



COMMUNITY LEADERS AT THE TENANT MARCH ON WASHINGTON ON JULY 12<sup>TH</sup>!

# MHAction Mid-Year Report

## August 2017

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## Housing Is a Human Right!

Thirty-one MHAction Community Leaders from Massachusetts, Delaware and Florida participated in the Tenant March on Washington, D.C. on July 12<sup>th</sup>!

We joined arm in arm with 750 homeowners and renters from allied organizations, like New York Communities for Change, Community Voices Heard, the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, the Alliance of Californians for Community Improvement, the Center for Popular Democracy and many others. Our goal was to push back against the Trump Administration's proposed cutbacks to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Budget and to raise awareness around the devastating impacts that our communities face as Wall Street investors expand their hold over our nation's housing supply.

The day's activities included an energetic rally at the Lutheran Church of the Reformation. Jesse Martinez, a MHAction Core Team Leader from Massachusetts, introduced the key-note speaker, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). Sen. Warren gave a rousing speech demanding that her colleagues in Congress push for greater protections for homeowners and renters that face economic eviction due to the business

practices of greedy, Wall Street landlords and to fully fund the HUD Budget.

Manufactured homeowners across the country have continued to express their outrage about the proposed HUD cuts. The proposed cuts call for the elimination of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG program provides crucial funding on a local level to communities to pay for infrastructure and safety improvements from sewers to sidewalks to lighting. 30% of CDBG funds are targeted to rural and exurban communities, where many manufactured housing communities are located.

Margie Mathers, a MHAction Core Team Leader from Fort Myers, Florida, spoke about the rapidly increasing rents being enacted by corporate owners, like Equity Lifestyle Properties, Inc. She called upon Members of Congress to provide greater protections for senior, homeowners who find themselves economically devastated by predatory community owners. A special thanks to community leaders from the Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Alliance (DMHOA) for turning out a large contingent! Look for more actions soon!



### MHAction's Leadership Cross Training Program Grows!

MHAction and MHOAI Community Leaders, Terry Nelson and Linda Reynolds presenting at a MHAction Leadership Cross Training in Illinois.

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### MHAction's Online Resources

MHAction is continuing to invest in its online infrastructure. Read more about how MHAction is using our innovative online systems to strengthen the work of grassroots leaders.

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## MHAction's Leadership Cross Training Program Continues to Grow!

MHAction's ability to build successful campaigns that protect the economic and retirement security of manufactured homeowners is reliant on developing a large base of powerful, volunteer community leaders via our Leadership Cross Training (LCT) program. MHAction's LCT program began in 2015 and is supported thru a generous grant from The Research Retirement Foundation of Chicago. Our goal for 2017 is to hold four to six LCTs and train 250 to 350 leaders.

As of July 31<sup>st</sup>, MHAction's LCT Program has trained 233 leaders at 7 LCTs. We are well on our way towards exceeding our goals for the year! Many thanks to the incredible community leaders that have led MHAction's LCTs in 2017: Richard Robinson from Louisiana, Connie McIff Hill and Shirlene Stoven from Utah, Margie Mathers, Dale Muzzy, Curt DeLong, Judy Johnston and Carolee Mathias from Florida, Terry Nelson and Linda Reynolds from Illinois and Patti Rose and Yvonne McCurley from California.



Some highlights of this year's trainings include:

- Educating homeowners about the recently passed Humboldt County Rent Justification Ordinance
- Pushing forward in Florida to build out a statewide rent justification campaign
- Establishing a campaign in Illinois to ensure that RV Horizons/MHP Funds treat homeowners with respect.

If your community is interested in hosting a LCT, send an email to [info@mhaction.org](mailto:info@mhaction.org).

### TRAINERS IN ACTION!

Pictured above is Margie Mathers at the July 12<sup>th</sup> Tenant March on Washington. Margie organized a MHAction LCT in Fort Myers, Florida that garnered the participation of thirty-four manufactured homeowners from surrounding communities. Photo Credit: Andres Rodriguez from the Institute for Policy's article, *Tenants March to Stop Giveaways to Wall Street Landlords* by Adidi Katti.



"We are pleased to welcome MHAction into our network of 48 affiliates across 32 states. MHAction's focus on affordable housing is particularly important at a time when our communities are under attack by the federal government as well as corporations looking to force us out of our homes. Bringing MHAction into our network makes us stronger than ever."

Jennifer Epps-Addison, Network President and Co-Executive Director Center for Popular Democracy

## MHAction Affiliates with The Center for Popular Democracy!

In April, MHAction Core Team Leaders unanimously approved an organizational resolution to affiliate with the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD).

CPD works to create equity, opportunity and a dynamic democracy in partnership with high-impact base-building organizations, organizing alliances, and progressive unions. CPD strengthens our collective capacity to envision and win an innovative pro-worker, agenda.

Over the past year and one-half, MHAction leaders have been working with CPD affiliates, like New York Communities for Change (NYCC) and the Alliance of Californians for Community Improvement, on housing justice campaigns.

In September of 2016, MHAction and NYCC leaders descended on a private equity conference and interrupted a speech by Sam Zell, Chair of Equity Lifestyle Properties, Inc. MHAction has heard numerous concerns from homeowners that live in ELS-owned community about rapidly increasing rents and decreasing community maintenance. Joint actions with existing CPD affiliates fueled our organizational desire to join CPD's powerful network.

We're excited to work with CPD and its affiliates to create a multi-geographic, multi-racial and multi-generational fight for housing and economic justice!

# Utah Safety Net Campaign Heats Up!

MHAction is building a collaborative campaign with community leaders involved with the Utah Coalition of Manufactured Homeowners (UCOMH), Comunidades Unidas and the Utah Health Policy Project to ensure that our nation's social safety net is protected and strengthened.

Many manufactured homeowners in Utah rely on Medicaid, Food Stamps and Social Security to make ends meet. These vital programs face a constant barrage of efforts designed to dismantle them.

Thanks to a generous grant from the New Venture Fund, MHAction community leaders have attracted the resources to coordinate with Utah-based organizations on these important issues. Our goal is build a campaign so that Utah's most vulnerable families can achieve economic security.

Community leaders have been organizing educational sessions designed to inform the broader public on the importance of these programs. Homeowners across the Beehive State had been leading public actions to get the attention of elected officials to ensure they work to support safety net programs. The strength of our campaign rests in our ability to highlight the personal testimonies of Utahans that rely on those programs for their financial security.

Shirlene Stoven, a homeowner from Midvale, Utah, has been helping to lead the charge on this campaign. Shirlene was motivated to share her story in the hope that it would encourage Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Mike Lee to oppose the harmful healthcare proposals that have been debated in Congress over the summer. Here is an excerpt from a guest editorial from Shirlene that was printed in the Salt Lake Tribune on July 4<sup>th</sup>:

*"My life feels a lot like tip-toeing on eggshells every day. I am 80 years old, living in a mobile home community, facing rising costs to stay in my home with just a small, stagnant monthly payment from Social Security to make ends meet. If it weren't for Medicare covering my health expenses, something would have cracked by now.*

*That's why I'm keeping a close eye on Sen. Orrin Hatch and his fellow senators, who are*

*trying to revise a health care bill that would decimate Medicaid as we know it and devastate the lives so many Utahans.*

*I have supported Hatch, but I am deeply disappointed by his role in the Senate's secret health care negotiations, designed to keep the bill a secret from the tens of millions of people who will be harmed by it.*

*The Senate bill is a bad deal for Utah. Like the House's bill, the Senate version would bring deep and debilitating cuts to Medicaid – as much as \$772 billion by 2026, according to the Congressional Budget Office. For the more than 300,000 Utahans that depend on Medicaid – including seniors, people with disabilities and families with children – these cuts could be a matter of life or death.*

*My best friend is a perfect example. She would be homeless today without Medicaid, which helps cover the cost of her assisted living facility and ongoing, long-term care. Even with Medicaid coverage and financial help from her son, after her care is paid for she lives on just \$40 per month. If her Medicaid coverage is cut, she'll go from living on the edge of a cliff to falling over it. Millions of vulnerable Utahans like my best friend live in fear of what will happen if the Senate succeeds in gutting Medicaid – all so they can give a giant tax break to billionaires.*

*If Congress succeeds in repealing the Affordable Care Act and replacing it with this callous legislation, millions will be left at risk of losing their health, their homes and even their lives. My friends and neighbors in my manufactured home community are already living on next to nothing – the reality of rising lot rents and health care costs often forces them to choose between putting food on the table and paying for their medicine. No one should be put in that position, but the proposed legislation would add millions more to the ranks of the uninsured."*

MHAction has been working in conjunction with valuable national organizations like the Center for Community Change (CCC), HealthCare for America Now and CPD on this campaign.

Keep tuned in as our work across the state continues to expand!

SUPPORT OUR WORK!



## Donate Today

Manufactured homeowners across the country, like Patti Rose and Yvonne McCurley from Humboldt County (pictured above), not only organize on important housing issues...but also financially support the organization.



## Every Dollar Counts!

It takes organized people and organized money to ensure that MHAction can work to protect and strengthen the affordability and accessibility of manufactured home communities.



## It's a Simple Click Away!

Your support provides our organization the ability to hire and train staff, hold educational trainings and convenings, and pays for the printing of this newsletter. Make sure to donate today by going to:

<https://mhaction.org/action/donate/>

# MHAction's Online Resources for Homeowners

Homeowners from across the country are continually reaching out to MHAction staff and Core Team members to increase the amount of resources available for homeowners to access online. MHAction recently updated its website. Our newly designed site can be found by going to [www.mhaction.org](http://www.mhaction.org). MHAction has made the website easier to navigate so that homeowners can more readily download the resources they need to win.

The most visited sections of MHAction's new website are the Stories, Toolkit and News sections. In the Toolkits section, homeowners can now download a training guide on MHAction's Social Security and Safety Net Campaign. This toolkit can be used when holding an informational session on these important topics at a local homeowner association meeting. Make sure to check out the fun "Pop Quiz" exercise as a part of this guide.

Many thanks to the Utah Coalition of Manufactured Homeowners for working with MHAction staff to upload a useful online toolkit that assists communities that are interested in setting up a strong and well-functioning homeowners association. This particular toolkit also includes an interactive doorknocking game that teaches homeowners how to perform effective outreach. This online game was developed



by the Center for Third World Organizing.

MHAction's Facebook Page continues to grow in leaps and bounds. MHAction has added over 3,500 followers to our Facebook page in 2017. We now have over 16,000 homeowners and allies keeping up to date on the work of the organization. Make sure to like us on Facebook by going to the following link: [www.facebook.com/MHAction/](https://www.facebook.com/MHAction/).

MHAction also utilizes our Action Network platform which allows the organization to perform outreach for our national Community Calls, put together letter writing campaigns to inform our elected officials about important topics and much, much more! If you would like to learn more about our online resources and how they can be used to strengthen your local work, please send an email to [info@mhaction.org](mailto:info@mhaction.org).

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