



In 2011 Christian Communities Group Homes was renamed Seabury at Home First.

Over the years, Christian Communities Group Homes (CCGH) has been home to more than 130 low-income, and often formerly homeless, seniors. Many of them have lived at the home for 10 years or more. For many, CCGH has been their last home, a true testament to the program's capacity to keep seniors in the community. Mr. Herbert, the first resident, lived at Harmony House for 16 years, until a stroke caused him to need the ongoing nursing care at the Washington Center for Aging Services next door.

The backgrounds of the residents are varied. Former occupations of residents include: store clerk, housekeeping, security guard and homemaker. In recent years, residents have come to CCGH after a period of homelessness. All three homes serve DC residents, 60 years or older with an emphasis on those at the greatest risk and most in need of stable housing. CCGH provides an alternative to homelessness and allows seniors to age in a supportive environment with dignity and respect. Staff provide 24-hour supervision and full housekeeping service at Pleasant Hill and general oversight at the independent homes, House of Togetherness and Andrus House.

In 1995, the Age-In-Place program began offering home upkeep and yard work services to older adults so that they might remain more safely in their homes and communities. The program has grown significantly and more than 2000 volunteers from around the country volunteer their services to more than 500 older adults each year.

Age-In-Place is one significant example of the CCGH tradition of encouraging intergenerational activities. Other wonderful results of this tradition include many ongoing school connections, beautiful intergenerational quilts and art work, living history programs, and many friendships between young and old at the homes.

Throughout its history, CCGH has been the fortunate beneficiary of the gifts of foundations, businesses, congregations, civic groups and personal donors. In addition, board and advisory council members have shown leadership, perseverance and a love for those we serve.

Here's to the next 30 years under its new name, Home First!

TIMELINE

1979: Representatives from ten DC churches called the Christian Communities Committed to Change or the 4 C's under the sponsorship of Associated Catholic Charities got together to help their low-income, elderly neighbors. The ten original churches were Holy Name, Immaculate Conception, Saint Aloysius, Saint Augustine, Saint Martin of Tours, Holy Redeemer, Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Saint Anthony, St. Francis de Sales, and Saint Matthew's Cathedral. The group's research pointed to a pressing need for safe, affordable housing for both active and frail elders.

The group found three vacant, city owned houses on the grounds of the Washington Center for Aging Services at 18th and Evarts Streets, NE and contracted with the Washington DC government to use the houses.

To keep costs down and make the residents truly a part of the community, the CCGH Board went to the community to seek donations for furnishings, volunteer services for the residents, Sunday dinner donations by church groups and other support.

1981: Harmony House opened in partnership with the DC Office on Aging (DCOA). Pleasant Hill and House of Togetherness opened next. The names of the homes were selected by residents from Psalm 133 of the Bible, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when all God's people live together in harmony."

House Mottos:

House of Togetherness: "Love and happiness are the keys to togetherness"

Harmony House: "To live together in peace and harmony"

Pleasant Hill: "Love dwells within"

1981: Catholic Charities provided staff and administrative supervision for the homes and an all volunteer board from the churches and community provided fundraising support as well as assistance with recreational activities, home maintenance, volunteers, and public relations.

1981: The Annual Christmas Party began and has continued every year since (except 2010 when it was snowed out). Each year music is provided by John Czjaka and the "Young Adults" folk group from St. Matthew's Cathedral attends to lend their voices and good cheer.

1983: The first living history program was begun with a local school.

1985: The Washington Post featured the living history program at CCGH. The program brought residents to area schools to share their personal history with students.

1985: CCGH incorporated and received 501(c)(3) status in preparation for independence.

1986: Catholic Charities is no longer the administrator of CCGH. On July 1 the Board of CCGH took over its operations.

1986: The Board sought and received funding from the DC Office on Aging.

1986: Residents of Harmony House were alerted to a fire by smoke detectors. Damage was restricted to the 2nd floor and no residents were injured.

1986: CCGH incorporated intergenerational living at House of Togetherness. Over the years, - a younger adult shared the home with seniors, including a grad student at a local college and young professionals saving for their first home..

1986: From 1986 until 2004 a theater and dinner benefit were held at Catholic University's Hartke Theater.

1987: A poster contest was held for neighborhood school children using the theme "Old Friends are Good Friends." Posters were on exhibit at the Friendship Gallery in Chevy Chase in 1988.

1987 – Fundraiser dinner honored founding board member Algetha Quander.

1988: The first United Way funding was received.

1988: Fundraiser honored Board member and retired police officer Silas Vaugh.

1989: Residents worked on a quilting project with Langdon Elementary School students and Sojourner Community Fellowship

1989: Roxanne Ando becomes Executive Director.

1989: Old Friends are Good Friends event with an intergenerational picnic in honor of Mary Ann Welter and a quilt auction.

1990: The first recreation and volunteer coordinator was hired.

1990: A Christmas party was held with teen mothers and their children from St. Ann's.

1990's: It was noted that 100% of the residents who came to CCGH had been homeless (had been 2/3) and there were now more male residents than women.

1990- First full time assistant director, Mildred Clark was hired.

1990: Resident Emma Stevens celebrated her 100th birthday. She had lived at CCGH for 7 years at that time.

1991: Ten Years of Sharing event celebrated the tenth year of operation.

1992: Picnic celebrating Elizabeth Fox's 50th birthday included a plant sale with plants from the CCGH garden.

1992: The first mini van was purchased to transport residents.

1992: Christian Family Montessori School classes "adopted" residents and visited regularly.

1993: Needs assessment of seniors and housing providers conducted which pointed to need for services so seniors could stay in their homes and communities.

1994: Age-In-Place pilot was launched with Upper NE Ecumenical Ministry Group, St Frances de Sales Church, and DC Cares volunteers.

1994: Summer Fundraiser "Find the Luck of the Irish" with a tribute to Mary Anne Gibbons where two tickets to Ireland and other Irish goodies were raffled off.

1995: Age-In-Place, an outreach service for seniors living in their own homes in NE Washington began providing service. The initial grant to launch the program came from Fannie Mae. Age-In-Place became a regular weekend activity for volunteer groups and families to provide free yard work and house cleaning to older homeowners who were referred for the service by churches and organizations in the community.

1996: United Way "Association Day" brought volunteers in to work with Age-In-Place and CCGH for the day.

1997- Caring is an Art silent auction held.

1997: A grant from the Order of Malta Federal Association USA installed electronic stair climbers in the houses.

1998: Salute of Roxanne's ten years as Executive Director and Board member was held - Roxtenberfest

1999-2001 Renovations to the homes were slow at times. Residents moved to temporary rental housing while the renovations proceeded.

1999: "Thank the Generation that Brought you Swing" was the name and theme for the summer fundraiser held from 1999- 2005 which brought together enthusiasts of all ages to swing dance to the music of a good name band. All but the last dance, which was held at Glen Echo Park, were held at Catholic University.

1999: Executive Director Roxanne Ando received an honorable mention in the Washington Council of Agencies Shayne Award which recognizes outstanding leadership of small non profits.

1999: Age-In-Place hires its first full time coordinator, Ruth Shea.

2000: A Telephone Ministry was started to make a connection with isolated older adults in the community.

2000: CCGH became a subsidiary of Seabury Resources for Aging, then Episcopal Senior Ministries, a longtime provider of housing and supportive services in the District and Maryland. The CCGH Board felt this was an outstanding opportunity for CCGH to gain stability from a well-regarded, larger organization and to share the benefit of its 20 years of experience. As a wholly-owned subsidiary, CCGH continues to be responsible for managing the three group homes and the Age-In-Place program.

2001: 20th Anniversary Party auctioned off a quilt made by the residents of House of Togetherness.

2001: The renovation of Pleasant Hill was completed and the administrative offices were now in the lower level. A donation of furnishings for resident rooms came from the Washington Home.

2001: Through the support of the Philip Graham Foundation and John Edward Fowler Foundation, a new van was purchased.

2002: The Board of Seabury conducted a program evaluation at CCGH including interviews with residents.

2003: A Gospel Sing to benefit CCGH Was held at Washington Center for Aging Services.

2003: The renovation of House of Togetherness was completed and the unfinished basement turned into a 1 bedroom apartment. Harmony House renovations also were completed.

2003: Bunton Institutional CME Church Senior Center volunteers had long supported CCGH. When the Church had a fire, CCGH could return the service by hosting the senior group until the church was repaired.

2003: CCGH joined the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless program which raises awareness and funds for the relief of homelessness. Raising funds relies on young and old friends of CCGH to support our efforts and the awareness of our program.

2004: Corporation for National Service awarded a \$200,000 grant for the expansion/replication of Age-In-Place. The grant provided the opportunity to hire outside consultants to evaluate the program which was completed by Shannon Jarrett, PhD from Virginia Tech and a feasibility study on developing a skilled home repair program.

2005: The last issue of the CCGH News was produced. It was combined into the newsletter of Seabury Resources for Aging (then Episcopal Senior Ministries.)

2005: Roxanne Ando resigned and was recognized for her 16 years of service as Executive Director. The activity room was named the Roxanne Ando activity room.

2005: The performance season of the Thomas Circle Singers group benefited Christian Communities Group Homes.

2006: CCGH joined other Seabury subsidiaries and programs in planning for a successful fundraiser, the Magical Moments gala which has taken place each year afterwards (now known as the Leadership in Aging Celebration) and raised funding for services and programs.

2006: The Quinby Fund of St. John's Lafayette Square provided funds to purchase a Subaru station wagon.

2007: A management assessment was conducted by the OCL Group on the feasibility of developing a fee for service home repair program.

2007: CCGH received grant funding to pilot a skilled home repair and maintenance program. The program opened in 2008 and served more than 100 older adults before closing in 2010 when continued funding was not obtained.

2007: The Tap-G award from the D.C. Deputy Mayor's Office of Economic Development expanded services to targeted communities in Washington and offered education programs as well as Age-In-Place services.

2008: With the support of AARP and the DC Government, Harmony House was renovated to incorporate the principles of universal design. The redesign was done by Michael Graves with assistance from architecture students at the University of Maryland. Other partners were Clark Construction and Rebuilding Together. The home's design moves beyond accessibility, incorporating innovative design that allows seniors of all ability levels to live with independence. It was renamed Andrus House in honor of Ethel Percy Andrus, AARP's founder. Andrus House was presented as a model of universal design at the AARP convention and the NCOA/ASA conference.

2008: Seabury Board member Jean Smith and the Poor Roberts Foundation provided a new van.

2009: Age-In-Place® becomes a registered trademark ensuring the integrity of the program's name.

2010: Regine Clermont becomes director of the program. Gigi Shelton joins the staff as the Assistant Director.

2011: CCGH celebrates its 30th Anniversary and changes its name to Home First, and is branded Seabury at Home First with the tagline: Housing Services for Seniors.

Executive Directors:

Elizabeth Fox

Sr. Roberta Kerins

Jill Hall-Williams

Pat Hunt

Julia Johnson

Sr. Joan O'Shea

Mary Ann Welter

Roxanne Ando

James McSpadden

Current Staff:

Executive Director: Joseph Resch, Jr.

Director: Regine Clermont

Assistant Director: Gigi Shelton

Age-In-Place Coordinator:

Group Homes Manager: Rue Gordon

Development Assistant: Connie Kaldor