



Charlottesville's Catholic Worker community
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Preserving and expanding affordable housing in Charlottesville

Our vision to operate Carlton House and expand hospitality

WHAT IS CARLTON HOUSE?

BACKGROUND



Located in Charlottesville at 300 Carlton Road, Carlton House consists of 10 units: single bedrooms with a private bath. The house has a common living room and kitchen on each floor and a shared laundry room. Carlton House is situated on a bus line, approximately one mile from the downtown mall and only half a mile from Casa Alma's houses of hospitality and urban homestead.

Carlton House was constructed in 1986 as a Group Care Home and served as senior housing for the next eighteen years. Converting the home to meet modern accessibility standards was too costly so it was sold to a private landlord in 2004 and Carlton House became rental units for single adults.

When the property went up for sale years later in 2015, a local developer (Chris Murray) approached Casa Alma and proposed that we purchase the building as a means of expanding our mission of hospitality and community support for families who would otherwise be homeless. Casa Alma entered into a year-long discernment and exploration process, and even put Carlton House under contract. We did not proceed with the sale, however, as it seemed beyond our volunteer and financial capacities at the time.

Carrying forward the vision that Carlton House could serve people in need, Chris Murray coordinated a unique partnership among his development company (Murray + Co LLC), BMC Property Management, and a local nonprofit (Virginia Organizing) to purchase the house. With these owners and with support from the Charlottesville Affordable Housing Fund, Carlton House began serving low-income single adults in 2016. The average tenant income in 2020 was \$17,500, approximately 22% of the area median income; monthly rent ranged between \$660-740 with all utilities included. Carlton House, though small in scale, became an important part of the city's available affordable housing stock.

AN OPPORTUNITY EMERGED

In March of 2020, Chris Murray approached Casa Alma to communicate that both his company and BMC Property Management were preparing to exit the Carlton House project and move on to other efforts. They wanted Casa Alma to purchase their 99% share of the building so that Carlton could continue to serve people who cannot afford market rate housing.

OUR VISION: A thriving community focused on women; increased affordability for the long term

Casa Alma volunteers and our board of directors developed a vision for Carlton House. We will bring together our mission of hospitality, our practice of radical generosity, our depth of experience and our community partnerships to convene a supportive community at Carlton which focuses on low-income single women and women with children.

Our vision includes increasing the number of residents from 10 (maximum in the existing model) to closer to 20 (maximum occupancy) to increase impact. We will improve the rooms and common spaces to make them more welcoming and comfortable, and make long-needed repairs to the exterior of the building. We will not displace current residents who wish to stay, and bring an ethic of care to help transition those who wish to move on to other housing.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We launched a fundraising campaign in June 2021 with the goal of raising \$60,000 to:

- Buy a 99% stake in the ownership of Carlton House, assuming existing project debt
- Seed a small, initial capital improvement fund of \$20,000
- Reduce rents for seven rooms
- Reserve three rooms for hospitality for at least one year

At the conclusion of our campaign in September, we had raised over \$103,000 from individual donors. We closed on Carlton House on December 1, 2021.

RESIDENT COMMUNITY and PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Casa Alma volunteers will coordinate the community at Carlton House. Our newest resident volunteer, Heidi Coleman, will serve as the Community Coordinator; she will engage Carlton residents to develop an empowered and mutually supportive culture within the house, and respond to requests for on-site programming such as community meals, ESL classes, or mentoring.

Casa Alma has contracted with DM Rothwell for property management services. Participation from Casa Alma resident volunteers and extended community members will reduce the labor costs of landscaping, painting, and other basic repairs. Capital improvement projects, coordinated by Casa Alma, will be undertaken in partnership with local nonprofits whenever possible.

ROOM SPONSORSHIPS

We are inviting small groups and congregations to adopt a room at Carlton as a way to make a significant and impactful contribution toward expanding and improving affordable housing in Charlottesville. Sponsorships are flexible. Adopting a room could mean a monetary donation, volunteering services, outfitting a room for families – or any combination of these. To learn more, please contact Laura or Steve Brown at cvillecw@gmail.com. *Thank you!*