

# COMMUNITIES TOGETHER INC



At Bernard E. Mason, a senior and adult community in Baltimore, we did exactly what this month calls for: **we gave women their flowers.**

*Literally.*

**Thanks to a generous donation from Unich Flowers of Rockville, we honored three of our most beloved residents: Ms. Evelyn, 92, Ms. Mama Gene, 86, and Ms. Nora, 81, with a bouquet each.**

These three women are lively, engaged, and present at every event we host. **They bring energy to every room they walk into.** And on an ordinary Monday during Women's History Month, we wanted them to know that their presence matters. That they matter and are worthy of celebration.

Ms. Evelyn, Ms. Mama Gene, and Ms. Nora aren't just the eldest senior residents at Bernard E. Mason—they are the heartbeat of the community. **Their wisdom, joy, and consistent participation are a gift to everyone.**

**This Women's History Month, we celebrate them and all the women who lead, show up, and bring our communities to life.**

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## Program Highlight: Neighbor Up



**Neighbor Up is Communities Together's best vehicle for building the kind of social and civic connections that turn a building into a community.** At The Gale Eckington, a 60% affordable housing development with 603 apartments in Washington D.C.'s Ward 5, launching Neighbor Up meant navigating something that gets in the way of community building everywhere: *conflict.*

Our Community & Resident Engagement Coordinator David Scrivener and his partners recognized this challenge and made a pivotal decision: rather than pushing past the tension, he took it on, as our curriculum advises. David worked patiently to build relationships with residents and management. He adapted the Neighbor Up model to meet the community where they were. And he helped everyone see that, in order for the community to thrive, underlying concerns must first be heard. **David facilitated honest conversations where residents voiced what was really on their minds, with structure, respect, and confidentiality guidelines that made it safe to speak up.**



Today, our partners in property management and ownership sit alongside residents in Neighbor Up sessions, building trust one session at a time. Residents and the on-site property management team are working on building a relationship of trust and respect in which residents feel genuinely “heard” in the place they call home.

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## By the Numbers: Women-led Households



We estimate that 60 percent of the households we support are led by women.

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## Partnership Spotlight: UDC's Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health

**What does it mean to truly nourish a community?** For Communities Together, it’s ensuring residents have access to food as well as the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make healthy choices that sustain their lives and budgets.

That's exactly what our partnership with the University of the District of Columbia's Center for Nutrition, Diet, and Health (CNDH) makes possible. **CNDH brings research-based nutrition education directly into communities**—teaching residents how to prepare healthy meals, understand nutrition, and find affordable, nutritious food right in their neighborhoods. Their

educators, including registered and licensed dietitians, tailor every session to the needs of the people in the room.

This hands-on experience builds real skills and confidence and connects directly to one of our core beliefs: **when residents are equipped with the right tools and knowledge, they lead healthier, stronger lives.**

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## Get Involved: Volunteer with Communities Together

**Behind every program, every event, and every bouquet of flowers are dedicated volunteers who keep our work moving.** Whether you have a few hours on a weekday or want to support us from your home, *there's a place for you!*


**Here's how you can plug in:**

- **In Communities:** assist with resident events and programs, bringing energy and support directly to residents. Help with food distribution, ensuring residents have access to nutritious meals.
- **Behind the Scenes:** Help with research, partnerships, and volunteer recruitment to shape how we grow and improve our programs.

*No matter your schedule or skill set, your time makes a real difference.*

**Ready to join us? Reach out to Preet Bhogal, our Program Manager, directly:**

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 703-843-1641

*In honor of women everywhere,*

**The Communities Together Team**

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