Growing Greater

Fall 2021 Newsletter

A Message from the Director:

As we near the end of 2021, I am grateful for all of the amazing things we have accomplished this year, and am excited for what's ahead at Cornerstone Renter Equity. Our staff, membership, and partnerships are growing, our programs are gaining momentum, and our presence in the Over-the-Rhine community is making a difference.

Our staff, which now includes a Family Coach, Financial Coach, and Community Specialist, have worked tirelessly to support the success of our members. In 2022, we will have a new Marketing and Development Director to support our communication and fundraising efforts.

Membership in the Renter Equity Program has gone up. We currently have 72 families enrolled, plus 16 more applicants in queue. Families can also now access our application online and receive assistance to complete it.

Our philanthropic and community partnerships have been crucial to expanding and enhancing our services. In 2021, we secured nearly a dozen new partners and hope to engage others in 2022.

Community-building is part of our mission, and this past year it showed. We hosted a variety of community-building activities such as National Night Out, Fitness in the Park, COVID-19 vaccination events, and more. We look forward to rolling out a new Community Ambassador program in 2022 (details on page 2).

To help members maximize their assets, we have expanded equity-earning opportunities to include Health & Wellness. For example, in 2022, members will be able to earn equity credits by participating in a healthy cooking and eating program conducted by Ohio State University. In addition, we have increased the amount of equity members can earn. Families can now earn up to $155 monthly or $1,960 annually.

We are thrilled to have achieved so much at Cornerstone, and cannot wait to achieve even more next year. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Alisa Berry, Executive Director

Cornerstone Renter Equity Board of Directors

Jonathan Bennie
Kurt Billups
Aaron Byers
Bernice Cooper
Brandon Dunigan
John Hancock
Kurt Hibbett
Don Larson
Robert Maly
Doug Myers
Mo Riggins
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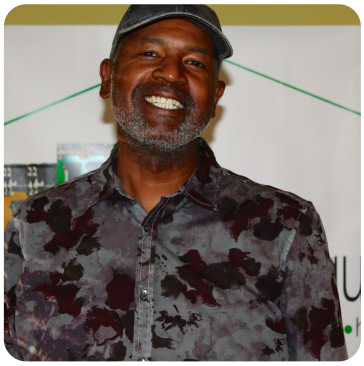
Member News



OTR Community Council Board of Trustees Welcomes John Hancock!

Renter Equity Member John Hancock recently joined the Over-the-Rhine Community Council Board of Trustees, where his goal is to help build a more equitable community.

The Over-the-Rhine Community Council serves as a safe place for neighbors to meet, talk, and enjoy the neighborhood together. Its mission is to improve Over the Rhine's quality of life by representing, with a recognizable voice, the residents' interests.

"I am excited to be part of the Board of Trustees, helping to make our vibrant and diverse community more equitable for all," says John.

An entrepreneur, self-starter, John also serves on the Board of Cornerstone Renter Equity, where he gives generously of his time and talents to support our community events, and advocates the values of our organization. We are grateful for John's commitment and proud of his continued leadership in Over-the-Rhine.

Community Ambassador Program Coming in 2022!

In 2022, Cornerstone Renter Equity will launch the Community Ambassadors Program, which aims to empower members to advocate for their community and explore professional/personal development opportunities.

Nominated by staff and members, Ambassadors will sit on our Advisory Board, where they will share member concerns and ideas for improving/enhancing the community. Ambassadors will also receive hands-on experience and leadership training that supports their education, career, and financial goals.

Cornerstone Hosts Self-Care and Trauma Workshop

In October, Cornerstone hosted a Self-Care and Trauma Workshop, where our agency staff and community partners shared professional and personal stories about strategies for self-care as it relates to trauma. Hamilton County Commissioner Stephanie Summerow Dumas presented at the event. Dumas is Ohio's first black female commissioner and a certified Healthy Relationship Facilitator, with more than 40 years of experience in the field of mental health. We also heard from Key Beck, Racial Equity Training Specialist, who was recently featured in the Pride issue of Cincinnati Magazine. Beck's presentation focused on facilitating equity with regards to gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and race, as well as how these components intersect through community and culture.

We are grateful to all those that attended the workshop, and to our wonderful speakers for sharing their insights on ways to improve mental wellness for our community members.

Seasongood Foundation Supports Community Equity

The Murray and Agnes Seasongood Good Government Foundation, a philanthropic organization dedicated to providing resources highlighting civic education and community engagement, has awarded a generous grant to support the continued coordination and promotion of Community Equity activities. In addition to providing opportunities for members to earn and build equity, these activities, which include community meetings, block clean-ups, garden club, family nights, and special events, also help members build positive, healthy relationships in their neighborhood.

Community-building is vital to our mission, strengthening the presence and voice of families in Over-the-Rhine. Seasongood's generosity not only supports ways for families to get involved, it also supports the platform they need to make a meaningful impact on their community.

National Night Out

On October 5th, Cornerstone Renter Equity co-hosted “National Night Out” with District 1 Cincinnati Police in Findlay Park. The event brought more than 250 families and community partners together for a fun-filled day that included food, games, a petting zoo, Yoga, live music, and line dancing.

In addition to promoting the Renter Equity program, Cornerstone volunteers and partners distributed information on drug and violence prevention, as well as how to access various community resources.

"We are grateful for the Cincinnati Police, Cincinnati Recreation Commission, YEP Fitness, and all partners that helped us provide positive programming in Findlay Park to support our community," says Alisa Berry, Executive Director.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers play an important role in helping our members organize and engage in community-building activities. Volunteer for a block clean-up, urban gardening program, or special event at Findlay Park, and help make a difference!

To sign up, or for more information, email cornerstone@csequity.org.

Become a Renter Equity Sponsor!

For more than 20 years, Cornerstone Renter Equity has been committed to helping renters of affordable housing achieve better lives for themselves and their families.

Through our Renter Equity Program, we offer unique, non-traditional ways for low-income families to earn equity and build assets. Instead of investing money, families invest in themselves and their community.

Members of our program can earn equity by attending community meetings, volunteering, engaging in healthy activities, and more. After three years they are vested, and can withdraw funds to purchase a home, reduce credit debt, pursue education, grow or start a business, or continue saving.

As we head into 2022, we are asking our donors, partners, and friends to support this crucial program by becoming Renter Equity Sponsors.

Renter Equity Sponsorship = $2,000
(provides equity funds, one-on-one coaching, and financial planning services for one family)

To become a Renter Equity Sponsor, or for more information, call 513-369-0114, or email cornerstone@csequity.org

Thanks to all who support the Renter Equity Program!

Your contribution has been paramount to families in Over-the-Rhine, helping them pursue their dreams and build a better future for themselves and their community.

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facebook.com/RenterEquity