



# The Porch Light

*Be a good neighbor; remember to keep the porch light on at night !*

Coldstream Homestead  
Montebello Community  
Corporation (CHMCC)

Volume 3, Issue 2

March 2011

**Town Hall Meeting with Mayor Rawlings-Blake  
6:30pm– 9:00pm, Thurs. April 28, 2011  
Mergenthaler Vocational H.S., 3500 Hillen Rd.**

**CHMCC Puts  
The Puzzle's  
Pieces Together**

## A Bittersweet Ending For Tivoly Avenue Residents

This summer, Olive Stewart will pack nearly 35 years worth of memories and say good-bye to a home and neighborhood she loved and fought for.

Mrs. Stewart first arrived in CHM in the spring of 1976. She was dissatisfied with the East Baltimore community where she had been living, and her search for a new home led her to 2700 block of Tivoly Avenue.

While it may be hard for those familiar with the community today to believe, Tivoly,

**“Black women are born into the struggle from day one”**

Fenwick, and Hugo Avenues were once safe, lovely tree-lined streets overlooking the historic summer home of Johns Hopkins. On that day in 1976, the beauty of the area was apparent, and Mrs. Stewart, who had recently moved to Baltimore from Jamaica, wanted nothing more than to live her American dream on Tivoly. She found a house to rent and, only six months later, the owner offered to sell her the house and assist in financing the sale.

In a time she will always remember as idyllic, Mrs. Stewart and her husband, in between working and raising a family, transformed their new Tivoly address into a home they could be proud of. The home where they planned to spend the rest of their lives. They finished the basement, remodeled the kitchen, added a bathroom, and made many other small improvements.

Around 1990, Mrs. Stewart's block began to change. Speculative investors from outside of the community bought houses and rented them to apathetic tenants. Crime and violence were soon common on Tivoly. The houses started to deteriorate, and were eventually abandoned.

If a rising tide lifts all boats, a plummeting tide must cause them to sink. When droppings from pigeons



**Olive Stewart of Tivoly Ave.**

roosting at the vacant house next door began to pile on Mrs. Stewart's porch, she was forced to build an enclosure. When that neglected house's roof collapsed, she had to raise her own basement floor to avert the flow of damaging rainwater. Her homeowner's insurance rates rose to over \$1,800 per year before the company eventually chose not to renew the policy. The

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One can sometimes be overwhelmed by the hundreds of pieces to a puzzle. It can be challenging and discouraging—but through sheer will, stick-to-itiveness and determination eventually the puzzle unfolds and a thing of beauty is unveiled.

Currently, CHM is connecting those disparate pieces to re-define a community:

- Harford Road streetscape
- Tivoly Avenue project
- Kirk Avenue, The Alameda and Harford Road infrastructure projects
- Construction of the new Clifton Park rec. center
- Coldstream Park improvements
- A new charter school
- CSAFE Reentry Services
- Healthy Neighborhoods Program
- Lake Montebello Improvements
- CHMCC master plan
- After School, Nutrition & Youth Programs
- Neighborhoods for All Ages Seniors Program

While putting this puzzle together is often times slow and incremental, a thing of beauty is starting to be revealed. With the support of our partners, the neighborhood you deserve is well on its way. Change is coming!



## ...the neighborhood you want

After a long run around Lake Montebello and playing with the dog at the dog park Saturday morning, I realized that hunger was getting the best of me. With the refrigerator bare the next best option was a quick stroll up the street to neighborhood café/ bistro, you know, the one that has Wi-Fi and free internet access, the juice bar and the open-mike night on Mondays. After brunch I figured I would purchase some groceries two blocks over at the ever popular corner store that has the widest selection of locally grown fresh produce.

Now this account of my Saturday may not be possible in our current neighborhood, but if neighbors had their way, services similar to those and more would be the qualities that make our neighborhood the hottest place to be in Baltimore. Those sentiments reflect some of the views of neighbors who gathered at a recent Chat in CHM potluck.

Over the last several years a few

hardy and motivated neighbors have been gathering informally for potlucks around the kitchen table, on the porch the backyard and local parks, collaborating on ideas that can improve our community. Their efforts, with that of the community organization, CHMCC, have led to CHM Master Plan and enhancements ranging from community greening through tree plantings, the installation of spot lights at the Martin Luther Statue and improvements at Lake Montebello. The aim of the most recent gathering held the last Saturday in February was to focus on the services that would transform the community from not just a place we live, but to one where we spend our money and encourage our friends to move. The attendees chose to exempt issues like public safety, and education from this conversation since those issues are tackled regularly at community meetings. Still, while being mindful of those dominant issues, the addition of the following services would continually move the

community in an upward direction:

Coffee House / eat- in restaurants

Produce market/ butcher shop

Drycleaners

Eat-in restaurants

Community gardens

Community centers

Clean Block Competition / Parties

Laundry mart

Signs on the entry-ways to the community

Trash removal at parks

Ideas continued to flow well after the gathering concluded. Hopefully you too have suggestions to offer. What are the services you want to see in the community? How can you aid in improving the community? Please feel free to register your thoughts by sending an email to;

LiveinChum@Verizon.net

## C-SAFE Positively Impacting Lives

Last month residents from the community benefited from our College Career Day and Trade Jobs 2011. The two day event included one-on-one job interviews, internet job search and trade school application assistance. Participants had an opportunity to speak with representatives from Civic Works, Sojourner Douglas College, Morgan State University and University of MD of College Park. Our guest speaker Michael Austin shared a video with our youth regarding charting a positive path for your life and the importance of goal setting. Residents also received information regarding free health care services, record expungement and affordable housing.

C-SAFE Reentry services include:

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

- RESUME WRITING
- INTERNET JOB SEARCH
- JOB TRAINING CLASSES

HEALTH CARE REFERRAL

GED CLASS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

- TRADE SCHOOL
- COLLEGE UNIVERSITY
- VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

RECORD EXPUNGEMENT

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

If you need individual assistance regarding services listed above call to schedule an appointment during

### RESOURCE CONNECTION WEDNESDAY'S

TIME: 12-2pm (Every Wednesday)

Call: 410-235-6715 to schedule an appointment or for more information contact:

Catherine Trotter

[chm.csafe@gmx.com](mailto:chm.csafe@gmx.com)



## Tivoly Ave. *Continued from page 1*

Stewart's home and area was considered too high a risk.

"Black women are born into the struggle from day one" asserts Mrs. Stewart. She fought valiantly for her home and for Tivoly. Outreach to various elected officials initially created a flurry of visits and promises. But with each new election cycle, it became apparent that those promises would remain unfulfilled for many years.

Today, crossing the threshold of Mrs. Stewart's tastefully decorated abode which stands in stark contrast from the outside surroundings, it is easy to understand why she chose the home in 1976, why she fought with bureaucrats, and why the prospect of leaving is bittersweet. In a deal orchestrated by CHMCC, the few homeowners left on the 2700 block of Tivoly Ave learned that the City would finally purchase and raze their homes. Mrs. Stewart credits CHMCC's Executive Director, Mark Washington for leading the charge and City Council member Mary Pat Clarke and Deputy Housing Commissioner, Julia Day as the individuals who were key in finally bringing this excruciating slow decline to an end.

After years of confronting blight outside her door each day, Mrs. Stewart is relieved at the prospect for a fresh start. She is also saddened that once again she will be starting anew, having to recreate relationships. She will miss the familiarity and warmth of her neighbors on Tivoly Avenue and CHM. And CHM will miss her too.

## CHM Wishes Wallace "Butch" McGinnis A Speedy Recovery

Well wishes are pouring in for a man you just can't slow down. Wallace "Butch" McGinnis is recovering nicely from hip replacement surgery. Always on the go and always doing for others, "Butch" as he is affectionately known, has been a leader in the CHM community for decades and a great source of inspiration for this writer.



Volumes could be written about the selfless work Mr. McGinnis has done for others and this community and his willingness to

give to others is only exceeded by his kindness and wit. One of the smartest people I have ever met, Mr. McGinnis has received accolades and awards for his good deeds from elected officials, philanthropic groups and the private sector.

Neighbors are all better people for knowing Butch McGinnis and CHM is a better place for having him. Get Well Butch, See You Soon!

## Just A Quick Thought

For years CHMCC has been lobbying elected officials to establish some form of means testing for utility bills and advocating for pro-rating utility bills for the elderly and those on fixed and limited incomes. As we face the potential of another 9% increase in water utility rates, we fully recognize the City's requirement to meet federal mandates and the need to improve our aging water system infrastructure.

But, placing the city's most vulnerable in greater

**...another 9% increase in water utility rates...**

jeopardy without spreading the burden evenly to other jurisdictions that benefit from our water resources, is questionable. CHM applauds the recommendation of the Mayor and Board of Estimates for calling for a similar measure.

Conversely, a more fair and equitable system that protects those most susceptible to counter productive policies must be devised. Allowing those who can least afford it to be victimized by additional predatory practices is not the safety net government should provide. While the recent efforts in Annapolis are a step in the right direction, one should never face the threat of losing their home due to their inability to pay a utility bill.

As for that other unregulated utility monopoly, BGE, the same should apply. While profits are important, people are more important. **Just a quick thought.**

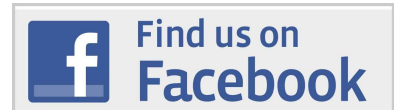
### Coldstream Homestead Montebello Community Corporation

Neighbors are encouraged to submit articles and ideas to the *Porch Light*. Please submit your thoughts using one of the following methods:

3220-A The Alameda  
Baltimore MD 21218  
Mark Washington, Executive Director

Phone: 410-235-6715  
Fax: 410-235-7456  
E-mail: [chmc.corp@verizon.net](mailto:chmc.corp@verizon.net)

Visit us on the web at:  
[www.LiveInChum.org](http://www.LiveInChum.org)



# Sign up for a **Free** Energy Savers Kit

The **Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge** informs you about low-no cost ways lower your bills. Take a pledge to save energy, and receive a **FREE** pledge kit!

## Be a Leader!

If you enjoy the program and have friends who you think are interested in saving money, sign up to be an **Energy Captain!** You can help to spread energy saving information across the neighborhood. Energy Captains will be given a free training, and **\$100 worth of energy saving goodies** for your home! You will also receive a t-shirt, captains' kit, and a whole lot of advice for how you can significantly lower your bill.



**Anna Ewing**

Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge

(443) 610.3826

(410) 927-6088

[Anna.ewing@baltimoreenergychallenge.org](mailto:Anna.ewing@baltimoreenergychallenge.org)



**Community Wide**

**Yard Sale**

**Saturday May 21**

**9:00am to 1:00pm**

**Rent a table for \$10**

**Contact Neil at**

**410.235.6715**

**[LivInChum@verizon.net](mailto:LivInChum@verizon.net)**