

# The Bulletin

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## Revitalizing Western

For a little more than two years, Knoxville's Community Development Corporation and likeminded agencies have worked with the community to develop a plan to wholly transform the Western Heights housing site and Beaumont area.

Work on the Transforming Western plan began in February 2021 with insight from residents. Input was extensive after many virtual meetings, surveys and community events. Residents' insight helped bring needs to the forefront, such as a lack of access to transportation, lack of economic development and growth, overall safety concerns and no sense of community.

"This is about the people and not just about what the city or what KCDC wants to do," Susan Troop, KCDC Transforming Western plan manager, said. "It's about what are the needs of the residents and trying to engage them in this whole process, engage the community and the city in this transformation."

In December 2021, KCDC's Board of Commissioners approved plans to expand affordable and mixed-income housing units, as well as make new green spaces, buildings and parks. Plans include supporting existing businesses, expanding the Boys & Girls Club, creating a destination park, building a community-focused restaurant, constructing an entrepreneurship center, and establishing an anchor building – the last of which will have art creation among other things for residents.

"Beaumont Magnet (Academy) is an art-focused magnet school, and what the



residents were noticing was that ... once they went to middle school in sixth grade, that art focus that they had went away," Susan said. "The community really has seen the value in the arts, and so that was something they really wanted to see continue and wanted to see more of in their community."

Transforming Western addresses three components – Housing, Neighborhood and People. Each section has a lead entity – Brinshore Development and KCDC for Housing, the City of Knoxville for Neighborhood and the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee for People. KCDC is the overall grant lead and involved in all areas.

The first step of the initiative was construction of the Western Heights Head Start facility, a \$5.4 million project that



opened in October and now offers Head Start and Early Head Start programming by CAC for 132 children up to 5 years old.

“There’s different focuses for each of the areas. That was a big People focus,” Susan said. “The next People focus I think is case management and hiring social workers for Western Heights, to start meeting with families and to help start meeting those needs. That’s pretty much the next focus for (CAC). For Neighborhood, we are finalizing all of the partner commitments. For Housing, it’s to get that first phase built, to break ground.”

“  
*This plan is a synthesis of the dreams and ideas of the residents, community members and stakeholders and will transform Western Heights and the Beaumont neighborhood into a community where families and residents can thrive.* - Ben Bentley  
 ”

Western Heights is two HUD properties next to each other. The original 1930s housing, while not part of Transforming Western, is receiving a \$12 million exterior makeover to better match the new construction. The red brick housing at Western will be torn down and rebuilt.

Interior and exterior renovations to the 1930s units are underway and could be done by December. Impact to residents should be minimal.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new units is set for this summer. In addition to the 196 units that will be replaced for



extremely low-income families, 99 new market rate units and 184 affordable units will be built. Susan said the plan is to build vertically and first on land that doesn’t currently have housing. New structures will first start on vacant land so that residents can be moved to new housing in hopes of offering minimal displacement.

“An important part is the addition of mixed-income units because that’s a big part of the neighborhood revitalization, is to not have it just be only low-income housing,” Susan said. “It’s to make it mixed income to bring new residents into the community to help revitalize it.”

According to HUD research, residents living in mixed-income sites experience lower neighborhood unemployment and poverty and increased safety. The plan includes an on-site police station.

## Community engagement a focus

A partnership kickoff meeting was held in March for more than 100 agencies involved, which hopefully left representatives excited for the Transforming Western initiative.

“It’s very exciting because that’s what makes something like this successful,” Susan said. “You can’t revitalize a community without teamwork, and it is exciting, and I’ve heard what was said to me by several of the partners is it’s really cool that everyone is working together for this and nonprofits aren’t in competition with each other, that we’re all working together to see this vision through. That’s really exciting, because it does take an entire community to accomplish something of this magnitude.”

KCDC in September was awarded a \$40 million Choice Neighborhoods grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Including the grant, more than \$220 million in public and private funds have been committed to the initiative.

“We took the time to listen to the needs, concerns, and most importantly, the dreams of the people of Western Heights and Beaumont,” Indya Kincannon, Knoxville mayor, said in September. “The City is committed to investing \$26.5 million to support local infrastructure and affordable



housing in this community. This grant also means residents will have more access to early education, recreational spaces, transportation resources and health care, all which can lead to a brighter future! We also want to thank KCDC, as a partner of the City of Knoxville, for its efforts to pursue resources and funds to connect this community.”

As part of the grant requirements, Transforming Western must be finished by 2028.

“This plan is a synthesis of the dreams and ideas of the residents, community members and stakeholders and will transform Western Heights and the Beaumont neighborhood into a community where families and residents can thrive,” Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said in September.



# Health & Wellness

## YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

By Matt Rogers

May is Mental Health Awareness month.

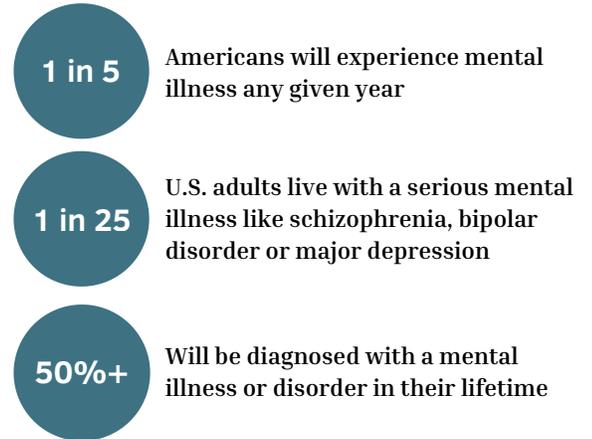
In 1949, Mental Health America launched a weeklong focus on raising awareness, which eventually ended up for a full month. The purpose of this month is to raise awareness and educate the public on mental health illnesses.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), there are more than 200 mental illnesses, including mood and personality disorders, schizophrenia and depression. More than 50% of people will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder in their lifetime. One in five Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.

### It's OK to not be OK

Mental illness is not rare and there are increasing odds that mental illness is chasing you. I want to encourage you to verbalize your overwhelming burdens. Gone are the days of silence. For resolution, you must talk about what is troubling you. Ask for help from all corners of your environment – family, friends, doctors, colleagues, supervisors, etc. You must become effective at establishing boundaries to protect your mental health. Find your limits/thresholds and don't breach them. It's OK to say 'no' and not feel guilty, but oftentimes, it takes practice. Please go [here](#) to learn more about mental health and how you can help someone.

Lastly, don't forget about your EAP benefit!



## Mobile Mammography Unit

Knoxville Comprehensive Breast Center will be outside the main office at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, May 18, to offer mammograms. To schedule an appointment, please call 865-583-1003 or 1-800-456-8169, Extension 1003.

Bring your insurance card, if applicable, and an acceptable form of ID. If you do not have insurance, the out-of-pocket cost for a mammogram and radiologic interpretation is \$170 and due at the time of your exam. Please do not wear lotion, deodorant or powder on the day of your appointment. Deodorant will be provided for use following your mammogram.

### Identification includes:

- 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 includes your full name

# Showcase

## Procurement Division

By Terry McKee

The Procurement Division, along with Human Resources and IT, is part of KCDC's Administration Department. Procurement consists of Eugene Littlejohn as courier, Emma Mitchell as procurement analyst and Terry McKee as director.

Our mission is to provide efficient, effective and innovative procurement services that maximize resources and support KCDC staff. Our vision is to be recognized as a trusted, innovative and strategic partner by staff, suppliers and the Knoxville community at large. Our values include accountability, customer service, ethics, excellence, innovation, professionalism and transparency. KCDC's Procurement Division has maintained accreditation from the National Institute of Governmental Procurement for nearly two decades. KCDC's Procurement staff is recognized locally, statewide and nationally for their accomplishments, knowledge and willingness to help colleagues.

Procurement works in conjunction with all KCDC departments and divisions to make purchases as economically as possible within the laws, rules and regulations that govern our entity.

We oversee the entire procurement process, including bidding, courier services, establishing store credit accounts, flag status notice, insurance for contracted vendors, inventory, P-Card program, prevailing wage requirements, purchase order issuance, signing contracts, surplus equipment, sales tax exemption forms, sales tax status information for other states, U.S. mail, vendor relations and warehouses. All our work and functions are to assist you in serving residents and to continue accomplishing KCDC's mission. Procurement balances multiple goals that often conflict: business needs, speed, low price, quality, level playing field, legal requirements, social/environmental goals, transparency, accountability and risk to achieve the needed results in a timely manner. Public procurement is incredibly complex, and it accounts for a huge portion of the United States' gross national product. Collectively, \$2.17 trillion is spent annually by non-federal public agencies.

At the corporate and public level, Procurement is not the same as "shopping at Walmart" since there are many different rules, regulations and challenges. Working in Procurement is never boring! Every day brings something new as we are constantly

purchasing new goods and services. If there was a typical day in Procurement, it would include putting out fires, interacting with vendors wanting to sell to us, issuing purchase orders, creating solicitation documents, dealing with staff concerns about vendors, handling emergencies, dealing with vendor concerns, issuing vendor evaluation documents to staff, reading and taking webinars/training to staff current, completing reports for internal or external usage, attending or conducting vendor fairs and outreach events, working with staff to resolve past due invoices, conducting market research and more.

Typically, the Procurement staff must rapidly change its plans as new and competing priorities come from customers.

It is our privilege to work with you. We look forward to serving you as you meet the needs of residents.



The Procurement Division is, from left, Emma Mitchell, Terry McKee and Eugene Littlejohn.

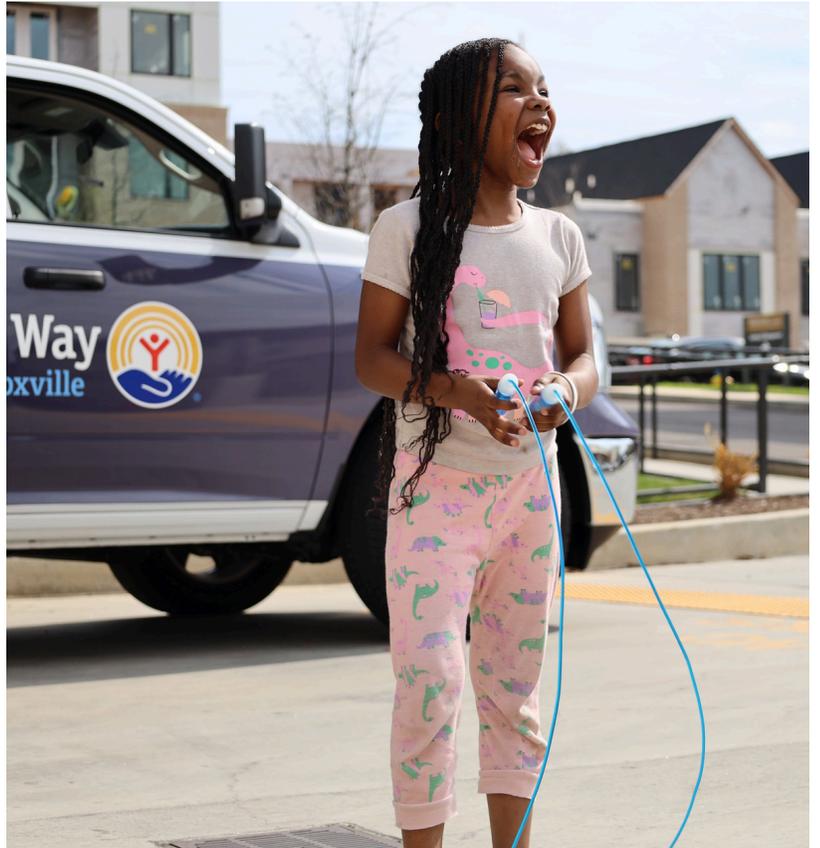
### FUN FACT

## Did you know?

In the fiscal year 2022, Procurement:

- Issued 1,676 purchase orders
- Oversaw 1,420 P-Card transactions
- Issued 34 formal bids & proposals
- Managed \$104,026 in inventory across KCDC

# On Location





## Egg Hunt Delights

After a brief countdown, several children quickly rushed to pick up as many candy-filled eggs they could while parents hurried to get the perfect keepsake pictures April 3 during the annual egg hunt at Western Heights.

Although there was an overcast sky and a slight chance of rain, that didn't stop families from coming out for the festive community gathering. Faith Coffman, AmeriCorps service member, estimated about 60-70 people attended the egg hunt and community resource fair, which was held prior to the holiday event and showcased available resources from 29 partner agencies.

"I hope that the Western Heights neighborhood was able to enjoy community, access resources from our amazing partners, and have fun," Faith said.

Three-thousand eggs were placed in the field beside the Western Heights Community Center, and all of them were easily picked up within 20 minutes. To ensure children of all ages got the chance to get eggs, groups were broken up between those in kindergarten and younger and those past kindergarten.

Jennifer brought her children, 8-year-old Olivia and 2-year-old Joshua, for the second year. The family has lived in Western Heights for three years. Jennifer said the egg hunt is something she hopes will be a tradition for her family.

"(Joshua) just gets excited," Jennifer said. "He loves it. Last year he won a bicycle."

Children who found a golden egg got their pick of five bicycles. Although Briana has lived in Western Heights for nearly six years, last month marked the first time she brought her children, 4-year-old Forrest, 5-year-old Scarlett and 8-year-old Lilly, to the egg hunt.

"This is the first one that I've just tried to be more involved with the community because I see that you all are trying to be more involved with the community, which is good. That's my biggest thing," Briana said. "... It's community-based. The kids have their friends, the school's right there, that's a really big thing.

Right now, we're on our feet, we don't really have a car, so it's good.

"I know kids don't get to do this a lot, and I notice that," she added. "I think that's really big and really great that you guys are doing that because these kids really need stuff like this."

Community gatherings make her feel safe, she said.

"When you can't drive them somewhere, little stuff like this - it's just the little things," Briana said. "It's really definitely the little things in life.

"And yeah, I feel great, and it wears them out, and I sleep tonight," she added, laughing.

The egg hunt also reached families outside of Western Heights, with some coming from the Beaumont area. That was the case for Casey and his 6-year-old daughter, Ripley, who live just down the road off West Oak Hill Avenue. Casey said his daughter got an egg hunt flyer from her school.

"I just like seeing her get so excited about coming out and doing something with the community," Casey said. "There's not a whole lot of activities, so anything we can do something where everybody's involved, she loves it."

*I think that's really big and really great that you guys are doing that because these kids really need stuff like this.*

- Briana



## On Location



COURTESY OF MATTER HEALTH

Steve Isom, left, and Jeffery Fishback with their trophies.



COURTESY OF MATTER HEALTH



COURTESY OF MATTER HEALTH

A handful of residents put their pool skills to the test March 27 at Isabella Towers. Of the six to take part in the friendly competition, Jeffery Fishback and Steve Isom came in first and second, respectively. Matter Health representative Debbie Jackson said she hopes to have a pool tournament at Cagle Terrace and Northgate Terrace in the near future.

# 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](mailto:jnash@kcdc.org) if you think there's someone we should highlight.

## Wayne Lovelace Maintenance Supervisor

Ever since he was a child, Wayne Lovelace has been hands-on and wanted to fix things.

The 12-year KCDC maintenance man recalled time spent with his father, who was a self-employed plumber.

"I went on my first job with him – because wherever my dad was I wanted to be – and so I went on my first job for him when I was 6 years old, and I carried plumbing tools," Wayne said. "He'd say, 'Go get a 14-inch pipe wrench,' or, 'Go get a pipe dope.' I'd run and jump in the back of the truck and carry tools back and forth. I worked with him off and on through my childhood – and even in my teen years up until I graduated school – every summer. If dad had a job, I was with him on it."

Wayne joined KCDC in January 2011 after his friend and now fellow coworker Rex Wolfenbarger informed him of a job opening as maintenance technician. At the time, Wayne was attending Pellissippi State Community College for industrial maintenance following a two-decade career at Panasonic.

For seven years he alternated as maintenance technician for North Ridge Crossing and Love Towers until September 2018, when he became maintenance supervisor for Love Towers.

The job has kept him on his toes because it's "unpredictable," but he said he wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's never boring, never predictable, but it's a challenge," Wayne said. "I guess it's an adventure every day coming in and not knowing what to expect. You always have to be ready for the surprises."

The people he has met over the years have been the highlight of his time with KCDC.

"I mean, my bosses, every one of them had been at KCDC for a long time," Wayne said. "Just to learn from them, see how they handle people and situations. To be able to learn under people like that and the respect that they show. To me it's encouraging and uplifting."

Over the years Wayne's drive has been his faith, his family and his willingness to keep an open mind and learn from his coworkers, some of which have been with KCDC for more than 20 years.

"When you come into something you think, 'I've worked in plumbing for – I'm 58 years old, I've been doing this since I was 6 or 7 years old, and I've seen a lot, but I'm still learning,'" Wayne said. "There's new technology that comes out that I'm like, 'Wow.' I like learning the technology. I like sharing what I know with



guys, and learning from them, and being able to teach them and share what I do know. Plus, all the other things I've learned – the electrical skills, the carpentry skills, all that stuff that I enjoy learning."

Wayne is happily married, and has a daughter, son and stepson all in roughly early adulthood. He's also a proud grandfather to three grandchildren. He said he's "just proud" of his family.

When he's not working, Wayne can be seen playing guitar and learning drums, riding his Harley-Davidson on the open road or fishing out on the lake.

"Guitar's my thing that I play the best, which I'm not really good at," he said.

He played guitar and sang in an unnamed gospel group for three years.

"I sang, if you want to call it singing," he said, laughing.

Wayne's interest in motorcycles dates back decades, but his hobby went to the wayside until a few years ago when he had more free time. Now it's not uncommon finding him

riding with his wife and son when the weather's warm.

"Me and my wife just like to get out and just ride the mountains and cruise around on the backroads between here and the mountains and stuff," he said. "We ride with my son, he rides. Usually he's a little quicker than me. I'm just like, 'OK, you go ahead, I'll catch up. I know about where we're headed.' He'll pull over some and wait on the old man."

And for fishing, the hobby's all about relaxation and the challenge.

"Trying for something that you can't see, that you're not sure," he said. "There again, you're just learning different things and it's never something that you master. You're never going to catch them all, so I think the challenge, but it's just relaxing. I can go spend an afternoon or a day on the lake. Even if I catch nothing, I'm satisfied."

*It's an adventure every day coming in and not knowing what to expect. You always have to be ready for the surprises.*

# Community Focus

## Lonsdale Homes

Lonsdale Homes is a Family community in Northwest Knoxville. The 260-unit property has been in KCDC's portfolio since the early 1950s when it was developed. Lonsdale borders Heiskell Avenue to the north, Texas Avenue to the west and the Western Heights community to the east.

Completed in 2018, the community underwent a \$26 million revitalization and modernization to improve curb appeal and create a renewed sense of community. Renovations included a slew of new things, including cabinets, countertops, HVAC units and windows. Appliances, sinks, tubs and electrical and plumbing systems also received upgrades. Exterior enhancements covered landscaping improvements, security camera installation and sealing and striping of parking lots. The current property manager is James Pruitt.

## Did you know?

In the late-19th century, what's now Lonsdale was part of a 240-acre farm owned by William Ragsdale. The entrepreneur in 1890 recruited investors and established the Lonsdale Land Development Company — named after his parents, Lonas and Dale Ragsdale. Lonsdale incorporated as a separate city in 1907 and was eventually annexed by Knoxville 10 years later.



# New Hires

The following were recently hired through April 25 at Knoxville's Community Development Corporation:



**DeAndre Brinson**  
 Hired: 4/3/23  
 Title: AMT  
 Place: First Creek



**Lindsey Hickok**  
 Hired: 2/15/23  
 Title: Intern  
 Place: Executive Suite-Main Office



**Arthur Dixon**  
 Hired: 2/22/23  
 Title: Custodian  
 Place: Cagle Terrace



**Christopher Kirkland**  
 Hired: 3/13/23  
 Title: AMT  
 Place: Lonsdale Homes



**Joshua Kitchen**  
 Hired: 2/20/23  
 Title: Maintenance Supervisor  
 Place: Montgomery Village



**Travis Turner**  
 Hired: 1/26/23  
 Title: AMT  
 Place: Western Heights



**Tiffany Adams**  
 Hired: 2/28/23  
 Title: Eligibility Intake Specialist  
 Place: Section 8



**Hector Ortiz**  
 Hired: 2/6/23  
 Title: Assistant Property Manager  
 Place: Cagle Terrace



**Susan Troop**  
 Hired: 1/30/23  
 Title: Transforming Western Plan Manager  
 Place: Executive Suite-Main Office



**Emily Bengyak**  
 Hired: 2/15/23  
 Title: Intern  
 Place: Executive Suite-Main Office



**Tanner Bearith**  
 Hired: 4/13/23  
 Title: Accountant  
 Place: Accounting-Main Office



**Tina Muncey**  
 Hired: 3/6/23  
 Title: Supportive Services Associate  
 Place: The Manor at Northgate

# Retirements

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



**Tracee Pross**  
 Retired: 3/8/23  
 Title: Chief Financial Officer  
 Place: Executive Suite-Main Office



**Steve Blevins**  
 Retired: 3/31/23  
 Title: AMT  
 Place: Five Points



**Teresa Lawson**  
 Retired: 2/10/23  
 Title: Supportive Services Coordinator  
 Place: The Manor at Northgate



## Welcome to KCDC

The first New Hires Day was held April 19 in the training room for nine newcomers to KCDC. New hires went back to the fourth quarter of last year. The day included several speakers from the main office, team building and group discussion. It will be held monthly with new hires and will gradually incorporate all KCDC team members over the next several months.



## Partnership Appreciation

By Marisa Moazen

Matter Health is on a mission to bring high-quality preventative and primary care closer to where it is needed most – at home. KCDC and Nashville-based Matter Health began their partnership in 2021 to add four on-site health centers in each KCDC high-rise building. Centers are open at Cagle Terrace, Isabella Towers and Northgate Terrace. A fourth center will open this summer at Love Towers.

Centers include a patient lounge, consultation and virtual health room, and an exam room. Each is staffed with a dedicated nurse practitioner, nurse and overseeing physician. Amenities and services are available to all high-rise residents regardless of insurance status.

Matter Health plans monthly events at each community to engage residents, get them outside of their apartments and combat loneliness, a contributing factor to poor health.

KCDC is grateful for this partnership and the convenient resident access to physical and mental health and lifestyle support. We have reports from our hospital partners that non-urgent ER visits have decreased 7% since the opening of the centers. The convenience of each location eliminates many barriers residents face when seeking health care, such as scheduling and transportation.

The goal is to not only improve resident health, but also enhance quality of life. We welcome all KCDC employees to the ribbon cutting for the Love Towers center later this year, or stop by any of the other locations 9 a.m.-4 p.m. weekdays to see the space.



## Partner Agency Resources

- **Furniture Ministry** – CedarBrook Outreach offers free furniture to residents in need. Furniture can be requested and donated at [cedarbrookoutreach.org/furniture-ministry](http://cedarbrookoutreach.org/furniture-ministry).

## Community Resource Fairs

Below are the scheduled Community Resource Fair dates:

- **North Ridge Crossing** – 3 p.m. May 8
- **Northgate Terrace** – Noon May 11
- **The Vista** – 3 p.m. May 15



## Newsletter Dates

The Bulletin is scheduled to be released every two months. Publication should fall on the first full week of the month.

- **July-August Edition:** July 3-7
- **September-October Edition:** Sept. 4-8
- **November-December Edition:** Nov. 6-10



## Newsletter ideas

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

