



## THE LAURA BAKER YEARS AT HILLTOWN CDC: 1994 - 2008



Laura Baker is moving on from Hilltown CDC after fourteen years of dedicated and highly productive community development work in the Hilltowns. Staff transitions don't usually make front page news, but this one is in a different league. And now that spring training has begun, baseball metaphors are starting to poke up out of nowhere like early crocuses in snow.

For some mysterious reason, there is no "Community Developers Hall of Fame" either in our nation or in these hilltowns. But if there were (and some day there will be) there would be a special exhibit for a great all-around rural community organizer named Laura Baker. The record books contain many marks she has made and broken. Laura is the longest serving staff person at Hilltown CDC. And she has worked in nearly every position that exists in the organization. She started as Grants Manager, also

running the Housing Rehabilitation, Social Services and Community Facilities programs, became Associate Director, then Executive Director, then interim Housing Director and ending her career as Housing Projects Manager, organizing Hilltown CDC's largest affordable housing development to date, the 11-unit condominium cluster on Laurel Road in Haydenville (affectionately known as "Laura Road" here at Hilltown CDC).

But it is neither Cal Ripken-like longevity nor a resume bulging as if on steroids that distinguish Laura Baker's career as a hilltown community developer. Rather, it is her quiet commitment to improving people's lives and communities, and her astonishing productivity. Just a few of the stats put Laura's accomplishments in black and white: she managed the building of handicap access ramps, lifts, elevators, accessible bathrooms and parking lots in libraries, schools, town halls and museums in five communities in 1995: Chesterfield, Goshen, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg and Worthington. She managed the construction of a new community center addition to the Cummington Community House in 1997 and oversaw two miles of road reconstruction on Powell Road, also in Cummington. She also renovated dozens of homes while managing the Housing Rehab Program.

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## HCDC ANNUAL MEETING

The Hilltown CDC **Annual Meeting** will be held on Thursday, March 20 at Stanton Hall in downtown Huntington (located next to Town Hall on Route 20). Members and the general public are invited at 5:30 pm for refreshments and conversation. There will be local business displays and door prizes. The annual meeting will take place from 6:00 – 7:00 pm showcasing highlights of CDC projects. Members will elect representatives to the Board of Directors, acknowledge retiring board members, and vote on bylaw revisions. (To review the proposed bylaw revisions, visit [www.hilltowncdc.org](http://www.hilltowncdc.org) or call and request a copy.) We will also honor our longest serving staff member, Housing Projects Manager, Laura Baker, as she concludes 14 years of highly productive service to the Hilltowns. Please RSVP if you would like to attend the annual meeting or showcase your business: (413) 296-4536 or [staff@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:staff@hilltowncdc.org). You may join the CDC as a Member at the door. Annual dues are \$15 but no one is turned away due to inability to pay.

## HILLTOWN SPRING FESTIVAL

It may not seem like it, but Spring really is just around the corner! Come and celebrate its arrival at the **Hilltown Spring Festival** on Saturday, May 10 from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm at the Cummington Fairgrounds. We are putting together a great hilltown party for Mother's Day weekend to showcase the many talents and treasures to be discovered in our small corner of Mother Earth. Spread the word and bring your family, friends (and mothers)! There will be a great line-up of local musicians, delicious food from our local eateries, artist exhibits, a Local Business Expo, a Focus on Sustainability, kid's activities and more. And there is still room for your talents! If you would like to join the Festival as a Sponsor, Exhibitor or Volunteer, contact Jennifer Peotter, (413) 296-4536 or [jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org).

More details inside on Page 2

# 2008 HILLTOWN SPRING FESTIVAL

**Mother's Day Weekend**  
**Save the Date!**



**May 10<sup>th</sup> ~ 10 am to 6 pm**  
**Cumington Fairgrounds**

Hilltown CDC is organizing a 2<sup>nd</sup> **Hilltown Spring Festival** to celebrate Hilltown life and all that makes it special!

The Spring Festival is your chance to see, talk to, network with and 'buy locally' from the many artists, businesses, restaurants, musicians and others who make up our region.

There will be great food, music, children's entertainment, dancing — something for everyone. It's also a great time to celebrate Mother's Day weekend with your families, friends and neighbors — right here in the Hilltowns. We'd like to gather 1000 participants and include you! Plans are fast developing, so contact us if you want to join in.

With support from many Local Cultural Councils and Business Sponsors, we're excited about bringing you even more this year. We've added a **Focus on Sustainability** and **Student Stage** to the mix, in addition to the **Music Stage, Business Expo, Art and Craft Exposition** and **Children's Area** from last year.

Watch our website and local events calendars for more details, and look for another great poster when they go up.

Contact Jennifer with your ideas, volunteer interest, or questions about sponsorship or booth reservations. Call 296-4536 Ext. 23 or email [jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org).

## **Line-up to date**

*... with more to come*

### **Music Stage:**

- Charles Neville
- Dave Barkley
- Malachite
- Sarah Stockwell
- Shokazoba

### **Local Restaurant Vendors:**

- Blue House Café
- Brewmaster's Tavern
- Hilltown Ice cream
- The Old Creamery

### **Student Stage:**

- Drama, Choir or Band students from each Regional District
- Local Dance Studios

## **Thank you to our generous Business Sponsors:**

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- Renaissance Manor Of Westfield
- Williamsburg General Store
- The Bank of Western Massachusetts

The Festival is supported in part by grants from the Local Cultural Councils of Ashfield, Chesterfield, Cumington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg and Worthington, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

We've heard a lot of talk about "change" this election year. The one change we can be certain of is that we will have a new president of our country come November. But what does "change" mean for our local communities? I see it as a new opportunity to make jam.

What do I mean by that? During the recent primary campaign, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama raised some dust over the roles Martin Luther King Jr. and President Lyndon Johnson played in making the changes brought about by the Civil Rights movement. The brief flap was most likely designed to stir up racial identity politics during the run-up to the South Carolina primary. Most people could see it was a false dichotomy.

As one community organizer I know once put it, "You need both the tree shakers and the jam makers to make change." I would add that you need "tree tenders" also. King was a tree shaker. Without charismatic leaders like him to challenge institutions, galvanize popular movements to fight injustice, and help people envision a new way, change does not happen. Johnson was a tree tender. Without skilled leaders who understand institutions, know how to organize legislators into powerful coalitions, and steer bills through Congress, the changes that tree shakers organize for do not become law. But after the trees have been tended and shaken, you need "jam makers" at the local level--innovative schools, progressive businesses, and dynamic community organizations--to pick up the fruits of the struggle and

turn new resources into good education, sustainable and rewarding jobs, affordable and energy-efficient homes, and affordable health care for everyone. Real change in our time is about building a fair and sustainable economy to support healthy communities that educate our children well and care for our elders.

In other words, making real change takes people like you and me. Hilltown CDC is one of the "jam makers." We trace our roots back to the early community action agencies and CDCs that developed out of the struggle for Civil Rights that both King and Johnson made into real societal changes. As you read these pages, you'll see many opportunities to shake trees, tend trees, and make jam.

You can join the hundreds of hilltowners who have become members and supporters of Hilltown CDC. You can travel to Boston and lobby your legislators for resources to improve our communities. You can take a workshop to start or strengthen your business, buy your first home, or repair your house. Encourage a neighbor to fill out the Hilltown Elder Survey. Bring a friend to the Hilltown Spring Festival. Take action. Give us a piece of your mind. Celebrate! I hope all of you voted in the primaries and will vote again in November. But there's more to making change than voting. In between elections, let's make some jam! Thanks for all you do to strengthen our communities.



## Community News

Contact the Hilltown CDC at 413-296-4536, or [staff@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:staff@hilltowncdc.org)



## HCDC ART SHOW

See the whimsical acrylic and watercolor paintings of Annette Rubino-Buckley of Cummington at the Hilltown CDC March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 12<sup>th</sup>. She designed the posters for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hilltown Spring Festivals (see inset opposite.) Also featured is "My Family Album," collage and mixed media by Sherry Loomis of Chesterfield. **Stop in at the Hilltown CDC weekdays between 9:00 am and 4:30 pm.**

## WELCOMES & RECOGNITIONS

At the Annual Meeting on March 20 we will bid farewell to four long-serving Board members with thanks for their wise counsel and many years of service: **Kerstin Liander** of Williamsburg, **Lydia Omasta** of Easthampton, **Linda Rowley** of Williamsburg and **Howard Terry** of Chesterfield. We also bid farewell to retiring staff member, **Laura Baker** (see page 1).

Welcomes go out to new Town Administrators, **Charlene Nardi** (Chesterfield) and **Steve Herzberg** (Williamsburg) and Select Board Secretaries, **Barbara Murphy-Malinak** (Cummington) and **Gail Tingley** (Chester). We look forward to working with you.

**"YOUR AD COULD BE HERE"**

Call Us For Rates

Sherry Loomis at 413-296-4536, ext. 10

## Community News

Contact the Hilltown CDC at 413-296-4536, or [staff@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:staff@hilltowncdc.org)

### OPEN HOUSE - NEW CDC RENTAL HOUSING IN HUNTINGTON

On Friday, March 28 from 3:00–4:00 pm, Hilltown CDC will host an **Open House** for the public to tour the four renovated affordable two-bedroom apartments at 6 Blandford Hill



Road in downtown Huntington. Hilltown CDC purchased and renovated the 4-unit tenement building, working in partnership with the Town of Huntington and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The partners secured a \$336,000 grant from the Massachusetts CDBG Housing Development Support Program (HDSP) and hired O'Brien Construction to renovate the 100-year-old building, which had stood vacant for nearly ten years.

**Please RSVP to Hilltown CDC if you would like to attend:  
(413) 296-4536 or [staff@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:staff@hilltowncdc.org).**

### FREE TAX CLINICS

If you would like help claiming the tax benefits you've earned, use Community Action's **Free Tax Assistance Program**. The Earned Income Tax Credit is a tax benefit for people who work full or part time, and whose income is in the low to moderate range. If you qualify for this credit, you could receive as much as \$4,500. In addition, you may be eligible for the Child Tax Credit, Credit for Child Care & Dependent Care Expenses, Education Credits and others. Schedule an appointment up until April 14 in Northampton (Wednesdays) at the Valley CDC or in Greenfield (Tuesdays & Saturdays) at the Community Action offices. **Call Kim at (413) 376-1165** and she will tell you what materials you need to bring to your appointment.

### APARTMENTS FOR RENT

Hilltown CDC currently has apartments for rent in Huntington and Haydenville. The Huntington apartments at 6 Blandford Hill Road (see article, left) have two bedrooms and rent for \$600 to \$725 per month, plus utilities. The Haydenville apartment at 13 South Main Street is a two-bedroom renting for \$775 per month, plus utilities. Both locations have washer/dryer hookups.

To inquire or apply, please call Yamilet Boston at Home City Housing Development Corp. at 1-877-889-3259, Ext. 104 (toll free.)

### JOIN MACDC LOBBY DAY AT THE STATE HOUSE!

Once a year, the Mass. Association of Community Development Corporations (CDCs) organizes a day of lobbying on Beacon Hill to communicate with our legislators about the issues and pending bills important to CDC community development work. On Thursday, March 27, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Hilltown CDC will join with staff, board members, local business people and community residents working with 60 other CDCs around the state to bring our message to Boston. We will ask our legislators to support the Governor's \$25 million bond bill to fund broadband internet access for our unserved and underserved towns. We will ask them to support funding for Small Business Technical Assistance to help increase local employment in the Hilltowns. And we will support MACDC's affordable housing legislative initiatives. If you would like to travel to Boston with us on March 27<sup>th</sup>, contact Hilltown CDC Executive Director, Andrew Baker at (413) 296-4536 ext. 18 or [andrewb@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:andrewb@hilltowncdc.org). If you can't go to Boston that day but would like to have Andrew deliver a letter or card to your Legislators about your how the CDC has helped your business, about Broadband or other issues, send it along soon!

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## Housing Rehabilitation

Contact Sarah Szczebak at 413-296-4536, ext. 17, or [sarahs@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:sarahs@hilltowncdc.org)

## HILLTOWN CDC LOOKING FOR GENERAL CONTRACTORS, SEPTIC INSTALLERS, AND WELL DRILLERS

Hilltown CDC is currently seeking general contractors, septic installers, and well drillers who are interested in bidding on Housing Rehabilitation projects funded by state and federal programs. We recently received a new round of funding and we will be bidding approximately 10 projects in the upcoming months.

Projects range up to \$25,000. Contractors working on Hilltown CDC administered projects are assured payment for all approved work and quick turnaround of their invoices, as well as a source of steady, local work year round.

HCDC is an EEO/Section 3 Employer. Women & members of minority groups are encouraged to apply.

### ATTENTION CHESTERFIELD, GOSHEN AND WILLIAMSBURG HOMEOWNERS!

Hilltown CDC has received funding for home repairs in the towns above. Interested homeowners, contact Sarah for more information and to be added to our waiting list.

Don't put off addressing those overdue and potentially costly repairs any longer.

Eligible Improvements May Include:

- > Roof and Foundation Repairs
- > Sewer Tie In and Septic Repairs
- > Heating Systems; Oil Tank Removal
- > Handicap Accessibility Work
- > Plumbing and Electrical Repairs
- > New Wells Drilled; Pump Repairs
- > Lead Paint and Asbestos Removal

Program Benefits Include:

- > No interest, no monthly payments
- > Loans may be entirely forgiven
- > Detailed work specifications
- > Project oversight
- > Contractor Selection Assistance

#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME GUIDELINES/LIMITS:

Household Size	Gross Annual Income
1	\$40,150
2	\$45,900
3	\$51,600
4	\$57,350
5	\$61,950
6	\$66,550
7	\$71,100
8	\$75,700

## Homebuyer Counseling

Contact Bea von Hagke at 413-296-4536, ext. 15 or [beavh@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:beavh@hilltowncdc.org)

## ARE YOU READY TO BUY A HOUSE?

*"This is a wonderful service you are providing. It gives people a lot to think about, but also offers hope."*

Unfortunately, there is a limited number of homes in a price range affordable to many low-moderate income buyers. In 2007, one home was on the market for only 7 days and sold for more than the asking price. The buyer was obviously prepared; are *you* ready to act if opportunity presents itself? Learning more about the process can put *you* in control when it comes to buying your first home.

A **First Time Homebuyer Workshop** introduces you to the process of buying a home and the "team members" who will be working for you. Speakers include a credit specialist, lender, home inspector, realtor, lawyer, and insurance broker. The workshop is certified by the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA), Massachusetts Housing and Finance Agency and the Massachusetts Housing Partnership. Participants will be issued a certificate of completion, which is required when applying for certain specialized mortgage products.

If you are like most Americans, a house is or will be the single largest purchase, the single largest debt, and the single largest investment of your lifetime. Have you prepared yourself? Do you ask yourself: Who is the right realtor for me? Do I need a home inspector? How good does "good" credit have to be? How much house can I afford? How much savings do I need for downpayment or closing costs? What mortgage products can I use? A workshop will help you answer these questions. Workshops are free of charge, but pre-registration is required. The next workshops:

**Series I: Tuesdays, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & April 1<sup>st</sup>**  
6:00–8:30 pm at Meekins Library in Williamsburg

**Series II: Saturdays, June 14, 21, & 28<sup>th</sup>** 9:00 am–1:00 pm at the Hilltown CDC office in Chesterfield.

**For more information or to register, contact Bea, above.  
Call right away for entry into the March 11th series.**

## \$\$\$\$ GET A GRANT TO HELP WITH YOUR DOWN PAYMENT \$\$\$\$

Grants of up to \$4,000 are available to eligible first time homebuyers to assist with down payment and closing costs. Applicants are asked to complete an application after they have an accepted offer on a house. Grants are available for the purchase of a home in the following towns: Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Williamsburg and Worthington. These are grants, not loans, and never have to be paid back. For more information, contact Bea.

# Economic Development

Contact Seth Isman at 413-296-4536, ext. 12 or [sethi@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:sethi@hilltowncdc.org)

## **BUSINESS COMPUTING WORKSHOPS 2008**

**6 – 9 PM at the Hilltown CDC office in Chesterfield**

**Each one session workshop is \$35; the four-session Quickbooks workshop is \$120.**

**Tuition waivers are available for many people. Fee includes computer use and training materials.**

### **Basic Computers -- Monday, March 31**

If you fear technology is gaining, this workshop is for you. We will look at all the basic components of a computer, what you need in a computer for your home or business, how to shop intelligently for software and hardware, and some basic troubleshooting techniques. You will learn how to scan, how to save documents on different types of storage media, and how to send along attachments (and open and save them) on your email. Don't wait for the kids to come home from school to help you.

### **Word for Beginners – Monday, April 7**

This workshop is designed for people with little knowledge of Word. You will learn how to create documents, set up margins and fonts, store documents, print documents, and do basic formatting of the documents. No experience is required.

### **Intermediate Word – Monday, April 14**

This workshop is for people with a basic knowledge of Word. You will learn how to format paragraphs, add bullets and numbering, add borders and shading, create a document with headers/footers, insert basic Word fields, and set tabs.

### **Creating Marketing Materials with Word – Monday, April 21**

You will learn how to use Word to create marketing materials through the use of graphics, text boxes, line drawings, colors, and fonts. We will see how easy it is to create fliers, posters, simple brochures, and ads using the software that comes with most computers! This workshop will explain page set-up and show how to tinker with pictures. All you need are basic Word skills, like typing (hunt 'n peck's ok), using a mouse, and using the Enter key. While this course is taught on a PC, the skills are transferable to a MAC.

### **Introduction to Photoshop Elements – Thursday, April 24**

This workshop is designed for the beginner. You will learn about the basic workspace within Photoshop Elements and the various tools available to edit your photos. You will learn to edit and resize photos, reorient the photos, crop photos, improve the color of the photos, and work with various color palettes. Photoshop Elements contains many of the techniques available in Photoshop.

### **Beginning Excel – Monday, April 28**

This course is designed for a beginning user (or someone who wants to learn a few new tricks). Topics covered include: navigating the basic spreadsheet; formatting cells, columns, and

rows; creating formulas; displaying your data as charts. This is a hands-on course and the price includes training materials.

### **Creating your own business in QuickBooks – Four Thursday sessions, May 1, 8, 15 and 22**

This is a 4-session course that will enable you to create your company in QuickBooks. Week 1, you will set up your company and design the Chart of Accounts and Item lists to match your business. Week 2, you will work with your own client base to create client databases, create customized invoices, statements, and credit memos, and learn the basics of using QuickBooks for all your Accounts Receivable. Week 3, you will work with your own vendor list to create vendor databases (including sub-contractors), pay sales tax using QuickBooks reports, prepare 1099's for sub-contractors using QuickBooks reports, work with credit cards and credit accounts with vendors, and master all the basics of using QuickBooks for Accounts Payable. Week 4 will show you how to reconcile your bank records and credit card accounts and create all the reports that show how your business is really doing. This workshop comes with demo QuickBooks software that you can load on your computer so that when you burn the CD of your project on the last night of class, you can return to your office and start working on your company's books.

### **Advanced Excel – Monday, May 5**

This course continues where the Intro course ends – folks with a basic knowledge of Excel are invited to join and learn more about this powerful software program. Topics covered include: creating workbooks, creating macros for repetitive operations, and worksheet set-up.

### **Integrating Word and Excel – Monday, May 12**

There are many ways to link these two programs so that the data in Word is automatically updated when changes are made to the Excel data. You will also learn how to create Word tables from Excel files and convert Word tables to an Excel spreadsheet.

### **Using the Internet to help your business succeed – Monday, May 19**

This workshop will explore everything a business needs to know about using the internet to help the business succeed: best ways to use email, how to be able to rely on the information that you find online, basic Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques to help people find your site, how to start a blog to keep people interested in your web site, and pay per click advertising. Both people with web sites and those considering a site are welcome.

## Economic Development

Contact Seth Isman at 413-296-4536, ext. 12 or [sethi@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:sethi@hilltowncdc.org)

### MORE BUSINESS COMPUTING WORKSHOPS

#### MARKETING YOUR WEBSITE

A three-session workshop--April 1, 8 and 15, 2008

Tuesday evenings from 6 to 9 PM at the Hilltown CDC office in Chesterfield

Even the best-designed website is essentially ineffective if it doesn't reach its target audience. Although search engine optimization is important, it is often over-emphasized, particularly by companies that are eager to provide the service for a fee. Nobody understands a small business better than its owner; you are probably the most capable person to promote your own company's website. This workshop will walk you step-by-step through hands-on, real world exercises. You will learn how to measure and evaluate performance, how to confirm that your site is fully search engine ready and search engine friendly, how to read and interpret web traffic statistics, how to uncover your competitors' secrets and strategies, how to use "offline" marketing to your maximum advantage, how to use powerful free tools from Google, and how to take an overall "guerrilla" approach to your website's marketing--all with a minimal commitment of time and on a shoestring budget. Taught by Peter Pelland of Pelland Advertising. *Fee for three sessions: \$90-- tuition waivers available for income eligible people.*

#### GROWING YOUR BUSINESS

Our most comprehensive business-planning workshop.

Twelve Wednesday evenings from March 5 through May 21, 6 to 9 PM at the Hilltown CDC Office in Chesterfield.

Participants complete a comprehensive business plan that prepares them to adjust to changing market needs, increase operational efficiency, increase profits, and grow their businesses. This course is designed for owners of existing businesses who are ready to expand their businesses, or for entrepreneurial start-ups that are very near launch. After the twelve sessions are completed, individual counseling is provided at no charge. Taught by Laura Howard of Sustainable Business Solutions, with guest speakers. Fee: \$375, including textbook and workbook. Income-eligible people pay only \$75 for the textbook and workbook. First session will be on March 5, weather permitting. If you miss it, and want to join the group for the second session, call Seth Isman right away.

#### PROSPECTING, COLD CALLS & SALES

In two 2-hour workshops you will explore the essential skills necessary to boost profits in the most time tested of ways – direct selling. You will learn how to approach, qualify and close prospects in a way that keeps your ego and integrity intact, and your prospects feeling good about your call – whether they buy from you or not. You will gain insight on how to manage your

mindset when calling someone new in order to eliminate the anxiety, tension or stress that often accompanies such calls. You will learn how to quickly distinguish between a high probability prospect and a low probability suspect, the most effective ways to get appointments with decision makers, and how to present what you do, who you are, and why any prospect should care.

These two 2-hour power packed workshops include a complete workbook, self-assessments and an action planning tool to implement what you learned. Your Sales Coach is J. Sheldon Snodgrass, owner of The Steady Sales Group. Sheldon will share his expertise so you can learn how to get a dollar out of every dime spent on sales and marketing. Visit [www.steadysales.com](http://www.steadysales.com) for free advice and resources.

#### INDIVIDUAL AND CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS CONSULTING AVAILABLE

Hilltown CDC offers free specialized business consulting to small Hilltown businesses. Either the business or the business-owner's residence must be located in the 11 hilltowns we serve. Expert help is available on many subjects. We can find a consultant to help you solve your business problems. Call or email Seth Isman, Economic Development Director, to explore what we can help you do for your business.

Register by mail, phone or online at [www.hilltowncdc.org](http://www.hilltowncdc.org)

#### FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR:

I just added up, for our Annual Report, what we accomplished in the twelve months ending June 2007. Hilltown CDC sponsored 69 workshop sessions on 21 different topics, ranging from website design to computer software, from business planning to marketing, with a total attendance of 222. We also provided 116 hours of individual consulting assistance to 56 hilltown businesses, on similar subjects. Our goal is to help you start and grow your businesses, to improve the hilltown economy and to create local jobs. If you have suggestions for new or improved workshops to better serve your needs, let me know. Give me, Seth Isman, a call to see what we can do for you and for your business.

**TO FIND OUT MORE WAYS THE HILLTOWN CDC CAN HELP YOU RUN YOUR SMALL BUSINESS, SEE THE BACK PAGE**

## BUSINESS PROFILE: BLUE HOUSE CAFÉ

Walking into the Blue House Café on Rt. 9 in Haydenville, I am greeted by the owners, Katy Eiseman and Corydon Woodard, busy getting a takeout order ready for a customer waiting at the counter. In the dining room, a man is reading a book from the bookshelf in the corner, two women are in conversation over plates of food, and an older gentleman is surfing the internet on the café's wireless connection, with a cup of coffee at his elbow. A fish tank bubbles on top of the old piano, artwork hangs on the walls, and a display of colorful greeting cards by local artists lines the counter.

Corydon and Katy have created their vision of a cozy home-like atmosphere that serves homemade vegetarian food, supports local business with their purchases and has a minimal impact on the environment. The café was two years in the planning and building. With help from family, the couple remodeled the space themselves, incorporating recycled and reclaimed materials when possible. When they saw that Hilltown CDC offered a program on business plan development, they enrolled and learned to develop a formal plan from their vision. The program helped them focus on the details of developing and running a small business, such as regulatory requirements, competitive pricing, and environmental impacts.

Their menu offers something for everyone, from buttermilk biscuits to black bean burritos, from macaroni and cheese to Chinese vegetable and rice dishes. There are many homemade baked goods, along with organic fair-trade Indigo coffee and espresso drinks and a variety of teas, including homemade fresh ginger chai. Breakfast and lunch are available all day. Many of the café's recipes have been handed down through Katy's family (though Cory's mother's peanut curried butternut squash soup was also a favorite last fall). Chocolate, sugar and flours used in the café are all organic. In keeping with their vision, Katy and Corydon incorporate as many organic and locally produced ingredients as they can. They also use compostable to-go containers, and they compost and recycle whenever possible.

Since opening a year ago, Katy and Corydon have increased the café's hours of operation. The café is now open Friday evenings (customers can bring their own beer and wine), with local musicians generally performing from 6:30 – 8pm. For information on music and other happenings at the café, join their mailing list at [bluehousecafe@gmail.com](mailto:bluehousecafe@gmail.com).

### Blue House Café hours are:

**Mondays, 7am - 1:30pm / Closed Tuesdays / Wednesdays & Thursdays, 7am - 4pm / Fridays, 7am - 7:30pm / Saturdays & Sundays, 8am - 4pm.**

--Written by Marjorie Snyder

## Laura Baker...Continued from page 1

Beginning in 1999, Laura led Hilltown CDC's affordable housing development program, acquiring, renovating and constructing homes and apartments for renters and first time homebuyers. In 2000, she organized the purchase and renovation of two buildings in Williamsburg providing six units of rental housing. Working with CDC Housing Director, Don Bianchi, she helped purchase and renovate the Chesterfield Hotel in 2003, adding another seven units of affordable rental housing. In 2005, she organized the Hilltown CDC's New Homes Program, which built two new single family Capes and a duplex condominium for first time homeowners. Working with Don and CDC Director, Marie Burkart, Laura developed Hilltown CDC's first senior housing project in 2006—seven new rental apartments at Westhampton Woods. And she has seen through our largest project, the 11-unit Laurel Road cluster, in 2008. All told, she played a major role in developing Hilltown CDC's entire portfolio of affordable housing, over 35 units so far. And as they say, that's not even the half of it.

It is rare that one person makes such a significant and lasting mark on an organization and on an entire region. Laura is one of those people, though if this were not published you might not know it. She would certainly be the last one to tell you. Sports clichés spring to mind once again: the all-around player, skilled at every position, modest, self-effacing, focuses on the work every day and does it all for the team. Except in Laura's case, it's really true.

The mark of a great community organizer is someone who doesn't leave a personal mark, who does their job so well that the community leaders she supports can take credit for accomplishing projects that might have initially inspired controversy. But the reality behind that success is that making things look effortless requires a lot of skill and effort. The careful research, preparation and people organizing that Laura puts in to countless planning studies, grant proposals, community forums and select board meetings pays off when zoning boards approve comprehensive permits and foundations are poured for new affordable homes.

The simple truth at the bottom of all this is that Laura Baker has changed a lot of people's lives for the better in the hilltowns – through her dedicated and skillful community development. We will miss her and wish her well in her next ventures.



**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SUGARHOUSES!**

## THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS AND FUNDERS

Many thanks to our 234 (so far) Members for joining or renewing your memberships with Hilltown CDC this year! (This includes 189 Individual Members and 45 Business Members.) All together, your dues and generous contributions to date total \$10,327 in support of our many successful projects and services. We will publish our complete membership list in the Summer newsletter issued in June.

Hilltown CDC also received grants from **Bank of America**, **Easthampton Savings Bank** and **Citizens Bank** to support our First Time Homebuyer and Small Business training programs.

And once again, we thank attorney **Felicity Hardee** and her firm, **Bulkley, Richardson & Gelinas** for their generous donation of in-kind legal services (valued at over \$50,000 this year) in support of our affordable housing development projects. Felicity was featured in a "Good Hearts" profile for her contributions to Hilltown CDC in the December 21, 2007 Christmas issue of *Daily Hampshire Gazette's* Hampshire Life Magazine.

## NEW AMBULANCE FOR PLAINFIELD

Congratulations to the Town of Plainfield, which will take delivery on a new **Ambulance** at the end of March. The ambulance purchase was funded by \$145,000 federal grant award through the Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program secured on behalf of Plainfield in FY 2007 by Hilltown CDC. Housed in the Town's new public safety building, the ambulance will provide years of reliable emergency response service to all of Plainfield's residents.

## HILLTOWN ELDER NEEDS & INTERESTS SURVEY

If you are over age 55 and live in the hilltowns, or care for an elder at home or elsewhere in the hilltowns, we want to hear from you on how to improve programs and services for elders! Hilltown CDC is working with area Councils on Aging (COAs) to conduct a survey of elder needs and interests. We'd like to hear how you use your local senior center, what COA activities you participate in now or would like to in the future, whether you would like to see a regional senior center be developed, and whether you would like to receive in-home care services, housing repairs or to live in senior housing in the near future. We also want to know about the transportation problems seniors may face and whether there is a need for adult social day programs to provide respite for people caring for disabled seniors. Your responses will help shape our efforts in the coming years, as a new cohort of Baby Boomers enters the ranks of elders in our communities. Feel free to think outside the box about how to improve senior centers and senior services! You can download a copy of the survey at [www.hilltowncdc.org](http://www.hilltowncdc.org) or call (413) 296-4536 and have a copy sent to you. Please return the survey by March 31 to Hilltown CDC, P.O. Box 17, Chesterfield, MA 01012. Thanks!



**Yes, I want to support the Hilltown CDC. My tax-deductible contribution is enclosed.**

Individual Membership \$15/Person     Visa Card    Card #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Business Membership \$25     Mastercard    Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 3-Digit Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Your personal information is confidential to the Hilltown CDC. We do not give out our mailing lists or other information.*

**Thank You for Supporting Hilltown CDC & Your Community!**

## HILLTOWN CDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## *Build Your Business with Hilltown CDC— 5 Ways to Start Today*

### **1. List in the Hilltown Business Directory**

On-line now at [www.hilltowncdc.org](http://www.hilltowncdc.org), with more features and 50% off for the remainder of 2008!

- ◆ **Already listed?** Add a display ad for 50% off.
- ◆ **Missed the 2008 Directory?** Get on-line for the remainder of 2008 and save 50%.
- ◆ **Waiting for 2009?** Email or call to receive our directory mailing this summer.

### **2. Attend a Training Session**

- ◆ **Business Computing** offerings include Word, Excel, Quickbooks, Photoshop and Using the Internet.
- ◆ **Art and Craft** workshops ... see our website for details.
- ◆ **Marketing** classes on Growing your Business.
- ◆ **Website** workshops focusing on development, design and marketing.

### **3. Get Individual Business Consulting—Free**

Specialized business consulting is available to existing and prospective Hilltown businesses.

### **4. Exhibit at the Hilltown Spring Festival May 10<sup>th</sup>, Cummington Fairgrounds**

- ◆ **Sponsorship** packages start at \$100; put your business name in front of potential buyers.
- ◆ **Reserve space** at the **Business Expo**, **Art and Craft Exposition** or **Focus on Sustainability** for just \$30.

### **5. Advertise in our Quarterly Newsletter**

Reach every household in ten Hilltowns. Only \$45 for business card size -- discounted for HCDC members.

**HCDC Economic Development wants to work for you.**

Contact Seth Isman at [Sethi@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:Sethi@hilltowncdc.org) for details or to share suggestions.

## **SHOWCASE YOUR BUSINESS AT THE 2008 HILLTOWN SPRING FESTIVAL MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>, CUMMINGTON FAIRGROUNDS**

Network with potential customers & other businesses in our region by booking a \$30 Booth at the Spring Festival. Specialty areas include the *Business Expo*, *Focus on Sustainability* and *Art and Craft Exposition* and all will be surrounded with food, music and fun. **Sponsorships** starting at \$100 are still available.

For details, contact Jennifer at [jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org](mailto:jenniferp@hilltowncdc.org).