

The Bulletin



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NEW HIRES

Five Points infill homes filling a need

Thanks to a new five-bedroom, two-bathroom home in the Five Points community, Ngina Blair can move into a place that better suits her family's needs.

She said finding the right spot had been difficult.

"It was hard because there's not too many five-bedrooms," Ngina said. "For them to build a five-bedroom in the community to accommodate bigger families is a joy."

Her home is one of five single-family houses recently completed off Ben Hur Avenue.

Ngina said she had been watching her eventual home since construction started.

"So when it got halfway up I called down to KCDC and I asked, 'How can I get that house down there?' And that's when they told me about the project-based vouchers," Ngina said.

The new infill homes are available for families approved for property-based vouchers with household incomes up to 30 percent of Area Median Income. For Knox County, that is about \$27,300 for a family of four.

"A lot of the affordable housing that is getting built today is great, but a lot of times it's in the smaller bedroom sizes, so these houses being much bigger are filling a gap that is not being met," Jim Hatfield, KCDC chief of development, said.

Infill housing is new construction in an established neighborhood that is often on vacant or underused lots. The plan is to revitalize vacant lots in the Five Points community, with five additional homes coming off South Chestnut Street and Selma Avenue. Construction will be handled by Clayton Homes.

“I think that this is a project that really embodies what KCDC does as an organization,” Jim said. “So we’re taking vacant land that’s currently underutilized and providing affordable housing for larger families that will provide stability to the neighborhood, but also to a lot of the residents here in Knoxville, and so we’re really excited about this project.”

On Feb. 25, Ngina officially signed her lease.

“It’s exciting because everybody is going to have their own space, so I don’t have to hear nobody, ‘Get out of my room,’ or whatever, because we all got our own rooms now. So they can go in their own rooms and stay out of my room,” Blair said, laughing.

She hopes other families can experience the same feeling of finding a home to call their own.

“There’s a lot of families that would like nice homes and they just can’t afford them,” Ngina said. “So having a project-based voucher is a joy and it’ll help families out.”

Once complete, the \$3.8 million infill housing project will feature four four-bedroom, two-bath homes, five five-bedroom, two-bath homes, and one fully ADA-accessible two-bedroom, one-bath home. All homes are scheduled to go online by June and will be handled through the Small Properties Collective.

VIDEO: Click [here](#) to see a video of Ngina Blair’s house tour.

It was hard because there’s not too many five-bedrooms. For them to build a five-bedroom in the community to accommodate bigger families is a joy.

- Ngina Blair



Resource Fairs

By Christina Slabinski

This year is extra exciting because it's the fifth anniversary of the community resource fairs!

What are community resource fairs?

Community resource fairs are an annual event series that connects residents with local partner agencies. They are held at select communities, typically those with a leasing office on site. Those that do not have their own fair are invited to a neighboring community's fair. We pair The Cottages at Clifton with Lonsdale Homes, Valley Oaks with North Ridge Crossing, The Verandas with Montgomery Village, and the Mechanicsville and Passport properties with Western Heights.

We started hosting community resource fairs in 2021 when KCDC created a position to focus on partnerships and resident needs. To ensure residents received the support they needed, we invited local community partners offering wraparound services and supportive programming to the fairs. Seeing the value of these fairs, we decided to make them an annual occurrence.

Over the years, community resource fairs have evolved:

- We shifted from summer-fall to spring-summer.
- Community carnivals for children became resource fairs for heads of household.
- Fifty-one unique partners across nine fairs grew to 67 unique partners across 13 fairs in 2024.

With the addition of Liberty Place, we plan to have a whopping 14 fairs this year.

When are they occurring?

Mid-March through mid-May, primarily on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Most family community fairs will run from 2:30-4 p.m., while the elderly and/or disabled community fairs will run from 1-2 p.m.

Day of the fair

This year, we only have two KCDC AmeriCorps members, so we've asked the maintenance staff to help with flyering the week before as well as setup and teardown on the day-of. We are incredibly grateful for their help – after all, many hands make light work!

On the day of the fair, before it starts, the AmeriCorps members arrive on site a couple hours early to set up the tables, chairs, speaker and popcorn machine. We try to have everything set up before our partners start arriving. We ask partners to come about a half hour before the event starts to claim and set up their booth. Booths are not assigned, so partners can choose where they decide to set up. This encourages them to be punctual so they can claim a prime spot for their booth – whether that's in the limited shade, next to the refreshments table or in the heart of the event, it's their choice! As partners filter in, we direct them to empty tables. We wear AmeriCorps-branded attire so that they know who to ask for help when they arrive. I also have my work phone on hand in case they need to contact me immediately.



During the fair, we act as floaters, helping wherever we're needed. This can look like manning the popcorn machine, corralling children or grabbing refreshments for the partners. It's a wonderful opportunity to strengthen connections with residents and deepen our relationships with community partners.

My takeaways

Event planning is hard! Regardless of how organized you are, something is bound to go wrong – you must learn to be comfortable with the ever-changing circumstances. The fairs have certainly taught me how to effectively pivot when things don't go according to plan. There are so many variables out of my hands, like weather or unexpected partner arrivals/absences, and there's only so much contingency planning I can do beforehand. Oftentimes, when I encounter an obstacle at the fairs, I need to evaluate the situation at hand in the moment and come up with a game plan using the limited resources at my disposal. Resiliency is key for event planning and will definitely help me after my AmeriCorps term ends.

The fairs are a lot of work, but they are more than worth the effort. Not only do residents have a chance to connect with potentially life-changing resources, but it is also a great opportunity to interact with their neighbors and the broader Knox County community.

I love seeing everything come together and watching residents engage with each other and the partners.

I am honored that you all have trusted me to plan these events for the past couple of years, and I wish my successor all the best in their endeavors to keep these important events going!

Christina Slabinski is an AmeriCorps VISTA. Her term will end July 29.



Community	Date
Autumn Landing	2:30-4 p.m. March 11
Lonsdale Homes	2:30-4 p.m. March 12
Nature's Cove	2:30-4 p.m. March 25
Isabella Towers	1-2 p.m. March 27
North Ridge Crossing	2:30-4 p.m. April 1
Montgomery Village	2:30-4 p.m. April 8
Cagle Terrace	1-2 p.m. April 10
Western Heights	3-4:30 p.m. April 15
Five Points	2:30-4 p.m. April 22
Guy B. Love Towers	1-2 p.m. April 24
The Vista	2:30-4 p.m. April 29
First Creek	2:30-4 p.m. May 6
Northgate Terrace	1-2 p.m. May 8
Liberty Place	2:30-4 p.m. May 13



Fundraiser luncheon held for The Manor

By Grae Potter

Nearly \$6,500 was collected last month during the second annual A Winters' Hearth, The Manor at Northgate Terrace's largest fundraiser of the year.

The luncheon was held Feb. 6 at Fellowship North Church, who is a great community partner for The Manor. I can't thank enough the more than 60 individuals and company representatives who came out and supported us. Each dollar raised is vitally important for the lowest income seniors and ensures The Manor's supportive services can continue.

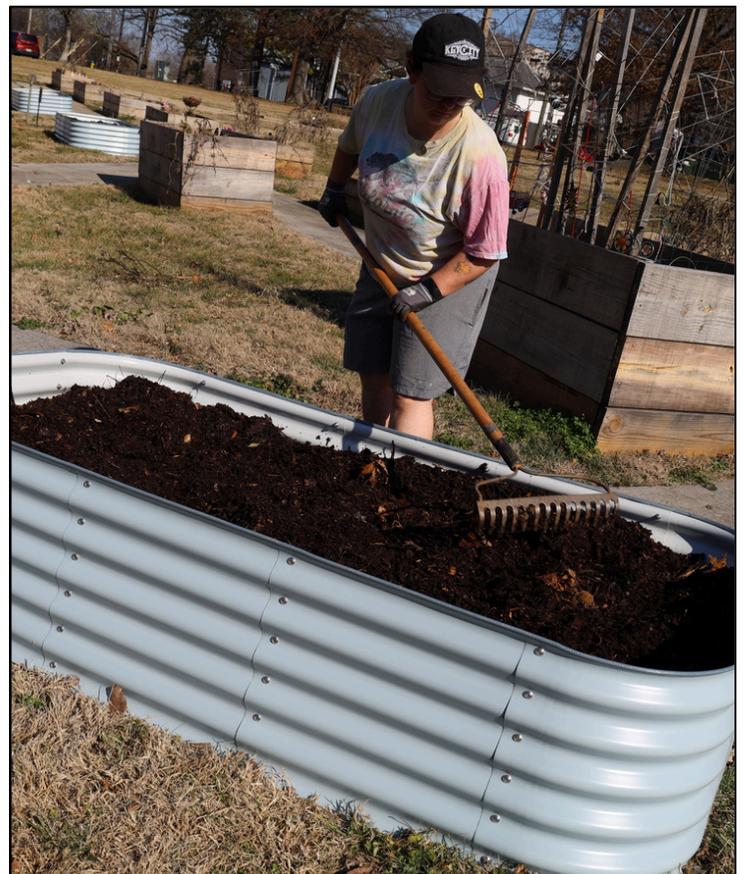
WVLT Chief Meteorologist Heather Haley emceed the event, Steph Cabell provided live music, and guest speaker Jim Adcock emphasized the importance of The Manor by highlighting Joe, a Manor resident, who lived in horrific conditions before moving here. In his opinion, The Manor has had a positive impact on Joe's life.

We look forward to future A Winters' Hearth luncheons!



Guy B. Love Towers gets new garden beds

Thanks to the generosity of CAC Beardsley Farm, residents at Guy B. Love Towers now have five additional raised garden beds to grow fruits, vegetables and flowers. Volunteers stopped by Feb. 4 to install the beds. Plans include building another in the near future. When that happens, Love Towers will have 21 raised beds.



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.

Patricia Clement

Senior Project Manager – Capital Projects



Patricia Clement has been involved in construction in one way or another for a lifetime.

Growing up in a family where all the men had construction experience, she often found herself lending a hand whenever needed. Around the age of 16, she began joining her father on job sites and quickly developed a knack for trim carpentry.

“You’re an artist,” she said. “There is a specific way to install crown molding that is very time-consuming, and very detailed in every way, and I absolutely love that, I really do.”

When it was time for college, Patricia put her construction skills to good use to support herself through graduation. While others took on waiting tables to make ends meet, she worked alongside her father on job sites, earning good money and gaining valuable experience.

“I would go in and put the stack molding in, stacking beautiful houses, crown molding kitchens, trim around doors and windows,” Patricia said. “Back then when minimum wage was \$1.61, I was making probably \$100 a week, well over what other people were making. It allowed me to buy my books, it allowed me to pay for my tuitions. My husband right now is also in construction. I don’t do much trim carpentry now except at my own house.”

Patricia earned a degree in general studies and humanities from Dean College, followed by a master’s in psychology from the University of Cincinnati. Though she remains passionate about psychology, after two years of counseling, she decided to pursue a career in a field she knew well and excelled in – construction.

“There is an aspect of construction that is very appealing for me,” Patricia said. “It’s the artwork. You start something, you give whatever artwork you have to that, and you step away and go, ‘That was nice,’ and then you move onto the next one. I like the completion about that particular work.”

Patricia has carried that passion for nearly three decades, with the past 15 years dedicated to affordable housing construction. She joined KCDC in September 2021 as construction and rehab manager and soon thereafter advanced to senior project manager-capital projects. During her time at KCDC, she has contributed to numerous projects, including high-rise renovations, additional Five Points infill housing, upgrades to the historic Western Heights 3-1 units, the veteran-focused Liberty Place community, and Phase 1 of the Transforming Western initiative in Western Heights. She is also working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to rebuild units in Montgomery Village that were lost to a fire in late 2022.

“Each time I visit a community that has been renovated or newly constructed, I see smiling faces, thriving families and pride in



their communities,” Patricia said. “I feel humbled that so little can make a difference in so many lives. ... The KCDC staff is passionate about providing needed affordable housing in Knoxville and that culture of giving is what makes me grateful for the opportunity to work with such a dedicated team.”

A love for gems

Since childhood, Patricia has been fascinated by gemstones of all kinds.

Her interest took shape around age 10, sparked in part by a family trip to Idaho. During the visit, her uncle took her to a petrified forest park, where he helped her identify the unique “rocks” that caught her eye.

“One piece was a petrified wood, one an agate, one a garnet and one was a sunstone,” she said.

In the years following that visit, Patricia’s uncle continued to nurture her fascination with gemstones, encouraging her curiosity and passion for collecting and identifying stones.

“I really started falling in love with the fact that this is something that the earth made all by itself,” Patricia said. “These chemicals came here, this water came here, and all of a sudden you have this amazing crystal that’s beautiful. Even in its rough form it’s beautiful.”

To this day, she still treasures her first gem collection, which has grown over the years to include around 300 pieces.

“My diamonds range from a 10-pointer natural pink diamond,” she said. “I have natural yellow diamonds. I have a lot of what they call ‘fancy browns.’ ... I have rubies. I have opals – I’m absolutely in love with opals. I have a couple friends in Australia that will send me rough opals, so I do have rough opals that aren’t polished or anything.”

For Patricia, every stone holds value – no matter how simple or imperfect – she loves them all.

“I have a 26-carat aquamarine, and it has a flaw in it. Someone said, ‘Why would you buy this beautiful aquamarine that has a flaw in it?’ And I said, ‘That tells you that it’s real,’” Patricia said.

In 2001, Patricia attended the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), earning her Diamond and Colored Stone certification.

As the world's leading authority on diamonds, colored stones and pearls, GIA provided rigorous courses that she found challenging but well worth the effort.

"Your final classes are they give you three diamonds, and you have this whole dossier you have to fill in like crown size and culet, whether it has a culet or it doesn't, how you look down into the diamond and whether there's a clear face or has someone cut it so there's dark faces and dark facets in it," she said. "You go through this whole thing and when you graduate you realize that you know a lot more about diamonds than most people will ever know."

In her free time

Patricia's hobbies change with the seasons. In the colder months, she enjoys photography, renovating her house with her husband, and getting lost in a good book.

During the warmer months, she enjoys riding her bicycle and tending to her garden. Each year, she grows mostly food in her 48-foot raised bed – and she plans to expand it even further soon. Gardening has been a cherished hobby since childhood, providing her with a deeply cathartic experience.

"It's a miracle," she said. "You take this little, tiny seed, carrot seeds are so tiny, and you throw it in the ground with some soil, you give it some water, and you come out with something to eat."

Although staples like tomatoes and herbs remain constant, the selection of fruits and vegetables varies each year.

"Every other year I try to do strawberries. They take a lot of room, so I move them around," she said. "I always do green beans because I have lots of places for them to climb."

This year she plans to grow potatoes, herbs like dill, basil and oregano, green beans, peas, broccoli and cucumbers.

Health & Wellness

March is National Kidney Month. Kidneys play a vital role in helping our body function properly. In addition to filtering the blood in your body every 30 minutes, they help control blood pressure, signal the body to make red blood cells, help keep your bones healthy, and regulate blood chemicals that are essential to life.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects one in seven people – about 35.5 million adults – in the United States. CKD is a condition in which the kidneys are damaged and can't filter blood as well as they should. Because of this, excess fluid and waste remain in the body and may cause health problems such as heart disease. Other health problems related to CKD include anemia or low number of red blood cells, an increased occurrence of infections, low calcium levels, high potassium levels, and high phosphorus levels in the blood, loss of appetite or eating less, and depression or lower quality of life.

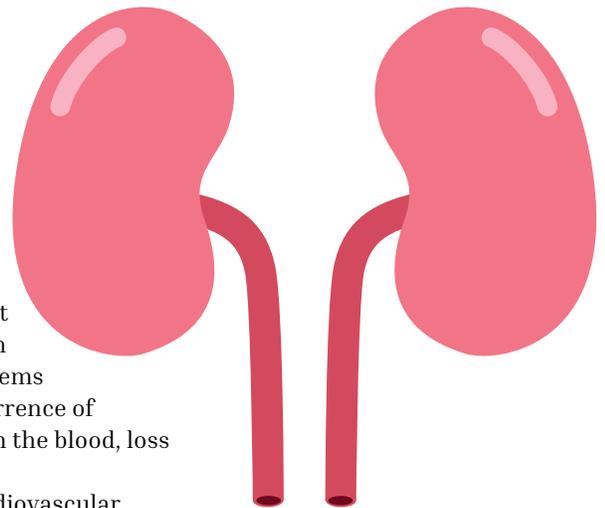
CKD varies in levels of seriousness and can progress to kidney failure or early cardiovascular disease. When the kidneys stop working, dialysis or a transplant is needed for survival. Kidney failure treated with dialysis or a transplant is called end-stage kidney disease. Not all people with kidney disease progress to kidney failure.

What can you do to reduce risk?

- Keep blood pressure below 140/90 or check with your doctor for right target for you.
- If you have diabetes, stay in your target blood sugar range as much as possible.
- Get active. Physical activity helps control blood pressure and blood sugar levels.
- Lose weight if needed.
- Get tested for CKD regularly if you're at risk.
- If you have CKD, meet with a dietitian to create a kidney-healthy eating plan.
- Take medicines as instructed and ask your doctor about blood pressure medicines called angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors and angiotensin II receptor blockers, which may protect your kidneys in addition to lowering blood pressure.
- Quit smoking.
- Include a kidney doctor (nephrologist) on your health care team.

By the Numbers

- Kidney diseases are the leading **cause of death** in the U.S.
- **40%** of people with severely reduced kidney function (not on dialysis) are not aware of having CKD.
- Every 24 hours, **360** people begin dialysis treatment for kidney failure.
- In the U.S., diabetes and high blood pressure are the leading causes of kidney failure, accounting for **2 out of 3 new cases**.
- In 2019, treating Medicare beneficiaries with CKD cost **\$87.2 billion**. People with end-stage kidney disease cost an additional **\$37.3 billion**.



New Hires

The following were recently hired through Feb. 28 at Knoxville's Community Development Corporation:



Jourdan Richardson
Hired: 1/28/25
Title: Admissions Specialist
Place: Main Office



Nathaniel Estabrooks
Hired: 2/4/25
Title: Director of Real Estate and Development
Place: Main Office



Jaya Jenkins
Hired: 2/10/25
Title: Maintenance Tech. I
Place: Western Heights



Jean Sands
Hired: 2/13/25
Title: Accounts Payable Specialist
Place: Main Office



Teresa Campbell
Hired: 2/24/25
Title: Payroll Specialist
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.



Newsletter Dates

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

- May-June
- July-August
- 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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