

THE ATHENS LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER



AUTUMN 2010 ♦ VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION PASSES!

Did you know that community land trusts across the country boast a foreclosure rate of less than 1% and Athens Land Trust has never had a foreclosure? This stability is important to our community.

Did you know that children of homeowners are 25% more likely to graduate from high school and 116% more likely to graduate from college than children of renters?

Did you know that ALT uses no local property taxes to fund new projects, yet each dollar spent on housing construction generates approximately \$1.70 in the local economy, and ultimately creates \$2.50 in tax revenues, according to the Federal Home Loan Bank? Applying these multipliers to the \$526,320 spent by Athens Land Trust on construction and rehabilitation in 2010 predicts that \$894,743 will be added to Athens' economy, and over \$1.3 million in taxes will be paid to local and state governments.

ALT homeowners care for our seniors, drive our children to school, create nutritious meals for our toddlers, clean our hospitals, hotels and offices, and perform many other jobs that make our community better. Many work two jobs or more, many are putting their children through college, and all need a stable place they can call home.

THANK YOU ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY VOTERS, for seeing the importance of this stability, for recognizing that the value to our community outweighs the small reduction in taxes, and for voting to give these hardworking homeowners a homestead exemption of their own!

COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK FUNDED

ALT has received a three-year, \$287,690 grant from the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture to establish a network of community gardens in Athens. The goal of the initiative is to provide healthy, nutritious food for low-income families (including children, seniors, and minority populations) by providing opportunities to grow their own food.

A kick-off celebration takes place on Wednesday, December 1 at 4:30 p.m. at the Athens Community Council on Aging,

the site of the future inter-generational community garden. See **COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK NEWS** on page 5.

MORE GRANTS

Athens Land Trust was recently awarded several grants to help us build organizational capacity, conduct a neighborhood planning charrette for Springfield Village, and help fund our affordable housing program. ALT received a \$15,000

BUILDING COMMUNITY

SERVICES THAT GROW LOCAL ECONOMIES grant, administered by ACTION, Inc.; Community Connection of Northeast Georgia; and the Institute for Nonprofit Organizations in the School of Social Work at UGA, for training, technical assistance, and financial assistance. Thank you, ACTION, Community Connection, and UGA!

ALT also received one of four Open Doors Homeownership Grants from the **COMMUNITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING EQUITY CORPORATION (CAHEC)** in Raleigh, NC. The **WACHOVIA WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION** provided funding to ALT as well. See page 4 for more information.



New homeowners Jeff and Tina Franklin at their closing, with Jeff Bishop of Athens First Bank & Trust and Mike Morris of Blasingame, Burch, Garrard, and Ashley.

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CONTACT INFO

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MONTHLY BOARD MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held on the third Monday of the month at 6:30 pm in our office and are open to the public.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK

at <http://www.facebook.com/athenslandtrust>

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Athens Land Trust is to promote quality of life through integration of community and the natural environment by preserving land, creating energy-efficient and affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods.

OFFICE NEWS

ALT is delighted to welcome three new staff members!

DANIELLA ADAMS graduated from UGA with a horticulture degree in 2008, and has worked in organic agriculture and greenhouse propagation. She is serving as part-time Plant Specialist to the Athens Community Garden Network.

KATE AUSTIN joins ALT as the Community Garden Coordinator. A recent graduate of UGA's College of Environment and Design, Kate brings five years of community organizing and nonprofit experience.

NATHAN SHANNON started as an intern and is now our Office/Asset Manager, keeping track of properties, accounting duties, and keeping the office running. Nathan has a degree from UGA in Housing and Consumer Economics.

LYNDA STIPE is another former intern who is working with ALT as our Design Consultant. Lynda completed her degree in Interior Design at Athens Technical College and she assists with all the details it takes to get our beautiful homes built.

Besides Nathan and Lynda, our interns during the summer and fall were graduate student **JOANNA SCHWEVENS**, UGA College of Environment and Design; and UGA undergraduates **BREANNE DAVIS**, **ANNIE GOLDBAUGH**, **AVONA NASARIO**, and **SHAYNA POLLOCK**; **LISI NAYLOR**, Athens Technical College Interior Design; and **AUDREY HORNE**, Clarke Central High School. UGA Conservation Ecology graduate student **SUSAN GRINE HARPER** has been working with the Community Garden Network initiative. Thank you, interns, for all your hard work!



New staff members Dani, Kate, and Nathan.

ALT could not function without our dedicated volunteers!

DYAN HOLT offers hours of expertise for the conservation program.

KEVIN THOMAS, Associate at Sutherland Asbill and Brennan, has done extensive legal work for the conservation program.

MIKE MCLEARY of Fortson, Bentley, and Griffin meets with potential ALT homebuyers to ensure that they understand the ground lease.

JOHNATHAN MCGINTY assists with events and publicity.

BETH GAVRILLES assists with web site updates and newsletter production.

KATE BLANE and **DAN EVERETT** offer advice and help with all our computer needs.

QUICK FACTS: ALT PROGRAMS

LAND CONSERVATION

- 1,024 acres permanently protected by ALT conservation easements
 - 767 acres of working family farmland
 - 257 acres of forest, wetlands, and neighborhood open space

HOUSING

- 265 individuals currently in affordable ALT housing
- 144 permanently-affordable housing units owned or developed by ALT

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

- 48 single-family properties (homes and lots)
- 43 residents currently ALT homeowners
- 9 residents lease-purchasing

FOURTH STREET VILLAGE

APARTMENTS

- 209 residents
- 96 affordable units
- 24 market-rate units

HOUSING COUNSELING

- 71 individual participants in 2010

CONSERVATION NEWS

HOUSE FAMILY FARM EASEMENT

In August 2010, ALT finalized an agricultural conservation easement on 42 acres of the House family farm in Oconee County. Rickey House's family began farming there in the early 1900s, growing cotton and then moving into cattle production in the 1950s. To ensure that their family land remains a working farm forever, Rickey and his wife Kay turned to ALT.

Working with the Oconee Partnership for Farmland Protection, ALT has now helped the family to secure funding for two conservation easements from the USDA Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program (FRPP) and Oconee County - one of the few local governments in Georgia to dedicate funding to farmland protection.

The FRPP was created to help stem the loss of active prime farmland in areas, like Oconee County, that are facing stiff development pressure. According to the 2007 Natural Resource Conservation Service Inventory, over 23 million acres of active agricultural land were converted to development between 1982 and 2007. Of that, almost two thirds (13.77 million acres) was prime farmland, with soils best suited for growing crops with the fewest inputs and the least amount of erosion. Georgia lost 566,000 acres of prime farmland - more than all but four other states.

According to José Pagán, District Conservationist with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oconee County has some of the highest quality farmland in Georgia, making ALT's efforts there - and the stewardship ethic of farmers like Kay and Rickey House - even more critical.

2010 GA SWCS MERIT AWARD

In June, ALT received the annual Merit Award from the Georgia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The award honors an outstanding effort that promotes wise land use or conservation and has clearly contributed to bringing about better land use and understanding of natural resource conservation. This year's award recognized ALT's Conservation Program, which currently protects 1,024 acres in the greater Athens area through permanent conservation easements.

LAND TRUST ASSEMBLY

Conservation Director Laura Hall attended the Amicalola Falls Land Trust Assembly in north Georgia in October. The conference included sessions on building strong and responsible boards, conservation ease-

ment defense and management, developing successful fundraising strategies, and discussions of the future of land conservation in Georgia.

GREENFEST 2010

As part of GreenFest, ALT sponsored an easement walk featuring several protected properties. Participants visited the Sheth conservation easement in Barrow County and experienced an intact wetland habitat. The group continued to Sam Mitchell's property in Oconee County where attendees toured the farm. Other protected farms nearby were also shown.

ALT presented the following awards at the GreenFest Awards Ceremony:

ALT DONORS OF THE YEAR: ROB AND CAROL WINTHROP



Rob and Carol Winthrop gave a generous donation from their family foundation to help ALT rehabilitate our new office home. Their donation was a boost to our sustainability efforts: our new home is preserving an important historic structure, is a certified Earth-Craft Renovation, and gives us

economic stability that will enable us to provide more resources to our programs.

ALT VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR: KATE BLANE AND DYAN HOLT

Kate Blane has been a member of Athens Land Trust since its beginning. For the past seven years, Kate has provided information technology assistance to ALT. Kate has also used her creativity to organize four fundraising events for ALT, including Renaissance Holiday Dinners, the first of which raised over \$1,000 for ALT's capital campaign.



Dyan Holt is a former staff member who has continued to volunteer even after budget constraints cut her salary. A native of Singapore, where she worked as an attorney in a variety of public service positions, Dyan has provided her expertise to our Conservation Program. As a volunteer, Dyan has

helped with everything around the office, from answering the phone, to helping with events, to working on conservation easement documents.

HOUSING NEWS

NEW HOMEOWNERS

Jeff and Tina Franklin closed on their home at 196 Cabin Lane Extension in July. Tina grew up in East Athens and has worked for McLane for over 15 years. Jeff and Tina previously lived in the Garden Springs Community and helped establish People of Hope.



New homeowners Trey and Elizabeth with Jeff Bishop of Athens First Bank & Trust at their closing.

Trey and Elizabeth Jones McManus are the new homeowners of 213 Tara Way. The home is a new EarthCraft-certified infill designed by Lori Bork and built by Levin MacDougald. Trey and Elizabeth love the design, particularly the amount of natural light provided by the clerestory windows. Elizabeth works at Jackson Spalding and Trey is self-employed.

Both families were able to obtain 30-year fixed rate mortgages from Athens First Bank and Trust and to take advantage of the first-time homebuyer tax credit!

MORE HOMES UNDERWAY!

The rehabilitation of the home at 474 Nellie B Avenue is almost complete as of November, and the new home at 289 Evans Street is well underway. We have acquired a foreclosed home at 635 Fourth Street that requires only minimal renovation.

Construction of the utilities and road at Springfield Village are also close to completion. The 15-lot subdivision is located in East Athens near Fourth Street Village.

FUNDING FOR HOUSING

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT allocated \$157,360 to ALT for fiscal year 2011. This funding is being used to increase homeownership opportunities and support the projects mentioned above.

In addition, the **COMMUNITY AFFORDABLE HOUSING EQUITY CORPORATION (CAHEC)** in Raleigh, NC,

awarded ALT a \$7,500 Open Doors Homeownership Grant to conduct a design charrette and enhance the green-building features of Springfield Village. The charrette, scheduled for December 11, 2010, will bring together neighbors, current ALT homeowners, and architectural designers to begin the planning process. ALT's grant was one of just four given annually to nonprofit organizations in the Southeast to supplement the costs associated with developing housing for sale to low-income households. ALT received a previous Open Doors Homeownership Grant in 2007. Thank you, CAHEC!

ALT received \$2,500 from **THE WACHOVIA WELLS FARGO FOUNDATION** for homebuyer education and affordable housing development. Thank you, Jim Jones, Ben Cucuzza, and Connie Bryant!

TRAINING THE TRAINERS

In September, ALT was the host for a Department of Community Affairs Training that was attended by the homebuyer educators of our community. Educators from ALT and ACTION, Inc.; Athens Housing Authority; East Athens Development Corporation; Hancock Community Development Corporation; and ACC Human and Economic Development attended the two-day training. After passing the difficult exam, ALT housing staff are all Certified Homebuyer Educators.

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

Housing Counselor Mary O'Toole provided homebuyer education to more than 71 participants during 2010. The eight-hour workshops address the responsibilities and benefits of homeownership, credit scores, mortgage loans, the closing process, and more. Jackie Dallas of the Cooperative Extension Service taught participants about energy conservation, and several local bankers, realtors, and attorneys volunteered their time to provide information.

HEATHER BENHAM FEATURED IN GEORGIA MAGAZINE

ALT Housing Director Heather Benham was featured in the September 2010 issue of the University of Georgia's alumni publication, *Georgia Magazine*. Heather, who received her JD and MHP degrees from UGA in 2003, was the subject of an alumni profile by Allison Mann.

Funding made available for these affordable housing projects by Athens-Clarke County Department of Human & Economic Development (HED) HOME and CDBG Programs of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, an Equal Opportunity Employer.



COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK NEWS

ALT RECEIVES 3-YEAR GRANT

ALT was one of just twenty-seven organizations throughout the country selected to receive a grant as part of the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture's Community Food Projects program, which funds projects that build community food systems and fight hunger and food insecurity.

The Community Garden Network is a collaboration of many community partners, including the University of Georgia Horticulture Department; Athens-Clarke County Extension Office; Athens Community Council on Aging; Casa de Amistad; Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful; People of Hope Cooperative, Inc.; and PLACE (Promoting Local Agriculture and Cultural Experiences). With additional support from the Athens Area Community Foundation and ACTION, Inc., ALT will work with our partners to create two major "hub" gardens, which will serve as demonstration and teaching sites, and will help interested community groups to establish multiple satellite gardens throughout the community.

Are you interested in getting involved with a community garden in your neighborhood or starting a new community garden? Contact Kate Austin at kate@athenslandtrust.org or (706) 613-0122.

GARDEN UPDATES

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY GARDEN expanded this summer to include a lot across the street, making room for more residents to participate in the gardening effort. Volunteers worked with residents to till the soil and prepare new plots in the expanded area of the garden.

The **PINEWOODS ESTATES NORTH COMMUNITY GARDEN** opened this summer with help from residents, volunteers, and UGA Professor David Berle's horticulture students. The 60' x 60' garden is located directly across from the community's Athens Regional Library branch, which has its own edible garden. Children who participate in the afterschool program at the library have been especially active in the new garden. UGA students Agustina Hein, Lian Zen Li, Katie Medina, and Katie Twomey have been volunteering throughout the week, working with children in the Library's afterschool program to help maintain the garden.

Pinewoods residents organized Latino Fest in October, a celebration of Latino contributions to music, performance, and culinary arts in Athens.



UGA Service Ambassadors group in action during their October SERV(ED) project at the Pinewoods Estates North Community Garden.

Latino Fest featured music and dance performances by Pinewoods residents, as well as delicious foods made with ingredients harvested from the community garden. Proceeds from the event will support the community garden.

SPLOST 2011

Athens-Clarke County voters approved SPLOST 2011, which included a continuation of funding for the Athens-Clarke County Greenspace Acquisition Program and new funding for infrastructure for HOME-funded affordable housing projects. ALT was a sponsoring organization for both of these projects, which will be administered by Athens-Clarke County.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY LAND TRUST NETWORK CONFERENCE

Heather Benham, Nathan Shannon, and Nancy Stangle were among the 250 attendees at the National CLT Network Conference in Albuquerque, NM, in November. The conference was hosted by the Sawmill Community Land Trust, which has 93 single-family homes, 60 lofts, 46 senior apartments, community garden, plaza, playground, and commercial development on a 27-acre tract donated by the city.

HOTEL INDIGO GO GREEN MUSIC SERIES

The Rialto Room at the Hotel Indigo is presenting the "Go Green" Music Series to benefit ALT and Oconee River Land Trust. This series of fourteen concerts started in June 2010 and will continue through June 2011. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to both organizations. Check our web site for upcoming concert dates.

SPIRIT OF THE LAND 2010

Spirit of the Land, a joint benefit for ALT and the Oconee River Land Trust, took place in June at the Botanical Garden. Featuring an exhibition and sale of artworks relating to the natural landscape curated by Chris Wyrick of Mercury Art Works; a gallery talk by Georgia Museum of Art curator Paul Manoguerra; and a gala evening with a wine-tasting by Gosford Wine, hors d'oeuvres by Farm 255, performances by Tin Cup Prophette and Canopy Studio, and a silent auction, the event raised awareness and funds for the conservation work of both local land trusts. Thank you to the artists, auction item donors, and our generous sponsors: **Madeline & Phil VanDyck; the State Botanical Garden of Georgia; Carson Advisory/Raymond James Financial Services; R.E.M.; Canopy Studio; Dennis Creech & Callie Pendergrast; Patricia Cooper; Larry B. Dendy; Flagpole Magazine; Jack & Sarah Frierson; Charles H. Hawkins; Clint & Mary Moore; and Richard Rusk.**

Special thanks to Elisa Vick for providing delicious desserts for the gala, to Cecilia Villeveces Cakes for donating a cake for the opening reception, and to Mrs. James Hall for providing flowers for all the events.

Local artists who participated in Spirit of the Land were Rinne Allen, Matt Alston, June Ball, Toni Carlucci, Nancy Carter, John Cleaveland, Sally Wyche Coenen, Glenn Galau, Wayne Hughes, Stephen Humphreys, Philip Juras, David Lindsay, Ken McLeskey, Lara Oshon, Dianne Penney, Charley Seagraves, René Shoemaker, Margie Spalding, Jim StipeMaas, Jimmy Straehla, and Chris Wyrick.

Silent Auction donors included Donna Andrews, Ann Peden Jewelry, Ashford Manor, Billie Baker, Martha Barton and Wally Emerson, Big City Bread Cafe, Borders Books, Broad River Outfitters, Meghan Burke, Chops and Hops, Ciné, The Classic Center, Walt Cook, Luci Elsey, Five & Ten, Glenn Galau, the Georgia Club, Juana Gnecco, Halfmoon Outfitters, Dr. and Mrs. James Hall, Dan Hope, Jack Hudson, Last Resort Grill, Mirko Pasta, Jim Norton, Walter O'Niell, Rage Hair Studio, Walter Reeves, R.E.M., Rose of Athens Theatre, Sangha Yoga Studio, Carrie Sealey-Morris, the Shannon Family, Amy Steele, Mike and Christy Todd, Smith Wilson, and Richard and Paula Zimdars. Thank you for making our Silent Auction a success!

ALT OFFICE RECEIVES ACHF AWARD

ALT received an "Outstanding Rehabilitation" Award from the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation for the rehabilitation of 685 N. Pope Street. The award was given at the annual meeting at the historic Morton Theater in June. Contractor Mike Todd and Project Manager Heather Benham accepted the award.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Harvest Moon and Holiday Renaissance Dinner are two events that support ALT's Capital Campaign. During the past seven months, ALT has raised \$12,000 toward our construction loan. We still need to raise \$160,983, so please consider a donation for "A Home of Our Own."



Winter Stubble on Hale's Field by John Cleaveland, this year's signature artwork.

2ND ANNUAL HOLIDAY RENAISSANCE DINNER

You don't want to miss this delightful evening of music, food, and entertainment with a Renaissance holiday theme! The dinner will be held on **DECEMBER 12** at the Taylor-Grady House and features a choice of venison roast or a vegetarian entree. The tickets are \$65, and the proceeds benefit ALT, Nuci's Space and Rose of Athens Theatre. For more information, contact Kate Blane at 706-248-8057 or at raya_mead@yahoo.com.

GEORGIA SHARES

Thank you to all UGA and other state agency personnel who contribute to ALT through payroll deduction as part of the Georgia Shares Campaign. We deeply regret that we have not been able to thank you personally, but individual contributor names are not provided to us. If you would like to donate through Georgia Shares, our pledge number is **194072**.

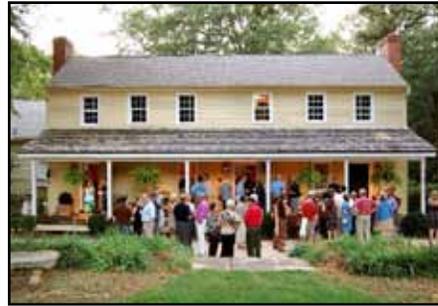
ALT is now officially part of the Combined Federal Campaign! Our pledge number is **60107**.

Thanks for your support!

HARVEST MOON 2010

The third annual Harvest Moon Dinner to benefit Athens Land Trust was a magical evening in a beautiful setting. Thank you to Lee, Daniel, and Ashley Epting for hosting the event and to all the generous sponsors who helped to make Harvest Moon 2010 a success:

Epting Events	Great Fish Company
Athens First Bank & Trust	R.E.M.
Aurum Studios	Northeast Sales &
Barron's Rental Center	Distributing, Inc.
Carson Advisory/ Raymond James Financial Services	WUGA



Thanks to Always, Always Flowers, Native Son Farm, and Terrapin Brewery for their support. And a special thanks to event organizers Tony Eubanks and Lara Mathes and all the amazing volunteers!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONORS & HARVEST MOON SUPPORTERS

Lisa & Terry Allen	Patricia I. Cooper	Mary Lopez & Chris Aubry	Peter Smith
Charles Apostolik	Elizabeth & Tony DeMarco	John Lyndon	Margie Spalding
Terrell Austin & Scott Jones	Marie & Daniel DerVertanian	Joe O'Brien	Susan Tate
Jared Bailey	Elizabeth Dorminey	Eric & Jessica Orbock	Dev & Gene Weeks
Tobie Bass & Paul Trudeau	Carolyn & David Hally	Alex & Janet Patterson	Deborah Weiler
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Elena Brown & Jared Harper	Paul Irvine	Pam Perlick	Rob & Carol Winthrop
Charles Burch	Michael Klank	Karen & Jim Porter	Winthrop Foundation
Paul Cassilly	Josh Koons	Tom & Lori Scott	

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & RENEWING MEMBERS & DONORS MARCH 31 THROUGH NOVEMBER 19, 2010

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**ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY DEC. 5, 3-5 PM**

Join us for our annual meeting at our office at 685 North Pope St. We'll provide an overview of our accomplishments for 2010, elect Board members, and enjoy refreshments. And as always, we'll have door prizes!



**PLEASE JOIN THE
ATHENS LAND TRUST**

We welcome new members and thank all the individuals and organizations who have supported our work over the years. Your support is critical to our work! We greatly appreciate all donations of time and money.

If you would like to renew your membership or join us for the first time, please complete the following:

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING LEVELS:

Forest \$1,000+ _____ **Grove \$500+** _____ **Oak \$250+** _____ **Seedling \$100+** _____

Acorn \$75+ _____ **Family \$50+** _____ **Individual \$10+** _____

Name _____ **New** **Renewal**

Address _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Would you like to join our listserv? **Yes** **No**

Would you like to volunteer? **Skills or interests** _____

Please make checks payable to **Athens Land Trust, Inc.**

ALT is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation. All donations are tax-deductible as provided by law.

YOU CAN JOIN OR DONATE ONLINE USING PAYPAL:

Go to www.athenslandtrust.org and click on the **Join Us** or **Donate** link.