

Worcester Common Ground
Community Development Corporation

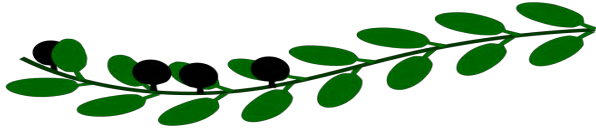


Annual Report 2017



Worcester Common Ground
Community Development Corporation

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THANK YOU DONORS

2016

Individual Gifts & Membership

Alvara Gyliapi	Horizon Acupuncture	Maria Paredes
Arline Rosario	Jaculine Suarez	Mark Borenstein
Billy Ayala	Jeanette Beltran Castellanos	Melvin Cutler Charitable Foundation
Brian Monteverd	Jeffrey Ortiz	Mery Vargas
Charise Canales	Jeshenia Luyando	Nurkis Felix
Edgardo Jimenez	Joe Petty	Paco & Margo Valdes
Ellie Gilmore	Jono O'Sullivan	Ramon Borges-Mendez
Eneida Pena	Jose Santiago	Sarah & Ernest Ostro
Estela Perez	Julio Rivera	Tairy Cabrera
Ester Flores	Knight Property Investment, LLC.	Woo Juice
First Church in Sterling	Luis & Isalby Martinez	Yolanda Matias
Gladys Guerrero	Margoth Flores	Yvette Dyson
Griselda Rodriguez		

Corporate Contributions

Country Bank for Savings	Santander
Curtis Construction Company Inc.	Spencer Savings Bank
Ed Hyder's Mediterranean Market	Tides Foundation
Fallon Health Foundation	TJX Foundation
Greater Worcester Community Foundation	UniBank
KaBOOM!	United Bank Foundation
Lowes	Webster Five Foundation
Pleasant Street Neighborhood Network Center	Worcester Community Housing Resources
Regional Environmental Council	Worcester District Attorney's Office

Community Investment Tax Credits

Bay State Savings Bank	Maloney Properties
Commerce Bank	Phil Stone & Katie Green
Davis Square Architects	PROTECH Extermination Services
Eastern Bank	R.C. Rheault Construction
Elizabeth & Jeff Wallace	Sandra Rose & Joseph Bearak
Gloria Hall & Joseph Karpicz	Unibank
Houssan & Ojerholm PC	

★ 2017 Awards ★

Each year, Worcester Common Ground proudly presents three awards to outstanding members of our community, whose contributions are instrumental to the success of this neighborhood. We are indebted to their dedication and hard work. Please join us in congratulating and thanking the following people ...

Aaron Wade

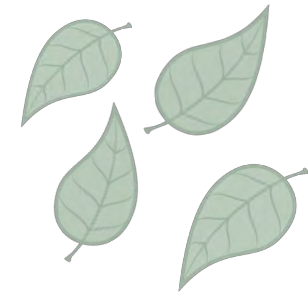
~ Molly Yeaton Award ~

YouthBuild Worcester

~ Community Business Partner ~

Molly Hourigan, Dismas House

~ Community Volunteer ~



Community Hub

Bioshelter

Photo Montage

Financials

Thank You Donors



A Letter From the Director


Worcester Common Ground, Inc. (WCG) has had the good fortune to work with residents of the Piedmont and surrounding neighborhoods for 29 years since our incorporation in 1988. In those 29 years, we have created 139 rental units, 25 first time homeownership properties and secured 5 public spaces (122 Austin Tot Lot, 7-9 Oread Place, 8 Preston Street, Castle Street, 7-9 Jaques Ave.)

WCG continues to work with residents to create “Piedmont Pride”. Our community development program will act as a mechanism to revitalize and reclaim our neighborhood’s public spaces from negative influences like drug activity, illegal dumping, and vandalism, which have historically plagued our neighborhood. Our neighborhood beautification and revitalization efforts will catalyze the instillation of widespread community pride, as pride acts as a stabilizing force in challenged communities. We are working with members of PACT Pleasant Street Area Community Team to address concerns expressed at our meetings held once a month. In 2018 we hope to spearhead a real coalition around trash. Many neighbors have expressed concerns related to this topic and we hope you will join us in this collaboration to clean our streets. This program will develop strong community relationships between neighbors that will be instrumental in achieving a sense of community pride.

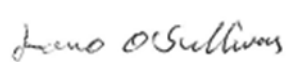
Some of the 2017 housing highlights include the ground breaking of 21 Jaques Ave., which is currently under construction, the ribbon cutting at the Bioshelter located at 7-9 Jaques Ave, 30 units of housing at 120-126 Chandler Street, production of three small near zero net energy homes at 20-24 Merrick Street. On the community building side, WCG hosted 11 events with 527 in attendance and 142 volunteers. These events included the Trinity Basketball League, Bioshelter Community Planning Event, Working 4 Worcester Hawley Clean Up Day, Clark University Neighborhood Design Day, Summer Basketball Clinic, Dismas House Farm Share Program, Bravehearts Game with residents, Piedmont Pride Petunia Planting, Santander Financial Literacy Classes, Holy Cross Cares Clean-Up and Jacob Hiatt students who painted signs that are installed at the bioshelter. We thank our residents and neighbors for taking the time to be part of these events and our incredible volunteers who help us to make it happen.

When you invest with WCG, change occurs, and the community takes notice. WCG reinvests our member, donor, philanthropic, business and governmental dollars directly back into the community. Your donation will support a variety of upcoming initiatives in 2018. We hope you will consider donating to our cause to protect an important facet of participatory democracy in our community.

Sincerely,



Yvette Dyson – Executive Director



Jono O'Sullivan – Board Chair

WORCESTER COMMON GROUND, INC. AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

CONSOLIDATING STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016

	WCG	PIEDMONT	9 MAY	AC II	ELIMINATIONS	TOTAL
REVENUES:						
Rental income	\$ 582,088	\$ 118,104	\$ 429,835	\$ 240,863	\$ (28,800)	\$ 1,342,090
Program service fees	34,416	-	-	-	(17,086)	17,330
Grants and contributions	121,365	-	-	-	-	121,365
Interest and miscellaneous	182,372	559	9,184	741	(178,323)	14,533
Total revenues	<u>920,241</u>	<u>118,663</u>	<u>439,019</u>	<u>241,604</u>	<u>(224,209)</u>	<u>1,495,318</u>
EXPENSES:						
Personnel and related costs -						
Salary and wages	346,311	-	83,221	43,241	-	472,773
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	79,957	-	15,728	7,750	-	103,435
Contracted services	-	17,086	31,995	12,636	(17,086)	44,631
Total personnel and related costs	<u>426,268</u>	<u>17,086</u>	<u>130,944</u>	<u>63,627</u>	<u>(17,086)</u>	<u>620,839</u>
Occupancy -						
Depreciation and amortization	146,768	74,350	434,223	167,747	-	823,088
Repairs, maintenance, rent and insurance	198,723	46,363	69,050	21,053	(28,800)	306,389
Real estate taxes	75,522	16,975	44,882	33,107	-	170,486
Other mortgage interest	-	-	330,114	15,526	(178,323)	167,317
Utilities	66,767	13,439	61,707	23,259	-	165,172
Mortgage interest	38,310	18,951	42,314	45,857	-	145,432
Total occupancy	<u>526,090</u>	<u>170,078</u>	<u>982,290</u>	<u>306,549</u>	<u>(207,123)</u>	<u>1,777,884</u>
Other -						
Liability insurance	29,839	-	22,831	15,204	-	67,874
Professional fees	24,771	5,500	23,632	12,999	-	66,902
Bad debts	7,692	-	6,224	5,747	-	19,663
Telephone	6,172	1,408	4,708	3,150	-	15,438
Miscellaneous	7,000	207	1,961	6,241	-	15,409
Office	3,275	-	8,025	2,663	-	13,963
Conventions and conferences	7,017	-	932	-	-	7,949
Advertising	7,239	-	-	-	-	7,239
Dues and subscriptions	2,655	-	-	-	-	2,655
Printing	313	-	-	-	-	313
Total other	<u>95,973</u>	<u>7,115</u>	<u>68,313</u>	<u>46,004</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>217,405</u>
Total expenses	<u>1,048,331</u>	<u>194,279</u>	<u>1,181,547</u>	<u>416,180</u>	<u>(224,209)</u>	<u>2,616,128</u>
LOSS ON LAND	<u>(22,200)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(22,200)</u>
Changes in net assets	<u>\$ (150,290)</u>	<u>\$ (75,616)</u>	<u>\$ (742,528)</u>	<u>\$ (174,576)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ (1,143,010)</u>

Financials

There are a couple key points to keep in mind when looking at financial statements from non-profit organizations such as Worcester Common Ground.

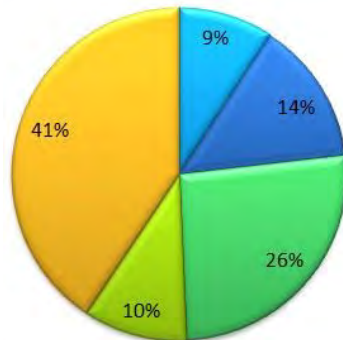
First, our rental properties have long term contingent liabilities attached to them. However, as a non-profit, much of that debt is forgiven in the future as long as Worcester Common Ground continues to meet these loans' requirements. When these contingent liabilities pass the affordability period, they are then booked as income to our financial statement.

Second, as a provider of housing to low income families who often need subsidies from various agencies to meet their rent obligations, WCG is subject to rental rates set by HUD. Furthermore, WCG is monitored by federal agencies to confirm that our families meet particular income qualifications. While we strive to minimize operating costs, maintaining quality properties while subject to rental rate caps sometimes means accepting losses.

Our target area, which we refer to as the Greater Piedmont Area, encompasses three census tracts, 7314, 7315 and 7316, within the City of Worcester (see map). These tracts are generally bound by Salisbury Street on the north, Main Street on the east, May Street on the south and Park Avenue on the west. The Greater Piedmont Neighborhoods consist of several neighborhoods with distinct identities that abut and at times overlap each other. The most organized neighborhoods are Elm Park, Piedmont, Crown Hill, and Castle Street. The concentration of WCG development activity is in tracts 7314 and 7315. These neighborhoods extend from Pleasant Street south to May Street and present the most severe conditions of disinvestment, blight, and urban decay. An owner-occupancy rate of 11% and the high level of absentee landlords reinforce these conditions.

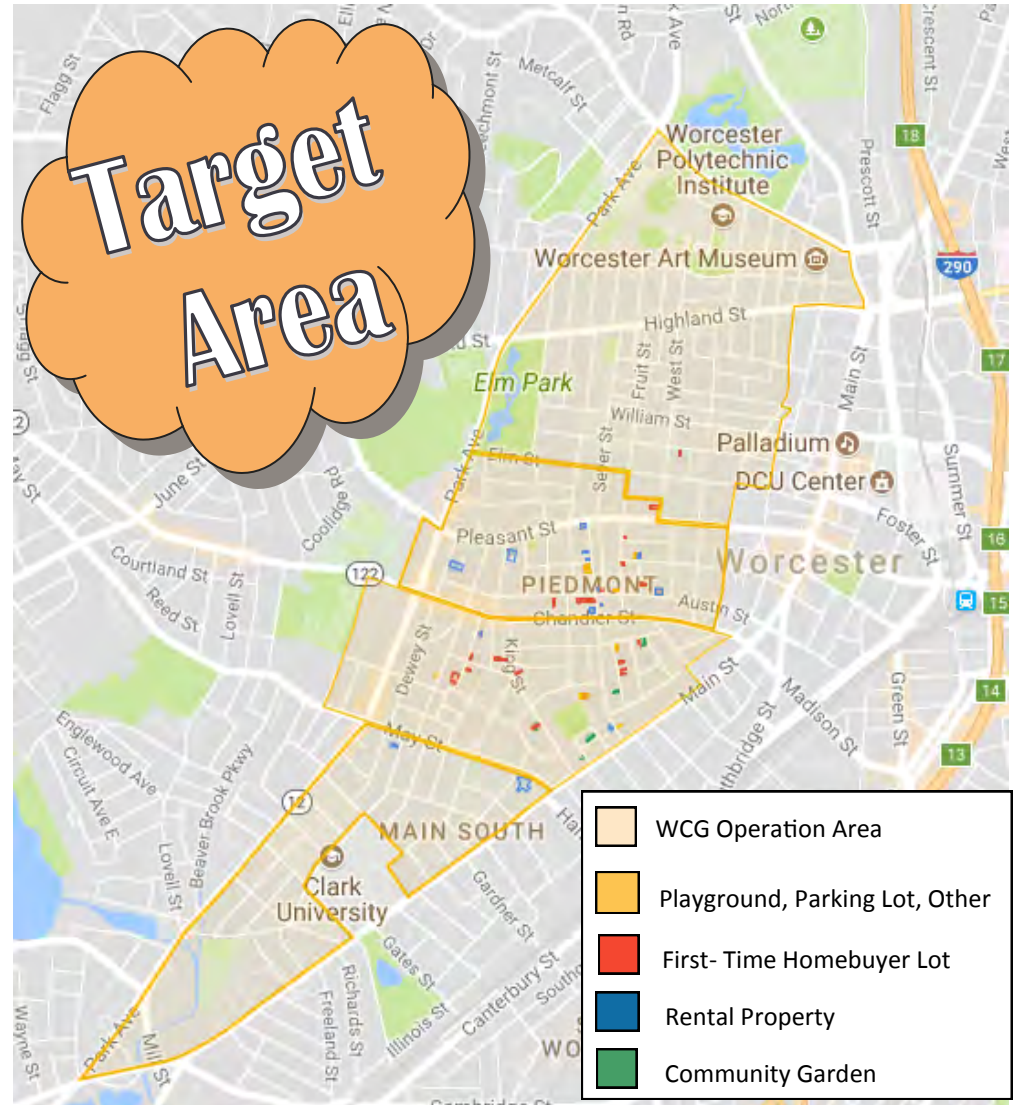
Expenses

- Office Expenses
- Depreciation and Amortization
- Repairs, Maintenance, Rent, Insurance, and Taxes
- Other Occupancy Expenses
- Salary and Benefits



Income

- Rental Income
- Program Service Fees
- Grants and Contributions
- Interest and miscellaneous



Meet Our Full Time Staff!

Yvette Dyson, Executive Director

Yvette joined us in April of 2001; her work here has been described by our funders as among the best in the state. She handles construction management, project development and everything involved in getting our projects from conception to completion. After graduation from Simmons College, she continued her training as an architect at the Boston Architectural Center and as a licensed construction manager. Her attention to detail and broad understanding of construction and financing has resulted in the outstanding projects we have completed and are planning. Yvette was the Director of Development until becoming Worcester Common Ground's Interim Executive Director in 2012. She was formally appointed Executive Director in July 2013.



Ron Germain, Facilities Manager

Ron joined us in April 2004. He is responsible for the upkeep of all of our properties. With 13 buildings to keep under control he has achieved our goal of maintaining the best homes in the neighborhood. He also handles all inspections, move-in, and move-outs and annual inspection of Section 8 apartments. Ron has over 20 years of construction and property management experience. He was the manager from one of our contractors on several WCG development projects before joining us.



Jeshenia Luyando, Rental Manager & Tenant Relations

Jeshenia joined us in March 2006. Her bilingual (English-Spanish) capability is complimented by her experience as a legal secretary and in social services for 10 years prior to her placement. She has expanded her responsibilities and, with equal proficiency, handles the function of office manager as well as her primary responsibility to keep our apartments in excellent condition and fully occupied. Her verification of income and status reporting to the state and city has secured us recognition as a 100% complete compliance organization - no small feat.



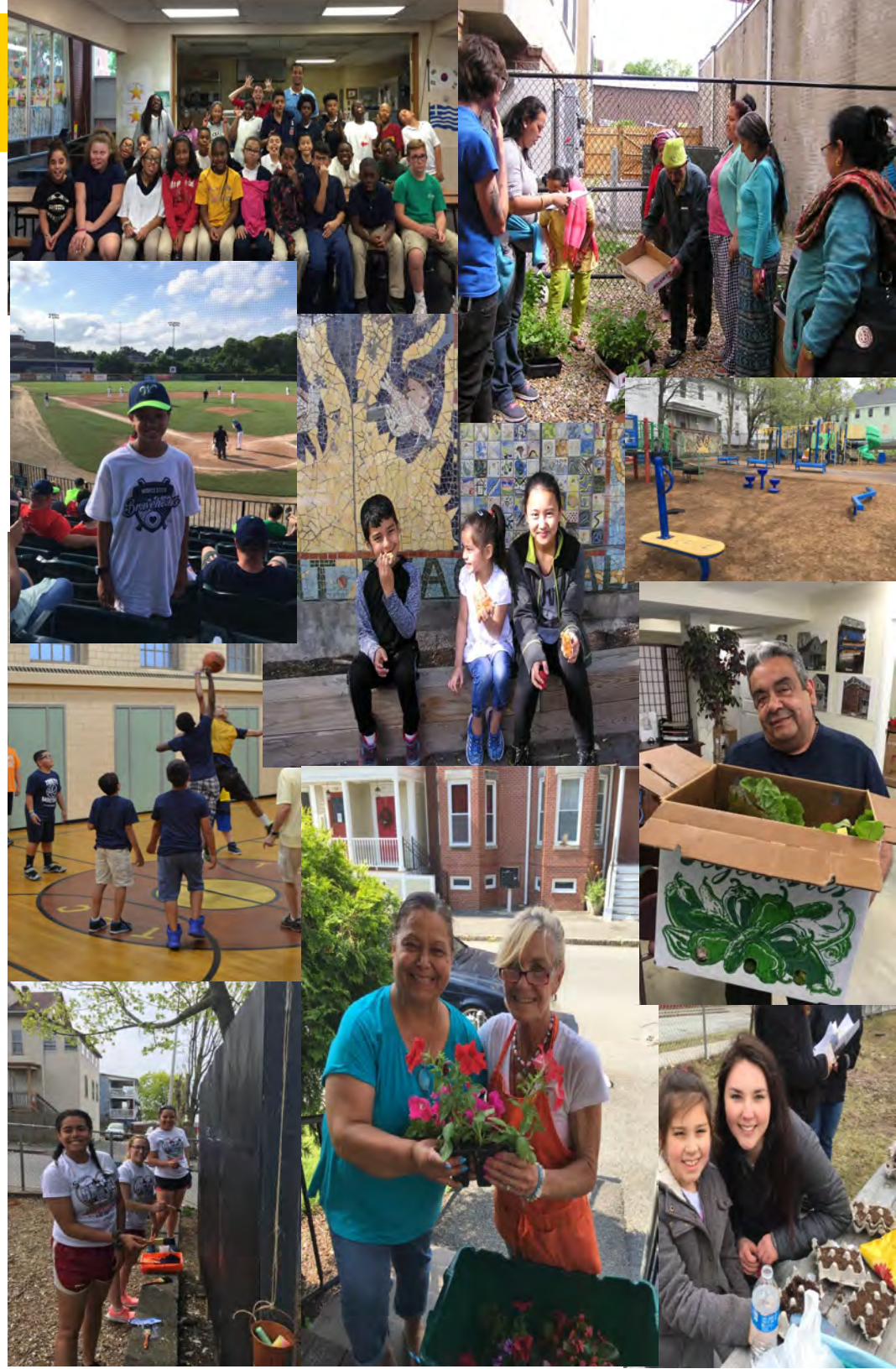
Joel Feinberg, Real Estate Development Director

Joel joined us in May, 2017, as our director of real estate development. He comes to us after almost 40 years as a real estate attorney, the last 20 of which were with the firm he helped found, Hackett Feinberg PC. In his law practice, Joel focused on work for community development corporations and non-profit organizations, as well as Massachusetts state agencies and institutional lenders, in community development and affordable housing transactions. He was often involved in multi-party transactions involving layers of public and private debt and equity and the use of governmental programs and tax incentives.



Ellie Gilmore, Community Organizer

Ellie joined us in August 2017. She is responsible for door-to-door outreach in the Greater Piedmont neighborhoods, increasing the organization's engagement with residents and businesses, and building leadership opportunities for members within WCG. She supports WCG's Community Land Trust leaseholders and rental tenants, and manages a wide range of community outreach activities. Ellie recently graduated from Clark University with a B.A. in Political Science, and has been living and working in Worcester since 2013. Her past work includes a variety of projects in youth work, policy research, fundraising, and event planning.



Piedmont Neighborhood Bioshelter and Urban Orchard



WCG's Interns

BEFORE



AFTER



The Bioshelter, a specialized type of greenhouse, was conceived through a partnership with WPI students and faculty. Construction began this summer, thanks to the dedicated students of YouthBuild Worcester. We are excited to see the Bioshelter become a truly community-driven greenspace initiative, with the capacity for year-round food growth, educational programming, neighborhood gatherings, and so much more!

PROGRAMMING



Community members gathered to discuss their ideas for the Bioshelter in April.

Early October welcomed an exciting ribbon cutting ceremony, officially launching it into the neighborhood.

36 students from Jacob Hiatt painted creative signs to be displayed inside the orchard. In November, they took a field trip to the Bioshelter!



Johanna Monge

Clark University '18

Johanna Monge is a senior at Clark University studying Political Science with a concentration in Urban Development and Social Change. Johanna is originally from New York City, specifically Astoria, Queens, and is of Peruvian descent. She is currently working on the Voter Registration Initiative for the Piedmont Neighborhood, which strives to increase voter turnout, as well as to spread information about polling stations, candidates, election days, and transportation being provided by the Worcester Common Ground. She is excited to gain a more hands on experience with development work and expand on her interests of housing and urban policy, within a city she has lived in for over 3 years.



Lorenzo Vicente

College of Holy Cross '18

Hailing from the South Bronx, New York, Lorenzo is currently a senior at the College of the Holy Cross pursuing a double major in International Studies and Spanish. As our Bioshelter Coordinator, Lorenzo is responsible for identifying and facilitating all activities and programs related to our newly constructed urban orchard. During his time at Worcester Common Ground, he hopes to gain valuable skills in the daily operations of a non profit, but also efficient strategies and programs to help create sustainable solutions to many of the social problems in under-served communities.





Housing Plus

21 Jaques Avenue: Funding was awarded for this project in April 2017. Construction began in October 2017 and is well underway. This four unit project will serve clients of the Department of Mental Health and those with incomes of 30%-50% area median income.



126 Chandler Street: WCG is in process of finalizing an option agreement to turn this building into 31 units of affordable housing, again with the help from a pre-development loan from the Arch Diocese of the Episcopal Church of Western, MA.



20-24 Merrick Street: WCG finalized the purchase of these two vacant lots in 2017. With the help from the Arch Diocese of the Episcopal Church of Western MA, we have a pre-development loan in place and are working on a development plan to produce small near zero net energy houses for first time homeownership under our Community Land Trust umbrella.



COMMUNITY HUB

1 Year
11 Events
671 Participants

WCG does more than develop rental properties, homeownership, community gardens, or even playgrounds. We build community. The activities we initiate develop opportunities for relationship-building and neighborhood growth. We work towards empowering our Greater Piedmont residents to take ownership over their neighborhood in order to create a safe and vibrant place to call home.

Our #PiedmontPride initiative aims to foster self-expression and a greater sense of community pride by creating opportunities to celebrate the spirit, diversity, and strength of our community. We strive to develop *common ground* at safe and enjoyable gathering spaces like the Tot Lot playground, 22 Newbury pocket park, community gardens, and Fatty Jenkins basketball court. We try to improve the quality of life for our residents through activities such as those listed below. To date in 2017 we have had 11 events with 671 participants. Thank you for joining in our efforts!

