Some Reflections on the Holidays

We Are Our Brother's Keeper

It has become accepted in many circles that religion should play no role in public discourse, that it be confined to spiritual institutions attended frequently or not at all, like the gym. After all, look at the destruction throughout the world in the name of religion that continues today. But at the same time, it can't be disputed that religious values built America, whose founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, are replete with references to the rights of man:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks of Britain has noted,

"Science will explain how but not why. It talks about what is, not what ought to be. Science is descriptive, not prescriptive; it can tell us about causes but it cannot tell us about purposes. Indeed, science disavows purposes."

Thus, we must look outside science to find meaning, which is the role of philosophers and theologians. One of the core messages of Christmas and Chanukah is the belief that we are all responsible for each other's well being.
The battle between the selfish and the selfless plays itself out over housing in the suburbs where the place you live, with few exceptions, determines your destiny. The people you meet, the schools you attend, the safety you enjoy all contribute to opportunity or the lack thereof. Suburban zoning that eliminates the poor and minorities by restricting development to expensive forms of housing violates our most enduring values. As we confront the restrictive zoning that has created homelessness and cost burdens for working families, let the message of Christmas and Chanukah mark a time of reflection and understanding that when it comes to housing, we are our brother's keeper.

Make a contribution to CHI.

CHI Helps Form Coalition to Promote Equal Opportunity in Suburban Zoning

The Workforce Housing Coalition demands that the MTA include 20% Affordable Apartments at the Harrison train station.

When the MTA Board agreed in principle to sell land at the Harrison train station to a private developer for 143 "luxury high-end" units in September, CHI responded by bringing together a coalition of housing and civil rights groups, including the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity, the Greenburgh NAACP, Mount Vernon United Tenants, the Working Families Party, WESPAC and the Westchester Hispanic Coalition.

At its December meeting, the MTA Board heard the Workforce Housing Coalition explain why the MTA's position that it is up to the town how state-owned land is administered cannot represent a just or even rational policy for three basic reasons.

First, Harrison has been named by a housing monitor under a federal consent decree as one of the worst, most exclusionary towns in Westchester County. It has shirked its responsibility to produce affordable housing for over 20 years. The county's own housing allocation plan fixed the town's fair share at 756 affordable units by the end of this year. It has yet to produce one.
Second, the MTA would become complicit with Harrison's violation of New York State court decisions that require every municipality to provide balanced zoning that does not discriminate. It is no accident that African American households in Harrison, a town that is two-thirds the size of Manhattan, represent just over one percent of the population. And finally, the MTA cannot allow Harrison to restrict its transit oriented development to luxury housing because it would continue what one developer has called "the hollowing out" of Westchester. Its most productive workers, especially 25-34 year olds, are leaving towns like Harrison in droves because of the lack of affordable housing. Office vacancies continue to climb despite recovering elsewhere.

Thomas Prendergast, the Chairman of the MTA Board, expressed support for our position and we have been told that intensive discussions are ongoing to introduce some affordable housing in the project. You can watch Chairman Prendergast's response at 25 minutes and 50 seconds into the video below:

MTA.info | Webcasts Archive

Support the Workforce Housing Coalition.

Little things that matter
ACADIA Realty Trust named November its "Thanks for Giving" month, and conducted a toiletry drive for CHI's Westchester emergency housing program.

"In Westchester, CHI provides scattered site emergency housing to 60 homeless families. We highly appreciate this gift, because toiletry items such as hand soap, shampoo and toothpaste are not covered by food stamps. Spending on these essential items poses an added burden to families on a limited income," said Debbie Perkins, Senior Director of Hudson Valley Programs at CHI.

For ACADIA Realty Trust's employees, their modest donation probably cost very little but for the people in CHI's shelters, "little things" mean a lot.

Read More.
CHI's eHome America Online Classes Bring Convenience to Homebuyers

According to CHI's recent Year to Date Homebuyer Education Report, 50 applicants have obtained their bank-approved Homebuyer Education certificates by completing the steps provided through this online platform, while 15 more are actually registered and actively involved.

CHI's eHome America online course allows individuals to complete the required homebuyer education at their own pace and in their own time. Its format is very interactive and user-friendly, including animated videos, easy-to-read content with highlighted keywords, and quizzes to insure understanding.

Learn more.

New Homebuyer Education Classes Coming Up in 2015!
Orientations, Certificate Programs, Online Learning and More...

Homebuyer Orientations
Free
Learn about CHI’s services, the steps to homeownership, and the resources available to you. This session will also help you decide if homeownership is right for you. Homebuyer Orientations are held every other month in Westchester.

- White Plains, January 15 -- Sponsored by People's United Bank

FastTrack™ to Home Ownership Courses
Cost: $99 - Fee includes the course manual.
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- White Plains, January 22

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