



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 1, 2018

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER TO ASSIST FREDERICKSBURG MOBILE HOME PARK RESIDENTS

Fredericksburg, VA – Local community service providers have joined forces to provide re-housing assistance to residents of a Fredericksburg City Mobile Home Park.

In 2016 the Fredericksburg Mobile Home Park was purchased by Cowan East LLC. Since acquiring the property, the owner has not undertaken to operate a mobile home park on the property, and is in the process of redeveloping the entire property for commercial business uses. Notice has been given to all of the mobile home park residents on multiple occasions since the 2016 purchase that they must vacate by November 30, 2018.

In response to the initial announcement to vacate the park, local service providers – Central Virginia Housing Coalition, City of Fredericksburg, Fredericksburg Department of Social Services and Rappahannock United Way – joined together to assist the residents, the majority of whom are low income, in relocating.

Starting in July 2016 the partners joined together to begin a series of visits to the mobile home park. In total representatives went out 5 times over an 18 month period, going door to door to speak to the residents, discussing their plans to find and secure alternative housing options and to provide assistance with applying for other supportive programs.

“We wanted to make sure that all the residents understood the need to vacate and know that we were there to provide support and resources to help them do it,” said Christen Gallik, Director of Fredericksburg Department of Social Services.

“Collectively we have staff that can help locate affordable and accessible housing options throughout the region, said Dee Smith with Central Virginia Housing Coalition, “we can help navigate the often overwhelming process of finding somewhere to live and moving.”

In addition to these services Rappahannock United Way, in partnership with the new land owner, offered financial assistance to residents seeking to relocate to new housing. “Moving can be a costly undertaking,” explained Sarah Walsh, Director of Strategic Initiatives at United

Way, “We are happy to provide financial assistance to cover moving expenses such as security deposits and first month’s rent for the residents who need it. The financial commitment of the new owners has helped us to do just that.”

To date, several residents have already been successfully rehoused with the assistance of the team. One mobile home in particular had two residents with specific housing needs. As a wheelchair user, one of the residents needed a fully accessible unit, close to family supports and public transportation options. The partners were able to rally around these residents; helping to find, secure and cover the security deposit for a perfect housing unit in downtown Fredericksburg.

As the deadline to vacate grows ever closer the partners are reaching out to the mobile home park residents once again in August. Printed notices reminding the residents of the deadline to vacate and information on supportive program options and resources will be hand-delivered to residents. The partners are planning more outreach efforts through the fall.

“We will continue to reach out to the residents,” said Susanna Finn, Community Development Planner with City of Fredericksburg, “our goal is to ensure everyone has access to our support and resources for a smooth transition before the November deadline.”

Concerned community members can help support these efforts with cash donations to the Emergency Assistance Fund – <http://www.rappahannockunitedway.org/donate-to-ruw/>

About Rappahannock United Way

Founded in 1939, Rappahannock United Way is a local nonprofit organization serving Fredericksburg, Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Our mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community. Our goal is to have more households emerge from poverty and achieve greater financial stability. Together, we can create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That’s what it means to LIVE UNITED.

About Fredericksburg Department of Social Services

The Fredericksburg Department of Social Services is a critical safety net government agency that has the responsibility of administering social service programs to City residents. Key programs include: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Childcare, Child and Adult Protective Services, and Foster Care and Adoption. For more information, visit www.fredericksburgva.gov

About Central Virginia Housing Coalition

Central Virginia Housing Coalition helps navigate the often overwhelming process of having to move. Our Housing Counseling Department offers free Housing/Rental Counseling services, including financial workshops. The organization also receives donations to its HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS program, which offers financial assistance throughout the year to help with some of the upfront expenses associated with moving. Please visit www.centralvahousing.org for more information.

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