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Housing North Carolina Awards Honor Developments Expanding Local Housing Options

# Housing North Carolina Awards Honor Developments Expanding Local Housing Options

October 25, 2018 by Madison Fisler Lewis



RALEIGH — North Carolina's top honor for excellence in affordable housing has been awarded to six developments and neighborhoods that provide opportunities for home buyers, life-changing repairs for homeowners, apartment homes for seniors and families, and permanent supportive housing for adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD).

Sponsored by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, the 2018 Housing North Carolina Awards recognize properties in

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Asheville, Asheboro, Greensboro, Hickory, High Point and Raleigh that serve as models for other communities. In their 29<sup>th</sup> year, the awards were presented October 24 during the NC Affordable Housing Conference, which hosted nearly 1,000 housing industry professionals at the Raleigh Convention Center.

- **Building Independence, Raleigh**, permanent supportive housing for adults with IDD, developed by Habitat for Humanity of Wake County, the Serving Cup and Lutheran Services Carolinas.
- **Givens Gerber Park, Asheville**, affordable apartment homes for seniors with significant services and close proximity to health care that allows residents to age in place, developed by Opportunities South, LLC, and Givens Estates, Inc.
- **Northstone, Hickory**, a fully-developed, mixed-income neighborhood of single-family homes developed by Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley and the City of Hickory.
- **Ole Asheboro Neighborhood and Southside Neighborhood, Guilford County**, a mixture of new homes and rehabilitation of existing homes that expands and preserves affordable housing options for younger buyers and older homeowners, developed by Community Housing Solutions, the City of Greensboro and the City of High Point.
- **The Village at Stone Creek, Asheboro**, rehabilitated affordable apartment homes for families, developed by Halcon Development and East Point Homes.

***Editor: A description of each winner and the contact person follows:***

### **Building Independence, Raleigh**

Building Independence provides homes with supportive services for nine adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) that enable them to establish and maintain their independence in the community and provide peace of mind for their families.

An innovative collaboration among Habitat for Humanity of Wake County, the Serving Cup and Lutheran Services

Carolinas, this development increases supportive housing options for adults with IDD in Raleigh. The Serving Cup advocated and planned for the project while Habitat for Humanity of Wake County acquired in-kind donations and mobilized more than 400 volunteers to build the development. Lutheran Services Carolinas secured funds and designed the slate of supportive services.

Building Independence provides a home for six men and three women ranging in age from 21 to 42 years old. Each resident has his or her own bathroom and bedroom with a shared kitchen, dining room and living area in each home. One of the homes features a larger common space to accommodate resident activities. The homes are energy efficient and close to public transportation and shopping, allowing residents to remain independent as they work or volunteer in the community or attend vocational training. The residents or their families pay an affordable monthly fee to cover utilities and supportive services.

Building Independence received funding from the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund.

*Contact: Melissa Parrish, director of foundation relations, Lutheran Services Carolinas, 704-603-1683.*

## **Givens Gerber Park, Asheville**

Givens Gerber Park provides a unique model of affordable apartment homes for seniors coupled with services and amenities that allow them to age in place. Developed by Opportunity South, LLC, and Givens Estates, Inc., the community offers 120 one- and two-bedroom garden apartments that range in size from 690 to 975 square feet. Rents range from \$255 to \$624, with nearly two thirds of the units serving seniors with extremely low incomes.

The development features a library, fitness room, community room with a fireplace and kitchen, raised garden beds, a screened-in porch, several sitting areas and classes including exercise and arts and crafts.

This winning development was the first phase of a larger community that offers 60 additional tax credit apartments, as

well as another 82 for seniors whose incomes exceed income limits for tax credit developments but are too low for retirement or congregate care facilities. The community features a food pantry and a café that offers moderate-priced meals and a central location for socializing.

Because assisted living and in-home care is potentially out of reach for seniors with low to moderate incomes, the developers paired housing with significant supportive services aimed at letting residents age in place. These include onsite resident service coordinators and a community nurse that coordinate health and wellness education programs and help residents connect with local services such as community-based care.

Located in urban south Asheville, Givens Gerber Park is conveniently located on public transportation routes and within minutes of retail stores, pharmacies and restaurants.

Givens Gerber Park was financed with Housing Credits awarded by the NC Housing Finance Agency.

*Contact: Teresa Stephens, Affordable Communities Director, Givens Communities, 828-771-2204*

## **Northstone, Hickory**

Identified as having the oldest housing stock in the state, Catawba County has long struggled to meet affordable housing needs. Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley has found a way to address that. Weaving together private and public funds, the Habitat purchased a subdivision in 2010 that today stands as the county's first mixed-income community. When finished, Northstone will consist of 10 affordable and 8 market rate single-family homes.

The homes' architecture evokes a traditional 1920s bungalow charm, enhanced with wooden siding, historic paint colors and architectural roofing shingles. The homes range in size from two- to four-bedroom single-family homes from 1,100 to 1,300 square feet. Each home comes with attached storage space at the back of the home.

The homes feature sealed crawl spaces, dehumidification

systems and indoor air quality modifications to improve health of homeowners and their families. Built to the U.S. Department of Energy's Zero Energy Ready standards, Northstone includes two homes that were certified as the first Zero Energy Ready homes in the state in 2016. All homes are handicap accessible and can be easily adapted to accommodate homeowners with disabilities.

Habitat sought to develop the mixed-income community based on research that indicates that children living in mixed-income neighborhoods have 16% higher earnings as adults and generate \$22,000 of additional tax-based revenue in their lifetimes.

Habitat prepares buyers to be successful homeowners with Habitat 101, an intensive pre-purchase curriculum. Buyers also take a financial literacy class and home maintenance and landscaping classes prior to closing on their homes.

The average sales price of the homes is \$130,000. The NC Housing Finance Agency provided zero-interest participation loans to the Habitat for Northstone, and the City of Hickory contributed funds for down payment assistance.

*Contact: Mitzi Gellman, executive director, Habitat for Humanity of Catawba Valley, 828-328-4663*

## **Ole Asheboro and Southside, Guilford County**

Two communities in Guilford County have gained new housing opportunities for home buyers and homeowners alike through a mixture of construction and rehabilitation. Leveraging public and private dollars and the work of local partners, Community Housing Solutions has preserved and expanded affordable housing options in Greensboro and High Point for older homeowners hoping to age in place and young home buyers raising families in the area.

In both the Ole Asheboro Neighborhood and the Southside Neighborhood, Community Housing Solutions received discounted and vacant lots from the cities of Greensboro and High Point as well as development subsidies for the rehabilitation of existing homes. Both neighborhoods feature new and rehabilitated homes with three bedrooms

approximately 1,500 square feet and sales prices ranging from \$95,000 to \$105,000. All homes are built to SystemVision standards to ensure low heating and cooling costs to help keep the homes affordable for homeowners.

In Ole Asheboro, one of Greensboro's oldest neighborhoods, architectural standards were adopted for the new homes to match the community's 1900s style. These homes are the latest in a two-decade revitalization effort that includes a new church, business growth and the repair of older homes by Community Housing Solutions. These efforts have helped more than 30 homeowners in Ole Asheboro, including elderly and disabled citizens who can now age in place due to critical repairs and accessibility modifications. In Southside, repair of existing homes and the creation of new ones has helped lower crime rates in the community and has inspired ongoing public-private partnerships that have so far brought together 150 volunteers to repair 11 homes for owners who may have otherwise had to move.

The NC Housing Finance Agency provided zero-interest, deferred second mortgages up to 20 percent of the purchase price for new home buyers in both communities, and the state's Housing Trust Fund dollars helped finance the home repairs.

*Contact: Gene Brown, executive director, Community Housing Solutions, 336-676-6986.*

### **The Village at Stone Creek, Asheboro**

The Village at Stone Creek in Asheboro first opened to residents in 1992, and over the decades, high vacancy rates and escalating crime made the property ripe for a full-scale makeover. The renovation of the development's seven buildings resulted in 56 apartment homes for working families and sparked praise and support from the City of Asheboro and its police force.

The complete rehabilitation of the community by Halcon Development and East Point Homes included extensive demolition and reconstruction, regrading of the land and the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms, mechanical systems and more. The end result are two- and -three-bedroom

garden apartments spanning in size from 800 to 1,000 square feet, with rents ranging from \$474 to \$585.

The renovation ultimately reduced the crime rate in the neighborhood and surrounding community as the new owners and management company worked closely with the Asheboro Police Department and neighbors to address safety concerns and implement crime prevention.

Rehabilitation of the Village at Stone Creek was financed by Housing Credits awarded by the NC Housing Finance Agency and investments from the state’s Housing Trust Fund and Workforce Housing Loan Program.

Contact: Traci Dusenbury, developer, Halcon Development, 804-320-1367

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