Building Thriving Communities

For more than 25 years, Community Preservation and Development Corporation (CPDC) has acquired, redeveloped, constructed and operated award-winning housing communities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Today, CPDC owns and operates more than 5,000 residential apartments. In addition to housing, we are helping nearly 10,000 residents grow and thrive by offering critical resources right where they live.

But housing alone is not enough to help low-income individuals and families have a chance at a healthy, productive life.

Affordable housing developers can make a difference by helping low-income individuals and families meet their needs where they live. Since 1989, CPDC has helped create opportunities for our residents to advance their education, earn a living wage, access medical care, buy healthy foods and more.

These tailored, site-based programs, or ‘Resident Services,’ were once the extent of our work in the community. Today however, CPDC has evolved to do more than resident services.

Impacting Communities | Resident Engagement and Community Development

With a new, strategic focus on community development, CPDC has evolved from a service provider to an active participant in neighborhood planning and joint creator of community solutions. To reflect this shift—and our commitment to a deeper involvement and investment in communities—we have redefined our work as ‘Community Impact Strategies’ (CIS). CIS well encompasses our expanded mission not only to serve residents but to collaborate broadly to build foundations for stronger local communities.

Our CIS team works with residents, private sector institutions, other non-profit organizations, and local and federal government agencies to create strategic alliances. These alliances result in increased programs, services, and resources for residents and community members, aligned with CPDC’s community building model.
Our Community Building Model

CPDC’s community building model is built upon five areas that serve as the foundation for CIS initiatives:

1. **Economic Development**: providing access to job placement and training, financial literacy workshops, transportation and technology access.

2. **Education**: focusing on early school readiness, youth development, parent engagement and adult literacy.

3. **Environment**: promoting energy efficiency, recycling and water conservation.

4. **Health and Wellness**: encouraging health education and awareness, providing nutrition and fitness classes and supporting access to social and human services.

5. **Resident Engagement**: supporting civic involvement, volunteerism, neighborhood leadership, community participation and cultural exchange.

The strategic implementation of initiatives that advance each area in this model is how CPDC effectively lays the foundation for stronger communities. Our focus on economic development, education, sustainability, health and wellness and resident engagement has resulted in residents who are empowered and performing better in school; acquiring new job skills and securing stable employment; learning financial literacy and growing their savings; and developing new healthy eating and exercise habits.

“We have redefined our work as ‘Community Impact Strategies’: a new title that well encompasses our expanded work not only serving residents but collaborating broadly to support the collective interests of local communities.”
In the heart of Silver Spring, MD, a close-knit community of primarily immigrant families at Park Montgomery is embracing economic development as a foundation for both their families and community growth.

Through a grant provided by Capital One Bank, CPDC’s CIS team at Park Montgomery partnered with IMPACT Silver Spring to create the first Family Asset Building (FAB) Circle prototype in the Washington, D.C. region. The FAB Circle was created to increase residents’ access to opportunities for economic empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Through the FAB Circle, residents are establishing and contributing to savings accounts, learning English to improve their job prospects, attending college and establishing small businesses. They are taking an active role in the decision making that affects quality of life in their community.

By promoting economic development, CPDC connects residents with resources, opportunities, and partnerships that help them grow and thrive.

**RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT**

**Elias Abdullahi** is a six-year resident of Park Montgomery and co-founder of the community’s Ekub, an Ethiopian cultural money saving program.

The 20 members of the Ekub meet for 20 sessions, collecting $100 from each participant per session for a total of $2,000 per session over a period of 10 months. At each Ekub, a member’s name is drawn and the winner takes the $2,000 pot of money. The process is repeated at each session until everyone in the Ekub has collected the pot of money at least once.

“Ekub operates contrary to lending firms in the United States, which have strict financial rules and regulations for customers. For Ekub, the most sacred word is ‘trust.’ Trust is the rule and regulation that governs the group’s interpersonal and financial relations.”

— *Elias Abdullahi*
Education

STONY BROOK

At the Stony Brook community in Alexandria, VA, CPDC’s CIS staff are working to provide a spectrum of educational opportunities to residents of all ages and backgrounds. Youth after school programs and an award-winning summer reading program keep children engaged. For teens, Stony Brook’s college preparatory program provides mentorship, introduces high school residents to the university admissions process and offers annual college tours.

Adults with children who speak English as a second language benefit from a program to help their children acclimate and thrive in American schools. Financial education is not excluded. CPDC believes in the power of strong financial planning to build stable home environments. At Stony Brook, we offer credit counseling to promote financial independence. Education initiatives at Stony Brook include:

- Fairfax County School Readiness Program
- Hilltop Microfinance Initiative
- College Preparatory Program Annual college tours
- Fairfax County Public Library Youth Summer Reading Program Site
- Fairfax County Youth Volunteer Site

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

Deborah Asabere moved to Stony Brook while in pre-school and today attends Virginia Tech, where she was accepted into the prestigious and competitive School of Engineering. While in high school, Deborah was a member of the lacrosse and field hockey teams, as well as serving as a member of the National Honor Society, National History Society and a Peer Mentor. At Stony Brook, she was a frequent volunteer in the after-school program and for community events and was awarded a CPDC “Distinguished Volunteer Award.”

“Living in Stony Brook since pre-school, I can attest that the mentorship, programs, weekly homework help and SAT preparation provided have all paid off. My advice to teens is to focus on school, learn to balance your social life and academic life and use all available resources on your journey.”

— Deborah Asabere
Building to green standards, reducing our carbon footprint and encouraging behaviors to support the environment within communities is a CPDC priority. Our $6.7 million green renovation of the West Wood Oaks community in Fairfax, VA featured extensive improvements to two buildings and 54 apartments.

Designed to meet Enterprise Green Communities and EarthCraft Virginia Standards for green building, West Wood Oaks features solar panels on the roofs that assist its new hot water heaters, a system that reduces dependence on natural gas by an estimated 40 percent. Upgraded kitchens have EnergyStar-certified appliances; upgraded baths have low-flow toilets. HVAC systems have been replaced by high-efficiency, 15-SEER systems. Six apartments also meet universal design standards for people with disabilities.

CPDC understands the importance of energy conservation both from an asset management and an environmental perspective. Our sustainability measures are reducing monthly expenses for residents and helping them see the difference they can make to support a healthier environment.
Health and Wellness

ARBOR VIEW

In an area of Southeast Washington, D.C. where access to fresh, nutritious foods and produce is scarce, CPDC residents along with local and national partners have built a rich, diverse network of food, health and wellness services that is benefitting not only residents, but the entire Ward 8 community.

Health and wellness initiatives at Arbor View include:

- Ward 8 food pantry
- Community gardens
- DC Department of Health Produce Plus program
- USDA Grocery Plus program
- Capital Area Food Bank Empowerment grant
- Capital Area Food Bank Technical Assistance Gardening grant
- Health and wellness youth summer camps

Arbor View’s CIS staff maximize these programs by regularly hosting cooking demonstrations to introduce residents to new, healthy food options and teach them how to prepare in-season foods available in the pantry.

With ongoing health and wellness initiatives across our communities, we are shaping the way residents learn about and access healthy foods. CPDC is committed to improving the health outcomes of low-income residents and helping them grow and thrive.

“We know that eating more vegetables and fruits can help people live happier and healthier lives, but some neighborhoods in our area suffer from a lack of access. Communities like Arbor View that grow their own food help fill in these gaps—and with fresh, tasty garden produce in their backyards, residents have increased control over their health.”

— MJ Crom, Food Growing Capacity Coordinator, Capital Area Food Bank
As the primary supplier for Arbor View’s on-site and resident-led community food pantry, Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) provides hundreds of residents living in and around Arbor View access to fresh produce and canned goods. Additionally, through empowerment and technical assistance grants, CAFB has funded a health-themed youth summer camp at Arbor View and constructed a community garden where residents grow tomatoes, herbs, peppers, squash, radishes, cucumbers, beets, carrots, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, onions, bean sprouts, potatoes, cantaloupes and squash.
Resident Engagement

EDGEWOOD COMMONS

A key goal of CPDC’s $50 million revitalization of the Northeast Washington, D.C. Edgewood Commons campus is to create a mixed-income community that is open, vibrant, engaged and on pace with the fast-developing surrounding community.

In addition to ‘opening up’ Edgewood physically through extensive renovations and new outdoor amenities, CPDC’s CIS team has embarked upon an innovative new approach to resident engagement—one that is empowering residents of diverse backgrounds to come together and take ownership in key processes.

CPDC’s “ONE Edgewood Network” has significantly increased resident engagement in the community by establishing an effective practice for bringing residents together monthly to share food, exchange small favors and solve concrete problems.

The shared operating culture of the Edgewood community now actively encourages and supports resident-led initiatives as the primary means of community change, as opposed to externally-imposed programs and decision making. A core group of 30 diverse residents and staff are committed to and actively working toward expanding the Network, based on principals of interdependence and shared quality of life.

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT

After years of living in Washington, D.C. and surviving challenges of drug addiction and disability, 35-year-old Emmett Kittrell Jr.—a multi-generational Edgewood resident whose father and cousin also live on the campus—made up his mind to become more involved in his 7-year-old daughter’s life and in his community.

While volunteering at a community event, Kittrell shared his passion for cooking and community building with CIS managers and was soon brought on board to provide catering for Edgewood’s resident Network Nights. Soon after, he joined a group of six residents as a Network Action Team Member and a graduate of the resident engagement group. As a result of his involvement in the Network, Kittrell completed two programs in the Edgewood/Brookland Collaborative Fatherhood Education and Empowerment and Development (FEED) Program and has since been an active parent in his daughter’s school parenting group. He has also since enrolled in the DC Central Kitchen Culinary Job Training Program, which trains unemployed adults for culinary careers, to pursue aspirations as a trained chef.
Measuring Program Outcomes

The impact of CPDC programs is evaluated by aligning each community’s action plan with a comprehensive Strategy Map. The Map contains a set of measurable strategies designed to reach intended results. Each strategy has a set of core performance measures. Data collected are entered into a database that allows CIS Managers to monitor and report on program performance and outcomes.

The Strategy Map also allows CIS staff to evaluate the quality of its partnerships with those partnerships that provide direct services to those living in and around CPDC communities.

Partnering with CPDC

CPDC is committed to affordable housing preservation, high-quality real estate development and community development both inside our communities and in the neighborhoods surrounding. We encourage broad participation in our CIS program—by residents, community leaders, local business owners and those who live in communities nearby—because this investment leads to stronger, healthier, more resilient neighborhoods, which in turn benefits everyone.

From national foundations and community-based organizations to our neighborhood volunteers, successful partnerships are the reason CPDC has been able to make a meaningful impact in people’s lives. Whether you wish to fund key programs, collaborate with residents as they seek to solve neighborhood problems, or volunteer at one of our food pantries, please consider joining CPDC and our other partners as we work together to build and grow thriving, resilient communities. We know we have made a difference, but with your help we can do so much more.
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MARYLAND
8403 Colesville Road, Suite 1150, Silver Spring, MD 20910
202-885-8900 (main) • 202-895-8805 (fax) • www.cpdc.org

VIRGINIA
413 Stuart Circle, Suite 300, Richmond, VA 23220
804-303-2330 (Real Estate Development)
804-303-2333 (Community Development) • www.cpdc.org

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