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A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM HRW, INC FOR BOARD MEMBERS, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONALS

RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE: COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR AWARDS

At the most basic level, every homeowner association **exists to maintain, protect, and enhance** the value of the property within the association, and **its governing body strives for a balance between individual rights and the good of the entire community.** In the real world, achieving this balance is no easy task, so the winners of the Association of the Year awards stand as great examples of how they faced challenges and overcame them, all the while maintaining their focus on the reason for the Association and the Board's existence.

The awards are given by the Community Associations Institute (CAI), which is a national organization dedicated to fostering vibrant, competent, harmonious community associations. CAI also advocates for legislative and regulatory policies that support responsible governance and effective management of community associations. The organization provides a forum for community association volunteer leaders, professional managers (and other professionals and companies that provide products and services to associations) to develop relationships and increase their knowledge.

Each HRW Community Manager is expected to complete the CAI Professional Management Development Program, the first step of which is to obtain the Certified Manager of Community Associations® (CMCA®) certification and the culmination of which is the Professional Community Association Manager® (PCAM®). Our commitment to the ongoing education of our staff is one of the things that sets HRW apart from other management firms.



Annually the North Carolina chapter of CAI recognizes associations across the state that demonstrate successful problem solving, overcoming adversity, educating their homeowners and participation within the local community. In 2007 three HRW clients were honored as winners in each of their respective categories of the CAI Association of the Year award. We thought you might find their stories interesting.

Brandon Ridge Condominium Unit Owners Association, Inc. in Durham was chosen as the winner in the small multi-family category. This 20-year old community was facing the nearly inevitable challenges that many aging communities face: lack of funds and an escalating need for repairs and maintenance. Such challenges can lead to a community's downward spiral. In this case the Board worked together with their Community Manager, Alina



**BRANDON RIDGE
CONDOMINIUMS - Before**



**BRANDON RIDGE
CONDOMINIUMS - After**

Cochran, to inform and educate residents of their options, which included obtaining a loan for exterior painting and a required increase in the monthly assessment rate. In order to secure the loan, delinquencies had to be brought down significantly and the community succeeded in slashing the rate to fewer than 5% in less than a year.

All Board members are aware of the high level of apathy that affects so many homeowners, and this Board chose to use newsletters and community meetings to communicate their message and gain the support of their homeowners. The commitment and persistence that this team demonstrated has brought excellent results that benefit everyone in the community.

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Left to right: President, Amber Cline, Alina Cochran CMCA, AMS, HRW Manager and Secretary, Elaine McClure, Brandon Ridge Condominiums

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In the medium single-family category, WestPark Community Association was recognized for the second time this decade (HRW was the management company both times!). The nine-member Board includes many

new members who were elected to their first term during the past two years. Each Board member represents a specific section of the neighborhood, so recruitment efforts at election time have to be well-planned in order to properly fill each vacancy. This structure also allows Board members to get to know their neighbors on a personal level and to represent the interests specific to that neighborhood within the 300+ home association.

A vital part of this community's success is the high level of homeowner involvement in the various committees and projects that the community undertakes. Most recently, a new playground was installed and the playground committee coordinated an effort in which homeowner volunteers contributed almost \$6,000 (volunteer hours) of labor to install the playground equipment. The association received a \$5,000 grant from the Town of Cary for this project.

In addition to this ad-hoc committee, there are also numerous standing committees:

The architectural review committee has long-standing members who diligently inspect every application, discuss it with the homeowners and follow-up months later to make sure everything was completed as proposed. They are also a valuable source of information for homeowners and regularly assist with answering questions about proposed changes.

The newsletter committee develops and distributes a print newsletter every quarter. Due to a homeowner's contact in printing, they are able to create the issues at a reduced cost. Many community notices, including these newsletters, are distributed door-to-door by volunteers and coordinated by 'block captains'. Newsletters are informative, eagerly anticipated and saved by residents for future reference, which indicates their ongoing value to the community. An annual homeowner directory is also created by this committee.

The pool and clubhouse committees check the facilities regularly and make sure that everything is in order. They are also available to assist homeowners with questions.



WestPark 2007 Board members (L to R): Dan Smith, Susan Hale (Vice- President), Marjorie Malley, Bill Fitzgerald (President), Jo-Ellen Dinger (Secretary), Donna Gibbons (Board Member). Not in photo: Molly Hegeman (Treasurer), Bob Reetz. (Board Member)

The website committee is also able to offer a full service website packed with community information due to volunteer efforts. Information is posted in a timely manner which makes this resource especially valuable to the residents.

The social committee is active year-round: they organize a special Christmas Carnival with carriage rides and activities for the kids. They have a summer pool social for each grade level. They have a wine-tasting event for adults and they celebrate "National Night

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Out” on a community-wide scale. There are numerous other community events, all coordinated by volunteers.

This high level of homeowner involvement enables the WestPark Community to excel in the arena of fostering community, which is one of the hardest ideals to achieve in this day and age in which time is so limited.

Another important factor in this community’s success is the Board’s focus on consistently and uniformly enforcing rules and always taking time to fully consider each homeowner’s input. Even when faced with a contentious topic that affects a large majority of the residents, as happened in recent years, the Board was steadfast in enforcing the rules and carrying out their policies. The point is, this Board faces the same problems that every community faces – vandalism, maintenance issues, non-compliance and homeowner apathy – but the large group of highly committed residents goes a long way towards achieving the all-important balance.



The Developer of the Year award is “presented to the developer who best exemplifies the creation, operation, and promotion of a harmonious community association in accordance with the goals of CAI”. Bryan Properties was recognized for Sunset Oaks in Holly Springs.

Bryan Properties is an experienced developer, having developed a number of communities throughout the triangle over many years, and most importantly, having learned from each of those experiences. Their approach is to create a sound foundation for the new community so that the association will be in a strong position once the developer moves on. They achieve this goal by involving homeowners in the governing process early on in the development phase.

At Sunset Oaks, even though the transition from developer to homeowner Board is not likely to occur for a number of years to come, the developer invited homeowners to elect two residents to the three person board and the developer appointed homeowners to the architectural review board. This enables residents to start participating in the governing of their community so that they can become familiar with the operations and processes involved in running a homeowner association. Bryan Properties also partnered early on with HRW for professional management so that the development is operated right from the start as a professionally run homeowner association with a focus on the future community’s priorities and with the tools, resources and experience available to make it work.

The developer’s representative and association President, Jim Earnhardt, meets regularly with the board members and has



Bryan Properties, from left to right: Jim Earnhardt, John Coley, D.R. Bryan



guided them through the rule making process this year in response to parking and signage concerns. His guidance is valuable because he is able to communicate the developer’s original vision and intentions to them, so that they can understand the governing documents in that context. This is valuable information that is often not available to homeowners after the transition from developer control has been made, and is vital to the interpretation of the rules and governing documents. His focus though, is to make the board aware that this is their community and their actions will shape its future.

A great benefit for the homeowners is the developer’s willingness to consider homeowner requests and implement them, while always balancing these requests with the developer’s business interests. He also recognizes the importance of regular communication and keeping residents informed of progress. By establishing a partnership, this creates a win-win situation for both the developer and the residents of this community.

HRW congratulates these three communities for their achievements!



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Welcome to HRW!

New Clients:

*Finsbury,
Heritage Pointe,
Ellerbe Creek,
Ashlyn,
River Estates,
Braefield,
New Hope Crossing TH,
Cottages of Stonehenge,
Weslyn,
Savannah Square*

New staff members who joined our team during the third and fourth quarters of 2007:

Makini Harris - Assistant Community Manager
Britta Billingsley – Assistant Community Manager
Tessie Sylvester - Community Manager
Jim Kealey - Community Manager
Patty Ryser – Community Manager
Cindy Tarr - promoted to Community Manager

Designations earned during 2007:

Debbie Edson – CMCA®
William Jordache – CMCA®
Mike Talmarkes - CMCA®
Gordana Sekulic – CMCA®
Alina Cochran – AMS®
Cathy Wade – AMS® and PCAM®

Certified Manager of Community Associations® (CMCA®)
Association Management Specialist® (AMS®)
Professional Community Association Manager® (PCAM®)

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