

Your Story Spirit and Compassion



Future Home Renovation by the Community Spirit Team!



Your Stories

You have something to share about the community association experience. It may be good, bad, funny or poignant.

It may be something your community has done that's exemplary, interesting or just plain different.

Tell us about it. Send photos, ideas and information to commonground@caionline.org. Submissions may be edited for content and clarity.

LAKE FOREST Community Association in Lake Forest, Calif., faces the same challenges from the economic downturn as other communities across the country. Some homes are deteriorating because owners continue to struggle with financial hardships. That's why association staff created its community spirit team this past April.

When untended homes in Lake Forest receive CC&R violations, they go to a hearing committee, which may recommend a fine or legal action. However, when residents don't have any means to remedy the violations due to extenuating circumstances, the hearing committee refers them to our community spirit team. The team then makes modest repairs to help owners comply with rules and regulations.

The Lake Forest board contributed a \$300 starter fund that was quickly matched by Professional Community Management of California. The team consists of community volunteers and Lake Forest maintenance staff. Local sponsors contribute money, materials and additional labor to the team.

Your Story Civic Activism

THE RESIDENTS OF The Tower and Executive Condominium Associations of Coconut Grove in Coconut Grove, Fla., take the concept of civic volunteerism very seriously. The board believes it's important for all residents to give back to the community. The concept is enlivened by The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, which manages the associations, and its Community Footprints program. The desire of residents to impact the community and Ritz-Carlton's passion to serve and contribute has led to several events in 2012 that have made a meaningful difference to the local area.

In March, association residents and staff beautified the grounds of the Holocaust Memorial of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation. Also in March,

LuAnn Johnson, the most recent Lake Forest homeowner referred to the team, couldn't have been more grateful for the help after suffering three personal tragedies in a short time. She lost her 25-year-old son, her 3-year-old granddaughter was diagnosed with melanoma and a eucalyptus tree crashed through her fence.

After dealing with funeral costs and trying to arrange for health care for her uninsured granddaughter, Johnson was financially and emotionally unable to handle home repairs. The community spirit team stepped in and corrected all of Johnson's CC&R violations and installed two new windows.

Johnson, a Lake Forest resident since 2001, knows what it's like to help people in a time of need. As a nurse, she visits patients throughout Orange County and Los Angeles.

"It's ironic that the Lake Forest community spirit team is now coming into my home and completing much-needed repairs," says Johnson. "My family and I are overwhelmed with gratitude."

The Lake Forest team demonstrates that there are creative and compassionate solutions to the challenges faced by associations. When neighbors and community leaders come together, they can turn a negative into a positive with generosity and support. —KIM BACK, community relations manager, Lake Forest Community Association, Lake Forest, Calif.

more than 100 boxes were filled with food for the disadvantaged during Passover. The community collaborated in April with the Florida Heart Research Institute, where more than 2,000 bottles of water were donated and distributed to roughly 500 attendees gathered for an event that fostered the prevention of childhood obesity. The association also donated more than 500 items of clothing, water, toiletries and canned goods at St. Paul's Church of Coconut Grove for the homeless and others in need. The association planned a beach cleanup, a school supplies drive and other charitable events throughout the year. —REY CASTRO, director of residences, The Tower and Executive Condominium Associations of Coconut Grove, Coconut Grove, Fla.