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## Construction underway for new COC development, *Park 215*

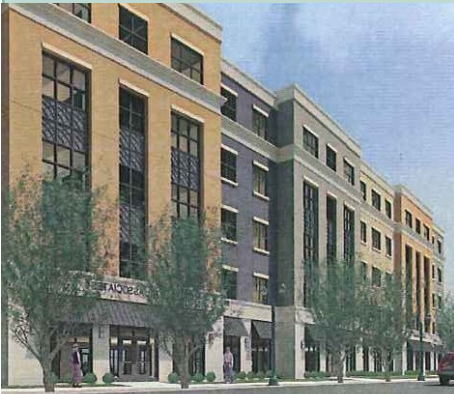
Charter Oak Communities (COC) is excited to announce its latest addition to our growing community! Construction on the **Park 215** development began in November 2016 as Phase Four of the Vidal Court Revitalization effort. This effort has led to the transformation of a physically obsolete, state-assisted public housing complex into a cluster of newly developed, self-sustaining, mixed-income communities. First came Westwood, completed in July 2011, and Palmer Square, completed in July 2012. Greenfield, completed in December 2014, came next as the first to be located on the former Vidal Court site.

Park 215 will be a residential and commercial – hence “mixed use” – five and one-half story building, comprised of 136,500 total square feet. The ground floor exceeds 20,000 square feet of commercial space that will be configured as state-of-the-art medical offices. The residential portion contains 78 one- and two- bedroom mixed-income apartment units. Sixty percent of the apartments (47) will be affordably priced, and the remaining 40 percent (31 units) will be market rate. Project-based

Section 8 voucher subsidies have been reserved for 23 of the affordable units. The remaining 24 income-restricted units will be affordable to households whose income is less than 60 percent of the Area Median Income.

Park 215 will have many resident amenities to offer! Facilities available to all residents will include a community room, event kitchen, laundry room and a beautiful, outdoor landscaped patio. Community strengthening and support services will be housed in offices for resident service coordinators, health care providers, property management and on-site security services. Residences will feature hardwood kitchen cabinetry, granite countertops, ceramic tile and stainless steel appliances. An outdoor pergola and landscaped roof deck on the roof top (!!) complements the building.

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*View of Park 215 from Stillwater Avenue. Rendering courtesy of Kenneth Boroson Architects.*

### Board Meetings for 2017:

- **February 22, 2017**
- **March 22, 2017**
- **April 26, 2017**
- **May 24, 2017**
- **June 28, 2017**
- **July 26, 2017**
- **August 23, 2017**
- **September 27, 2017**
- **October 25, 2017**
- **November 15, 2017**
- **December 13, 2017**

*The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.*



*Future site of Park 215, located on Stillwater Avenue at the corner of Merrell Avenue. Aerial photograph courtesy of Viking Construction.*



## Dogs Rescued at Lawn Hill Terrace

Two abandoned dogs were discovered by the COC Maintenance team at Lawn Hill Terrace on Custer Street this past fall. The dogs, believed to be brother and sister, were abandoned with nothing left to eat in a vacant apartment. The small dogs, both under a year old, are a cross between a Pomeranian and a Chihuahua called a Pomchi. The male, Riley, was adopted by a COC employee, Michelle, and his sister, Eve, by another COC employee, Ruben.

Riley's affectionate personality made it easy for Michelle and her family to adopt him. Despite her family already having a cat and Chihuahua, her husband and daughter were happy to welcome Riley into their home. Michelle says, "The whole family helps with Riley. My husband grooms him every month, and my daughter enjoys taking Riley for a walk and bringing him to our local dog park to socialize with the other dogs."

Michelle describes Riley as a good-natured dog who is playful, but has an abundance of energy. Michelle and her family have had a few surprises occur



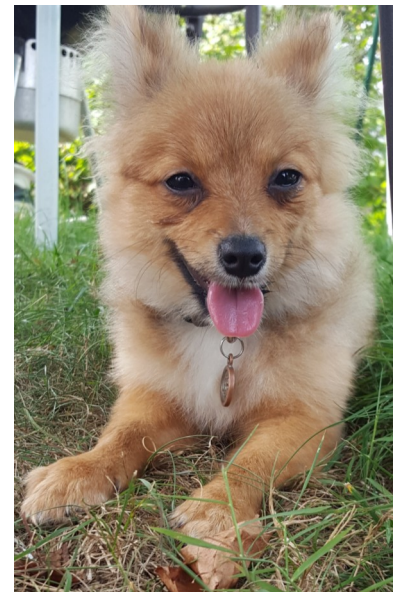
*Riley pauses in his playing just for a moment to pose for the camera.*

in their apartment since Riley has arrived: Some of their shoes have been destroyed by Riley chewing on them, and Riley was curious about the family Christmas tree, knocking it over with ornaments scattered everywhere! Luckily, no one was hurt.

Ruben and his family enjoy Riley's sister, Eve, who is playful and loving. Similar in size to Riley at around eight pounds, Eve is friendly

and happy to be with Ruben's family. "Taking care of Eve is a family event," says Ruben. "The kids have fun playing with Eve and my wife spoils her by buying her clothing."

A special "thank you" goes to Michelle and Ruben and their families for embracing Riley and Eve into their homes.



*After frantically running around, Eve stops to catch her breath.*

## Clinton Manor Honored with Silver Award



*COC employees, Steven Brown and Megan Shutes, display the Silver Level Award at the 2016 Change Makers dinner.*

Clinton Manor was recognized with a Silver Award at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Change Makers Awards event hosted by the Stamford 2030 District. The event was held to honor outstanding real estate projects across Fairfield County that exemplify high levels of energy efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The Stamford 2030 District, working with other districts across the nation, is a non-profit organization dedicated to making downtown Stamford more sustainable and resilient. They have determined and measure specific performance goals for reducing energy use, water use, transportation emissions and resiliency impacts associated with Stamford's buildings. The program will keep downtown Stamford more competitive and ensure an affordable, resilient, healthy and vibrant city in years to come.



## Resident Corner: Tom Kessel

Tom Kessel, resident of Wormser Congregate, prefers to remember Stamford the way it was when he was growing up rather than the way it is now. For over 40 years Tom photographed Stamford. He was known as “The man with the camera,” and has over 26,000 photos capturing the changing landscape of Stamford.

Around 1970 Tom began taking photos in Springdale where he grew up, and expanded into Glenbrook, the Cove, Shippan and the South End. He saw that the landscape of Stamford was changing quickly and was determined to keep up. “I tried to get pictures that no one else would get,” says Tom.

On sunny days Tom walked miles around the city photographing Victorian homes and businesses, sidewalk scenes, intersections, buses and trains, old buildings coming down and new ones going up, signs and even statues. He knows details about the neighborhoods, from the torn-down buildings to the built-up downtown.

Tom’s hobby was expensive, especially developing many of his photos earlier in his career. The history itself, not the selling or displaying of his work, interested him most. Tom also researched the backgrounds of many of the buildings. “I would go to Town Hall and check land records,” Tom said. “I tried to verify what I could.”



Tom reviews one of his many photographs.

People could not understand why he was taking so many pictures. He took grief for it, he said, especially when others discovered he wasn’t getting paid for it. “I did it for the pleasure of preserving history. It was a lot of work, but I wanted to save Stamford in my own way,” Tom said.

## COC Sponsors Food Drive



From the working poor to the unemployed, there are many who are struggling to make ends meet. To stretch their limited financial resources, individuals and families go to local emergency food pantries for assistance. Not having to pay for groceries, the clients are able to use their limited resources to pay for other necessary expenses, such as rent and utilities.

During the month of November, COC employees, friends and families participated in the *COC-sponsored Food Drive* to benefit the *Emergency Food Pantry at Person-to-Person*. COC collected a record amount of food totaling 2,015 pounds! This was double our contribution from last year’s collection.

The amount of enthusiasm COC continues to demonstrate is a great reflection of everyone’s generosity and the spirit of giving. A special thank you to all who have donated to this valuable cause!

## Construction underway for new COC development, Park 215

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Park 215 will be a great asset to Stamford’s West Side, home of the vibrant *Vita Health & Wellness District*. It is within one of Stamford’s most diverse communities, at the doorstep of the new Stamford Hospital and adjacent to the newly renovated Lione Park, thriving businesses, the Boys and Girls Club and Fairgate Farm. Other amenities nearby include proximity to the downtown area and public transportation.

Funding for Park 215 comes from a variety of municipal, state and federal financing sources including Low-Income Tax Credits, State Bond Funds, Housing and Urban Development and the City of Stamford. We are proud that Kenneth Boroson Architects is the project architect for Park 215 and Viking Construction is the construction manager. Occupancy will be offered in the summer of 2018.



## *Surviving the Cold*

Prolonged exposure to low temperatures, wind and/or moisture can result in cold-related injury, damage to fingers and toes, and possibly even death. With temperatures dropping, here are some tips for keeping warm.

- Dressing in loose layers will help trap the warm air close to your body. Avoid tight clothing and don't forget to wear a hat -- body heat can be lost through your head.
- Mittens provide more warmth to your hands than gloves.
- Wear waterproof, insulated boots to help avoid frostbite by keeping feet warm and dry.
- Stay hydrated when outdoors in the cold weather, and avoid caffeine or alcohol, which reduce body temperature.
- When traveling in the winter, allow extra time to get to your destination.

## *You Nailed the Interview! Now What?*

*By: Jessica Herlihy of Family Centers, Inc.*

You've finally landed an interview and feel like you've nailed it...or blew it...or have no idea. In a time where you've only received one reply out of dozens of submissions, what do you do now? Most people do one of two things. They either completely ignore following up after the interview and become more anxious and upset as the days and weeks go by; or they bombard the interviewer with questions or requests that label them as obnoxious or desperate. Although following up can seem like a scary task, it is essential to confirm your interest in the position.

### **1) Ask about the next steps BEFORE you leave the interview.**

Ideally, you have obtained contact information from your interview and have asked what the next steps are in the hiring process. It is acceptable to ask questions during an interview and find out what the next steps are. It gives you a timeline to follow so that you aren't guessing.

### **2) Send a thank-you note the same day or next**

Thank you notes are essential for a few different reasons. First, it gives you a chance to thank the interviewer(s) for their time and attention. It gives you a chance to confirm your interest in the position and to remind them why you would be a good match. It also gives you a chance to make things right if you feel you haven't given the best interview you are capable of.

Some people say handwritten notes are a must while others say that they are outdated and time consuming. Try to get a feel for the interviewer and organization to see what that person may prefer. These days an email is always accepted but should still be written formally. Mail it out *immediately*.

### **3) What's next?**

Keep in mind how you would feel as the potential interviewer during the next stages of follow up. However, we are hearing more stories of unanswered inquiries and feelings of frustration at being ignored as the job seeker. Try to remember that the interviewer may not have the answers and may be receiving more requests via email, phone and fax than they can possibly handle. Above all, continue to act with manners and professionalism at all times to enhance the possibility of you being hired or even called back at a later time.

If a timeline isn't offered at the interview, check in one week following your thank you note and one week after that. If they respond that they are still working on hiring or there has been a delay in the hire, you can check in about once a month after that. If there has been no response, you can move on knowing that you were professional, polite and left a good impression for possible future opportunities.