

# National NeighborWorks® Association

For Immediate Release

March 30, 2010

Contact:

Dave C. Brown 202 223 2526 [dbrown@nnwa.us](mailto:dbrown@nnwa.us)

## **National NeighborWorks® Association Presents Excellence Awards to Three Outstanding Practitioners**

**Bethesda, MD** – The National NeighborWorks® Association (NNA) presented three awards to outstanding individuals in the NeighborWorks® Network who have demonstrated innovative talent and dedicated commitment to the housing and community development industry. Prizes were awarded March 25, 2010 at the Annual NeighborWorks® Executive Directors Symposium in Bethesda, MD in the following three categories:

1. Lifetime Achievement - Prize \$5,000
2. Practitioner of the Year - Prize \$2,500
3. Emerging Leader - Prize \$2,500

Two, non-NeighborWorks®, industry-related executives and last year's winners judged the 2010 candidates. All judges commented on the quality of submissions received and noted how difficult it was to select just one winner.

Eddie Latimer, CEO of Affordable Housing Resources and Past-President of NNA, along with Lou Tisler, Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland and President of NNA, presented the awards to the three winners:

Lifetime Achievement Award: Bruce Gottschall, former Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois. Gottschall led Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago for nearly 35 years as its first and only executive director. Gottschall retired this year, leaving behind Chicago's largest neighborhood revitalization organization and a record of serving more than 181,000 Chicagoans, creating 3,400 new homeowners; financing, building or rehabbing 28,000 homes; and generating \$1.1 billion in investment in the City's low-income neighborhoods.

In the past three and half decades, Gottschall and NHS have been Chicago's lead innovators on some of the most critical community development issues. In the beginning, the most pressing problem was redlining, or a lack of lending on the south and west sides of the City. NHS addressed this problem by creating and administering loan pools where banks could invest funds targeted to low and moderate income families and neighborhoods. Through these pools, Gottschall and NHS have demonstrated that affordable and prudent lending in

low income neighborhoods makes economic sense. Nearly 18,000 Chicagoans have benefited from these loans totaling \$494 million.

In more recent years, the problem has not been the lack of capital in low income neighborhoods, but rather the infusion of too much risky capital. In 2003, before foreclosure was a national issue, NHS formed the Homeownership Preservation Initiative, a partnership of government, lenders, servicers, and counselors. The goals were simple: when possible, help homeowners avoid foreclosure; if that proved to be infeasible, work with the lenders to ensure that the vacant building left behind didn't become a neighborhood burden. Since its inception, the partnership has saved more than 2,200 Chicagoans from foreclosure and reclaimed more than 600 vacant buildings.

As Gottschall was transitioning from NHS, the community development issues came full circle. Low and moderate income borrowers and neighborhoods are experiencing severely reduced access to credit for new home purchases and for refinancing.

In order to address this, Gottschall established a new \$115 million loan pool that will provide sensible, affordable credit in hard hit neighborhoods, including capital to refinance borrowers into affordable, sustainable mortgages.

Practitioner of the Year: Peter Daly, Executive Director of Cambridge Neighborhood Apartment Housing Services (CNAHS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Daly leads by offering creative and pragmatic solutions and has moved the organization to take on new programs and initiatives to address evolving challenges. For example, faced with growing resident needs, CNAHS established programs including:

- "First Books" (free books to children 18 and under living in CNAHS properties)
- On site playgroups through the local non-profit Center for Families
- A scholarship program - now in its third year. CNAHS gives scholarship awards to qualifying residents who are students entering 2 or 4 year college programs and/or to residents interested in pursuing certificate or vocational programs to advance their careers. Awards are given out at "National Night Out"—one of the largest local events that brings the community together to combat crime and promote safety awareness.
- An Energy Capital Planner staff person to help find ways to lessen buildings' environmental impacts through decision-making and operational strategies that help conserve resources.
- Adopting tools to track energy consumption that have resulted this year in dramatic improvements in CNAHS's portfolio's energy consumption.
- A project in development that is on track to be certified as LEED Platinum and another completed project that was LEED certifiable

Emerging Leader: Robert Tourigny, Executive Director of NeighborWorks Greater Manchester, in Manchester, New Hampshire. Two projects highlight Tourigny's vision and leadership in improving the communities of Manchester. The Straw Mansion was the home of Ezekiel Straw, a managing agent for the historic Amoskeag Mills, and one-time governor of New Hampshire. A challenging tax credit project, in which the general contractor filed for bankruptcy mid-project, Tourigny rallied the staff and oversaw the tedious and time-consuming process to call the bond, satisfy subcontractor liens, and complete the project. A significant portion of the developer fee was eventually realized on this project. Instead of being a highly visible black eye in the downtown area, the Straw Mansion is routinely held up as an example of the fine work being done by NeighborWorks® Greater Manchester.

Another innovative project, Silver Mill, was originally a shoe factory. Located in the south end of Manchester, it was ideally situated for an affordable housing project. It took over seven sources of funding, including funding from NeighborWorks® America, to turn this historic mill into 57 units of greatly needed affordable housing. Significantly, the project was brought in on time, on budget, and generated its full developer's fee. The project was considered such a success that the opening ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Manchester, Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter, and the governor of New Hampshire, Governor John Lynch, who read a proclamation in support of the project by name and the goal of providing affordable housing.

### **About National NeighborWorks® Association (NNA)**

NNA is the national association of NeighborWorks® organizations (NWOs) that advocate for better neighborhoods and housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. Our members use Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (d/b/a NeighborWorks® America) funds to leverage private dollars in order to create new homeowners, revitalize distressed communities, and build single family and multi-family housing for low- to moderate-income families in urban and rural communities throughout the country.

[www.nnwa.us](http://www.nnwa.us)