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Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 What happens between neighbors

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 When those who live in our properties create
3 connections, we get a healthier, safer community for all

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 WE AT Windham & Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT)
6 believe housing is about more than four walls and a roof. It is
7 about creating places where people feel safe, connected, and
8 supported.

9 At the Snow Block in downtown Brattleboro, we are
10 seeing what is possible when residents, staff, and community
11 partners work together with intention.

12 The Snow Block is home to a growing network of
13 neighbors who are actively building community. With support
14 from WWHT, residents have been participating in restorative
15 circles facilitated in partnership with Interaction and the
16 organization’s Restorative Practices Program.

17 These circles create space for honest conversation,
18 shared problem-solving, and stronger relationships. They are
19 helping shift how people engage with one another and how
20 challenges are addressed — moving from isolation and frustration
21 toward trust and collaboration.

22 * * *

23 THESE EFFORTS are already translating into positive,
24 resident-led activity.

25 When a resident asked for help creating a flyer to
26 encourage regular game nights, the team at the Housing Trust was
27 glad to assist. Today, Friday evenings at the Snow Block often
28 bring neighbors together for games, conversation, and
29 connection.

30 Many weeks, a member of the Brattleboro Resource
31 Assistance Team (BRAT) joins in, creating an informal and
32 welcoming setting to build relationships and foster a shared sense
33 of responsibility for the community.

34 This approach reflects a broader commitment we made
35 as an organization. WWHT owns 912 rental homes across
36 Windham and Windsor counties, and we provide property
37 management and support services to the majority of our
38 Brattleboro area properties.

39 In our most recent strategic plan, we identified
40 community safety and well-being as a top priority.

41 We trained our full staff in restorative practices, began
42 showing up consistently for supportive circles in our buildings,
43 strengthened partnerships across Brattleboro through our
44 participation in the One Brattleboro Group, and deepened our
45 collaboration with the Brattleboro Police Department through
46 regular meetings.

47 This work is informed by data as well as relationships.
48 Beginning in the fall of 2024, we began to track every call for
49 police services at our properties. This helps us better understand
50 how police activity at our properties fit into the larger context of
51 what’s going on in town, and it helps us better understand what
52 types of support residents need and where the greatest needs are
53 concentrated.

54 We found that our buildings account for 3% of the total
55 annual police calls in Brattleboro, and only a few locations
56 account for the majority of the calls. In many cases, these calls
57 are for wellness checks or assistance with conflict among
58 residents, allowing us to better align resident services and
59 intervene early with the right supports.

60 * * *

61 THE REAL MEASURE of success, however, is what happens
62 between neighbors. When people come together around a table
63 to play a game, share a meal, or talk through concerns, they are
64 laying the groundwork for a healthier, safer community.

65 These moments may seem small, but they are powerful.
66 They are how trust is built. They are how belonging takes root.

67 At the Snow Block, residents are showing that
68 community does not happen by accident. It is created — through
69 presence, partnership, and a shared commitment to looking out
70 for one another.

71 And when community grows, so does safety, stability,
72 and hope.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

73 **ELIZABETH BRIDGEWATER** is executive director of the
74 Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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