Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) has obtained a $1,682,134 grant from the New York State Housing Trust Fund to rehabilitate a long-vacant but architecturally significant building on the northwest corner of Main & Ferry Streets in Buffalo and to build a complementary adjoining structure. Once complete, the two buildings will house the HOME offices as well as 10 units of energy-efficient barrier-free affordable housing.

In addition to providing new housing, the project marries architectural preservation with community development—changing the face of the highly visible Main Street intersection which acts as a gateway to both Buffalo’s Linwood-Oxford and Cold Springs neighborhoods. It will also provide the first permanent home for the nationally recognized fair housing agency, which last year served more than 10,000 residents from all parts of the Buffalo-Niagara region.

To build its offices, HOME has undertaken a half-million dollar Capital Campaign. Beginning with a leadership gift from the Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, in twelve months HOME raised $325,000—65 percent of its goal.

The M&T Charitable Foundation and the Mulroy Family Foundation recently announced contributions of $30,000 and $50,000 respectively.

With funding previously committed by Mayor Byron W. Brown on behalf of the City of Buffalo and Federal Home Loan Bank of New York for construction of the housing units, to date HOME has secured approximately $2.4 million dollars for the project.

“The Home for HOME is no longer just a dream,” said Executive Director Scott W. Gehl. “With more than 93 percent of the project’s cost already committed, we believe that local foundations, businesses, and people who believe in equal opportunity and understand the importance of diversity to our region will help us raise the last dollars needed. Even in hard times, this community will come through.”

HOME’s Main-Ferry project was conceived by the board’s Program Operations and Planning Committee and Janet Meiselman of Oxford Consulting. Designed by architects Charles Gordon and Robert Conway, general contractor Paul Lamparelli estimates about eleven months from groundbreaking to completion.

Thank you to all our supporters!
HOME is absolutely ecstatic to introduce to you its newest youngest members—the Children for Change and Teens for Tomorrow. Both membership groups feature wonderfully dedicated conscientious youth members of our very own communities.

The Children for Change, ages 12 and under, and Teens for Tomorrow, ages 13-18, meet at least once a quarter. Just a few of the topics that the groups discuss include housing, discrimination and life opportunities. They are eagerly engaged in the work of HOME and have already begun to let their voices be heard. At their very first meeting they created a logo, pledge (see right column) and recruitment program.

They were first featured at HOME’s 46th anniversary celebration this past April.

Recently they hosted their first fundraising endeavor raising $50.50 at HOME’s July boat ride! The youth members bring such a vibrant and new perspective to the work of HOME. Their energy encourages us that better days are certainly coming. While the children and teenagers are told of the discrimination of old, we must remember that they too experience it in a more covert manner. Not only does a youth membership to HOME offer an opportunity to stand for what is right but it equips them with the self-confidence that they too can make a difference. As the youth membership continues to grow HOME will expand its service mission to assist clients families with holiday meals and other resourceful initiatives—ideas generated by the children and teenagers.

A youth membership is also a wonderful way to continue the legacy and good work of affirmatively further fair housing and other civil liberties afforded by law but not always in practice.

We are always looking for new members for either the Children for Change or Teens for Tomorrow. Please let us know if you’re interested in joining or wish to sign your child/ren or grandchild/ren up for the program. It’s a wonderful way to continue the legacy of service and community responsibility.

Cali, Tyler, Marese, Jolie & Shavon

Please Renew Your Membership or Give the Gift of Membership in HOME.
Save a stamp and donate online at www.homeny.org. Thank you!

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May we list your name in Insight as a HOME supporter? _____ Yes _____ No

Categories of Membership (check one)
_____ Children for Change (12 and under) … any
_____ Teens for Tomorrow (13-18 years) ….. $5
_____ Students, Limited Income…………….. $10
_____ Individual Membership ……………….. $30
_____ Family/Household Membership …… $40
_____ Contributor …………………………… $50
_____ Patron………………………………… $100
_____ Sponsor ……………………………… $200
_____ Benefactor …………………………… $500
_____ Other ………………………………… $______

Special Corporate/Business memberships are available.
Visit www.homeny.org for details.
Contributions to HOME are Tax-Deductible.
For more information contact Shannon Koehn at 854-1400.
Influenza Shot Clinic

The Flu Season is upon us! On average, 226,000 people are hospitalized every year because of the Flu. It is important to stay healthy and get vaccinated! HOME will be hosting a flu clinic at our office on October 5, 2009 between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm. This is open to HOME members, friends, family and members of the community. Pneumonia vaccinations will also be available. Various types of insurances are accepted: Aetna, Independent Health, MVP Health Plan, Preferred Care, Capital District Physicians’ Health Plan (CDPHP), Medicare – Part B ONLY.

You can still get vaccinated even if you do not see your insurance carrier listed above for a minimal cost of $30.00 for a flu shot and $45.00 for a pneumonia shot. Please note: children 8 years old and younger cannot be vaccinated at this flu clinic and will have to contact their pediatrician. Any questions, please contact Jennifer Metzger at 854-1400, ext. 14.

Network with HOME members
Thursday, October 15, 2009

Have you or any of your friends, family members or colleagues ever wonder just what HOME really is? Join us at HOME’s third annual “Coming HOME” networking event.

It’s FREE, informative and lots of fun! The evening includes light refreshments, networking and chances to win wonderful prizes donated by local businesses. You will have a chance to meet HOME volunteers and staff, hear all about the work of the agency and witness some client stories.

So mark your calendar for Thursday, October 15th from 5:30-7:30pm. The event will take place in Canisius College’s Grupp Fireside Lounge (in the Student Union building on Hughes Street). More details will follow shortly.

Please be sure to pass this information along to anyone you think would be interested in learning more about HOME and standing with an organization which continues to educate, advocate and enforce the fair housing law to ensure that everyone lives in the communities and housing of their choice!

Free parking is available in the Jefferson & Delavan Ramp with shuttle service provided.

The event is open to all. For more information, to donate or RSVP please contact Shannon M. Koehn at skoehn@homeny.org or 716.854.1400 ext. 22.

Call for Volunteers

HOME is in search of committed volunteers to serve on agency committees or the board of directors. Interested members are invited to contact Nominating Chair Bill Berry at wberry@lSED.org or 716-853-3087 ext. 208 for more information.

Fair and Affordable Housing Seminar
Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Often affordable housing projects are not constructed due to a lack of community understanding of fair and affordable housing. Perceptions of fair and affordable housing do not often coincide with reality. Housing Opportunities Made Equal, the Erie County Fair Housing Partnership, and Erie County Department of Environment & Planning have co-sponsored a seminar to dispel the myths of fair and affordable housing.

On Wednesday, October 21st the seminar will take place at Erie Community College’s South Campus, 4041 Southwestern Blvd, Orchard Park, Building 5, Room 5101. Registration is at 4:00 p.m. with a light dinner provided; while the seminar begins at 5:00 p.m.

Topics that will be presented and discussed include:

- Demographic trends and fair housing in Western New York, presented by Richard Deitz and Grace McKenzie;
- Affordable housing projects (examples of affordable housing projects and community involvement in constructing these projects), presented by Mike Riegel and Richard Leimbach;
- Overlay Districts where affordable housing may be most sustainable and desirable, presented by Gary Black; and
- Fair and affordable housing in Comprehensive Plans, presented by Andrew Reilly.

The Master of Ceremonies will be Dan Symoniak of Realty USA.

While this seminar gives four hours of training credit to municipal board members, everyone from architects to concerned community members may attend.

Registration is requested. For more information or to register, please contact Grace McKenzie at 716-854-1400 ext 22.
The Greater Buffalo Community Housing Center (CHC) works daily to change the lives of people in a positive way. Many people come to us with stories of extreme hardship, only wanting a fair chance in life. Over the course of the year, there have been many memorable people with which I have worked. One story stands out in particular.

Lisa is a 46 year-old, African-American female mother of two teenage sons, ages 14 and 16, who had lived on the East Side of Buffalo with her sons all of their lives.

When I first met with Lisa to discuss her housing needs, she told me that it was extremely important for her to move to an area that was safe for her family. Lisa explained to me that a few days prior to our meeting, her oldest son had a bullet graze his head while they were riding in their car, going to a store two blocks away from their home. Thankfully her son was not seriously injured. But, this incident was a signal: they needed to move someplace safe.

Lisa admitted that she was terrified for the lives of her teenage boys, and she was worried about the impact the neighborhood was having on them. Lisa told me that she needed to move to a new environment immediately because she wanted better for her sons. During one of my weekly phone calls with Lisa to assist her on her housing search, she told me that she was extremely frustrated and having a hard time finding housing.

Lisa said that she was being turned down frequently because she had a Section 8 voucher. Lisa informed me that her sons were being harassed whenever they went outside, and they often got into fights due to this harassment. As a result, neither she nor her children felt safe in their own home.

During this phone conversation, Lisa kept repeating to me over and over again: “We have to get out of here; we have to get out of here; I can’t take it no more.”

Her family was overwhelmed with their living circumstances and they were afraid to leave their home.

Working with the CHC program, Lisa was able to find an apartment in North Buffalo. After submitting all of her necessary paper work for this North Buffalo apartment, she told me that she finally had piece of mind for herself and her children. Lisa said, with a big smile on her face, that she has not seen her children this content in years, and she is so grateful for all the help the CHC program has provided for her family.

The CHC program is designed to help people, like Lisa, to live in the housing and in the communities of their choice while providing counseling and assistance in that move to make it a smooth transition. The CHC changes lives one person at a time by helping people to live where their heart desires and their means permit.

Lisa said, with a big smile on her face, that she had not seen her children this content in years.”

Sometimes it takes a tragedy to make us realize what is important in life and reevaluate our priorities. Maria has endured more hardship and trauma in the past 20 years than anyone should have to endure over a lifetime. Childhood trauma and abuse led Maria to turn to drugs for comfort and coping. Maria described herself as drifting along in life without any real purpose or direction. She did not trust anyone, especially males, and was afraid to love. Maria had two beautiful children, and because of her drug use, they had been taken away. That situation devastated her and was a wakeup call – she decided to turn her life around.

Maria had been in drug treatment in the past and it had never worked, probably because she was not truly ready. This time she went to a rehabilitation center and got clean for good. Maria applied and was awarded Section 8 housing assistance. Because she now had Section 8 assistance, she enrolled in HOME’s CHC program. She was able to move her family out of the dangerous neighborhood they were living in and onto a quiet street in North Buffalo where her children can play in a fenced yard. She got herself a job and through hard work and determination, got her children back.

After HOME gave Maria security deposit assistance, she decided to enroll in HOME’s GO! Program. She is now in the process of repairing her credit so that she can eventually buy a home of her own. Maria also is looking forward to enrolling in college to become an addictions counselor so that she may help others who are battling addictions.

Maria truly has a gift for touching others’ lives. Her sense of self and her resiliency are humbling. It’s great to see Maria make so many positive changes in her life and truly embrace the concept of self-sufficiency.
**HOME’S Hope: Inspirational Stories from Our Clients**

Brad, a landlord from South Buffalo, was having a difficult time getting his questions about the eviction process answered.

He had rented to a woman who moved out of the premises shortly after allowing her adult son to move in. This wasn’t a problem for Brad until the son stopped paying the rent and stopped returning Brad’s calls.

Brad called three local agencies with questions regarding notice and eviction and was informed that they did not help landlords, only tenants. Fortunately, one of the agencies referred Brad to HOME where he was able to speak with a counselor who took him through the eviction process step by step.

Brad called the following week to purchase *The Guide to Landlord’s Rights* with his credit card. He spoke with two other HOME staff members who were equally helpful to him.

Brad could not stop singing the praises of HOME and staff, and he was grateful that we were here to assist him in his time of need.

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Joe is an older single man who lives with his dog. He enjoys his quiet lifestyle but could not put up with any problems with repairs to his Buffalo apartment. For several months, Joe was trying to get the landlord to do necessary repairs to the front stairs and to repair a leak in the bathroom. Finally, Joe had enough and called the Building Inspector, using advice from a HOME counselor. In retaliation, the landlord gave Joe a 30 day notice to vacate.

Dejected, he called HOME a second time for help. Through counseling and referrals, he was able to find new housing in the suburb of his choice. Now Joe lives in the Town of Tonawanda and loves it there.

His new landlord is very conscientious and they get along well with clear communication and understandings from the beginning of his tenancy. Using the move-in checklist HOME provided, Joe was able to ensure that his new apartment was in good condition. He called back just to say “thank you.”

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For more stories, visit www.homeny.org.

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**Spend Smart**

by Faith A. Perry, Secretary-Bookkeeper

In this season of economic difficulty, it may be a struggle for some to make monthly rent or mortgage payments. As we all know, failure to pay can result in evictions or even foreclosures, and while certain situations may be extenuating and out of our control, that may be of little concern to the landlord or the mortgage lender. It is imperative for us to be finance savvy and to make the right decisions about where our money is spent. In order to steer clear of the “Rob Peter to pay Paul” mentality here are ways that we can keep more money in our pockets and less sifting out through our fingers.

1. **Write your list before going shopping.** Make a careful plan and stick to it. Coupons are an added bonus!

2. **Remember to turn off all lights before you leave home.**

3. **Try generic brands of items you buy regularly.** Don’t be a marketer’s dream; try out the store brand. Not only will you save a few cents, you may actually like it better.

4. **Visit your local library.** The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library offers speakers, GED classes, computer trainings, and exercise classes to name a few perks. You can also check out books, movies and CDs, read current magazines and newspapers, and stay abreast of community events.

5. **Reevaluate the “latte factor.”** How much of your income is spent weekly on Tim Horton’s, Netflix, TiVo and iTunes? If you stopped spending on these luxuries that money could be spent on something more important.
Summertime Events at a Glance: The July Boat Ride & The Poetry of Diversity

Housing Opportunities Made Equal was very proud to sponsor two exciting events this summer: The July Boat Ride and The Poetry of Diversity.

On July 18, about 60 HOME members set sail aboard the Miss Buffalo II to celebrate membership in HOME. The event raised more than $900 for HOME. One HOME member won the raffle of the overnight stay at the Beau-fleuve Bed & Breakfast. A joyful time was had by all.

On August 21, HOME, Just Buffalo Literary Center, and Albright Knox Art Gallery co-sponsored The Poetry of Diversity Gusto at the Gallery event where children were able to create art and poetry. Then, there was a poetry reading. Annette Daniels-Taylor was the master of ceremonies for the poetry reading. Some of the poets that read that evening were: Tomika Starks, Adreana Martin, Ten Thousand, and Marilyn Foote-Kragbe. Thank you to all the poets who participated in “The Poetry of Diversity” and made it especially entertaining. Following the reading, a fair housing film was shown. The event was in appreciation of all of our members and to reach out to the global community.

Special “Thank You” goes to everyone who had made these very successful events possible. Also, without the members of HOME we would not be able to produce such wonderful events. Thank you!

There will be more events sponsored by HOME in the near future, such as the October Membership Event at Canisius College. For more information about events sponsored by HOME, please contact Shannon Koehn at 716-854-1400 extension 17 or visit our website at www.homeny.org.

Egeria K. Koehn builds a home during the children’s art activity at “The Poetry of Diversity.”

Poet Tomika Starks recites her original work: “Have You Ever Listened to a Poem Speak?”

HOME’s Mission:
Housing Opportunities Made Equal is a civil rights organization working to promote the value of diversity and to ensure the people of Western New York an equal opportunity to live in the housing and communities of their choice through education, advocacy, enforcement of fair housing laws, and the creation of new housing opportunities.

HOME’s Wish List:
Postage stamps, digital cameras with 2 GB memory cards, 1 GB thumb drives, printers, laptop computers, donated advertising space, volunteers for board committees, new HOME members.

MEMBERSHIP IS OUR STRENGTH!
Insight is published through the generous support of contributors to HOME

Thank you to all our patrons….

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Membership is Our Strength!