

CELEBRATING ACT! 2011 Annual Meeting Features Super Stars of Affordable Housing



William Traynor and Senator Sue Tucker share a moment of celebrating ACT's achievements at the Annual Meeting.



ACT Executive Director Susan Stott (right) presents the Fred Stott Advocate Award to Senator Sue Tucker.

Two tireless and enthusiastic advocates for affordable housing and community development addressed nearly 50 community leaders and volunteers at the Andover Community Trust Annual Meeting on May 25 at The Chateau in Andover.

"I love this organization—ACT. You change lives, one affordable house at a time," said Senator Susan Tucker, as she was given the Fred Stott Advocate Award in appreciation of her hard work advocating for affordable housing in Andover and for the families who live in this area.

"Sue has provided leadership in protecting the most vulnerable among us," said Susan Stott, ACT Executive Director. Senator Tucker served in the Massachusetts Senate from 1999-2010, representing the City of Lawrence and the Towns of Andover, Dracut and Tewksbury. As chair of the Housing Committee, she sponsored and passed legislation addressing the foreclosure crisis in Massachusetts, as well as landmark legislation to preserve affordable housing, commonly referred to as Expiring Use. Her work as a legislator is part of a lifelong commitment to advocacy and community service.

The evening's keynote speaker, William Traynor, strategic advisor to Lawrence CommunityWorks (LCW), discussed network organizing as a strategy for neighborhood revitalization in Lawrence. "This work is about finding and bringing out the best in human beings," he said.

When Traynor became Lawrence CommunityWorks executive director in 1999, a position he held for 10 years, he was moved by the "aspirational quality of the people of Lawrence." He described

Lawrence as "a tough city with an interesting history that defines its present." He also called Lawrence "a city of hustle. When you have energy, you've got lots to work with."

Traynor perceived the need to build a different way of connecting people in Lawrence. He began by creating a sewing class and then a young architects program. "We started to create spaces that fed people's aspirations," he said. "Especially with young people, we said, 'Do you know you have choices in life?'"

Since its rebirth in 1999, Lawrence CommunityWorks has emerged as a powerful vehicle for community revitalization in Lawrence. Today, it has a record of accomplishment and a vision for Lawrence founded in network organizing and community development.

LCW now has 5,000 members. "You join because you have aspirations," said Traynor. This was one of the first community development organizations to successfully implement Individual Development Accounts (IDA), in which participants put in money, then take financial literacy classes, share their stories and ideas, and withdraw money from their accounts to further their individual aspirations. "Our success rate is far above the national average," said Traynor.

In addition, LCW has developed more than 100 neighborhood circles. A small stipend is given to someone in a neighborhood to host a dinner, and LCW trains facilitators and hosts. "The idea is about getting people together, not creating formal meetings with officers or rules," said Traynor. "What Lawrence needs is a diverse network of people."

A Message from ACT's President



The Town of Andover 1992 Housing Report, Housing Strategies section, says: "Encourage long-term (perpetual) affordable housing using the community land trust (CLT) model. The CLT retains ownership of the land and the owner purchases the house with a ground lease and a deed restriction which regulates resale value ..."

When affordable housing choices are available in a community, people who otherwise would not be able to live there benefit from the opportunities that the community provides. ACT believes strongly that the community itself becomes more vital and livable when it is able to retain economic diversity.

Since our founding in 1992 by a small but visionary group of Andover citizens, Andover Community Trust has constructed three single family homes and renovated another for a total of four permanently affordable homes for income eligible families. We have two new homes in the pipeline. One, on Andover Street, will be built by students and faculty at the Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS), as were our Haverhill Street and Heather Drive homes. This lot was purchased by ACT from the Town of Andover at a public auction in 2010. We're excited to be able to partner with GLTS because these projects provide a learning experience, as well as a community service opportunity, for students. This home will be completed in 2013. The second is on North Street and will be built by the developer of Northfield Commons on a lot purchased by ACT. We expect it to be completed and sold to an eligible family in time for the beginning of school in September. ACT received a \$50,000 grant award from the Andover Affordable Housing Trust Fund to assist in the purchase and construction of the North Street home. In addition, ACT applied for and received a grant award of \$50,000 from the North Shore HOME Consortium competitive funds to assist in constructing this home.

ACT is particularly proud of the Preservation Award received from the Andover Preservation Commission and Andover Historical Society for ACT's fourth home on Cheever Circle. The award is for "Contextual Design and Construction in an Established Neighborhood."

ACT has initiated two annual award programs for outstanding volunteers and advocates: the Fred Stott Advocate Award and the Opening Doors to Affordable Housing award. Be sure to read about the special people receiving these awards on Pages 1 and 3.

All of this has been possible only through the dedication and support of our Board of Directors, ACT homeowners, Executive Director Susan Stott, ACT members, and the businesses, institutions and Town boards and committees that support and believe in the importance of affordable homes in Andover.

If you are already an ACT member, I hope you will consider increasing your commitment. If you are not yet a member, please use the membership form on Page 4 and join us in making Andover a more diverse and welcoming community, one home at a time.

~John Pearson



Why Our New House is Special to Me

Dear Andover Community Trust,

Thank you so much for choosing us! I love my new house, and I can't even begin to tell all of you how much it means to me. If it wasn't for Andover Community Trust, I would never have been able to live in a house as beautiful as this.

After my mom handed in the paperwork and we drove by the house a few times, I had an instinct that we were going to get the house. Every time we drove by, my instinct grew, and it felt like it was ours already.

Living in Andover is a gift that I will cherish my whole life. The school system is great, and it is a great place to learn. Now that I am living in Andover, I have a chance to do a lot more things. One thing I can do is to go downtown and hang out with all my friends. It is really fun, and I wouldn't have been able to do something like that where I used to live. I also live in walking distance to my school.

Before we moved, we lived in an apartment building, and I couldn't play outside. Now I have an open yard with a soccer net and a nice neighborhood to walk or ride my bike around. Our yard is an important feature of the house to me because I love getting outside and kicking my soccer ball around.

Thank you again. You helped us own our house, and you are on your way to helping many other families own their own houses. You showed me what it means to give something to someone less fortunate. Even if it is only one family at a time, one family makes a huge difference.

Jillian Gamache
Age 13

ACT Board of Directors

John Pearson, President | Donald Schroeder, Treasurer |
Joan Johnson, Clerk | Sandra Davila | Wendy Gallant |
Tana Goldberg, ACT News Editor | David Lindsay, Webmaster |
Kellie Mahoney | Carol Rougvie | Susan Stott, Executive Director

Andover Community Trust Awards

FRED STOTT ADVOCATE AWARDS

The Fred Stott Advocate Award has been given by ACT since 2009 in memory of Fred Stott, a member of the ACT Board as clerk, cheerleader, friend and advocate. His son, Sandy Stott, said, "Over the years, he invited us to join our resources with our voices. Again and again, we did so, learning in the process to speak fully for our beliefs."

The first Fred Stott Advocate Awards were given in 2009 to Andy Caffrey and Bill MacLeod.

Andy Caffrey served on the ACT board from 1998-2006, providing good advice and pro bono legal assistance. He helped ACT develop and finalize the ground lease and other legal documents required by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and Andover Board of Selectmen. In addition, he has advised ACT on everything from legal matters to relationships with the Town boards whose support is essential to ACT's ability to develop permanently affordable homes in Andover.

Bill Macleod has been an ACT advocate, providing civil engineering services pro bono since ACT received its first land donation on Heather Drive in the mid-1990s. He helped ACT evaluate the Heather Drive lot and then completed the site plan 10 years later, after a Town sewer was installed in the road. Bill also completed the site plan for the Cheever Circle lot, which he had worked on 20 years earlier. He has helped ACT develop the facts and information needed to demonstrate to Town boards, including the Board of Selectmen and the Andover Zoning Board of Appeals, the nature of proposed ACT homes and how they fit appropriately into their existing neighborhoods.

In 2010, the Fred Stott Advocate Award was given to **Margot Bixby**, founder of Merrimack Valley Habitat for Humanity. Margot's passion for the past 25 years has been the spark that ignited the volunteers and families of Merrimack Valley Habitat to build more than 50 homes in the valley. Her passion and advocacy come from a deep inner commitment and has brought hundreds to join her in her efforts to create decent, safe, affordable homes and a supportive community for families in the Merrimack Valley. ACT has spoken with Merrimack Valley Habitat about working in partnership on a home in Andover, which we hope is in our shared future.



Andy Caffrey



Bill Macleod



Joan Duff

OPENING DOORS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING AWARD

When ACT dedicated its first permanently affordable home on Haverhill Street in 2001, the Greater Lawrence Technical School made a key to present to ACT's first owner, Mercedes Duran. When ACT dedicated the home on Cheever Circle, Mercedes loaned the key for the celebration and also future events. In 2009, ACT initiated the Opening Doors to Affordable Housing in Andover award.

Joan Duff, chair of the Andover Housing Partnership Committee (AHPC) 2002-08, was the first recipient for her leadership during the years in which the Heather Drive and Cheever Circle homes were permitted under the state's Local Initiative Program (LIP), also known as a "friendly 40B." Joan led the AHPC to recommendations based on the facts of the proposals, often in the face of neighborhood opposition to change. These proposals ranged from large multi-unit developments, such as Coachman's Ridge and Casco Crossing, to single family proposals, such as the ACT homes. During Joan's tenure, the AHPC also was able to negotiate with the developer of Brookside Estates to keep 42 units affordable as the complex converted from rental to condo ownership. Brookside Estates, which was opposed by residents when it was developed in 1989, is now cited by Andover residents as a model of how affordable housing should be designed. Joan now chairs the Andover Planning Board.

In 2010, the award was given to the **Town of Andover** for its consistent strong support for ACT's work over the past 10 years:

- The idea for forming a community land trust came from work on the Andover Housing Plan in 1992.
- The Town has waived the building and utility connection fees for all four of the completed ACT homes.
- The Andover Housing Partnership Committee has supported all of ACT's Local Initiative Program (LIP) applications, including for the next ACT home on North Street.
- The Andover Board of Selectmen has supported ACT's LIP applications for all of its completed homes.
- The Andover Affordable Housing Trust Fund has awarded grants for land acquisition for the ACT homes at Cheever Circle and North Street.
- The Andover Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) has approved a comprehensive permit for all of the LIP applications ACT has submitted, resulting in the approval of building permits for two ACT homes.
- The Andover ZBA included conditions in comprehensive permit approvals for Casco Crossing and Northfield Commons, resulting in the developers making existing homes available to ACT for renovation/construction of two permanently affordable homes.

North Street



Lelani Loder, chair of the Andover Housing Partnership Committee, and David Murray, Northfield Commons developer and builder of ACT's house on North Street, greet each other at last year's ACT Annual Meeting. The house will be completed and sold to an eligible family in time for the beginning of school in September. ACT received a \$50,000 grant award from the Andover Affordable Housing Trust Fund to assist in the purchase and construction and a grant award of \$50,000 from the North Shore HOME Consortium competitive funds to assist in constructing this home.

Mercedes Duran ACT's first homeowner: LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM



Mercedes Duran has owned her home on Haverhill Street for 10 years. When she submitted her application for Andover Community Trust's first home, she was a single parent of three children – a son at Andover High School, a son at West Middle School and a daughter at West Elementary School. In the mid-1990s, Mercedes and her family moved from Museum Square in Lawrence to Riverview Commons, built in the late 1980s under a comprehensive permit. She moved to Andover for more space and a better education for her children.

Mercedes was born in the Dominican Republic. She moved to New York City for three years and then to Lawrence, where her sisters were living. She felt Lawrence would be a better place for her to raise her children and for her to continue her own education. She studied at Northern Essex Community College, received an associate's degree and then continued her studies and trained as a dental assistant.

After Mercedes learned about Andover Community Trust, she would drive by the house on Haverhill Street while it was under construction by the students from the Greater Lawrence Technical School. When her children asked why, she told them she hoped it would be theirs. She says home ownership means more peace, privacy and responsibility. She had always wanted to own her own home and be part of the American dream.

Today, Mercedes's oldest son is studying to be a physical therapist at the University of Massachusetts/Lowell. He will graduate in 2012 and hopes to complete his clinical training and be certified two years later. Her second son is studying criminal justice and is in his third year. Her daughter, also at UMass/Lowell, has begun her second year and has not yet decided what she wants to be: perhaps a lawyer.

Three years after Mercedes purchased her home, she met and married Ahmet. Recently, they added a puppy, Zeus, to their family. Mercedes says someday, after the three children have finished college and all tuitions have been paid, she wants to own her own business. In the meantime, the family is working hard, paying taxes and living the American dream, owning their own home.



ACT'S AWARD-WINNING HOUSES | PRESERVATION AWARD

Andover Community Trust is proud of the Preservation Award received from the Andover Preservation Commission and Andover Historical Society for ACT's fourth home on Cheever Circle. The award is for "Contextual Design and Construction in an Established Neighborhood" and states, "The Andover Community Trust builds affordable houses for Andover residents. This custom built house, reminiscent of an Arts and Crafts bungalow, compliments its neighboring houses in both style and scale and is an attractive asset to Cheever Circle."



ANDOVER STREET

Andover Community Trust purchased a half-acre lot on Andover Street from the Town of Andover at a tax title auction in April 2010. John Pearson, ACT president and architect, has designed the permanently affordable three-bedroom home to be built on this lot by students from the Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS). This will be the third ACT home built by GLTS. This project came before the Andover Zoning Board of Appeals on April 7. It was approved under section 7.8, Dimensional Special Permit - Affordable Housing, of the Town's zoning bylaw. ACT anticipates that site work will begin this summer, and the students will begin construction in September. John Pearson also designed the ACT homes on Cheever Circle and Heather Drive.

PLEASE VISIT THE ACT WEBSITE AT
WWW.ANDOVERCLT.ORG



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

“ Never believe that a few caring people cannot change the world.
For, indeed, that’s all who ever have. ”

~Margaret Mead

NEWS



WWW.ANDOVERCLT.ORG

Creating permanently affordable homes in Andover