



**FOR RESIDENTS, COMMERCIAL TENANTS,  
WORKFORCE PARTICIPANTS, AND  
SUPPORTERS LIKE YOU.**



## **A Letter From Our Executive Director**

Common Wealth Family,

This quarter, I need to share a difficult update about our housing work.

For many years, Common Wealth Development has made a deliberate choice to keep our residential rents as low as possible. That has been part of our mission, part of our identity, and part of our commitment to the residents who call our properties home. Today, our residential rents average roughly 48 percent of the maximum allowable affordable rent levels. In plain terms, we have been operating far below what we are permitted to charge while still remaining within affordable housing guidelines.

We are proud of that. We also know it has helped many residents remain housed through periods of instability, transition, and rising costs.

At the same time, we have reached a point where we can no longer ignore the financial condition of the housing portfolio. The cost of maintenance, repairs, insurance, utilities, and basic building upkeep has continued to rise. Several of our properties now cost more to operate than the rents bring in. Nearly half of the portfolio is no longer financially sustainable under the current rent structure.

This has been one of the hardest decisions I have had to make as Executive Director. The choices in front of us are imperfect. We can sell properties, which would remove homes from Common Wealth's long-term stewardship. Or we can increase rents in a more substantial way than we have historically done, while still keeping them as low as possible and below allowable affordable rent limits.

After reviewing those options, I have made the decision that we need to increase rents.

I want to be clear about something. This decision rests with me. Common Wealth staff, especially our Housing Operations staff, have brought forward the best data, the best information, and the clearest understanding of what residents are facing. They have worked hard to reduce operating costs, improve systems, manage repairs, and find ways to avoid or limit increases. Because of that work, the increases are lower than they otherwise would have been.

Staff have also pushed hard on behalf of residents. They have challenged assumptions, raised concerns, and argued for every available alternative. That is exactly what I expect from a staff committed to this mission. They are zealous advocates for the residents who live in our housing, and they are deeply committed to the work of keeping people housed.

The Housing Admin team member answering a phone call, sending a notice, completing a work order, or sitting across from a resident did not make this decision.

I did.

Any blame, understandable outrage, should be directed / addressed/ associated with me.

I do not write that lightly. I know rent increases place real strain on households. I know that even when an increase is justified on paper, it still lands in people's monthly budgets. It affects groceries, transportation, childcare, medication, school supplies, and the ability to plan. I understand that, and I never take it casually.

I am choosing this path because, in consultation with staff and our Board, I believe it gives Common Wealth the best chance to preserve these homes for current and future residents. If the housing portfolio fails financially, the mission cannot hold. If we lose these properties, we lose one of the main tools we have to support resident stability in Madison and Dane County.

Common Wealth will continue to communicate directly with affected residents. We will continue to be available to residents who need additional

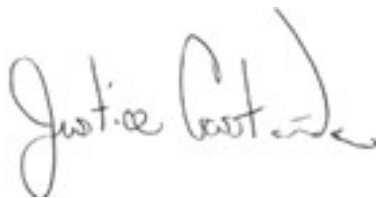
support, information, or referrals. We will continue to work with flexibility where we can. We will also continue to advocate for public and philanthropic investment that helps preserve housing that is affordable below market rates.

Our goal is to keep being a mission-driven community development organization that provides stable housing, supports young people, helps adults connect to work, and creates space for small businesses and community enterprise.

This is a hard season for that work. Our direction remains clear. We will keep our rents as low as we responsibly can. We will keep investing in the buildings we steward. We will keep advocating for the people who live in our housing, the young people who contribute to our programs, the adults working toward stability, and the small business owners who trust us with space for their dreams.

Thank you for continuing to stand with Common Wealth and with the residents, youth, workers, entrepreneurs, partners, and neighborhoods that make this work worth doing.

Onward.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justice Castañeda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Justice Castañeda  
Executive Director  
Common Wealth Development, Inc.



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## Administrative Updates

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## **Thank you, TruStage Foundation**

Thank you, TruStage Foundation for your support of Common Wealth Development's Madison Youth Advisory Board! Your partnership in supporting this work is an investment in learning, leadership, and development of the student leaders who sit on the board and dedicate their time to engaging with systems leaders, learning about the intersections of systems, and develop their leadership skills.

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## **Events, Community Engagement, and Fundraising**



Common Wealth Development

◆ **GOLF** ◆  
**OPEN**

Presented by The Muskellounge



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**MONDAY, JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup>**

Door Creek Golf Course

**\$110 per golfer, \$400 Foursome**

**SHOTGUN START**

**10AM**



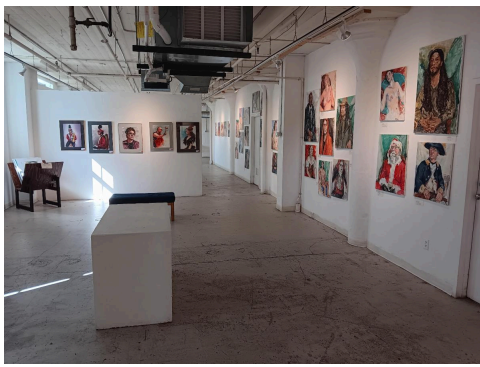
**SIGN-UP HERE!**

For more information:  
**JENNY GREYER**  
[jenny@cwd.org](mailto:jenny@cwd.org)



Join us for our upcoming Common Wealth Golf Open on June 8th.

**Register Today!**



## Spring Gallery Night

Thank you for joining us on Friday May 8<sup>th</sup> for Common Wealth Development's Spring Gallery Night. The show, curated by Atwood Atelier, featured beautiful paintings by Taylor Elkins, Gail Hutchinson, John Mix, and Bernie Tennis.



# WE'RE HIRING

## MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR

- 40 hours/week
- \$24-25/hr
- Full benefits

*Apply Online!*

*[cwd.org/career-opportunities](http://cwd.org/career-opportunities)*



Housing Operations staff have continued to work diligently to make progress this spring on work orders now that warmer weather has arrived! Working across the portfolio, staff are working on ensuring outstanding projects are completed, unit turns are on track, and that we remain poised to head into the busier summer season ready to support current and prospective residents. Housing staff recently completed the Occupancy Specialist Certification, continuing to build out the team's collective skillset and ensuring effective oversight knowledge of regulations and compliance expectations.



## Hail and Farewell, Emily!

We recently bid farewell to Emily Hill, one of the Housing & Resident Relations Coordinators on staff. Emily has been an instrumental member of the team, supporting residents, developing her own skills, and bringing humor and care to all of her work. Thank you, Emily, for all of your work and we're wishing you well on this next chapter!

### Our Housing Application Process:

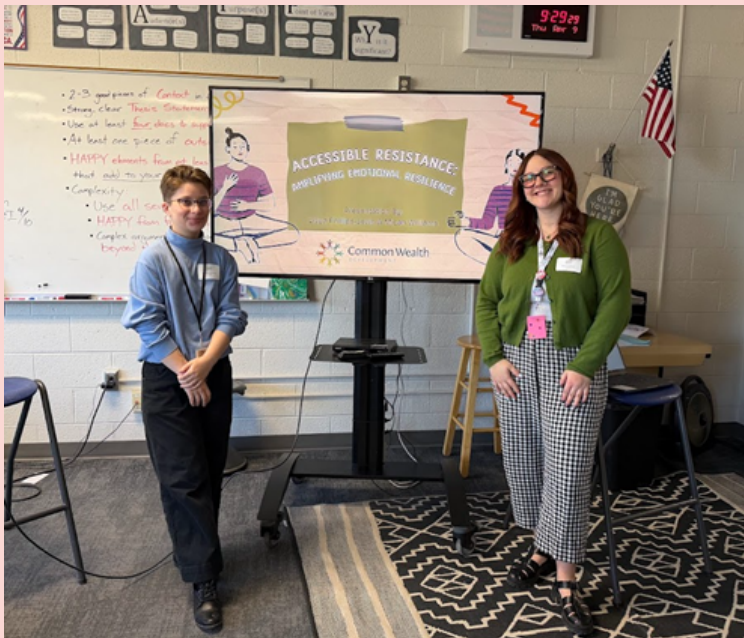
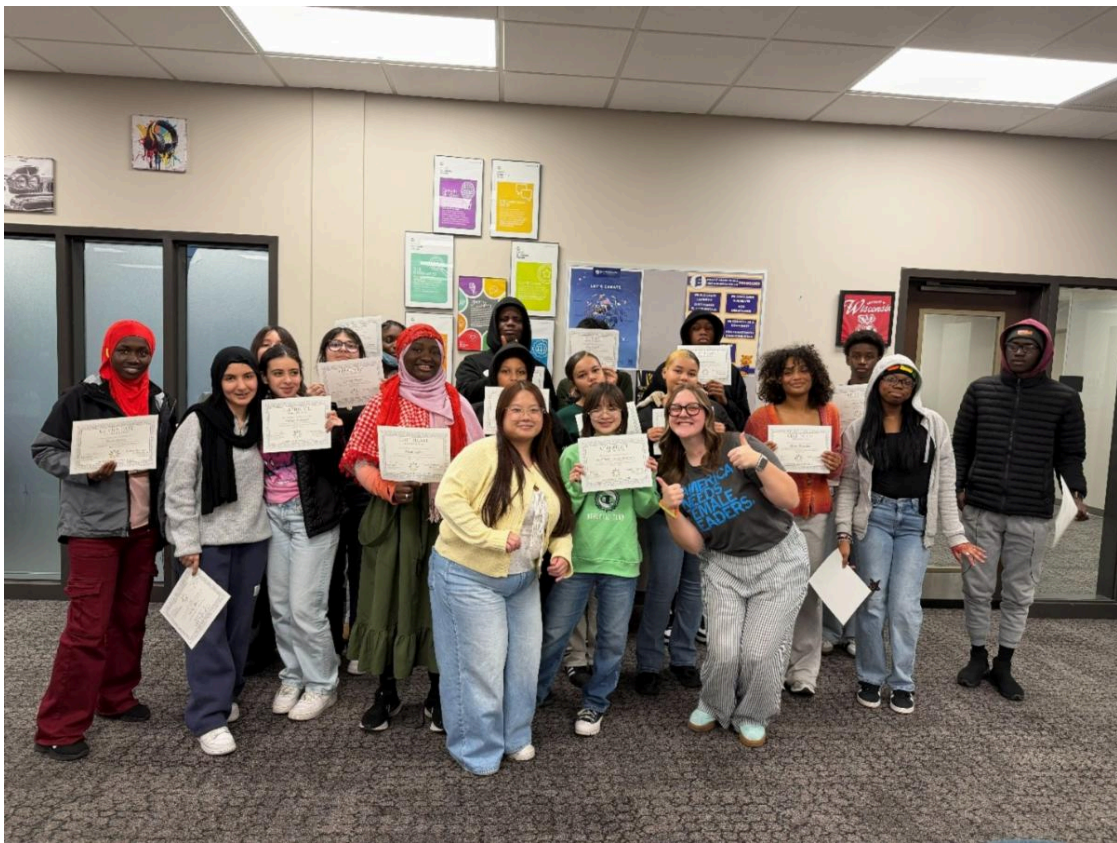
When we have an upcoming vacancy, an email will be sent out to everyone on our Housing Interest list. From there, we will schedule a showing and an application will be provided.

If you would like to join our housing interest list, please send an email to [rental@cwd.org](mailto:rental@cwd.org)



## Updates from Youth Workforce Development

The Youth Workforce Development team has had a busy spring semester and are preparing to conclude their final Youth Business Mentoring Program session, to be hosted at LaFollette High school starting May 11<sup>th</sup>! The team will work with LaFollette students to develop their professional skills and prepare to enter the workforce after school for two weeks, supported by staff mentors.



## West High School Equity Symposium

Micah Williams and Livya Phillips-Levin worked collaboratively this spring to develop a workshop presentation for the West High school Equity Symposium. Together, they connected with West High students and staff about mindfulness and emotion and conflict resilience. Staff walked workshop participants through breathing exercises, value discussions, and received feedback that folks would have liked to participate for longer. Great job Micah and Livya on the success of this workshop and for all of your work supporting students and staff!

Visit the [Common Wealth Youth Programs Instagram page](#) to see photos from last year and keep up with upcoming dates!

If you have any questions about the program or applying for next year's program, please reach out to Maggie Douglas, Youth Workforce Development Coordinator at [maggie@cwd.org](mailto:maggie@cwd.org) or (608) 516-6740.



## Experiential Learning and Leadership Academy

Common Wealth's Experiential Learning and Leadership Academy (ELLA) annually supports a cohort of young adults navigating post-secondary life with structured internships and professional seminars. The program incorporates peer-to-peer learning, rigorous seminars, and hands-on experiential learning through internships working within one of Common Wealth's sections of work. ELLA staff range from recent high school graduates and graduates of our Youth Workforce programs to graduate students. Pairing their active community development work with academic theory and innovative policy work offers a unique opportunity. Welcome to the 2026 ELLA cohort – we're thrilled to be working with each of you!



## Updates from Adult Workforce Development

Common Wealth's Adult Workforce Development (AWD) programs support adults re-entering the workforce following a gap in their employment history, due to either incarceration, being unhoused, or other circumstances. Our approach within the AWD programs uses a person-centered and coordinated care model, where we collaborate with multiple partners to help participants with pre-employment skill development and addressing their basic needs, such as housing support, food security, mental health and wellness, amongst others. The AWD programs address both the immediate needs and long-term goals of individuals and families through a continuum of programs from our southwest office at 5802 Raymond Rd., Madison, WI.

### WorkUp! Academy

Common Wealth's Adult Workforce Development Manager, Kari Alston, recently facilitated the first WorkUp! Academy session of 2026 – successfully supporting and graduating four participants! Kari has worked diligently to hone and refine the curriculum, program space, and individualized needs of each group. Kari's leadership of the section and of this new initiative has been a significant asset to offer participants looking to develop their skills, access tailored support, and gain eligibility for job placement support. Congratulations Kari and thank you for all that you do!



For more information about upcoming program dates, eligibility requirements, and application information, please contact Kari Alston at [kari@cwd.org](mailto:kari@cwd.org) or (608) 516-5332.

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## Job Shop

**Job Shop is currently being held Wednesdays 9 AM-12 PM at the Meadowood Neighborhood Center**

Job Shop has continued to be a vital community resource, serving neighborhood residents weekly with both employment opportunities and referrals to community resources. Job Shop provides a welcoming space to start and receive individualized support.

Held every Wednesday morning from 9 AM – 12PM at the Meadowood Neighborhood Center, Job Shop is powered by strong partnerships to provide wraparound assistance from one space. Common Wealth Development, Joining Forces for Families, Early Childhood Initiative, Children's Wisconsin, the County of Dane, MSCR, and Good Shepherd Church work collaboratively to provide support that includes resume writing and job applications to housing navigation, childcare support, and public benefit applications. Thanks to the dedication of this partnership, Job Shop continues to serve as a cornerstone resource; meeting people where they are and helping them take their next step toward stability and success.



**COME ANY WEDNESDAY MORNING 9AM-NOON— NO NEED TO SIGN UP.**

# SOUTHWEST MADISON'S JOB SHOP

**START WHERE YOU ARE.  
WE'LL HELP WITH THE REST.**

## ABOUT US

Job Shop offers **FREE**, drop-in support for anyone seeking help with job searching, resumes, applications, housing resources, public benefits, and more.

We believe that no one should have to navigate these challenges alone — and at Job Shop, you don't have to.

### IN COLLABORATION WITH:

- COMMON WEALTH DEVELOPMENT
- JOINING FORCES FOR FAMILIES (JFF)
- CHILDREN'S WISCONSIN
- COUNTY OF DANE
- MADISON SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RECREATION (MSCR)
- GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH

## IF YOU NEED SUPPORT WITH...

- ✓ RESUME WRITING
- ✓ COVER LETTER COMPLETION
- ✓ JOB APPLICATIONS
- ✓ PUBLIC BENEFIT APPLICATIONS
- ✓ HOUSING SEARCH
- ✓ SEEKING RENTAL ASSISTANCE
- ✓ CHILDCARE NAVIGATION
- ✓ PARENTING AND OTHER RESOURCES

**LOCATED AT THE MEADOWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**  
5740 RAYMOND RD.  
MADISON, WI

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT KARI @ 608.516.5332 OR KARI@CWD.ORG OR ERIC ALVIN @ 608.516.6014 OR ALVIN.ERIC@DANECOUNTY.GOV**

**For any additional information or questions regarding Adult Workforce Development programs or available resources, you can contact Workforce Development Manager Kari Alston at kari@cwd.org or (608) 516-5332.**

Contact Kari Alston



## BUSINESS INCUBATION

### Updates from our Business Incubators

Common Wealth supports business incubation through our first-stage incubator, Madison Enterprise Center (MEC), and second-stage incubator, Main Street Industries (MSI). The diverse and unique businesses that call these spaces home offer a wide array of services including business that range from bakeries to florists, artists to content creation, photography to brewing. Common Wealth offers affordable commercial spaces for emerging enterprises alongside a community art gallery that's available for weekly rentals.

#### Welcoming new businesses to our community!

We recently welcomed two new businesses to Madison Enterprise Center!

The Big Gay Market aims to host inclusive, welcoming and fun local markets for the Madison community and beyond. We're thrilled to have them joining us at MEC and excited for all that they have to come. *Learn more about their events and keep up with their work!*



#### TrueMosaicsStudio



We've also welcomed the Center for Creative Innovation, founded by Laurel True of True Mosaics Studio. True Mosaics Studio has been creating public, architectural and commissioned work for many years and we're looking forward to welcoming this new endeavor into the MEC community. *Learn more about the incredible work done already here* and

keep an eye out for all that's ahead for  
the Center for Creative Innovation!

## Commercial Space Available:

We have available space open for more businesses to join our community! The Madison Enterprise Center has several suites available, details about the spaces can be found below and our *commercial website here*.

## Your Future Event?

The Common Wealth Gallery is a community art gallery located in the historic Madison Enterprise Center at 100 S. Baldwin Street on Madison's near east-side. The 2,000 square foot gallery can accommodate solo and group shows. The rental rate is \$200 per week, with a minimum rental period of one week. Reserve Common Wealth Gallery for a solo or group show. Please check availability by visiting our gallery calendar!

## Upcoming Gallery Events:

- Glenda Hodge
  - Glenda Hodge's work will be in the gallery from May 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> with specific viewing hours:
    - May 23<sup>rd</sup> from noon – 5:00pm
    - May 24<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup> from 1:00 – 5:00pm
  - *Learn more about Glenda Hodge's work*
- Pauli Ivanova
  - June 3<sup>rd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>
  - *Learn more about Pauli Ivanova's work*
- Nicole Gruter: The Basement – Unearthing Our Inheritance
  - June 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>
  - *Learn more about Nicole Gruter's work*

Gallery Calendar

**For more information about renting spaces at MSI, MEC or the Common Wealth Gallery, please contact Brendan Vandenburg-Carroll, Business Development Coordinator, via phone: (608) 438-6804 or e-mail: [brendan@cwd.org](mailto:brendan@cwd.org).**



## UPDATES FROM THE MADISON COMMUNITY



### Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center

504 S. Brearly Street

We're an inclusive neighborhood center that's provided diverse programming for our community and all those in need since 1968.

[Click here for the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center website.](#)



**JULY  
9-12  
2026**

**McPIKE  
PARK  
MADISON**

**BY AND FOR  
THE WIL-MAR  
NEIGHBORHOOD  
CENTER**

**Arbor Hills Neighborhood Association**



We create a sense of community by holding events and developing spaces that are welcoming and inclusive for all residents.

*[Click here for the Arbor Hills Neighborhood Association website.](#)*



**Meadowood Neighborhood Association**

We work for community betterment and promote fellowship for the Meadowood neighborhood.

*[Click here for the Meadowood Neighborhood Association website.](#)*

**2026 Meadowood Neighborhood Association (MNA) Events Calendar:**

**Tuesday, January 27, 5:30—7:00 pm:** Orchard Ridge and Toki Schools, new construction planning meeting, ORE School Cafeteria, 5606 Russett Rd.

**Friday, February 27, 6:30—8:30 pm:** MNA Bingo Game (in person); Location at Ten Pin Alley, 6285 Nesbitt Rd, Fitchburg.

**Friday-Saturday, May 8—9:** Meadowood Neighborhood Garage Sales.

**Sunday, June 21:** Make Music Madison, Meadowood Park. More details to follow in our next newsletter.

**Saturday, Aug. 15:** Meadowood Neighborhood Association Annual Picnic at Meadowood Park.

For updates on additional events in the Meadowood area, please refer to the 'Events' page of the MNA website: [meadowoodneighborhood.org/events](http://meadowoodneighborhood.org/events)



**Marquette Neighborhood Association**

*[Click here for the Marquette Neighborhood Association website.](#)*

health resources + information + advocacy



Sheray  
Wallace

(608) 622-2355

# Meadowood Health Partnership

sheraywallace44@gmail.com

Common Wealth  
Development  
news@cwd.org  
P: 608.256.3527



COMMON WEALTH DEVELOPMENT | 1501 Williamson Street | Madison, WI 53703 US

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