

The Voice of the Commons



Vol. 1

The official newsletter of Charm City Land Trusts

No. 1

This Newsletter

by Mike Casiano

Welcome to the inaugural issue of “The Voice of the Commons,” Charm City Land Trusts’ official newsletter. CCLT is a community land trust located in Baltimore City dedicated to community-driven land stewardship. With community gardens and housing in McElderry Park and open space in Patterson Park, CCLT values a shared-equity approach to neighborhood stabilization that prioritizes collective ownership, free collaboration, and communal healing.

This newsletter is intended to document the activities, share the insights, and publicize the events of CCLT and its membership. Within the pages of this first issue, you will learn about the history of our organization, the lives of our members, and our ongoing and upcoming events.

If you are interested in learning more about our organization or becoming a member, please connect with us! You can find our contact information on the second page of this issue, but I’ll highlight here that our most effective means of communication is our email address: info@charmcitylandtrusts.org. Shoot us an email if you’d like to join CCLT or its listerv!

Member Spotlight

by Ronald Rucker

My name is Ronald Rucker. I am a visual and performance artist, a member of Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, and a board member of Charm City Land Trusts.



I was born and raised in Baltimore City. I have always been interested in nature. When I was young, my friends and I would play with pea shooters. Instead of actually shooting the peas, I would bury mine and watch them grow!

As a member of Charm City Land Trusts, I still get to plant and be in nature. I work with others to maintain the greenspace: the Amazing Port Street Commons. We pull weeds and grow food, but I also see that we are cultivating space for healing, reflection, and community.

All of the CLT work requires that we build relationships and communicate with one another—we have meetings, set goals, talk about problems and try to deal with them realistically. I would encourage you to come and join us as we work to be good stewards of our environment and our community!

Bricks & Roses

by Charlie Jones

For communities in the path of gentrification and displacement, the CLT model is a common-sense response, a strategy for people who want their neighborhoods improved but want to remain in them after they’re improved. Like scores of CLTs in the United States and abroad, Charm City Land Trusts was founded in 2000 to create and preserve affordable housing and commercial space.

We also hoped to make our permanently affordable community greener than ever—bricks but roses too.

As it happened, legal technicalities obstructed CLT housing development for years, but we were able to proceed with the green component and now the Commons is poised for spring.

In the meantime, we are now preparing to launch the housing component we thought we would start with, and a new wave of creative people have joined us and are sharing their skills and knowledge.



Garden Workday

by Natalie Cohen

On Saturday March 10, Amazing Grace Lutheran Church and Charm City Land Trusts held the first Garden Workday of 2018 in the Amazing Port Street Commons!

Community members of McElderry Park, Charm City Care Connections, Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition, members of Towson Unitarian Universalist Church, and others spent time in the Commons preparing the greenspace for spring!

Tasks completed that day include: mulching the berry patch in the Amazing Port Street vegetable garden, pruning fruit trees, weeding the rain garden, and starting seedlings inside the Center for Grace-Full Living's Garden Resource Center. We are looking forward to another eventful year full of blossoming flowers, community events, and a bounty of fruits and vegetables!

To learn more about the Amazing Port Street Commons and how you can become a steward: contact Natalie Cohen at nataliecohen9315@gmail.com or call Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, 410-276-5674.



A group photo of volunteers and community members that were a part of the first Garden Workday.



McElderry Park neighbors enjoying the sun at Amazing Grace and CCLT's annual Spring Fling

Contact Us

Stay in touch with CCLT through our various social media and Internet accounts!

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/charm-citylandtrustsinc/>

Twitter

<https://twitter.com/charmcityclt>

Email

info@charmcitylandtrusts.org

Website

<http://www.charmcitylandtrusts.org>

Spring Fling

by Jennifer Kunze

Spring Fling is coming! Every year, as temperatures start to rise, flowers start to grow, and rain starts to fall, the Amazing Grace Lutheran Church and the McElderry Park community gathers to share our resources and celebrate the work that we do together.

This tradition began in 2013 with a festival centered on wellness with free healthy food, dance, yoga, art, and opportunities to share resources. It was the culmination of a series of events around the theme of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. quote: "We may have arrived in different ships, but we're all in the same boat now!"

Since then, each Spring Fling has brought old friends and new partners together in the Amazing Port Street Commons to feed, perform, dance, sing, and share important information with hundreds of our neighbors. This event was never quite as memorably as in 2016 when a torrential rainstorm forced us to move the whole Spring Fling indoors to St. Wenceslaus!

Keep your fingers crossed for a beautiful, sunny spring day on May 5 this year, and join us then in the Amazing Port Street Commons for the sixth annual Spring Fling: "Find your Voice, Speak your Truth."