A Thriving Community

OUR MISSION:
To promote a collaborative community centered on quality housing, education, health and wellness and opportunity.

OUR VISION:
To end intergenerational poverty through a holistic community revitalization effort.

Women living in the Renaissance West neighborhood spent many hours committed to completing RWCI’s educational offerings. Most have children and are proud to set a strong example for their children.

Ultimately our goal is to help residents gain the necessary skills to get out and stay out of poverty. Some require just a little encouragement. Others need help with establishing new possibilities beyond what they have known all their lives. RWCI is helping residents create a new narrative for their families by helping them see that they have what it takes to realize the new visions they dare dream for their families. Our residents are working hard to gain skills, increase their salaries and land their next job leading up to their dream. For example, three nights each week, many elect to participate in RWCI and CPCC’s High School Equivalency program (also known as “GED”). This is one of many programs where RWCI coordinates partners and provides accountability for programs that meet the needs of residents.

From the very beginning, RWCI has help residents in Charlotte Housing Authority’s (now Inlivian) Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program increase their incomes from an average of $13,100 to $22,600. Perhaps one of the largest successes of 2019 is the accomplishment of our residents in the Little Rock neighborhood. As RWCI expanded services, the employment rate* of participants in RWCI’s Care Coordination increased from 46% to 64%. These positive outcomes are just beginning for RWCI! More work is needed to promote fulltime employment, as many residents are still underemployed.

In 1 year, the employment rate* has increased from 46% to 64%
The average income of FSS families has increased from $13,100 to $22,600

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**RWCi** works collaboratively with property management agencies at The Renaissance and Little Rock Apartments with the goal of maintaining fluid communication and the ability to proactively address residents’ challenges and/or barriers before their housing may be affected.

One way that RWCi is providing support to residents facing housing instability is through the Life Navigation program. These coaches for heads-of-households are full-time resources in the neighborhood that support residents during life challenges, and with goal setting related to maintaining housing, health and employment.

Since May 2019 Angela W. decided to work with an RWCi Life Navigator to accomplish her goals. “RWCi has been very beneficial for myself and my family! I am able to achieve my education [without any] worries of needing childcare. Also, I don’t have to go home and cook dinner because this is also provided. My Life Navigator is the best ...Through this program I’m able to move in to better housing for my family and later [I hope] to move into my own home that I will own! [The Life Navigator] program is the best thing that I have ever done.” Residents set goals with their Life Navigator, such as homeownership. Homeownership planning includes developing a strong grasp on finances and establishing a stable income. These factors, as well as others, are addressed while residents build relationships with their RWCi Life Navigator and utilize community partners and program offerings.

New to RWCi in 2019 is the offering of mental health services convenient in the neighborhood. RWCi began to receive more inquiries into mental health offerings by residents and now offers easy access to professionals on-site. Social and emotional health is equally important to housing stability and our adult’s ability to manage their household and our children’s ability to perform in school.

Life Navigation, along with all our supportive services, creates a proven solution for assisting families with the critical component of family stability, supportive housing. This is a key step along their economic mobility journeys.

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“Supportive housing, a highly effective strategy that combines affordable housing with intensive coordinated services, can provide that needed assistance,” describes the Center of Budget and Policy Priorities.
57% of Public Housing residents participating in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program have maintained or increased their annual income an average of $11,072 in 2019.

Nine residents graduated the FSS program in 2019 and moved to homeownership or market rate rental.

If you want to be inspired, stop by CPCC’s on-site High School Equivalency (formerly known as GED) class on Tuesday and Thursday nights. Residents are working hard to increase their education level and expand employment opportunities. Nearly 20% have not earned their high school diploma, which creates a barrier to high paying jobs.

It’s a whole family sacrifice for most. Many of these participants are coming from their day job to join class in the evenings. Several come with children in tow. Childcare is provided to accommodate these working parents. A meal is provided, as well, eliminating another barrier to accomplishing this goal. Because of the whole family solution this program provides, participants tell us that they feel more successful in RWCI’s HSE class than other classes. In addition to the aforementioned supportive services, the small class size and one-on-one attention are key factors to their success.

In addition to the HSE program, residents are utilizing other resources that RWCI offers for workforce development. These include a Workforce Development Life Navigator, an on-site representative from NCWorks to connect them to on-demand jobs, and an on-site budgeting and planning expert thanks to our partnership with Community Link.

This is just the beginning! In addition to our program resources, residents are leaning on each other for support. A culture of achievement is sprouting! Participants are spreading the word in the community about the great new programs they are participating in right here in their neighborhood.

The contagious spirit for a better life is catching on. As household income increases residents are gaining confidence in themselves and finding joy in learning and aspiring for the next level of employment.

But more is needed. We are not quite reaching even half of our neighbors. Increased investment in workforce development experiences over the next several years is needed to allow RWCI to serve more residents who are ready to take steps towards a better, and higher paying, job. Investments in RWCI’s Life Navigators, Program Officers and Program Evaluation allow for continuous improvement, tweaking, and delivery of the most effective program offerings to the neighborhood.
High Quality Early Education
The Impetus for Lifelong Success

In August 2019, the Howard Levine Child Development Center (HLCDC), operated by the YMCA of Greater Charlotte, celebrated its first graduation of students from Pre-K. During the ceremony, students read books aloud, counted to 100 and sang songs to a crowd of doting parents. Of the children who graduated, the vast majority met “Age Appropriate Standards.”

Of the 2019 pre-k graduates:
82% Can Manage Their Feelings
100% Can Speak Clearly
82% Can Identify Letters

13 of those children are now attending Kindergarten at Renaissance West STEAM Academy (RWSA).

Studies show that investments in early childhood education yield $4-$12 in savings on every $1 invested by reducing costs associated with special education,

RWCI’s Workforce Development Scholarship at the HLCDC through Mecklenburg County provides parents whose previous barrier to work was lack of childcare, a quality early education for their children while they are in pursuit of employment, under the care of RWCI’s Life Navigators.

100% of caregivers receiving scholarships gained employment for at least 30 hours/week

70% of caregivers increased their household income after one year

Median annual income at enrollment was $13,260 and increased to $18,958 in 2019

40% of caregivers who did not complete high school have enrolled in our HSE program

All (3) previously unemployed caregivers are now employed