



annual report 2007

good for families...



Our Mission:

NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester enhances peoples' lives and the community environment by providing access to quality housing services, revitalizing neighborhoods and supporting opportunities for personal empowerment.



My relationship with NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester began in the Fall of 2001 when I walked into their office and asked if they could help me buy a condominium. I was a recently divorced, single mother not making a great deal of money and I wanted to bring stability to my daughter's life.

To my surprise and delight, the answer to my question was “yes!” I completed the homebuyer education program and secured a mortgage pre-approval. With the help of NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester, I owned my own home by the Spring of 2002.

My mother's favorite quote came from Robert Frost's *The Death of the Hired Man*: Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in. I doubt my mother ever read the entire poem, but it spoke to her of a community where family and friends were there to provide help if ever needed.

My family's roots run deep in this area. In fact, my grandfather worked in the very mill that we are now converting into affordable rental units. This is not the norm these days. People do not remain in the same place and family and friends may be half the country or even half the world away. This is what makes the services offered by NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester so important.

We all need a place we can call home. It connects us to the community, makes us care about our neighbors, and gives us a stake in what happens, not just today, but tomorrow too. It does not matter if that home is a beautiful new apartment in the newly renovated Silver Mill or a fixer-upper house. What matters is that NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester gives opportunity to people who might not otherwise be able to afford a place that they can proudly call home. From personal experience, I can tell you this is so important!

Over the past several years, I have had the opportunity to experience NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester from a different perspective, first as a board member and this last year as Chair of the Board. I am proud of the strategic plan adopted this past year that will guide the organization's focus and financial strength over the next three years. With the continued commitment, support and partnership of the wider community, NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester will build on its success in addressing the housing needs of the Greater Manchester region and be there for others who, like me, wanted something better for their family.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Jellison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Beth Jellison, *Chair, Board of Directors*



Educating and Assisting First-time Home Buyers

When Martha and Scott Tacker first moved to Manchester in 1998, they envisioned renting for one year. They so wanted to buy a home of their own for their family, which included three young children. But the Tackers soon realized the very real financial challenges of providing for a family while saving for the purchase of a home.

At the time, Scott worked as a Medical Assistant (his current occupation) and also served in the New Hampshire Army National Guard while Martha stayed at home to care for the children. “Every time Scott received a raise in pay, there was a raise in rent so saving was very difficult,” remembers Martha.

The goal seemed more attainable in 2000 when Scott and Martha decided to attend a home ownership seminar offered by NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester. They completed the educational program and enrolled in the IDA program. They set a goal of saving \$100 every month toward the purchase of a home. Martha went back to work part-time.

Their plan was sidetracked briefly in 2004 when Scott was deployed to Iraq for one year. “We never stopped saving for the house, even while Scott was away. It was our future,” says Martha.

After accumulating a total of \$6,000 of their own and IDA matched funds, Martha and Scott began the process of looking for a home in June 2006. “Because of the education we received, we were more aware of options and ways to avoid expensive pitfalls,” says Martha. Six months later Scott and Martha purchased a four-bedroom home on Manchester’s East Side. The Tacker kids were thrilled – now they could build a snowman and no one was going to knock it down!

The Tacker family remains busy in their home today, happily working on various house projects. Martha says “Our kids have their own space and we feel a sense of stability in our lives. Our next goal – finding the right dog for our home.”

Making Housing Affordable to Young Professionals

While attending Plymouth State University, Tony Demers assumed, like most of his fellow finance majors, that he would be able to land a well-paying job right after he graduated in 2005.

“I had certain salary expectations but soon found they were unrealistic,” says Tony. “I quickly discovered that even in banking you need experience and knowledge before you start making the salary I originally envisioned.”

As a result, Tony found himself moving back into his parents’ house after a short period of time on his own. For a 25-year-old who had already developed a liking for independent living, he said this was a big blow – not just to his social life, but also his self-esteem.

Salvation, however, was close at hand. After living with his parents for some six months, a relative told him about the brand new, affordable apartments owned by NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester at the recently-completed Straw Mansion Apartments.

Tony admits he wasn’t sure what to expect. In his mind, “affordable housing” was only needed by senior citizens. But as he soon discovered, the Greater Manchester housing market isn’t exactly affordable to college-educated young professionals either.

After touring Straw Mansion Apartments – and the top floor, one-bedroom apartment he eventually moved into in January, 2006 – any doubts he might have had disappeared.

“The mansion was beautiful; it was in a great downtown location in a great neighborhood. The parking was good and the neighbors were quiet,” says Tony. “And, of course,” he added, “the rent was great, and it included heat and hot water.”

Indeed, the rent was so great that he was able to use his added monthly savings to purchase, with his brother, a duplex on Manchester’s West Side.

“It does take discipline to save up that kind of money, but it’s not an impossible feat. Living in the Straw Mansion definitely afforded me the opportunity to save a lot faster than I would have been able to do otherwise,” he said.

