



Poverty to Joy

Community Help, Inc.

Annual Report

2013



Our thanks to International Paper for providing the paper and printing for the annual report again this year.



Our Mission

To improve the quality of life of economically challenged families in the city of Savannah and Chatham County, Georgia through assistance to youth and senior citizens by focusing on education, economic development, and safe, secure housing.

501(c)(3) Non-Profit
PO Box 863 – Savannah, GA 31402
912-228-3539 – www.communityhelpinc.org

**Mr. Bernard Polite,
President**

Community Volunteer
Retired Manager,
International Paper Co.
Member - St. Philip
Monumental AME Church

Mr. Bonzo Reddick

Attorney and Part-time Pro-
Tem Magistrate Judge
Member - Living Hope
Community Fellowship
Church

Mrs. Claudia Clarke

Vice President,
Senior Lending Officer,
Carver State Bank
Member - Speedwell United
Methodist Church

Mr. Keith Lord

Information Technology
Youth Futures Authority
Member - St. Philip
Monumental AME Church

Mr. Darrel Daise

Director, Community Housing
Services Agency
Member - Brownsville Baptist
Church

**Mr. Charles Nelson,
Treasurer**

Community Volunteer
Retired Supv. International
Paper and Retired Military
Member - St. Philip
Monumental AME Church

**Rev. Marsha Verdree,
Secretary**

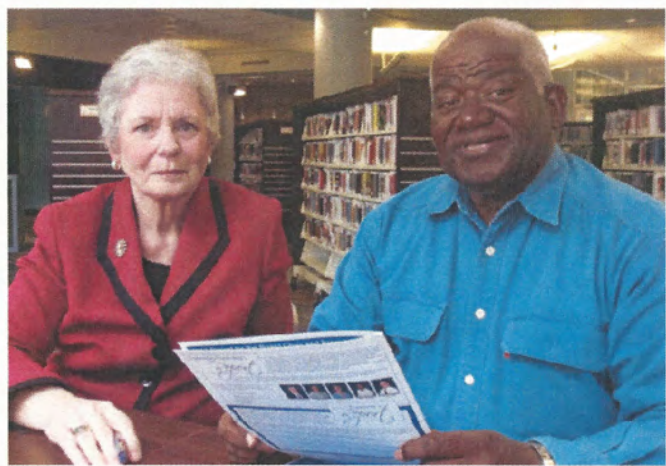
Associate Pastor
St. Phillip Monumental AME
Church
Savannah, Georgia

Mr. George Bowen

Retired Military
Former Education
Administrator
International Consultant



Board of Directors



*The Board
at Work*



*From the
President*

Greetings,

May God's Blessings fill your life with Joy.

As a resident of Savannah, Georgia, and even more as a citizen of Chatham County, I know full well the meaning of joy. I have seen it on the face of a middle school student as she looks out into the ocean on to the horizon and is greeted by the morning sun. Her vantage point is the observation platform of the Tybee Island Light House. This same joy is visible when a most precious senior citizen, who has lived under the weight of growing financial obligations and a leaking roof with rain water buckets in her house, offers a "High Five" to celebrate the completion of her new roof; that just a few months earlier had been out of the question. And yet again, joy can be seen on the faces and heard in the voices of local senior citizens and their care givers as they reflect on those times of wonder that stand out in the minds of our sick and shut-in. It is not by chance that you often hear a person say that "they got more out of the visit than the shut-in person they visited".

Projects



The year 2013 was an important year in the life of Community Help, Inc. We focused on our mission and in so doing, we touched the lives of many. We were able to remove the anxiety of six senior households by leveraging our \$12,500.00 to the roofs on their homes that actually cost \$43,597.00 to replace.

You may wonder if the work that we do is necessary. Or you may just ask the question straight out "Do these people really need help?".

Our Work Has Grown

Well, the local organizations that keep the data continue to produce reports on poverty. You know those reports, the ones that tell you about the stagnant picture of almost a quarter of our citizens continuing to live below the poverty line. Yes, it has been going on for more than three generations. Yes, you only need to pause for a moment before you begin to think of all those social ills that flow from life below that poverty line.

I want to acknowledge and thank our contributors. Their gifts have allowed us to grow, expand and now even to sustain our work.

Our Board of Directors and volunteers focused our energy and efforts to produce tangible and measurable improvements in the quality of life for those economically challenged families. We recognize that at the present time what we are doing is small in scale and that there are so many that are not being touched. I say to you in closing that our commitment is to continue on this path - to get better at this work and to bring others to this path that will help make life better for us all.

Bernard Polite
President, Community Help, Inc.





Community Help, Inc.

In the News

Community Help steps in to fill gap from federal budget cuts at Savannah home



Workers put on a new roof on a house on Lucy Grant's home on Hanson Street.

Lucy Grant was worrying herself sick over her roof.

The 85-year-old retiree kept a constant eye on the water spots on the ceiling of her East Savannah home. She tried coating the stains with Kilz, but the damage continued to spread.

"It kept my (blood) pressure up," she said. "I was worried maybe the ceiling was falling in on me."

Monday morning, as workers clambered over her roof, Grant's worries were replaced by gratitude. Instead of wringing her hands, she got to clutch an oversized check presented to her by the nonprofit organization Community Help.

The group for the first time has joined with the city of Savannah to help pay for repairs to senior citizens' homes. Grant's is the first. The combined effort is designed to offset federal funding cuts to Community Development Block Grant funds.

The city's Minor Home Repair Program, which administers home repairs such as Grant's, is working with \$353,304, a 20 percent reduction from 2010.

Even with those reductions, Martin Fretty, the city's director of housing, estimates the city and Community Help will assist about 150 families this year, with the average cost per home between \$5,000 and \$8,000. If a youth group provides labor, that drops the average cost to \$3,000, he said.

Bernie Polite, president of Community Help, said the volunteer group is focusing efforts on senior citizens who need repair assistance and on youth.

Community Help also recently awarded checks to 70 students in the historic preservation class, who are part of the early college program with Savannah-Chatham County public schools, Polite said. The grants will help students pay for non-tuition college costs such as textbooks.

Alderman John Hall, who represents Grant in the city's third district, heralded the Community Help partnership as an example of how government and the private sector can work together.

Much to the satisfaction of residents like Grant.

"I'm not a big talker, but I have to say something," Grant said as she stepped to a microphone. "God bless you. Thank you so much."



Leaky roof replaced for midtown Savannah resident



Jan Skutch/Savannah Morning News

Anna Covington's home in the 1800 block of Ott Street has a new roof as part of a partnership between the city of Savannah and Community Help Inc., a nonprofit that helps low-income seniors keep up their homes.

Anna Covington has lived in her Ott Street home for 41 years while rearing seven children. But a leaking roof needed replacement.

Wednesday she had a new roof, courtesy of a city of Savannah partnership with Community Help Inc., a nonprofit that targets such cases.

"The new roof makes it comfortable," the spry 81-year-old Covington said.

Ronald Bayfield, owner of Bayfield Construction Co., and his assistant, Joseph Sanders, were on site Wednesday doing last minute touchups to a job they started on Tuesday.

Also on hand were Luke Gardiner, construction services administrator for the city's Housing Department, and Cynthia Holly, also with city housing, as part of a check presentation.

The \$6,600 project was funded by the city with a \$2,000 contribution from Bernie Polite, president of Community Help Inc.

Gardiner said the city's minor repair program assists low-income property owners with repairs they are not able to afford and for which they qualify under

federal Housing and Urban Development guidelines. It emphasizes elderly and handicapped residents.

Covington and her son, Danny, selected Bayfield for the job, Gardiner said.

The city program has been in place for more than 20 years, but it relies on partners such as Community Help to spread the dollars further and assist more residents, he said.

This is the first year for Community Help's participation, but Gardiner said the city looks to work with the group "well into the future."

Community Help's Polite said seniors and folks living on limited incomes can benefit from safe and secure housing.

"One of the ways for us to help is looking at home repairs that allow us to participate with the city to help those who are in trouble," Polite said.

The money his group contributes allows the homeowner to complete the work without owing the city, Polite said.

This is the second such house the partnership has addressed this year. Community Help also participates in other home repairs absent city participation.

Local senior citizen receives new roof

BY JAN SKUTCH
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Georgia Green has been in her Carvet Heights home for 22 years, so when her roof began to age she sought help.

This week Gregg Norris with Norris Construction & Roofing, working with the city of Savannah and Community Help Inc. to save her abode, started replacing bad wood before replacing the roof.

"I just didn't want to lose it," Green said. "Your roof is your house. That's the way I feel about it."

For Bernie Polite and his partners at the nonprofit Community Help it is another opportunity to put their money where their mouth is. They add funds from a small budget to city money to assist low-income homeowners with property threatened by aging and limited budgets to respond.

In Green's case, the city put

up \$7,500 with Community Help adding \$2,000.

It is the sixth house the two entities have worked together on since 2011. Community Help has done two others on its own.

Green, 71, lives with two children, a great-grandniece and a great-great-grandniece in the three-bedroom home. Her income is fixed.

It took several attempts to get to the point of action, including one missed deadline.

Ellen Wyatt, senior program analyst, is working with Green, Polite's group and Norris to make it happen.

She can't recall the number of homes she has assisted in over the past.

Green found Norris through a neighbor and under the program, he works for free.

Norris said he has done other homes in the area.

"It was just a lot of rotten wood there," Norris said. "I didn't know it was that bad."



Community Help, Inc.

Our Projects



Ellen Wyatt, City of Savannah Housing Representative, and Edward Sledge , homeowner with his caregiver



This project was one of the first partnerships between the City of Savannah and Community Help, Inc.

38th Street





Board members Reddick, Polite, Verdree, and Nelson join the homeowner at the completion of this roofing project.

Dell Street



This home, near Gamble Road and Highway 17, was in very bad condition.



Blossom Drive - Before



Mrs. Dorothy Ortt, Home Owner with
Bernard Polite of Community Help, Inc.



Mr. Nate Norris, Contractor,
Mrs. Ortt, Home Owner, and
Bernard Polite.



Largo Drive



This is Mrs. Louise Terrell's project on Blossom Street. Ronald Bayfield Construction was the contractor. The project was completed 11-14-13. Mrs. Terrell stated she is happy she doesn't have any more leaks.

Blossom Drive - After



SAVANNAH EARLY
COLLEGE

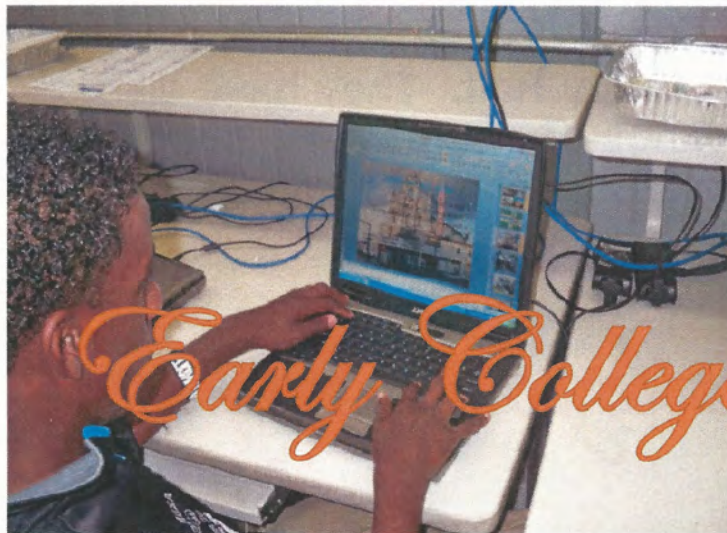


Early College Program



Research and report on historic structures in Savannah's Historic District.

Field trip to actual restoration project in Savannah's Victorian District.



Student using class computer to study historic structures.

Early College Program



Education is important to us. The Early College Program's Historic Preservation Class has attended field trips to the Scarborough House Ships of the Sea Museum, and lectures including one about the construction and preservation of Savannah's City Hall. They have also viewed architectural drawings of local historic buildings. The Early College Program receives financial support from Community Help, Inc.

Early College Program

| Month | Served On-Site | Delivered | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------|
| 12-Jan | 308 | 160 | 468 |
| 12-Feb | 293 | 272 | 565 |
| 12-Mar | 230 | 193 | 423 |
| 12-Apr | 220 | 175 | 395 |
| 12-May | 301 | 265 | 566 |
| 12-Jun | 240 | 169 | 409 |
| 12-Jul | 191 | 136 | 327 |
| 12-Aug | 314 | 190 | 504 |
| 12-Sep | 251 | 188 | 439 |
| 12-Oct | 295 | 256 | 551 |
| 12-Nov | 249 | 261 | 510 |
| 12-Dec | 152 | 220 | 372 |
| 13-Jan | 233 | 252 | 485 |
| 13-Feb | 250 | 221 | 471 |
| 13-Mar | 217 | 233 | 450 |
| 13-Apr | 173 | 168 | 341 |
| 13-May | 321 | 308 | 629 |
| 13-Jun | 276 | 245 | 521 |
| Avg. Total Meals per Week | | | 108 |
| Avg. # Meals Delivered per Week | | | 50 |



Food Service Program

Meals Prepared On-site, Served and
Delivered to the Sick and Shut In

Hour of Power

*Helping
Others to
Find Joy*

CHI



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