

# Asset Building Coalition begins at Enclave Apartments

SPECIAL TO  
THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Asset Building Coalition (ABC) held a Community Day celebration at the Enclave apartments on Sept. 17. The Coalition has invited the residents of the Enclave Apartments to participate in a community-based project that offers tools for families to increase their financial stability.

The project offers residents financial education, coaching, and a variety of supports for pursuing homeownership/better jobs, savings, and affordable credit counseling. The Coalition will work together with individual residents to create a plan based on what they want for themselves and their families.



Submitted photo

*The Asset Building Coalition holds Community Day at the Enclave Apartments on Sept. 17.*

poverty."

The Community Day event was open to all residents at the Enclave Apartments and featured entertainment, food, and games for kids. The event gave residents and Coalition members the opportunity to get to know one another and to learn about what the Coalition could provide. Linda Bates, resident of the Enclave Apartments, heard about

the event and wanted to volunteer.

"My neighbors were happy. We have never had anything in the Enclave," said Bates. "That was something to get the neighborhood together and it definitely did. People found that they didn't know a lot about the partner agencies and it enlightened a lot of people about different non-profits."

Shenell Thompson,

Director of Financial Education at Financial Pathways of the Piedmont, which also co-leads the Coalition, oversees the ABC place-based initiative.

"The ABC is grateful for the warm response we received from the residents of the Enclave," Thompson said. "Opportunities to work alongside families as they create life plans is exciting. We are also appre-

ciative of the support of our financial sponsors, local foundations and community partners in making this event a success. We look forward to supporting the long-term success of the participants."

The Community Day was the first of several planned events and networking opportunities for residents and Coalition members. The place-based initiative will be an ongoing

process.

"I am very grateful to all the members of the Asset Building Coalition for making this community day so much fun," said Peter Laroche, president and CEO of Financial Pathways. "And it was very gratifying to see the community come out and take an interest in financial stability. This is a good sign for the Coalition's first place-based project."

Earlier this year, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation awarded a grant to support the Coalition's activities. A website is currently under construction with the support of The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. The Community Day was sponsored by PNC Bank, BB&T, Truliant Federal Credit Union, the City of Winston-Salem, and Chick-fil-A.

*The Winston-Salem/Forsyth Asset Building Coalition (ABC) is a voluntary collaboration of more than 20 local organizations, agencies, businesses and individuals. For more information on the Asset Building Coalition or its place-based initiative, contact Peter Laroche at peter@financialpaths.org or Twana W. Roebuck at twana.roebuck@eisr.org*

## Wells Fargo donates to free tax preparation

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Experiment in Self-Reliance has received a \$15,000 grant from Wells Fargo. These funds will support ESR's Forsyth Free Tax Program.

Forsyth Free Tax, a program of Experiment in Self-Reliance, provides free tax preparation through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program to low and moderate income individuals and families in Forsyth County making \$53,000 a year less.

All tax preparers are certified by the IRS and help people receive every tax credit for which they qualify (for example, the Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC). On average, a qualified Forsyth County taxpayer receives \$1,700 in EITC credit, and the credit can sometimes total more than the amount earned during the year. In addition to benefiting working families, the credit brings money directly into our community.

Forsyth Free Tax also offers online tax services at [www.myfreetaxes.com/for](http://www.myfreetaxes.com/) syth to individuals making less than \$59,000 who want to self-prepare their taxes.

EITC and VITA are vital asset building tools that help low-moderate income people build wealth.

Nine community sites are available throughout Forsyth County during tax season to provide free tax preparation services. In addition to free tax preparation, sites offer Asset Building Counseling, and linkages to asset-building programs such as Experiment in Self-Reliance's Individual Development Account program, NC Saves, Financial Literacy Counseling and more.

"We are most thankful to Wells Fargo for their support of Forsyth Free Tax. The grant they have awarded us will enable us to expand our reach to more of our neighbors, empowering them on their path to self-sufficiency. This gift will also help to save taxpayers thousands of dollars in tax preparation fees," said Takia Miller, Forsyth Free Tax Program Manager.

Executive Director Twana W. Roebuck is grateful for the longstanding relationship with the Foundation.

"Wells Fargo has been a major lynchpin for ESR's capacity to continuously improve our asset building programs for many years," said Roebuck. "In concert with our tax program and our signature IDA program we are able to inform Winston-Salem/Forsyth County residents of tax preparation services and a

menu of supportive financial stability resources community-wide. Our joint vision is to empower people to become self-reliant long term."

Wells Fargo awards annual grants through a competitive application and review process.

"There is a tremendous need for resources like financial and tax assistance programs in the Triad," said Tamika Bowers, Wells Fargo's community development officer. "Wells Fargo is honored to support ESR in their mission to empower individuals to better themselves and help build the foundation for a brighter tomorrow."

Experiment in Self-Reliance is a United Way partner agency established in 1964 during Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty. Its mission is "empowering working low income and chronically homeless individuals and families to achieve their full potential for long-term social and economic self-reliance. For more information about ESR's services, visit our website at [www.eisr.org](http://www.eisr.org).



Submitted photo

L-R): Twana W. Roebuck, Executive Director of ESR, Jim Rosenberger, Analytic Consultant, Wells Fargo Insurance Services, Chris Bryan, ESR Board Chair, Jerry Romans, ESR Vice Board Chair, Leslie Hayes, Carolinas Business Banking Manager and Tamika Bowers, Community Development Officer-Piedmont Triad holding the donated grant.



**Big 4 Alumni Association of Forsyth County, Inc.**

As the loan holders for ESR's new facility, M&F Bank has supported ESR and countless community partners in their endeavors to provide much needed resources to individuals and families in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County.

"We could not be more grateful to M&F Bank, its staff members and community supporters for helping our clients and their children breathe a little easier," said Roebuck.

*Experiment in Self-Reliance Programs include Self-Sufficiency, Housing, Forsyth Free Tax, and New Century IDA (Individual Development Account). Clients must be working low to moderate income individuals and families. For more information about ESR, visit our website at [www.eisr.org](http://www.eisr.org) or call 336-722-9400.*

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Experiment in Self-Reliance (ESR) partnered with M&F Bank for a back to school drive to benefit clients of ESR. With the help of M&F Bank staff members and individuals from the community, three boxes filled with school supplies were donated to help ESR families in need.

A non-profit, Community Action Agency, ESR has been helping people in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County since 1964. Often clients struggle to find adequate and affordable school supplies for themselves and their children. ESR was thankful to partner with M&F Bank to relieve that burden for clients.

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