

The Bulletin

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



KCDC breaks ground on phase 2 of Transforming Western initiative

Knoxville’s Community Development Corporation (KCDC), along with business and community leaders, officially broke ground June 4 on the second phase of the transformation of Western Heights to build affordable housing, mixed-use space to include a health center, police substation and art center.

Overall, the transformation plan for Western Heights and the surrounding Beaumont neighborhood will bring enhanced access to economic opportunity, transportation, healthcare, recreation and youth enrichment to Northwest Knoxville residents.



“Transforming Western is exactly what the name says – it’s transformational,” KCDC Executive Director and CEO Ben Bentley said. “An area that has lacked the necessary resources to thrive will become a place where the residents will have access to early education, employment, healthcare and transportation.”

Phase 2 will include two mixed-income residential buildings with a total of 52 one- to four-bedroom units. The main floor of one building will have 15,000 square feet of mixed-use space that will include the Knoxville Arts Center; a health center provided by The University of Tennessee Medical Center; and a Knoxville Police Department substation.

The funding for Transforming Western comes in part from a competitive \$40 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Choice Neighborhoods grant

that was announced in 2022. The City of Knoxville also is investing \$26.5 million that has been committed over multiple budgets and includes major infrastructure upgrades.

“I am excited to see the next phase of this project getting underway,” Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon said. “Neighbors had the vision for Transforming Western, and we are happy to invest more than \$26 million to see this into reality. The City’s ongoing support of infrastructure lays the groundwork for a vibrant neighborhood with affordable housing and valuable amenities that will be enjoyed by everyone.”

Part of that vision included better access to healthcare with the addition of a health center within the housing community.

“As the region’s academic health system, The University of Tennessee Medical Center has a long history of leading and supporting community health initiatives – from screenings and education to health fairs,” Dr. Keith Gray, president and CEO of UT Medical Center, said. “Establishing a health center within a residential neighborhood takes our commitment even further by bringing high-quality care close to home – advancing our vision to transform the health of our region. We’re proud to partner in the Transforming Western initiative, providing much-needed resources to this community. We are excited for the opening of the health center and look forward to promoting wellness in Western Heights.”



Work already is underway for Phase 1, which will provide 76 rental units, including 31 subsidized replacement units, 30 affordable units and 15 market rate units. Phase 1 is expected to be completed later in 2025.

Phase 2 will be constructed on the north end of the neighborhood near the intersection of Virginia Avenue and McSpadden Street. The site’s redevelopment will occur over several phases with completion expected in 2029 with an anticipated 479 total housing units.

Architecture for Phase 2 is provided by Shapiro & Company Architects; J.A. Fielden is general contractor; U.S. Bank is equity partner; lender is J.P. Morgan; and Brinshore Development and KCDC are developers.

The process to earn the highly competitive HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant began in 2021 with insight from Western Heights residents followed by meetings with 17 stakeholder groups with a vested interest in the neighborhood. Only three other cities across the United States were awarded the HUD grants, which totaled \$180 million, included Omaha, Nebraska; Durham, North Carolina; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. Established in 1939, Western Heights is KCDC’s largest affordable housing development. The Choice Neighborhoods grant program enables communities to replace distressed public housing and HUD-assisted developments with new mixed-income housing.

The shift leads to investments in the surrounding neighborhood and improves opportunities for residents. Grant recipients and their partners tailor supportive services to improve employment, health and education outcomes for residents living in public and other HUD-assisted housing.

Transforming Western is exactly what the name says – it’s transformational. An area that has lacked the necessary resources to thrive will become a place where the residents will have access to early education, employment, healthcare and transportation.

– Ben Bentley

As part of the Transforming Western plan, the 196 units of affordable housing at the current Western Heights are being rebuilt along with an anticipated addition of 283 new units of affordable and market-rate housing to create a diverse, mixed-income community for a total of 479 units. The 232 renovated residences at Historic Western Heights are in addition to these new units.

“The intent is to fundamentally change the fabric of a community, and the Choice Neighborhoods grant has allowed us to earnestly follow that mission,” Bentley said. “The location of this neighborhood offers aspirational views of the city and the mountains, and we want the residents to be the ones to benefit and thrive.”

The grant program also addresses a multitude of enhancements, including better internet access; healthcare; living wage jobs and career paths; affordable, healthy and fresh foods; safety; transportation; parks and recreation; arts and culture; and entrepreneurship.

The opening of the Western Heights Head Start center in October 2022 marked the first step of the overall initiative with comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start programming by the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) to more than 130 neighborhood children from infant to age 5.

KCDC’s lead partners in the Transforming Western planning process include the City of Knoxville, Brinshore Development and CAC.

VIDEO: Click [here](#) to see a video of the groundbreaking.

Award recognition

KCDC's Liberty Place earns national award from veterans' group

Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC) has earned a national award for Liberty Place, a 32-unit permanent supportive housing development for veterans.

The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) presented KCDC with the Outstanding Partnership Award at NCHV's 35th anniversary annual conference, which was held May 27-30 in Washington, D.C. The award honors an organization or individual whose work to build effective partnerships exemplifies creativity and collaboration.

"Liberty Place would not have been possible without the partnerships that were built at all levels and phases of development, ranging from local, state and federal agencies to nonprofits and community members," Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said. "Liberty Place is a success because of these collaborations and is an example of how developments can and should work within our community to support homeless veterans."

For more information, visit [here](#).



From left: Jim Hatfield, KCDC; Tiffany Higginbotham, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; Marisa Moazen, KCDC; and Kathryn Monet, NCHV. Photo credit: Chris Flynn.



From left: Jimmy Ryan, Johnson Architecture; Peter McKay, KCDC; Jim Hatfield, KCDC; and Ben Bentley, KCDC

KCDC's First Creek at Austin Phase 1 earns two Urban Land Institute awards

Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC) has earned two prestigious Urban Land Institute (ULI) awards for First Creek at Austin Phase 1 that recognize exceptional design, land use, financial success and transformational impact on a community.

ULI Nashville presented the 2025 Rose Faeges-Easton Community Impact Award and an Excellence in Development Award to KCDC during a ceremony April 30 at the Omni Nashville Hotel to honor exceptional developments in Middle and East Tennessee.

"We are proud that First Creek at Austin exemplifies a model for modern neighborhood revitalization, and we are especially grateful for the Community Impact Award as the first recipient from Knoxville," KCDC Executive Director and CEO Ben Bentley said. "ULI Nashville selects award winners for developments that are worthy of emulation, and that is a high standard to achieve. KCDC and all of our partners are grateful to have been recognized, and we look forward to the continued success of First Creek at Austin."

For more information, visit [here](#).

ULI Nashville tours First Creek

ULI Nashville members stopped by June 2 to tour First Creek at Austin Phase 1.



Appreciation lunch held

Several of KCDC employees came together May 23 at Covenant Health Park to catch up with coworkers and enjoy a meal. Of KCDC's 151 total employees, 136 RSVP'd for the appreciation lunch.

VIDEO: Click [here](#) to see a video of the event.

PHOTOS: Click [here](#) to see a photo gallery of the event.



Work Anniversaries

The following were recently recognized for annual milestones with Knoxville's Community Development Corporation. Congratulations on the hard work over the years!



40 years

- Johnny Booker



30 years

- Lee Cooke
- Donna Martin



20 years

- Terry McKee *
- Joy Patrick



5 years

- Rachel Chisholm
- Tammy Francis
- Cheryl Hall
- James Hatfield
- Marisa Moazen
- Jane Shrader



35 years

- Rebaca Eshbaugh
- Rhonda Harris
- Michael Johnson *
- Sterling Lee
- Beverly Silvano
- Linda Thomas



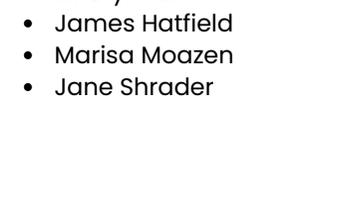
25 years

- Stacey Ayres *
- Eric Bellamy *
- Michael Chandler *
- Gary Cole *
- Beverly Farmer
- Eugene Littlejohn *



10 years

- Randall Brown *
- Kristi Dunlap



45 years

- Jack Canada *

*** Not present**

Tim Burchett visits Liberty Place

KCDC representatives welcomed U.S. Rep. Tim Burchett, R-Tenn., June 16 to tour Liberty Place. Afterward, Burchett greeted residents and property staff.



CIC seeking sock donations for upcoming event

The KCDC Community Involvement Committee (CIC) participates in the Shoes for School event hosted by the Knoxville Area Urban League. The Shoes for School Event brings in partners and resources each year to set up tables and booths to hand out school supplies and shoes for hundreds of students. This Aug. 2, 2025, will mark the 23rd year that Shoes for School will take place.

The CIC attends these events and gives out donated school supplies such as paper, pencils, back packs, folders, etc. This year, along with school supplies, the CIC would like to “Bless Their Soles!” Pun intended.

How can I help?

You can help by donating pairs of new, never worn socks.

When can I bring my donation?

You can bring the donations in **now through July 21** at the main office at 901 N. Broadway or the Rental Assistance office at 400 Harriet Tubman. Socks of all colors, shapes and sizes will be accepted.

Questions?

For more information, please reach out to Lanita Puckett at lpuckett@kcdc.org or 865-910-5711.



KCDC Spotlight

The Spotlight aims to recognize the amazing things KCDC employees are doing to help make the community and workplace better. Email jnash@kcdc.org if you think there's someone we should highlight.

Nathaniel Estabrooks

Director of Real Estate and Development



After about three years away, Nathaniel Estabrooks returned in April with greater insight into how much good KCDC can do.

Nathaniel took up the role as director of real estate and development earlier this year following about three years at Baker Tilly

Advisory Group, specializing in affordable housing transaction services.

“All public housing authorities have a unique toolbox. KCDC has a unique toolbox among unique toolboxes,” he said, laughing. “Both our position in the state, our position in the city and our position nationally as a PHA. All those qualifiers — where we are, the city we’re in, all those things — lend themselves to a unique set of opportunities, which is awesome, and I know that because I was able to work with other public housing authorities and see what they could do and see what they couldn’t do. We have more tools. Tools like PILOTs and TIFs that we can utilize in certain ways that other PHAs can’t.”

Since graduating from the University of Tennessee in 2020 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration, the Knoxville native has carved out a career in the housing industry, but it’s not always what he wanted to do. In high school he went between wanting to be an architect, a chemical engineer and a stockbroker.

Nathaniel credits his decision to pursue a career in real estate to his experience volunteering at a church-run English language learning camp the summer before his senior year of college.

“We were working specifically with folks from Central Africa,” he said. “We were visiting them in their apartment one day, and we were chatting with them, and they were complaining about how their landlord was not repairing a water leak that they had in their roof, and they were not in a good position apartment-wise. They were not in a KCDC property, they were in what we may associate more with kind of slumlord behavior.”

At that time, he felt compelled to do good and asked God if this is what he should do with his life. But, in the chaos of finishing up

Whatever perspective you might have, I believe everybody has inherent value because of the way God views that person.

– Nathaniel Estabrooks



his college degree, he forgot about this whole experience — until months later, in February 2020, when he saw KCDC’s booth at a job fair in search of a real estate development analyst.

“I read it and was like, ‘Holy crap, this is exactly what I was thinking about,’ I didn’t know this was an industry, I had no idea this was a thing,” he said.

So, he applied for the role, and oddly enough, a professor of his also recommended the opening — unbeknownst to him that Nathaniel had already applied.

Nathaniel stayed in the role for two years before applying for other jobs in preparation for wherever his wife, Emma Grace, chose to attend law school — likely in Chicago or Knoxville. On the day of a job interview he had with Baker Tilly, his wife chose UT. Still, at least to be professional, Nathaniel took the interview and learned the role was remote, so he took it.

Fast forward to this year, and he returned to KCDC because it “just made sense.”

“I worked with other public housing authorities, and I worked with other developers all across the country, and I want to stay in this industry,” he said. “I kind of came to the conclusion after a while that the best position to be in is at a public housing authority like ours because we have a toolbox that is unrivaled as far as what we can do and how we can do it in our communities that we serve, what we develop and the tools that we can bring to bear to make these developments happen.”

Since returning he’s been busy, especially with Transforming Western. He recently helped close on Phase 2 of the development. “We are doing a ton,” he said. “Most public housing authorities — I sat in a pretty unique chair in my last role, I was able to see a lot of how this industry works outside — there are very few public housing authorities that have the capacity to do what we do as well as we do it, which means that we’re doing a ton because we know we can do it.”

Nathaniel’s biggest highlight of his time with KCDC so far has been writing the Section 202 grant application for First Creek at Austin Phase III just before he left in 2022.

Each day he believes he can make a difference.

“I’m only in this industry because I believe that people have inherent worth — even people in really difficult positions,

... whatever perspective you might have, I believe everybody has inherent value because of the way God views that person," he said.

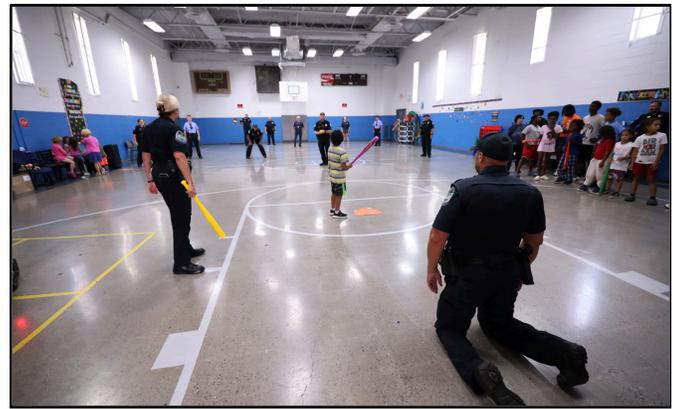
In his free time

Nathaniel and his wife have two cats, Toby and Truffles, and enjoy camping, reading books and playing board games. "If you ever want a camping spot and you booked it too late, the best place to go is to find an equestrian campground because nobody ever books those and actual horse campers are pretty rare," Nathaniel said, laughing. "You can get a good booking in October, peak camping season, you can book it two weeks before your trip and still get one." Nathaniel enjoys reading mainly historical nonfiction. Lately he's been playing the board game Ark Nova, but his favorite is Star Wars Rebellion.



KPD plays wiffle ball with Montgomery Village kids

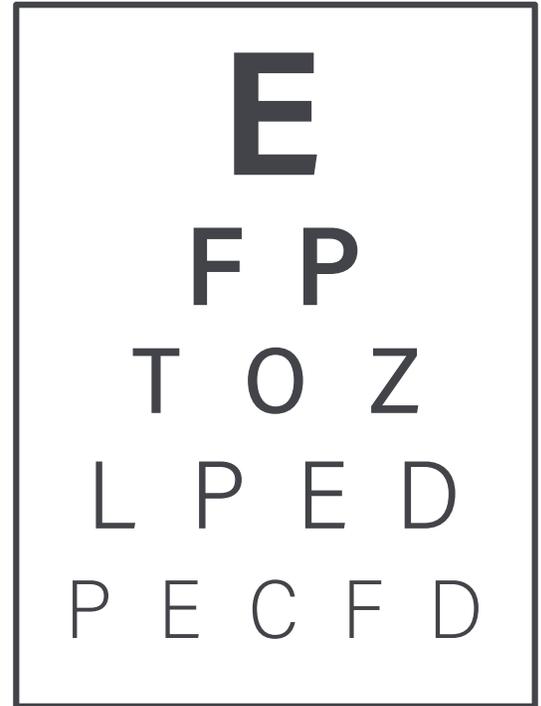
On July 7, Knoxville Police Department (KPD) competed in a friendly game of wiffleball with kids in Montgomery Village. Hotdogs were provided afterward. "This is a good interaction between the officers and the kids as opposed to the kids seeing the bad interactions," Kyle Loveday, KPD sergeant, said. "It builds positive rapport, we're getting to be involved in the community, and they actually see us playing and having a good time." This marks the second time KPD stopped by for a game. Last year, officers played kickball.



Health & Wellness

With August being National Eye Exam Month, let's learn about the importance of keeping an eye – pun intended – on your vision.

As we age, baseline exams can detect early signs of a disease or damage to the eyes. Ophthalmologists recommend periodic eye exams every 2-4 years from the ages of 40 to 65, and every 1-2 years after the age of 65. While most symptoms are often disregarded, getting a simple checkup and following a doctor's orders can greatly lower risks of more severe and future damage, and you can continue to enjoy healthy vision.



By the Numbers

4.2M **1.5M** **93M**

Had glaucoma in 2022

Had vision-affecting glaucoma in 2022

Adults had high risk of vision loss in 2017

** Data taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*



Mobile mammography unit coming to KCDC

Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Cancer is bringing its mobile mammography unit to KCDC in August.

When and where?

- Thursday, Aug. 15
- KCDC main office – 901 N. Broadway

How can I get screened?

Call 865-583-1003 to schedule an appointment.

What should I bring to my screening?

Please bring your insurance card, if applicable, and an acceptable form of ID. If you don't have insurance, the out-of-pocket cost for the mammogram and radiologic interpretation is \$170 and due at the time of your exam.

Acceptable forms of ID:

- State or federal government issued document that includes your photo and full name
- VISA (U.S. government issued)
- Passport
- Employer issued photo ID or badge that also includes your full name



1 in 8 women in the U.S. will develop invasive breast cancer at some point in their life.

16%

Of women with breast cancer are younger than 50 years old.

** Data taken from the BreastCancer.org. For more information, visit [here](#).*

Blood drive held at main office

Thank you to everyone who gave blood during the blood drive July 7 at the main office!



New Hires

The following were recently hired through July 1 at Knoxville's Community Development Corporation:



Gini Thrasher
Hired: 5/5/25
Title: Leasing & Occupancy Specialist
Place: Five Points



Larry Hunter
Hired: 5/5/25
Title: Maintenance Supervisor
Place: Montgomery Village



Jeff Kuykendall
Hired: 5/27/25
Title: Maintenance Tech. II
Place: Montgomery Village



Crystal Landsman
Hired: 6/2/25
Title: Assistant Property Manager
Place: Northgate Terrace



Amber Lurry
Hired: 6/2/25
Title: Office Assistant
Place: Rental Assistance Office



Desiree Harris
Hired: 6/2/25
Title: Leasing & Occupancy Specialist
Place: First Creek at Austin

Retirements

The following recently retired from Knoxville's Community Development Corporation:



Kimberly Mills
Retired: 7/1/25
Title: ADA/504 Coordinator
Place: Main Office





Announcements

Got an announcement you'd like to put in The Bulletin? Email the information to jnash@kcdc.org. The deadline for content will typically fall on the last Monday or Tuesday of the month before publication.

- **Liberty Living** – We've started a newsletter specifically for Liberty Place. If you would like to be put on the email list, please email jnash@kcdc.org. Liberty Living aims to highlight the happenings around the community, the needs of residents, and just provide a way for us to show our appreciation for those who have an interest in supporting Liberty Place.



Newsletter Dates

The Bulletin is scheduled to be released every two months. Here are the remaining newsletters for 2025:

- September-October
- November-December



Newsletter Ideas

Got something you think could be in The Bulletin? Email information to jnash@kcdc.org. The deadline for content will typically fall on the last Monday or Tuesday of the month before publication.

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Resident Resources