



The Bulletin

Resource Fairs are Back

By Jodie Johnson

This week marks the start of the sixth year we've hosted resource fairs for residents living in KCDC communities.

What are community resource fairs?

Community resource fairs offer residents an opportunity to connect with partner agencies who provide essential services.

When are the resource fairs?

Fairs occur March through May, primarily on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the afternoon.

What has preparation looked like?

Dedicating time to understanding the KCDC communities and Section 8 housing needs assessments has been integral in planning for the fairs. It is important to me that these events not only engage and entertain residents but also provide an access point to essential services and resources. If there is a service or resource that could contribute to an overall improvement in a resident's quality of life, I want them to not only understand how to access it but also feel that they will be supported in doing so.

Day of the fair

AmeriCorps members will flyer at communities beforehand, and property managers and case managers will assist with getting the word out to residents. Maintenance staff help with setup and breakdown on the day of, and the Partnerships team will be there to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Partners across multiple areas of focus will attend, including (but not limited to) organizations that provide resources for food, health, education, employment and transportation. The primary focus of the fairs is to connect residents with resources, but they also function as a community event that brings together neighbors who may not have many opportunities to interact and get to know each other.

We encourage partners to bring activities or useful household items in the hope that there will be multiple levels of engagement available to make the experience worthwhile.

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How can KCDC staff contribute to the success of the fairs?

While property managers and maintenance staff play an essential role in the success of the fairs, I believe as individuals we are always making connections and building community wherever we go, and I know that KCDC staff do the same both within and outside of their professional roles. If you meet someone who has a resource you think could be useful for KCDC residents, please direct them to connect with us at partnerships@kcdc.org. If they can attend even just one fair, that is one more resource we can connect residents with!

** Jodie Johnson serves as partnership coordinator during her AmeriCorps term.*



Location	Date
Autumn Landing	1-2:30 p.m. March 18
Cagle Terrace	1-2 p.m. March 24
Guy B. Love Towers	Noon-1 p.m. March 31
Northgate Terrace	Noon-1 p.m. April 7
The Vista	1-2:30 p.m. April 8
North Ridge Crossing	1-2:30 p.m. April 14
First Creek at Austin	1-2:30 p.m. April 15
Lonsdale Homes	1-2:30 p.m. April 21
Montgomery Village	1-2:30 p.m. April 28
Isabella Towers	Noon-1 p.m. April 29
Five Points	2-3:30 p.m. April 30
Western Heights	12:30-2 p.m. May 12
Rental Assistance Office	1-2:30 p.m. May 13
Nature's Cove	1-2:30 p.m. May 20
Liberty Place	1-2:30 p.m. May 26

KCDC Earns Pinnacle Business Award for Partnerships, Affordable Housing

Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC) has earned a Knoxville Chamber 2026 Pinnacle Business Award in the Impact Award category for its efforts to build partnerships, support the community and expand affordable housing.

"Being a catalyst to improve and transform communities is at the core of what we do each day," Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said. "KCDC's impact can be measured not only in new buildings or investments, but in the lives changed: children developing in safe environments, seniors aging with dignity, veterans finding stability and families gaining access to healthcare and opportunity. By aligning partners, resources and residents toward shared goals, KCDC is helping to build a stronger, healthier and more equitable community.

"We're honored to be recognized with the Impact Award by the Knoxville Chamber and proud of our team members and partners who deserve this recognition."

The annual Pinnacle Business Awards salutes regional business excellence across nine categories, with winners chosen by the Knoxville Chamber board of directors. The Impact Award celebrates community improvement in multiple areas and the ability to engage other partner organizations in these endeavors. An event honoring the winners was held March 5 at The Pavilion at Hunter Valley Farm.

KCDC was chosen for the Impact Award in part by its work to expand affordable housing across Knoxville, including the innovative Liberty Place initiative. The Liberty Place housing community, which serves the needs of military veterans who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, is becoming a model for other communities to follow. Strategic partnerships brought the community to reality, with individuals, groups and organizations across the area stepping up to provide services and goods – including comfortable home furnishings – to support the residents.

KCDC has brought or is committed to bringing more than 1,200 renovated, replaced and new housing units to the local market between 2020 and 2029. In meeting the parameters of the Impact Award, KCDC has brought more than \$500 million in housing investment to the Knoxville area over the past 10 years; leveraged more than \$100 million in philanthropic and private investment for neighborhood projects that uplift Knoxville; championed environmental stewardship in each redevelopment; and fostered health care, education and workforce pathways, adding new on-site primary care clinics and partnering with schools, colleges and workforce agencies to connect residents to training and career opportunities.

"The rationale for any KCDC investment is the same: to align with the mission to collaborate with the Knoxville community to create and preserve housing opportunities and strengthen neighborhoods," Bentley said. "This is especially important during a time when Knoxville has a huge shortage of housing units, and we believe the Impact Award further confirms that we're succeeding in reaching our mission."



Manor Fundraiser Collects \$5,400

By Grae Potter

The Manor at Northgate Terrace recently held its third annual Winters Hearth Fundraiser at Fellowship North Church.

It was a wonderful opportunity to meet up with individuals and organizations from across Knoxville who came together to support the residents of our Supportive Services Program.

Despite the recent frozen precipitation and current financial climate, we still raised \$5,400 to support our elderly tenants. Matter Health and Senior Financial Group were our main sponsors this year, but we took time to recognize all of the agencies in attendance. A special Thank You goes to Delectably Yours for the amazing lunch as well as the music provided by a Ukrainian War Refugee couple who initially stayed with us at The Manor. We are also grateful to Marisa Moazen who shared information about KCDC's ongoing projects but also shared about the work of The Manor.

I will reiterate the sentiments of one attendee, "It is wonderful to meet the fantastic people who have a heart for the work of The Manor and its residents."

I second that sentiment. Thank you to everyone.

KCDC Community Impact

See what others are saying about KCDC's impact in the community.

Bridging the Gap: A Reminder of Our Collective Impact

Last summer, families in Western Heights participated in an early learning and family engagement initiative made possible through a partnership between the University of Tennessee, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) and Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC).

The program was designed to address limited access to licensed child care and early learning opportunities. Faculty and graduate students from UT's College of Education worked alongside community partners to create a series of accessible outings for families with children under 5 years old. Instead of a traditional classroom model, caregivers and children explored local educational and cultural institutions together, building early learning skills while strengthening parent-child interaction.

Transportation, cost and safety concerns were intentionally addressed to remove barriers to participation. CAC community ambassadors helped build trust and encourage families to connect with one another. What began as a summer pilot initiative has continued with monthly gatherings that are growing through word of mouth.

This initiative is more than a single program. It is an example of how KCDC's broader ecosystem works. Stable housing, trusted relationships and strong partnerships create the foundation for opportunities like this to take root. Whether your role is in property management, maintenance, resident services, compliance, finance or leadership, the work you do every day contributes to outcomes like these.

This collaboration in Western Heights reminds us that the work each of us does every day contributes to something larger. It strengthens families, expands opportunity and deepens community connection.

With more than 150 team members across KCDC, it can be easy to focus on immediate responsibilities. Stories like this help us see the full picture. Together, we are creating communities rooted in safe, dignified housing, where families are connected, supported and positioned to thrive.

Visit [here](#) to see the full story by the University of Tennessee's College of Education, Health & Human Sciences.

KCDC Finalizes Contract to Improve Pedestrian Access, Safety in Western Heights Area

Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC) has finalized a contract with the U.S. Department of Transportation that will improve pedestrian safety improve a key intersection within the Transforming Western initiative.

Work for the project will start later this year and will be complete in late 2027.

With a finalized contract, the approved grant funding can now be used to install five signalized crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety around Western Heights Head Start and provide safer access to the new park and new school planned for the neighborhood. The intersection at Reed Street and Oldham Avenue also will be improved.

"The funding and finalized contract are part of our focus on enhancing walkability within our residential communities," Ben Bentley, KCDC executive director and CEO, said. "Transforming Western, which has begun to take shape for residents, has been intentional about creating accessible neighborhoods where children and families have safe areas to walk."

In 2024, KCDC was awarded the \$1.7 million Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Demonstration Grant from the U. S. Department of Transportation (DOT). With a finalized contract, the approved funding can now be released and planning work begun.

The funds will increase [Safe Routes to School](#) (SRTS) programming at Beaumont promoting safety strategies like Walking School Bus (WSB) or bike trains, where teachers or other adult volunteers accompany children as they walk or bike to or from school. The programming will be implemented in

partnership with Bike Walk Knoxville.

The funding complemented the overall [Transforming Western Plan](#) and the [City of Knoxville Vision Zero Plan](#), which seeks to eliminate traffic fatalities on city-controlled roads by 2040.

The funds are awarded as a demonstration grant so participation and utilization of the new neighborhood elements will be monitored and reported to the DOT.

The [Safe Streets and Roads for All](#) (SS4A) discretionary program was established as part of the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#) (BIL). With over \$5 billion in appropriated funds over five years, the SS4A program funds regional, local and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The program supports the DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy and its goal of zero roadway deaths.

Transforming Western is a comprehensive plan for the Western Heights and Beaumont neighborhoods to enhance access to housing, transportation, economic opportunity and youth development. The Overlook at Beaumont, the first phase of new housing, opened Jan. 14, 2026. The plan also seeks to boost internet access, availability of health care and opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

The first step of the overall initiative was completed in October 2022 with the official opening of the Western Heights Head Start center, which provides comprehensive preschool programs for neighborhood children from infant to age 5 by the Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee.

Information about Transforming Western is available at [transformingwestern.com](#).

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.

Daniel Watson

Director of Philanthropy



Since joining KCDC in December as director of philanthropy, Daniel Watson has been hard at work advancing philanthropic strategies that expand opportunities and improve outcomes for residents.

“As I’ve gotten started, I think the benefit I’ve had stepping into this role is I’m already pretty well connected in this community,” Daniel said.

Daniel brings with him two decades of experience working alongside families navigating housing instability and systemic barriers. With his wife, Mandy, he co-founded nonprofit The Restoration House in 2006, offering supportive transitional housing for low-income single mothers and their families. Daniel said the initial decision was scary, both leaving their jobs to start up the organization, but it’s something they felt called upon by God to do.

“We knew we were taking a huge risk, but we were also in our middle 20s and probably didn’t know any better. In the beginning, it was tough,” he said. “I was working full time for The Restoration House, but then I was moonlighting five nights a week at Oak Ridge National Lab to make ends meet. In the early days we were going to food pantries and things like that to make it work.”

The move paid off, though, and The Restoration House grew over time, at first a couple homes on 3.5 acres – next to their home – and eventually expanded to the point where from 2013-20 over three phases 24 homes were built on six acres for a development called The Village.

The Restoration House’s public awareness got a boost in November 2012 when the nonprofit was featured on ABC’s “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.”

“Right before we started building The Village, Extreme Makeover came to town and tore down the original homes that we bought and rebuilt those,” he said. “That led to The Restoration House buying the property next door, not because we generated a lot of donations through the show, but because the goodwill of the community was pretty high. ... It was a catalytic moment for us. I mean, you can’t buy that kind of awareness, you know?”

I think we need to align the work of our community partners to the foundation and help people see that as a front-door opportunity for not just philanthropy and giving, but also for volunteering and partnering.

– Daniel Watson



In 2023, Daniel helped establish Olive Tree Early Learning Academy, a high-quality early education center for children 6 weeks through 5 years old. He said that was the last big challenge he wanted to tackle before moving on.

“Part of launching Olive Tree went way back to 2007 when Mandy and I were first opening The Restoration House, our original dream was to always have an early ed center,” Daniel said. “You can’t do everything at one time, and so for us that accomplished the final piece of the puzzle.”

Knowing The Restoration House was poised for future success, Daniel felt it was time to make room for new leadership at The Restoration House. He was ready to tackle new challenges elsewhere and in early 2025 he and the board started implementing his planned transition to leave.

“I wanted to allow it to live beyond Mandy and I and I felt the best way to do that was to intentionally step aside and help prepare the next leader,” he said. “The person there who ended up becoming CEO had been with me for 14 years.”

Daniel said he’s extremely fulfilled with the work he did at The Restoration House, and he’s excited about his new role at KCDC.

Focusing on raising awareness

Part of Daniel’s focus since joining has been making the Family Investment Foundation (FIF) – KCDC’s 501(c)3 component unit – more forward-facing so that people in the area know they can invest philanthropically in the communities they want to invest in. FIF’s mission is to support residents of KCDC housing and focuses primarily on serving households with area median incomes of 50% or below.

He believes that mission can further be achieved by expanding the FIF board from seven to 11 members to help generate more needed resources, building a standalone website separate from its page on the KCDC website, and creating a FIF logo to help establish its identity.

“I think we need to align the work of our community partners to the foundation and help people see that as a front-door opportunity for not just philanthropy and giving, but also for volunteering and partnering,” Daniel said. “KCDC for most

people is such a large entity, and they see it as purely a public entity, it can be a lot to navigate and handle. The foundation is nowhere near that complex, right?

“It’s something that people can get their heads around, and so I think that’s part of it,” he added. “I think part of it, too, is having people on the board who – the people on the board currently are great. We need to grow the board, the board’s only seven members. ... We need to be strategic about making sure that they’re connected in the right ways in the community, to provide some credibility to the foundation.”

Plans are to launch the website by April.

A love of woodworking, basketball

Daniel’s two main hobbies are basketball and woodworking.

Ever since high school shop class, he’s loved delicately crafting items.

“You know, some people disagree with me. I think everybody’s creative,” he said. “People are creative in different ways, and I found that that’s my creative outlet. ... I mean, I can’t sing or play an instrument or anything like that – I can barely play the radio – but I can look at a piece of furniture, a picture of it, and I can replicate it and probably make it better than it was than the picture.”

While he sells some things, he doesn’t want to turn the hobby into a full-on business.

“It’s all an opportunity for me to reinvest in the woodshop,” he said. “I’m not trying to make a living on it because then it wouldn’t be fun anymore. But I love making things all the way from custom furniture to CNC projects that I can replicate in mass.”

Big or small, the size of the project doesn’t matter.

“This is not common for people who have woodshops, but I also have my own sawmill,” he said. “I mill my own wood, and I’ve got about 40 or 50 logs right now. ... The most expensive part of woodworking is buying the wood, and I got tired of that.”

In addition to woodworking, Daniel likes to play basketball when he can. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, he played in a pickup game for 15 years. Now, twice a week, he wakes up early in the morning and drives to Johnson University to play.

“Two mornings a week at 6:30 in the morning is when we meet and start playing,” Daniel said. “It’s some college students, some professors and other folks, it’s a good variety, and occasionally my son even plays with me.”



Health & Wellness

Observed every March, National Save Your Vision Month highlights the importance of protecting and maintaining eye health. Taking a proactive step can go a long way in protecting your sight.

Digital strain

Extended screen time on computers, smartphones and tablets can lead to headaches, dry eyes, blurred vision and neck or shoulder pain, typically due to reduced blinking when focusing on the devices. If left unaddressed, symptoms can worsen and impact productivity and daily comfort. EyeCare Associates offers some things you can do to reduce digital eye strain:

- **Optimize Your Workspace** – Creating an ergonomic setup is essential to reduce digital eye strain. Position your screen about an arm's length away and slightly below eye level to reduce unnecessary eye movement. Adjust lighting to minimize glare – use shades, curtains or anti-glare screen protectors to prevent excessive brightness. Finally, sit with proper posture, keeping your back straight and shoulders relaxed to prevent neck and shoulder strain.
- **Take Breaks and Blink Often** – Extended screen use reduces blinking frequency, leading to dry, irritated eyes. To prevent this, follow the 20-20-20 rule and make a habit of blinking more often, as this naturally moistens the eyes and reduces discomfort. You can also try eye exercises like rolling your eyes or shifting focus between near and far objects to ease tension.
- **Manage Your Screen Time** – Balancing screen use and rest is important for long-term eye health. Consider reducing blue light exposure by using screen filters or enabling night mode on your devices, especially in the evening. You can also set reminders or use app notifications to encourage frequent breaks and establish “screen-free” zones to give your eyes a chance to fully relax.

Best care practices

- **20-20-20 Rule** – Look away from your screen every 20 minutes for 20 seconds at an object 20 feet away.
- **Protective Eyewear** – If what you're doing runs the risk of potential hazards to your eyes, consider wearing safety glasses or goggles to prevent injuries.
- **UV Protection** – Even when it's cloudy, extended exposure to UV rays can increase the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. For the best protection, wear sunglasses that block 100% of UV rays.
- **Avoid Smoking** – Smoking is associated with a higher risk of developing cataracts, macular degeneration and damage to the optic nerve. Quit smoking to improve eye health.



Eye Conditions

- **Cataracts** – A gradual clouding of the eye's natural lens that can cause blurry or dimmed vision.
- **Glaucoma** – Damages the optic nerve and can lead to permanent vision loss if untreated.
- **Macular Degeneration** – Affects central vision, making it difficult to read, drive or recognize faces.
- **Diabetic Retinopathy** – A complication of diabetes that damages the small blood vessels in the retina, potentially causing severe vision loss.

HR Update

Your Health, Your Way: Introducing the HealthCheck360+ Wellness Program

By Ryan Cook

We're excited to offer employees the HealthCheck360+ Wellness Program – a voluntary, confidential program designed to support your overall health and well-being while rewarding healthy choices. Through simple steps like completing a Health Risk Assessment, biometric screening or physician form, you will gain valuable insight into your health and earn points each quarter. The program is flexible and personalized, allowing you to participate in ways that best fit your lifestyle, whether that's tracking daily activity, completing wellness challenges or engaging in preventive care.

In addition to meaningful health insights, participation can earn you financial incentives throughout the year. Points earned through eligible activities convert into monetary rewards – up to \$300 per quarter – while all personal health information remains private and protected. With easy access through the myHC360 mobile app and optional health coaching support, this program is designed to make wellness convenient, supportive and rewarding. We encourage all employees to take advantage of this opportunity to invest in their health and well-being.

If you have questions, please see any member of Human Resources and we will be happy to help you!

New Hires

The following were recently hired through March 2 at Knoxville's Community Development Corporation:



Hailey Patzer
Hired: 1/21/26
Title: Intern / Development
Place: Main Office



Tyler Phelps
Hired: 2/4/26
Title: Groundskeeper
Place: Supportive Maintenance



Betsy Boswell
Hired: 3/2/26
Title: Accountant II
Place: Main Office



James Phillips
Hired: 1/27/26
Title: Maintenance Tech. II
Place: Five Points



Jeanine Johnson
Hired: 2/23/26
Title: Assistant Property Manager
Place: First Creek at Austin

KCDC in the Community

Got a photo of you or a coworker representing KCDC in the community? Email the information to jnash@kcdc.org.



**East Tennessee Purchasing Association
Business Outreach Expo**



United Way Housing Information Panel



Hero's Hill Groundbreaking Ceremony

Visit [here](#) for more information on Knox County's Operation Hero's Hill project.

Announcements

Got an announcement you'd like to put in The Bulletin? Email the information to jnash@kcdc.org.

- **KCDC Appreciation Breakfast** – A KCDC pancake appreciation breakfast will occur 8-9:30 a.m. April 1 at the supportive maintenance building – 302 E. Anderson Ave. RSVP through Paylocity by March 27.
- **Sports Tickets Available** – KCDC has tickets available for baseball for employee use. Interested employees should contact Joy Patrick (jpatrick@kcdc.org) for more information or to reserve a game.
- **Pickleball League** – Interested in pickleball? Come join KCDC's small amateur league! Play is typically Monday-Thursday immediately after work at either the Williams Creek Community Center & Pool or Edgewood Park. Email Joy Patrick (jpatrick@kcdc.org) if you want to play or be placed on the weekly distribution pickleball list.

Newsletter Dates

- May-June
- July-August
- September-October
- November-December

Newsletter Ideas

Got something you think could be in The Bulletin? Email the information to jnash@kcdc.org.

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