


Communities Together Inc

2022 Annual Report





Executive Summary

Communities Together Inc. is a third-party provider of community and resident engagement programs and resources for residents of affordable housing. We are an independent, 501(c)3 charitable nonprofit enterprise. Our core program facilitates neighbors coming together to build civic community and solve community issues collaboratively with community management.

Around that hub, we build programs and activities that aid residents' ability to achieve their own self-reliance in every major facet of their lives, including, but not limited to, career, education, health and wellness, building and managing resources, enrichment, and social and civic community involvement.

Throughout this Annual Report you will find highlights of our 2022 programs. The following list distills our accomplishments. In 2022, Communities Together Inc:

- added **two more affordable housing communities** along with new community management firms and client ownership groups. That brings us to *21 communities with more than 7,000 residents* in DC, MD, and VA.
- became the **nonprofit sponsor and co-owner of our first and second developments**, providing **economic benefits to our co-owners**.
- began to provide excellent community and residential engagement services to **people with developmental disabilities** with qualified engagement coordinators.
- successfully completed an **experimental program to provide would-be entrepreneurs** with the rigorous professional development program and networks to enable them to launch their small businesses – enabling them to build wealth and stability and embark on rewarding careers.
- added several new partner organizations
- prepared the successful post-pandemic re-launch of our **core program of community building – Neighbor Up**.
- diversified and expanded our revenues with the addition of new funders and donors.
- brought **new grant- and donor-funded programs, services, and resources to our residents, holding down costs for ownership groups** even as we facilitated residents' self-reliance.

Note that Communities Together's unique model has several reinforcing and complementary dynamics at play:

- a) we raise donations and grants to supplement the basic cost of residential engagement programs, enabling
- b) improved and impactful programs that yield higher results in our residents' personal development, wealth acquisition and stability, and collaboration with community management teams, thereby making it possible for
- c) ownership groups and management firms to hold down costs, increase resident satisfaction and help prevent turnover, and still earn the tax credit that accompanies qualifying residential engagement programs.

Please enjoy several reports highlighting some of our more dramatic and inspirational programs and impacts in 2022.

Program Highlights

Silver Creek Senior Living - a new community we sponsored!

For the first time, in 2022 Communities Together became the nonprofit sponsor of a new, completed development in partnership with several individual owners. Welcomed by Montgomery County and the State of Maryland, Silver Creek is managed by Residential One and tucked into a dense spot in the heart of **Kensington, Maryland**. Its design and finishings would make any resident of a so-called “upscale” building feel at home. Communities Together Inc is proud to be its community and resident engagement provider and co-owner.

One of Silver Creek’s greatest victories is our innovative Community Connections program, funded by a **\$148,600 grant from Capital One**. The tech program has opened new doors for residents, as **every household** at Silver Creek is eligible to receive a **Chromebook** laptop, free of cost. The grant also funded a building-wide **WiFi** network that provides Internet access in every unit and common area, also free of cost. The grant continues to provide free Chromebook and tech **training** to residents. Finally, Capital One provided an external independent **evaluation** organization to measure the impact of this partner program. The Community Connections program has supported the residents’ ability to access websites for services (social media, video streaming, and shopping, and delivery), manage finances, and connect with family and friends. It is a crucial strategic response with which we are overcoming the isolation that challenges so many seniors in independent living. Our research has found evidence that the **social and enriching connections made possible by WiFi and web-connected devices provide significant gains in mental health for seniors**.

We are seeking funds to replicate this terrific Community Connections program at other communities.



Prince George’s County’s Local Development Council provided \$10,000 for the same project at **Ft. Washington Manor, and we are looking for matching donations and grants to bring that project to fruition.**

Metro Village - our second community sponsorship!

A community located very close to the Metro station in the Takoma Park section of the District of Columbia, Metro Village is a dense, urban, modern community owned by several individuals and firms. Having studied the benefits of a nonprofit co-owner with a majority interest, in 2022, the ownership group for Metro Village decided to propose to transfer shares to Communities Together Inc. Communities Together’s Board of Directors approved this transfer. Along with Silver Creek Senior Living, therefore, Metro Village is now the second development in which Communities Together Inc has a share of ownership.

Ashburn Chase Apartments

Just one year ago, the Communities Together Portfolio expanded to welcome our first multifamily community home to individuals with developmental disabilities. **Ashburn Chase Apartments**, in Ashburn, Virginia, is a 96-unit complex managed by TM Associates (co-owner and property manager). Another co-owner is GoodWorks (co-owner). TMA and GoodWorks brought in Communities Together to ensure that the first affordable housing development in Loudoun County, VA with residents with developmental disabilities would enjoy premium community and residential engagement programming.

Our mandate at Ashburn Chase is **to integrate residents with developmental disabilities (DDs)** into the entire cohort of neighbors in all of our activities and events, including partnership programs. As we finished 2022, we closed in on a terrific new coordinator for Ashburn Chase with long experience working with people with disabilities. Our team has big plans for 2023. As we finished 2022, we were providing more and more activities and resources, including:

- **Connections to 20+ local organizations** that address hunger; access to free clothing, baby formula, and toys; and case referrals in coordination with residents' case managers.
- Programming designed to **cultivate community engagement**, including use of the **Neighbor Up** model and an **after school** program for children and youth.
- Active and ongoing partnership building to strengthen and expand programs.



Mercaditos Project - an experiment in entrepreneurship!

The Mercaditos Project has been an experiment in developing would-be entrepreneurs, working with qualifying residents. It was a risky idea, fraught with challenges, and yet it succeeded measurably in its first year for the graduates of the first program.

With funding from HSBC, the Prince George's County Council (courtesy of Member Deni Taveras), and Crescent Cities Charities, we launched and brought to a successful finish the pilot cohort of the Mercaditos Project.



Working with Spanish-speaking residents in the Langley Park area of Prince George's County, we found partners in El Poder de Ser Mujer, Residential One, and Truist Bank, to whom we extend our lasting gratitude. Employ Prince George's (the County's workforce development team) helped us identify El Poder de Ser Mujer.

El Poder and our team evaluated applicants for the program, requiring proof of their commitment and time. El Poder then provided an entrepreneurship training program, supplemented by guest instruction sessions (in Spanish) on financial management from Truist Bank. In these sessions, participants created their business plans and executed the plans by offering goods and services at "mercaditos" (little markets) in their communities.

They created marketing materials and networked with potential clients. The partnership won in-kind donations exceeding \$5,000, allowing them to earn certificates and governmental approval as a nail technician, retail food providers, and a cleaning service team. The participants - **all women** - signed up potential clients and registered for insurance. Their hard work culminated in a graduation ceremony and in actual **customers, revenue, and the prospect of rewarding business growth**. What's more, they have come together as a cohort and built a community within the community.

We appreciate the support and contributions made by our partners named above, and we are *seeking funds to renew and scale up the program*.

Friendly Garden -- one year later

In March 2022, tragedy struck **Friendly Garden Apartments**, a community served by Communities Together Inc. The **Silver Spring** community was struck by an explosion and fire ignited by a gas line. While 14 residents were injured, all residents survived. Yet more than 150 residents had to move into temporary housing while their buildings were tested. Some were never able to return to buildings that collapsed. Yet the residents' response, full of resilience and grace, was a remarkable demonstration of the power of a tightly knit of community of longtime neighbors.



Moreover, the network of community responders provided an excellent series of services to residents in need. Today, we can say that not only have residents recovered, but in some ways many of them thrive more than ever before, in part with the facilitation of Communities Together and our chief partner at Friendly Garden – Camp Fire of Patuxent.

After the initial emergency response – a thoroughly coordinated collaboration of Montgomery County, Communities Together, MHP, the Red Cross, Residential One, Camp Fire, and many other area organizations – many resources and programs were provided to Friendly residents to alleviate the burdens raised by temporary homelessness. We were proud that our team merged with the Camp Fire team to provide on-site emergency coordination for residents beginning the day after the fire, led by trained emergency responders on both our team and Camp Fire's team. Residential One responded quickly with all the funds and on-site authority we requested, as well as a very successful text messaging system with which we could communicate with all residents. MHP managed the County's fundraising drive. Their staff proved to be good and reliable partners in coordinating the provision of those charitable funds to residents based on needs. The County's emergency management teams were quick and collaborative. In the following days, we coordinated with a wide array of people and organizations offering their aid.

For example, a **free clothing drive** run by student volunteers from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School brought diapers and garments for residents. **Mental health support** was made available to residents by the Black Physicians Network, and our younger residents were gifted school supplies prior to the start of the 2022-2023 school year by partners at Novavax. At the same time, we protected residents from unwarranted public and media scrutiny and identification.

Apart from one-off events and programs, Communities Together's chief youth development partner, Camp Fire, has run an **after-school program** and resumed the family-centered programming that was interrupted by the emergency. Both of these programs are even more popular than they were before the pandemic. We are seeing sustained and unusually high levels of community engagement, sharing of information, and reciprocal support among residents. After the emergency, residents understand and appreciate the enrichment Communities Together and its partners, led by Camp Fire, bring to the community. We remain very grateful to the County, to MHP, and to the Red Cross for their timely and expert aid and coordination.

Nothing could be more rewarding than the progress we have witnessed among the bonded residents at Friendly Garden. We hold up the residents at Friendly Garden as models of personal and community resilience and grace.

Multifamily Community Program Review



2022 was another dynamic year of programming and innovation. Our community engagement coordinators listened and acted on the requests of residents. Beyond the outstanding programs mentioned above, our programming highlights in 2022 included the following:

- **Youth Development:** day camp programs and regular **outside of school programming** with the expertise of **our partners Camp Fire** (in MD, DC, and VA) and the **Cultural Academy for Excellence (CAFÉ)** at Queens Manor (at Queens Manor).
- **Lifelong Learning:** Our initiative to launch **community libraries** and **book clubs** in 2022 made reading for fun and enrichment accessible at communities. Book clubs have already proven to be a **conducive environment for resident leadership** and they're catching on at other communities.
- **Civic Engagement:** Voter registration events, community swaps (residents can trade dry goods, recipes, information, and favors), and community meetings enriched our grounds with the social connections of neighborhood camaraderie. These events, introducing neighbors to one another and **showcasing the skills and kindnesses** each can offer to those around them, were a precursor to our re-launch of our **Neighbor Up program** in 2023.

- **Career & Financial Development:** Entrepreneurship programs such as the Mercaditos program and **Family and Business Finance** workshops in the first language spoken by residents.
- **Social Enrichment & Recreation:** Such activities as National Night Out (for community safety and fun), culturally-appropriate games, holiday parties, and Resident Appreciation Days brought food and refreshments along with music, games, bouncey houses, face painting, and other celebratory activities. Such events provide residents with **the opportunity to get to know and even befriend neighbors** they hadn't met before.
- **Health, Wellness, and Nutrition:** Resources, external partners, exercise and yoga instructors, walking clubs, food assistance, mental health services, and other resources and information on the availability of affordable and high quality food.



Senior Community Program Review

After facing hardship and more losses than usual during the pandemic, communities home to senior residents rebounded in 2022, marked by **expanded physical and mental health programming**, resident leadership, in-person celebrations, and **educational events**. In addition to the highlights above, other notable results included the following:

Food Security offerings ranging from **monthly grocery distributions** to hot meals provided by such **local partners and voluntary organizations** as Operation Earnie's Plate.

Wellness, meditation, spiritual, and exercise sessions such as yoga classes and **walking groups** meeting as often as weekly

Social Enrichment & Recreation:

- For instance, board and card games and crafting gatherings. These activities, no matter how casual, provide uplifting social connections for community members. They **combat isolation – one of the chief health challenges** for our elders living apart from their families.
- Holiday events are very popular. These events are **among the most redeeming** events we coordinate, as many senior community members do not have strong networks of kith and kin with whom to celebrate the holidays.

Lifelong Learning, including **guest speakers** and discussions.

- Informational sessions on preventing and overcoming fraud and scams targeting seniors
- Educational programs brought by the library systems in Prince George's County and Loudoun County. The library systems visit more than one-third of our senior communities once a month to offer a selection of new books to our communities.
- Presentations made by local organizations to inform residents of the history, recreation, and resources in the community.

Our Partners

In 2022, Communities Together coordinated the delivery of many programs, services, and assistance with community management teams at Residential One and TMA and with external organizational partners. We deeply thank the following partners for their collaboration.

2400 Diner
AHD, Inc.
Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen
Audubon Enterprises
Bruce Levin
CAFÉ
Camp Fire Patuxent Council (MD, DC, VA)
Capital Area Food Bank
Capital One Bank
CAPREIT
CASA Maryland
Catholic Communities in Langley Park (CCLP)
Central Kenilworth Revitalization (CKAR)
Covenant Presbyterian Ch, Harrisonburg, VA
Crescent Cities Charities
CVS
DC Housing Finance Agency
El Poder de Ser la Mujer
Employ Prince George's
Friends Housing
Flow Yoga
Giant Pharmacy
Girl Scouts Troop 22023
GoodWorks
Greater Riverdale Thrives
GrindTime Eats
HSBC
JITA
Lock 7 Development
Loudon Volunteer Caregivers
Luminis Health
Maryland Dept. of Energy Administration
Maryland Multicultural Youth Center

Mary's Center
MedPacks Pharmacy
MHP
Montgomery Co. Emergency Assist. Prog.
City of Mount Rainier
NDC
Neighborhood Restaurant Group
Newmark (volunteers)
Operation Earnie's Plate
Pavilion Health Care
Prince George's Co. Health & Aging Depts.
Prince George's County Libraries
Prince George's Co. Police Community Svce.
Prince George's Co. Child Protective Svces.
Prince George's County Council
Prince George's County Council Member
Sydney J. Harrison
Prince George's County Council Member Deni
Taveras
Prince George's County Local Development
Council
Prince George's County Public Schools
Residential One
Rick Edson
River Jordan
Saint Francis International School
Safeway
Stratford Capital Group
Tomorrow's Caterers
TM Associates (TMA)
United Healthcare
Women's Voters League of Fredericksburg

Donors and Grantors

We greatly appreciate the strong & growing support of our donors & grantors. You made our achievements possible, and you improved lives & communities. Many of you provided time & expertise as well as resources.

Pillars
\$75,000 +

Capital One Bank
Donald Tucker

Bridge-Builders
\$30,000-74,999

Maryland Department of Energy Assistance
Michael Seltz
Camp Fire of Patuxent (*in-kind contributions*)

Partners
\$10,000-29,999

Newmark Knight Frank
DC Housing Finance Agency
Maryland Department of Energy Administration
Prince George's County Local Development Council

Advocates
\$1,000-9,999

Crescent Cities Charities
HSBC
Bruce Levin
Anthony Waddell

First Responders
\$50-999

Shavon Bartley
Jordan Bishop
Hassan Dixon
Nemo Hannafin
Molly Jamison Juarez
Jeff Kleeman
Paul Mayer

Annette Mooney
Audrey Moore
Kent Neumann
Karon Phillips
Jonathan Rosenberg
Tony Ross
Scott Schell

Lili Spain
Donna Thurmond
Richard Tager
Phuc Tran
Thomas Vellenga
Scott Willis
Steve Wilson

Growth and Impact Summary

Over the course of 2022, Communities Together Inc grew in a number of dimensions with impact to match. In addition to the developments mentioned above, Communities Together achieved the following:

- In 2022, for the first time Communities Together became a **sponsor/co-developer with an ownership interest in a new community**. Construction of **Silver Creek Senior Living** was completed in December of 2021 in Kensington, Maryland in Montgomery County.
- Added **another new community** with yet another ownership group in **Virginia: Ashburn Chase**. 9% of its units have people with developmental disabilities.
- Now serving 21 communities with a total of approximately **7,000** residents across Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Virginia.
- Now the nonprofit sponsor and co-owner of our first and second developments.
- Began to provide community and residential engagement services to people with developmental disabilities.
- Added several new partner organizations (see list above).
- Prepared the successful launch of our core program of socio-civic community building – Neighbor Up.
- Diversified and expanded our revenues with the addition of new funders and donors.
- Brought new grant- and donor-funded programs, services, and resources to our residents, holding down costs for ownership groups even as we facilitated residents' self-reliance.
- Made community engagement proposals and signed agreements with new client development firms to serve communities scheduled to open in 2023, 2024, and beyond.
- Kicked off a Board-led strategic planning project that will culminate in early 2023.
- Created a new internal evaluation system to track our programmatic impact and operations and inform our continuous improvements.

- 501c(3) (charitable) nonprofit governed by an independently elected and diverse Board of experts in related fields serving in staggered terms. Founded in 2017, operational in 2018.
- Earned a development fee of \$175,000 in 2022 from sponsorship / co-ownership of Silver Creek Senior Living. Expect similar fee in 2023.
- “Lean & Sweet” Team: 7 full-time employees, 4 mid-career interns, 5 specialized individual contractors, and professional and resident volunteers.

Organizational & Financial Summary

- Financial review and 990 by the SC&H Group. Audit scheduled for 2023 finances.

<u>2022 year-end figures</u>	
All Expenses	.850,840
All Income	.951,540
Net Income	100,700
Total Assets.....	476,790
Total Liabilities.....	24,980
Equity	.400,592
Total Equity.....	454,500
Total Equity+Liabilities...	479,490

<u>2023 Budget</u>	
Projected Expenses.....	840,000
Projected Income.....	998,000

Invest in the Residents We Serve

Please consider *investing in the good people we serve* in affordable housing through one of our top programs:

1. **Community-Building:** Our core program, Neighbor Up, facilitates neighbors coming together to address their common challenges and opportunities. As residents “network” with each other, they become stewards of their community and build civic pride. We use activities and events to reinforce neighborly goodwill, developing social and community bonds. Active neighbors create stable, safer, more livable communities, and they develop the tools to improve other facets of their lives as well.

- The cost of one (two-month) community building program would be **\$5,000**. Your investment buys the time of expert trainers and activity costs.

2. **Youth Development:** We are seeking sponsors to create more programming opportunities for the youth we serve. You can cover the costs of our youth development partners:

- 1 week of out of school time (OST) program or summer camp is an average of **\$370/child**.
- Children and youth affected by the explosion and fire at Friendly Garden Apartments in Silver Spring benefit from the additional funds we are raising to provide programs and ongoing **family support and healing from the trauma** suffered in the fire of March 3, 2022.
- We estimate a cost of at least **\$10,000 per month** for new youth programs.
- Many of our families are headed by single parents who would appreciate any program extended to their children.

3. **Community Connections:** Internet access is a lifeline to residents who cannot afford access to the Internet, an electronic device, or the training to master those connections.

- Email and Web access have proven to overcome social isolation, particularly for older adults.
- **Prince George's County's Local Development Council has awarded us a \$10,000 grant. We are seeking to raise an additional \$25,000 to complete a WiFi network at Fort Washington Manor, a senior living community.**
- **Capital One has provided us with a total two-year investment of \$148,600 for a comprehensive program** at one of our new communities, Silver Creek Senior Living in Kensington, Maryland.
- To make **WiFi available and free** to all residents of a typical small multi-story apartment we would need at least **\$35,000** for the initial installation.
- We estimate that providing our other residents with **Chromebook "loaners"** would entail an investment of approximately **\$10,000**. We successfully tested this concept.
- Providing **training and a staff resource** on the Internet, email, the Web, and devices can cost a minimum of **\$10,000** per year per community.

4. **Health and Wellness:** Your donations can help our neighbors care for themselves through a variety of programs and services, several of which we illustrate below:

- **\$240 = one yoga class** for one community (and one week).
- **\$150 = two gym instruction classes** at one community (in one month).
- **\$300 = one healthy cooking class** for 30 participants.

5. **Entrepreneurship Program:** Building on the success of our pilot "Mercaditos" project in 2022, we hope to scale up our provision of robust programs in entrepreneurship and small business management across our family communities. These programs provide a direct path to wealth creation for residents.

Visit our secure donation site to make your personal donation: <https://commtogether.org/donate/>

Write to admin@CommTogether.org to inquire about your firm's donation or grant.



Family Communities (14)

Auburn Manor – Prince George’s County, MD
Langley Gardens – Prince George’s County
Penn Mar – Prince George’s County
Quebec Arms – Prince George’s County
Queens Manor – Prince George’s County
University Manor – Prince George’s County

Friendly Garden – Montgomery County, MD

3 Tree Flats – District of Columbia
Metro Village – DC – our 2nd sponsored
development in 2022!
Mills Place – DC
Royal Courts – DC
Savannah Heights – DC

Mosby Heights – Harrisonburg, Virginia

Ashburn Chase – Ashburn, VA -- new clients in
2022 (see above)!

Senior Communities (7)

Clinton Manor – Prince George’s County,
Maryland
Laurel Lakes – Prince George’s County
Ft. Washington Manor – Prince George’s
County

Silver Creek Senior Living – Montgomery
County, MD – new in 2022 & our 1st sponsored
development!

Madison House – Leesburg, Virginia

Mill Park Terrace – Fredericksburg, VA

Potomac Woods I and II – Woodbridge, VA

Communities Together Inc is a 501c(3) charitable non-profit organization governed by an independently elected board of seven experts in complementary and related fields with staggered terms. Donations to Communities Together are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Board of Directors

*Don Tucker (Founder & President), Anthony Waddell (VP), Michael Seltz (Treasurer),
Donna Thurmond (Secretary), E. Scott Willis, and Tony Ross (with one vacancy)*

Advisory Council

Rosemary Pezzuto, Shavon Bartley, Bruce Levin, and Dr. Karon Phillips

To volunteer or partner with us,
please visit us at www.CommTogether.org
or write to admin@CommTogether.org

To make a secure donation, visit us at
[Support Communities Together \(https://CommTogether.org/donate\)](https://CommTogether.org/donate)