



ASHEVILLE YOUTH BENEFIT FROM HUD PROGRAMS

GREENSBORO – The City of Asheville and the Asheville Housing Authority are supporting local organizations, including Green Opportunities (GO), an emerging nonprofit organization with a mission to build a strong and just green community in Western North Carolina. As a result, GO is educating local youth about green collar employment opportunities, community resources and green microenterprises. This organization is also implementing a green construction training program and conducting energy retrofits for low-income families in Asheville. “This is a great example of how American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding is being used to enhance existing HUD programs to help build sustainable communities,” said HUD Field Office Director, Christian Stearns.

The GO training team targets an audience of disconnected youth and young adults, between the ages of 16 and 24, who are not in school and are unemployed. The majority of the youth are African American, live in public housing and do not have a high school diploma.

The City of Asheville provided CDBG funding to Mountain Housing Opportunities to support the Asheville GO team for green collar training, apprenticeship and job placement. As a result of the funding, eighteen GO team members are employed. Results show a training completion rate of 88% and a paid apprenticeship rate of 68%.



Through ARRA funding to the Western North Carolina Green Building Council (WNCGBC), GO and a local Community Action Agency implemented a project to weatherize 60 homes in a low-income, high-crime area of West Asheville. This project supported on-the-job training for four GO team members who carried out weatherization activities. To date, 52 of the 60 homes in the project have been weatherized.



The GO Asheville team also performed air sealing, duct sealing, weather-stripping and insulation work in approximately 1,200 units in the Asheville Housing Authority (AHA). By recruiting and training AHA residents in the GO program, GO has created 16 jobs and trained 16 youth team members who also became certified in weatherization by the Building Performance Institute (BPI).

The GO training curriculum is based upon core topics that include life skills training (such as effective communication), community and environmental services projects, apprenticeships, practical, hands-on courses at local community colleges and a mentoring program; and is designed to provide GO team members with the broad-based skills required for launching successful green careers. As a result of being enrolled in GO, 78% of the youth completed community college coursework, including computer courses and certification requirements for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) construction courses; some also enrolled in courses to complete their General Education Degree.



By end of the training, the youth had completed projects such as constructing affordable, energy-efficient housing with Habitat for Humanity, installing a living roof at a local high school, weatherizing homes for senior citizens in the area, installing a cistern at a local garden and building a solar hot water system.



Additional information is available at:

<http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/recovery>

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HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. HUD is working to strengthen the housing market to bolster the economy and protect consumers; meet the need for quality affordable rental homes; utilize housing as a platform for improving quality of life; build inclusive and sustainable communities free from discrimination; and transform the way HUD does business. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.