



SPRING 2010 ♦ VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

NEW INITIATIVES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

VALLEYBROOK HOUSE

A green ribbon cutting will be held on April 16 for Jackie Roberts and her family who are the new homeowners of 155 Valleybrook Drive. The home is a perfect example of partnership in the community. Mr. Upshaw Bentley and Mrs. Gwen Griffin donated the lot to ALT after Mr. Bentley worked with many of our homeowners as they went through the process of buying their own homes. Designer Lori Bork generously donated her time, coming up with an environmentally friendly vision for the home that suited the lot. From there we have worked closely with the contractor and dozens of volunteers to create a wonderful home for the Roberts family.

SOWING SEEDS: COMMUNITY GARDENS

With springtime finally here, gardeners all over Athens are busy, and ALT is helping residents start community gardens in several low-income neighborhoods. Families are excited about growing their own food and creating park-like spaces within their communities.

Working with local farmers and gardeners, P.L.A.C.E., UGA Cooperative Extension, A.C.T.I.O.N., and the UGA Horticulture Department and College of Environment & Design (CED), we are applying for grants and accepting donations of funds and materials to help neighborhoods build their gardens.

With food costs high and many families struggling financially, we believe it is important to help provide

spaces within communities for people to grow food – but community gardens can do more than that. Residents of the Brooklyn neighborhood, with help from ALT and other groups, built a community garden in 2003. They turned an area that had been a haven for drug activity into a thriving neighborhood amenity, with raised vegetable beds for 10-12 families, plum trees, and flower beds.



Jackie Roberts and her daughter install a rain barrel at Jackie's new home during a volunteer work day.

If you would like to help, please contact Conservation Director Laura Hall.

GREEN BUILDING RECOGNITION

In January, ALT was a runner-up for two awards from EarthCraft House, a regional certification program of the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association and the Southface Energy Institute. The Pope Street Cottage was nominated for the Renovation of the Year award and ALT was nominated for Renovator of the Year. EarthCraft House is a green building program that

promotes energy efficiency, indoor air quality, durability, water conservation, and waste reduction. Mike Todd of Bar None Construction was the contractor for the rehabilitation of our new office on Pope Street.

“For our affordable housing program, we build or renovate to EarthCraft standards, and the benefits to the inhabitants are immediately noticeable,” explains Housing Director Heather Benham. These benefits include lower utility bills and a healthier indoor environment. “It is important to us to be good environmental and fiscal stewards, and EarthCraft certification helps us achieve that goal.”

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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 7 pm in our offices and are open to the public.

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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.

BOARD & STAFF NEWS

ALT is delighted to welcome two of our newest homeowners to the Board!

ROB ROBINSON, the owner of ProMobile Auto Salon, was elected to the ALT Board in December.

CHERENE WILLIAMS joined the Board in March. Cherene is the Director of the Jack R. Wells Boys and Girls Club in the Pauldoe neighborhood.

ALT is grateful to our departing Board members **SHIRLEY SMITH**, who continues to be one of our most enthusiastic ambassadors, and **STEPHEN CRAMER**, who faithfully served on the Board for more than three years. Thank you, Shirley and Stephen, for your commitment and support!

New staff member **BETH GAVRILLES** is our part-time Outreach Coordinator. Beth will be updating our web site, editing newsletters such as this one, and assisting with events.

Homeownership Coordinator **MARY O'TOOLE** has four years of housing counseling experience both locally and nationally and brings her many skills to our housing counseling program.

AND THANK YOU TO...

Volunteer **DYAN HOLT** for her expert help and countless hours on our conservation projects.

Intern **NATHAN SHANNON**, a UGA Senior majoring in Housing and Consumer Economics, for his help with ALT's Homebuyer Education and Housing Counseling program.

Intern **LYNDA STIPE**, an Interior Design major at Athens Technical College, for her design work on our affordable houses. Lynda is the owner of Peregrine Tile and she restored the historic tilework in the Pope Street Cottage.

Volunteer **JOE O'BRIEN** of the U.S. Forest Service for his professional expertise.

Volunteers **KATE BLANE**, **DAN EVERETT**, and **PHILIP JURAS** for help with our computer needs.



New Board member Cherene Williams (center) holds the key to her new home, as Jeff Bishop of Athens First Bank & Trust and ALT Housing Director Heather Benham give their congratulations.

QUICK FACTS: ALT PROGRAMS

LAND CONSERVATION

- 981 acres permanently protected by 21 ALT conservation easements
 - 724 acres of working family farmland
 - 257 acres of forest, wetlands, neighborhood open space, and scenic vistas

HOUSING

- 332 individuals currently in affordable ALT housing
- 128 permanently-affordable housing units owned or developed by ALT

HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM

- 47 single-family properties (homes and lots)
- 39 residents currently ALT homeowners
- 14 residents lease-purchasing homes

FOURTH STREET VILLAGE

APARTMENTS

- 279 low-income residents
- 96 affordable units
- 24 market-rate units

HOUSING COUNSELING

- 124 individual participants in 2009
- 37 individual participants in 2010

CONSERVATION NEWS

BURDETT EASEMENT

In December 2009, the Burdett family placed a permanent conservation easement on 167 acres just east of historic Washington in Wilkes County. The land sits along Upton Creek, a major tributary to the Savannah River, and has been in the Burdett family since the early 1800s. In addition to a working forest, the farm contains the grave site of Revolutionary War veteran Abram Simon. The Burdett family's goal is to use ecological forestry management principles on the property, which has previously been managed for loblolly pine in a more conventional manner. The Burdett easement is ALT's first in Wilkes County and brings the total number of acres protected by ALT to 981. (Please see **AN EASEMENT DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE** on page 7.)

FIVE ACRE WOODS REHABILITATION

Thanks to Melissa Caspary of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia, students from the College of Environment and Design, and neighborhood volunteers, work on clearing invasives and re-establishing trails at Five Acre Woods was undertaken in 2009. The students presented master plan designs for this intown natural area, and Melissa submitted a SPLOST proposal for funding to establish a partnership between the Botanical Garden, Athens-Clarke County, UGA, the neighborhood association, and ALT to manage the property in the future.

LAND TRUST ALLIANCE HIGHLIGHTS ALT

ALT was featured in the Winter 2010 issue of the Land Trust Alliance's quarterly magazine *Saving Land*. The article, "Community Ties: Athens Land Trust's Dual Mission," does a great job of explaining ALT's land stewardship ethic, where land is valued as a community resource rather than a commodity, and is used to create a healthy community for all citizens, regardless of income, ethnicity or background.

GREENSPACE USER GROUP

As a member of the Athens-Clarke County Greenspace User Group, ALT helps make recommendations to the county about greenspace acquisition using SPLOST 2005 and other funds. To date, nine parcels protecting farmland and river frontage have been acquired. Because ALT submitted the original SPLOST 2005 greenspace acquisition funding proposal, the user group asked ALT to sponsor a SPLOST 2011 proposal for continuation of



The Burdett property in Wilkes County.

the program. The Committee will make their recommendations to the Mayor and Commission in April, and they will select the final list of SPLOST 2011 projects to be on the ballot in November.

SPIRIT OF THE LAND IS BACK!

Spirit of the Land, an art exhibition and sale of local artwork culminating in a gala event with a wine tasting, hors d'oeuvres, music, and silent auction, will be held again this year. The Opening Reception for the art sale and exhibit will be held on Sunday, June 6, from 2-4 p.m. and will feature the work of local artists celebrating the beauty of the land. Chris Wyrick of Mercury Art Works is our guest curator this year. A talk by Dr. Paul Manoguerra, Curator of American Art at the Georgia Museum of Art, will be held on June 17 at 5:30 p.m. The gala event will be June 26 from 7-10 p.m. and will feature wine from Gosford Wine, food from Farm 255, music, and items from local businesses. All events will be held at the Visitor's Center at the State Botanical Garden. Spirit of the Land benefits the conservation programs of the Oconee River Land Trust and ALT. For more information, go to www.athenslandtrust.org/spiritoftheland2010.htm.

HOUSING NEWS

NEW HOMEOWNERS

Sharhonda Johnson and Rob Robinson and their three daughters are the proud new homeowners of 853 Waddell Street. The house was built by the Athens Housing Authority and will remain permanently affordable through ALT. The family is enjoying their new yard, and Sharhonda is excited to be so close to her job at Kroger. See more about Rob on page 2.



Frank Hill of First American Bank speaks at a homebuyer education class taught by Mary O'Toole at ALT's office.

Reginald Willis closed on his home at 883 Waddell, built in collaboration with Athens Area Habitat for Humanity. Reggie has already become a great asset to the ALT Board.

Cherene Williams is the new homeowner of 239 Field Avenue. The previous owner had to move for his job and notified ALT that he would be selling the home. ALT purchased the house using the resale formula from the ground lease, made some upgrades to the home, and resold it to Cherene. It's great to see the CLT model at work, giving the first owner a fair return and passing the gift of affordable homeownership to the next buyer. (See more about Cherene on page 2.)

CDBG AND HOME FUNDS

At presstime, an EarthCraft house is underway at 213 Tara Way in the Forest Heights neighborhood, rehab work is beginning at 474 Nellie B Avenue, and work is about to begin on a new home at 289 Evans Street where ALT demolished a burned-out house.

Funding for these energy-efficient, affordable housing projects is provided through Athens-Clarke County Department of Human and Economic Development (HED). ALT was awarded an allocation of \$146,098 for project costs and \$48,699 for implementation.

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

ALT's Homebuyer Education Program, a certified HUD Approved Counseling Agency, is now an affiliate of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, a newly designated HUD Housing Counseling intermediary. The Homebuyer Education Program, led by certified housing counselor Cathianne Watkins, had 124 participants in 2009. Classes included homebuyer education topics and CreditSmart clinics. Many financial professionals volunteered their time to help make these classes a success.

ALT extends our thanks to Cathianne Watkins, who has donated many hours to firmly establish this important program at ALT. She also worked tirelessly to develop the Housing Counseling Implementation Strategy for OneAthens. Cathianne is moving away from Athens but we are very grateful for the legacy she is leaving behind.

OCONEE STATE BANK GRANT

In December, Oconee State Bank gave ALT a grant of \$5,000 to increase homeownership. The grant is the third grant of a three-year commitment of \$15,000 from Oconee State Bank to assist homebuyers in the process of securing financing for a home and to ensure that ALT's buyers are successful in homeownership. During the past year alone, six families closed on their mortgages and another six families began lease-purchasing their homes. During the past three years ALT has increased our properties for future homebuyers from 19 to 32, and was presented with the Magnolia Award for Homeownership by the Department of Community Affairs. ALT has used the funding to provide housing counseling services and homebuyer education to future homeowners.

ONEATHENS HOUSING TEAM

ALT submitted a proposal for SPLOST 2011 funding on behalf of the OneAthens Housing team. The proposal is for funds to cover the cost of county utility hookups for affordable infill housing built with HOME dollars. The expense of connecting to public utilities was identified by the Housing Team as one of the key barriers to expanding the stock of affordable housing.

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.



4TH STREET VILLAGE HEALTH SCREENING

Athens Regional Medical Center provided a free health screening at Fourth Street Village on January 23. Health professionals from ARMC checked blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar for residents. ARMC intern Beth Pembleton has continued to meet weekly with residents as a health coach. Thanks to Katie Calkin for organizing the screening and to Julie Buffalo, Sandy Broyles, Andrea Cardenas, Beth Pembleton, Taylor Schachinger, Diane Todd, Shelby Lacy, and Beth Prescott, for your time and expertise!

NEW PROJECT: SPRINGFIELD VILLAGE

ALT recently purchased a 2.68-acre tract in East Athens, which has been approved for 15 single-family lots. The property was foreclosed on after a developer installed a portion of the utilities and stormwater facilities. The subdivision, known as Springfield Village, is located on Bray Street, near Fourth Street Village apartments. ALT plans to build homes on the property that will be for sale to low-to-moderate income families. ALT received HOME funding from HED to purchase the tract.

NATIONAL CLT NETWORK CONFERENCE

Over 150 representatives of community land trusts from across the country converged on Athens for three days of classes, workshops, and tours as the National Community Land Trust Network held its annual conference at the Foundry Park Inn in October 2009, with ALT serving as the local host.



Heather Benham leads conference participants on a tour of Athens neighborhoods.

The theme of the conference was "Growing Sustainably: From the Roots Up," and speakers and panelists indeed brought a historical

and environmental perspective to the work of CLTs. A highlight was the keynote address by Shirley Sherrod, the new U.S. Department of Agriculture Director of Rural Development for Georgia. Shirley recounted her experiences helping to create the first community land trust in the U.S., located on 6,000 acres in Southwest Georgia, in the 1960s.



Keynote speaker Shirley Sherrod, center, with CLT Network Board members.

ALT Board and staff members served on panels and helped lead workshops on incorporating green building techniques into CLT projects; building successful partnerships between CLTs and local Habitat affiliates; land use; and conservation and CLTs. ALT also hosted a reception for conference goers at the Lyndon House Arts Center, featuring a wonderful Southern-style buffet by Epting Events, music by Kyle Dawkins, and an aerial dance performance by Melissa Roberts and Julie Phillips of Canopy Studios. Conference participants took advantage of every break to explore downtown Athens, enjoying many of our restaurants and music venues, and thoroughly enjoyed Athens' own brand of southern hospitality.

ANNUAL MEETING

ALT held our first annual meeting in our new office home on December 6, 2009. Board members were elected and ALT staff presented the accomplishments of the past year. Over 75 people attended the meeting, which was also a "Housewarming" for our new office. Special thanks to Elisa Vick for providing homemade cookies for the meeting!

Left to right, Board member Dev Weeks and his wife Gene with new Board member and homeowner Rob Robinson and Sharhonda Johnson at ALT's annual meeting.



A HOME OF OUR OWN: CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Since our last newsletter, ALT has received more than \$17,000 in donations toward our capital campaign! We have also received several special gifts. Mike Mills donated custom-made stained glass windows, and Jamie Calkin created two original watercolors of the completed cottage. Including the donation of the building, ALT has received \$282,017 in pledges and gifts, leaving us with \$172,983 to be raised.

FRANCES WOOD WILSON FOUNDATION

donated \$10,000 to "A Home of Our Own," the capital campaign for our permanent office. The Foundation was established in 1954 by Fred B. Wilson, an Atlanta businessman, and named for his wife. The Foundation supports charitable, religious, civic, and educational activities primarily in Georgia.

HOLIDAY DINNER

ALT supporters Kate Blane and Tina Tinsley organized a Renaissance Holiday Dinner and concert in December to benefit ALT and raised more than \$1,000 for ALT's capital campaign. The dinner featured hot wassail, delicious local fare, and a troupe of musicians dressed in early 16th century costumes designed and made by Jennie Alvernaz. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who donated their time to this delightful event.



Holiday Dinner volunteers included Dan Everett, Arwen Blane, Kate Blane, Bill Sheehan, Joe Willey, and Fiona Sheehan, in full Renaissance regalia.

BEN & JERRY'S FUNDRAISER

Ben & Jerry's Scoop Shop in downtown Athens donated 10% of their proceeds from sales for an evening in October. Thanks to UGA Masters of Historic Preservation student Melissa Gogo who organized the event!

ALT HOMEOWNER KICKS OFF UGA'S CAMPAIGN FOR CHARITIES

ALT is now a part of Georgia Shares, a workplace giving program that allows employees of participating agencies and businesses to donate a portion of their paycheck each month to one or more of the Georgia Shares member organizations. The University of Georgia's annual Campaign for Charities includes Georgia Shares agencies, and this year ALT was highlighted at the Campaign kickoff breakfast.



ALT homeowner Pat Smith speaks at the UGA Campaign for Charities breakfast.

At the breakfast, which was hosted by UGA President Michael Adams, UGA employee and new ALT homeowner Pat Smith spoke movingly about her experience buying a home with ALT. Pat, who works at UGA's McPhaul Center, described how she has participated in UGA's Campaign for Charities for many years, donating a portion of her paycheck each month to the Boys & Girls Club. Pat was also featured in an article in *Columns*, the UGA faculty and staff newspaper. As a result of Pat's story, ALT received a number of donations in her honor.

THANKS TO OUR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONORS, OCTOBER 2009 - MARCH 2010

Gary & Joan Bertsch	Eugenia Langdale
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GARDEN DONATIONS

Heidi Davison
Mark Freeman
Nancy Lindbloom

AN EASEMENT DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE

My husband's family has owned land in Wilkes County, Georgia since shortly after the Revolutionary War. The family lived on the land for many generations, raising cotton in the 1800s, dairy cows until the 1950s, and then beef cattle and timber. Each generation split the larger piece into smaller pieces so that the children could inherit the land. What started as thousands of acres ended up being 167 acres for our family of three brothers. If we followed the family tradition, it would be divided three ways and each heir would get 50 acres. You can see where that's all going. . .

Good southerners don't sell land; they inherit it and pass it on to their children. They timber forestland to send their children to college. In the Burdett family, the past three generations have not lived on the land, and the timbering has not exactly been done with tender loving care; but the children and grandchildren all went to college and the family still owns the land.

This generation wants to pay the land back for all that it has done for the family. We don't want to subdivide any more: 167 acres is as small as it will ever be. We want our children and grandchildren to go to college, and we may need to harvest timber from the land to pay the tuition, but we'll do it in the right way so that the land is not left barren, with no topsoil left. We'll make the best of what we have, and with the protection of the easement held by Athens Land Trust, we'll help it be better.



Allen and Betsy Burdett.

Betsy Burdett



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We welcome new supporters and thank all the individuals and organizations who have supported our work over the years. Your support is critical to our continuance. We greatly appreciate all donations of time and money. Please use this form to join or renew your membership.

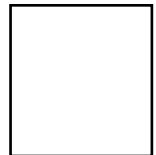
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spirit of the land

JUNE 6-26 AT THE STATE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Spirit of the Land, an art exhibition and sale featuring the work of local artists, an evening gala with hors d'oeuvres by Farm 255 and wine tasting by Gosford Wine, and a silent auction, benefits the conservation programs of ALT and Oconee River Land Trust. Details on page 3!