

Hilltown Community Development On The Ground

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Photo credit: Caitlin Marquis

Hilltown Mobile Market to Launch in July



In partnership with Healthy Hampshire and the Hilltown Community Health Center, Hilltown CDC is excited to launch an innovative project this summer to bring affordable local produce to Hilltown residents through the Hilltown Mobile Market. This year the Market will have two "pop-up" locations: Thursdays from 3-5PM at the Maples, 48 Old North Rd, Worthington, and Fridays from 3-5PM at Stanton Hall Green, 24 Russell Rd, Huntington. The markets will run from July 25th through September 27th.

There are two ways you can participate in the market. If you are eligible for SNAP (food stamps), you can sign up now for a \$5 per week farm share that is 100% reimbursable through HIP (Healthy Incentives Program). The farm share is valued at \$175 for 10 weeks and will include approximately five items of your choice from

the abundant local produce on the market stand each week. Or, you can simply visit the market each week to purchase your favorite fresh, Hilltown-grown vegetables.

For details on how to sign-up for the farm share, contact market organizer Seva Tower at sevat@hilltowncdc.org or call 413-824-1840. There are limited spots available so don't delay! This project was made possible through a Social Determinants Partnership Grant from the Attorney General's Office.

We are delighted to partner with several local farms including Crabapple Farm in Chesterfield, Hart Farm in Conway, Sawyer Farm and Four Corners Farm in Worthington, and Intervale Farm in Westhampton. Help us support our local Hilltown farmers and provide more ways to get healthy, fresh food to our Hilltown communities. See you at the market!

HILLTOWN MOBILE MARKET

July 25 - September 27

Thursdays in Worthington
3-5pm at The Maples

Fridays in Huntington
3-5pm on the Town Green

hilltownmobilemarket.info

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From the Executive Director



Photo credit: Susan Slattery

Greetings Hilltown Neighbors!

Summer has arrived at last to our beautiful lush green hills and we have many exciting projects in the works. Early in June, I attended the Annual Rural LISC Conference in the Catskills with Finance and Administration Director Denise LeDuc and Board Chair Susan Bronstein. We are proud to be members of Rural LISC and are grateful for their financial support over the last several years. We attended workshops and met with strong advocates from across the country who live and work in rural communities. They truly understand the challenges we face and the values we share around farming, environmental protection, land preservation, and love and care for our neighbors. I was especially moved by a speech from LISC Executive Director Maurice Jones who grew up in the segregated rural south. He spoke directly to the importance of the love he received from his community in realizing his full potential. I truly believe our success in rural community development is equal to the love we share.

I continue to serve on the MA Rural Policy Advocacy Commission (RPAC). We are engaging rural communities across the state to bring the voices of our rural neighbors to the state house. Currently we are working on submitting a comprehensive Rural Policy Plan to the governor that identifies the contemporary challenges and opportunities for rural Massachusetts and some specific policy recommendations to invest in our small rural towns.

At Hilltown CDC, we are working on several new initiatives to invest in our local Hilltown food economy. In July we will launch the Hilltown Mobile Market (see cover story). We have also secured a grant to hire a grocery consultant to assist the Williamsburg Market community to determine the feasibility of purchasing the business to keep the market open after the current owners retire. And we are supporting the Old Creamery Co-op in Cummington to conduct an extensive inventory to more accurately price and track their sales, which will result in better financial management, customer service and profitability. We want to do what we can to ensure that the small farms and retail stores we have are able to sur-

vive and continue to provide healthy, fresh and affordable foods in our Hilltown region.

Please keep in touch with us if you see new and creative opportunities to invest in our local community and strengthen our community power. We hope you have a safe and fantastic summer!

Dave

Rural Senior Housing



Photo credit: Seva Tower

All over the country, small and rural towns are striving to provide safe and affordable housing options for aging residents. Rural seniors typically have few options other than to remain in their own homes, which in many cases are not amenable to aging in place. Lack of access to transportation and other services only exacerbate issues of isolation and poor health.¹ Yet developing affordable senior housing in rural areas is not an easy undertaking; building small scale developments comes with challenges that include the need to bring infrastructure to rural sites that are not served by public utilities, compliance with wetlands regulations, adapting to site-specific topographic issues, and working with more limited funding than is available in many larger municipalities. It requires navigating multiple contracts with public and private lending institutions and developers, not to mention extensive planning work within each unique community. In recent years, Hilltown CDC has developed a strong profile of experience, having built or rehabilitated 57 units of affordable housing in five Hilltowns since 2006. Following on the successful completion of the Goshen Senior Housing Village in 2018, Housing Director Paul Lischetti has accepted a consulting role to assist the Town of Holland (MA) in planning a Senior housing development in their town. The project will include a community survey, market analysis, preliminary site feasibility analysis, and cost estimates. We look forward to assisting the Town of Holland to provide more affordable housing options for their seniors.



¹ Rachelle Levitt. Summer 2017. "Housing Challenges of Rural Seniors" PD&R Evidence Matters.

In May, Economic Development Coordinator Michele Kenney, along with Executive Director Dave Christopolis, attended a gathering of small business technical assistance providers with the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation, a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth established in 2010 to help create and save jobs at small, women, minority, immigrant, and veteran-owned businesses in Massachusetts. MGCC promotes economic development throughout the Commonwealth, focusing on Gateway Cities and low to moderate-income, underserved communities. Earlier this year, Hilltown CDC partnered with Franklin County CDC and Valley CDC on a \$120,000 grant from MGCC to assist 80 small businesses in Western Massachusetts. MGCC also offers training and professional development opportunities to small business technical assistance providers to ensure that organizations like Hilltown CDC have the most cutting-edge information to help small business owners succeed. "I am looking forward to participating in additional training programs and excited about many of the resources available to us through partners like MGCC to sustain and grow our small businesses in the Hilltowns" notes Kenney. To learn more about how the Hilltown CDC can assist you at any stage of your business development, visit our website at www.hilltowncdc.org/smallbusiness or contact Michele Kenney, Economic Development Coordinator, at michelek@hilltowncdc.org or call 413-354-1055.

Small Business, Big Impact

MGCC grant supports Hilltown business success



MGCC Conference at Worcester State, May 2019 Photo by: Michele Kenney



Program Eligibility Limits Increase for 2019

The HUD Income Limits have just been released, with a significant increase over last year's income limits.

These brackets are used to determine eligibility for several of our federally-funded programs including Housing rehab, rental apartments, childcare subsidy, and the HEN

program. If you or someone you know previously applied for one of these programs and were not income-eligible, we encourage you to apply again! This is a great opportunity to access services that may make a significant difference in your life or the lives of your neighbors. To learn more go to our website or call us at 413-296-4536.

Planning for Hilltown Climate Resilience

The MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP) provides support for cities and towns in Massachusetts to begin the process of planning for climate change resiliency and implementing priority projects. The state awards communities with funding to complete vulnerability assessments and develop action-oriented resiliency plans. With the assistance of Hilltown CDC, the Town of Goshen submitted an application on behalf of four towns: Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen and Worthington. We are pleased to share that we have been awarded planning funds to assess our town's vulnerability to climate change, including altered weather patterns, storm drainage management, aging infrastructure, agriculture, and other threats to our public safety. We will partner with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and gather community input in the planning phase, which will then allow us to apply for additional implementation funding from the state. Climate change effects everyone, whether we live on the coastlines or in valleys or ridges prone to flooding and other severe weather damages; the sooner we have a plan in place to cope with and mitigate the threats to our communities, the more we will be prepared to handle whatever tough situations come our way.

The MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant program (MVP) provides support for cities and towns in



HEN

by the numbers

The Hilltown Elder Network (HEN) continues to provide vital and compassionate services to Hilltown seniors, allowing them to continue living full and independent lives in their own homes. HEN currently serves the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Huntington, Goshen, Peru, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington. In the first three months of 2019:



112 elders served

1,838 hours logged



4,482 miles driven

81 local caregivers



New Ride Options for Seniors

Hilltown CDC is expanding the options available to seniors to get to medical and other professional appointments when the Hilltown Easy Ride Van is unavailable. The **Hilltown Driver Pool** is made up of vetted drivers in our community using their own personal vehicles. Hilltown CDC coordinates the rides and reimburses the drivers for time and mileage. This program is funded by MassDOT and supported by Mass Councils on Aging, Highland Valley Elder Services and Cooley Dickinson Health Care. You must pre-register to book a ride and be a senior 60+ in the towns of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Peru, or Worthington. Fares range from \$5 to \$15 depending on distance. The Hilltown Driver Pool is meant to supplement the Hilltown Easy Ride Van and our transportation coordinator will determine which option best serves your ride request. For more information contact us at 413-296-4232 or ride@hilltowncdc.org

Lt. Gov. Polito Announces CITC Awards

On June 13th, Hilltown CDC was given the honor of hosting Lt. Gov Karyn Polito and Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy here in Chesterfield to announce the 2019 Community Investment Tax Credits (CITC) to Community Development Corporations

and Community Service Organizations across the state. Our guests included several members of the Baker-Polito Cabinet along with our State Senator Adam Hinds, State Representative Natalie Blais, and directors and representatives from a number of Community Development Corporations, municipal leaders and community partners throughout Western Mass. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with the state on this vital program. "CITC has been a successful financial and community organizing tool for our rural region" says Hilltown CDC Director Dave Christopolis. "Access to capital is very limited in rural communities due to declining rural populations and decades long urbanization. CITC provides a vehicle for people to invest their own communities." This year we received \$150,000 in funding to expand our work with local farmers and retailers, expand our senior van with a driver pool and offer marketing and organizing support to our local artists and musicians. It has provided capital for us to build rural senior housing and provide technical assistance to our rural town governments. Says Christopolis, "Rural communities are struggling to survive. Twenty-first century rural communities need a vision and the capacity to carry out this vision. It requires our government and philanthropy to invest in people and to reimagine the importance of a vibrant rural economy. CITC allows this to happen."

Destination Hilltowns!

Check out the new JLBA map for summer fun!

Looking for some fun in the Hilltowns this summer? Look no further! Hilltown CDC and the Jacob's Ladder Business Association (JLBA) have teamed up to send a colorful map and business directory to every Hilltown household to promote some of the great destinations, trailheads, and adventures waiting for you in your own backyard. Check it out or pickup a copy at local businesses today!

