra organizes university visits for the youth, some of whom become the first person in their family to ever

attend college. Neighborhood service projects are also scheduled on a regular basis.

"Miss Deidra encourages us and tells us we can do it if we put our mind to it. If we have homework, she wants us to do it because when report cards come out, she doesn't want us to have any bad grades."

Tierney likes seeing the We Care signs in her neighborhood and she tries to practice the message on those signs.

"When people don't have family members or friends in the neighborhood, we let them know that people do care about them and people do love them. That's very important," she said.

"I love kids and I love to help them. But in the future I want to go in the military, in the Air Force. Being here is helping me get ready for that."

Deidra and her husband, Eric, who oversees the Youth Club, are like second parents for Tierney and other youth.

"I know I can go to Miss Deidra and talk to her about anything. If I have any problem, I can talk to her and she will give me the advice that I need."

Tierney is like part of the family now and those bonds will never be broken.

"Tierney wrote me a really nice letter last year that blesses me so because it reminds me of why I am doing what I am doing," Deidra said. "I look at that letter and it reminds me that what I'm doing is making a difference."

CELEBRATION

Caring partners come together at Community Renewal Friendship Houses for a



Red Ball Oxygen sponsors the annual Celebration of Caring picnic and residents come from all over the city



IS OF CARING

common purpose – Connecting Lives, Changing People, Transforming Communities



Celebration Church sponsors a neighborhood block party and backpack giveaway

QUEENSBOROUGH



Southern Trace residents raise funds to provide more than 400 backpacks, plus school supplies and more



CEDAR GROVE

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR DONATION TODAY!

Congratulations to our
Competitive Division Champions:
Mark & Drew Hebert!



THANK YOU FOR 20 WINNING YEARS AT THE CROQUET CLASSIC

Our fields were full and our hearts were overflowing at this year's 20th Annual Croquet Classic! This is such a fun fundraiser! Thank you to our sponsors, planning team, players, volunteers and referees for this year's event, which raised nearly \$50,000 for our Adult Renewal Academy!



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

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Silver Mallet

Southern Classic Chicken

Bronze Mallet

Hank & Rhonda Anderson

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In memory of Dr. George D. Beach

& Anthony P. Carmody

In memory of Tom &

Anthony Carmody

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Citizens National Bank

Bridges to Beauty

Barksdale Federal Credit Union

Praeses

Rhino Coffee

Ono's Hawaiian Cuisine

LSUS

SAVE THE **DATE!**

Croquet Classic
April 25, 2020 - LSUS campus



SHREVEPORT SCHOOLS EXPAND CULTURE OF CARING

Community Renewal is thrilled to announce that Atkins Elementary became the second We Care School in Shreveport this fall, further expanding a culture of caring into our city's classrooms.

"This is an amazing cause and we are going to get behind it one million percent," said Atkins Elementary Principal Belinda Stewart. "At the end of the day, we want to produce a culture of individuals who care. This is an invaluable gift we can give and it won't cost us one cent. It starts with us being the model for our kids. If we teach them to be caring individuals, our world will be a better place."

The idea for We Care Schools was conceived in a conversation between Community Renewal volunteer Mary Richter and her friend Kasie Mainiero, principal at University Elementary. Kasie shared her experiences of encouraging teachers and students to care. It was a light bulb moment for Mary who enthusiastically responded, "I must get you together with Community Renewal!" Mary's insights opened a new opportunity. The CR Institute assembled a team to follow Mary's lead and We Care Schools is the outcome.

A second year at the pilot school, University Elementary, started with a Community Renewal workshop in August. Planning has begun with Principal Ginger Gustavson to adapt We Care Schools to Captain Shreve High School for the 2020-21 school year.

"It is exciting for our team to explore with educators how Community Renewal principles and practices can enhance education. 'Students don't care what you know until they know that you care' is an accepted truth previously left to individual teachers' understanding and application. We Care Schools invite educators, students, parents and school partners to co-create a culture of caring as the foundation for learning and community," said Kim Mitchell, director of our Center for Community Renewal.

"We Care Schools are proving to be a fun opportunity to align a gift we all have in common, our capacity to care. It doesn't take a training manual to care, but when we practice intentionally prioritizing that gift in all our daily relations, the power of caring together is released."

A We Care School community begins co-creating a culture of caring equipped with new insights into the Community Renewal model and a new game, Caught-You-Caring. This school-year duration game involves observing caring acts, then writing the caring act on a card along with names of the actor and observer. Caught-You-Caring is practical

skill-building to see good in others. It is also structured for coopetition (combining cooperation, collaboration and competition) through teams connected across grade levels.

Additionally, the school community is encouraged to experiment with creating practices to prioritize caring actions. During the pilot year, 18 educators and students at University were celebrated with Pathfinder Awards for innovations and practices that contributed to creating a culture of caring. One example: a fourth-grade student's

pathfinder initiative became known as Recess Rangers. The shy student blossomed socially and emotionally by enlisting and training 40 students in evoking student behaviors that contribute to a school culture of caring. For perhaps the first time in the history of recess, behavioral problems practically vanished.

"My hope for the future is that we see children who learn relational skills and learn how to be a better community member," Mainiero said. "And there in turn they create a better country, a better city and a better community wherever they go. We want them to care about others. That's number one."



This is an amazing cause and we are going to get behind it one million percent. At the end of the day, we want to produce a culture of individuals who care."

**- Atkins Elementary Principal
Belinda Stewart**

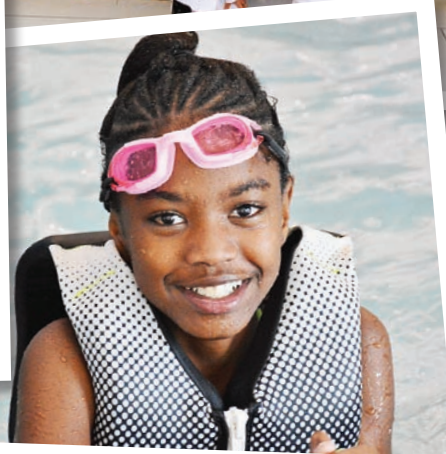


Join us this fall on a neighborhood tour and see how you can get involved! Upcoming tours: Sept. 19, Oct. 17, Nov. 7, Dec. 5.

Congratulations to the 2019 graduating class at our Adult Renewal Academy!



We love our volunteers! About 40 students and staff from Word of God Academy gave a day to work at four of our Friendship Houses!



Our Friendship House youth spent part of their summer learning water safety at the YMCA of Northwest Louisiana.



Community Renewal Founder Mack McCarter and Katie Couric became fast friends when Mack spoke at The Aspen Institute's Weave conference in Washington, D.C.



Mack was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Letters by Nyack College in White Plains, N.Y., where he was inducted into the Nyack President's Hall of Distinction.

BRIDGE BUILDERS

Sending thanks this fall to two of our longtime partners – AEP Swepeco and STAT Home Health – for their ongoing support in strengthening the foundation for safe and caring communities!



STAT
Home Health

STAT Home Health gladly supports Community Renewal. Their mission and their values line up with the values we believe in and operate with at STAT Home Health. We operate by five core values. But the one that really lines up with Community Renewal is our core values number three – “Joyful Purpose.” Community Renewal engrains itself in challenged neighborhoods and walks in love to make a difference. That is the same approach that STAT home health has with each patient. The love of Jesus leads the way.”

– Pat Durr, partner/administrator/regional sales director,
STAT Home Health



Pat and Shanna Durr stand with CRI's Jimmy Graves at the annual Cornerstone Luncheon.

AEP SWEPCO donated \$20,000 in August to support Operation HOPE youth programs.



**SOUTHWESTERN
ELECTRIC POWER
COMPANY**

For nearly two decades, SWEPCO has partnered with Community Renewal because we share a common mission to help those most in need within our community. I cannot tell you how rewarding it is to see the youth grow up in the positive culture fostered by the dedicated Community Renewal team. The same love and support extends to families throughout the community. I encourage members of the local business community to go by and visit one of the local Friendship Houses. You will leave with a deep appreciation for the mission Community Renewal is fulfilling and how all of our futures are built one child at a time.”

– Brian Bond, vice president of external affairs, AEP SWEPCO

GET INVOLVED!

Your business, church, school or other group can also make a difference in our community! For more information, contact Jimmy Graves, our director of development, at 318-425-3222.



COMMUNITY RENEWAL INTERNATIONAL

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a word from mack

WE ARE ON A TREMENDOUS JOURNEY

What a challenge our society faces today! Watch the news for just a moment and we quickly see that the forces of dysfunction are so immense!

It all begins with understanding the basic nature of what human society actually is and then proceeding to grow a healthy society. CRI launched based upon the great historian of civilization, Arnold Toynbee's definition of society as "a system of relationships." That was the "AHA moment!" Society can only get better and better as people get better and better. And folks can only do that through positive and caring relationships.

We all know that human friendship is the vehicle which carries us to higher and higher levels of well-being. We all know that to be a friend and to have a friend means that you must act and react in certain careful ways as well as consistently sustain that behavior and mindset. We also know that there are things you must not do or violate as friends. And finally we know that even if we let each other down, then there is the trump card of forgiveness which restores the relationship if both are willing.

So we all know how to participate in the basic building block of living that gets better and better (and makes us better in the process!) We call this societal molecule, "friendship." We keep collapsing our societies over and over because we forget that all human society is by its very nature composed of and stands upon positive human relationships! You cannot ignore friendships and expect them to grow! But we can conversely grow better and better societies by growing and connecting ALL positive relationships in a systemic and dynamic way! This means giving intentional attention to the Relational Foundation of

our common existence.

The best analogy here is that of utilizing the properties of the particles of light which we call, "photons." We can now capture "light" by flipping a switch. It is a great advance for us. We can make a dark place now bright! The room is filled with "photons" but they are quite diffuse and meandering, (not a bad thing if you want to fill a dark room with light.) But someone had an idea to take all of these diffuse photons and siphon them through a prism which makes them all march in a straight line and now we have "lasers" which can produce all kinds of great benefits in health care and other areas.

So it is with reconstructing the foundations of society! We already have existing caring relationships filled with millions of caring human beings. But we are diffuse and meandering in our heartfelt acts of caring thus we have not met the invasion of societal dysfunction in a united way and have lost over and over in our history.

But if we now coordinate our caring in a systematic way, then the power of that caring can be so concentrated that it can transform our cities and sustain generational betterment. Here is our belief: Caring alone cannot fix our cities, but caring together can! The prism that we use is the only humanly connected collectivity that has NOT collapsed: the village.

We are embarked on a tremendous journey. It is a High Cause to give our children and those who follow a way to grow a new world where caring for one another reigns supreme. We call it Community Renewal and we invite everyone to join this march that steps right off the map of history and into a new land of loving. Thank each and all of you for keeping the cadence of caring!



about **MACK MCCARTER**

Mack McCarter is founder and coordinator of Community Renewal International. A native of Shreveport, La., Mack holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in religion from Texas Christian University and a Master of Divinity Degree from Brite Divinity School.

He served as a pastor for 18 years in Texas before returning to Shreveport in 1991 to begin implementing his vision for community renewal. CRI was formally organized in 1994 and under Mack's leadership has grown into an organization which has received national and international recognition for its life-changing impact.



Many people have had their dreams crushed and through the power of friendship we give them the courage to dream again."

- Mack McCarter