



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

**Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015**

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

### SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Build-A-House

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Chesterfield County, Virginia

Jurisdiction population(s): 330,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2010

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: James J.L. Stegmaier

Title: County Administrator Jurisdiction: Chesterfield County, VA

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: David J. Pritchard

Title: Special Projects Manager Jurisdiction: Chesterfield County, VA

Street address: 9901 Lori Road

City: Chesterfield State/Province: VA

Zip/Postal Code: 23832 Country: USA

Telephone: 804.796.7030 Fax: 804.748.3952

E-mail: pritcharddj@chesterfield.gov

## **ICMA Award Nomination**

### **Nomination Summary**

#### **Abstract of the Program**

Build-A-House is a four-way partnership between Chesterfield County, Chesterfield County Community Services Board (Intellectual Disabilities, Residential Services), Chesterfield County Public Schools (Technical Center) and Chesterfield Alternatives, Inc. This partnership was developed to increase affordable and accessible housing for persons with disabilities while providing Chesterfield County students with real life work experiences. Over the course of the program, two houses have been built for use by individuals with intellectual disabilities, a third is currently under construction, and a fourth is in the planning stage.

#### **The Problem/Need for the Program**

For the last few decades a countless number of persons and entities have looked at the needs of Virginians with significant disabilities. Every survey has shown the need of housing as one as the most critical issues affecting people with disabilities in Virginia. Persons with severe disabilities living in Chesterfield County must try to live on less than \$733.00 (SSI) a month while the average one bedroom rent is over \$715.00 a month. Permanent, accessible, safe and affordable housing is essential in achieving success in assisting individuals with long-term disabilities to live productive and quality lives in their communities.

#### **Description of the Program**

The Build-A-House Project is a cooperative project through which students at the Chesterfield Technical Center construct homes on vacant County-owned land with Chesterfield Alternatives,

Inc. funding the construction expense and the homes ultimately being used by Chesterfield County Community Services Board to provide affordable and accessible housing to county citizens with disabilities.

The purpose of the program is to provide real work experience for Chesterfield County Public School's Technical Center students. It also provides long-term permanent accessibility for individuals with disabilities at below fair market rent.

The first house was completed in 2010 with over 300 Chesterfield County students perfecting their skills in drywall, electricity, plumbing, woodwork, HVAC, carpentry and landscaping contributing to the completion of a four bedroom, 2,300 square foot single family home. It is now home to three individuals with intellectual disabilities. A second Build-A-House was constructed last year with 2,750 square feet and five bedrooms with three bathrooms. Over the course of the program, a total of 850 students have received hands-on experience in a variety of construction related fields.

Chesterfield County Alternatives, Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide affordable and accessible housing to Chesterfield County citizens with mental and/or physical disabilities. They have worked closely with Chesterfield County for over 25 years in securing housing for individuals served by the services board.

In the past, the Chesterfield County Public Schools Technical Center had partnerships with various organizations to provide students with building experience. However, these endeavors

allowed the student only limited experiences. The partnership with Chesterfield Alternatives gave the students an opportunity to build an entire house under the supervision of a contractor.

### **Use of Technology**

The students had the opportunity to utilize the various technological equipment associated with each of their fields of study.

### **Cost of the Program**

The expense related to this project were mitigated due to the collaborative effort of this parties involved in the building of this home. The land was donated by Chesterfield County and labor was provided at no cost by the students as part of the learning experience. The cost of the this universal design and accessible home was around \$250,000 which is about 33% less than a comparable house on the private market.

### **Results/Success of the Program**

There were many successes as a result of this project. The first is that three individuals received an accessible and affordable home in the community in which they live. While they previously had a home, it was a multi-level home which made it difficult to allow them to age in place and they now benefit from the design of the new home to meet their ambulation needs.

A second success was related to the real life experiences that over 850 Chesterfield County High School students gained working on real homes. These students learned skills that provided actual work experience from which they will be able to build a resume and/or apply to college. They also gained specialized experience working on an accessible home, met the individuals the

home was designed for, and are able to better understand the needs of people with disabilities as a result of participating in this experience. Finally, through this process we were able to produce a home for one-third the typical cost.

### **Worthiness of an Award**

Our experience with Build-A-House has been one of collaboration and has been described as a win-win-win-win. The Community Services Board won- they were able to provide three individuals with a home where they can now age in place, with a design to better meet their needs. The Chesterfield Technical Center won because they were able to provide 850 students with real life experiences in enhancing their technical skills while also teaching them about people with disabilities and their needs. Chesterfield County won as they were able to successfully rehabilitate some under-utilized county land while supporting citizens with disabilities. Finally, Chesterfield Alternatives, Inc. won because they were able to produce a home for one-third the cost they would pay in the typical construction market. This project not only educated over 850 students around individuals with disabilities and their specialized needs, thereby further enhancing community integration, education, and acceptance but it also had a real life outcome of a home.