

## Introducing our “Housing With Love Walk” Celebrity Walker - Pam Parmakian

As the turn of the millennium approached, I was living in Provincetown and working as a real estate appraiser. The housing market was hot, prices were high and business was booming. But as prices continued to climb, I watched my friends and others I had known in the community for 20 years being pushed off the cape. To find out why this was happening, I joined the newly formed Affordable Housing Task Force and quickly realized that I was part of the problem.

So I contacted Ted Malone, owner of Community Housing Resources (CHR), to let him know that I was interested in working with him. My earlier professional experience as a business manager and my appraisal experience seemed like good transferable skills to his mission of creating affordable housing. I didn't know where I would fit in, but I knew that I wanted to be part of the solution. Well, you know you're moving in the right direction when the doors keep opening. I guess I was on the right road because Ted called a week later with a job opportunity and after getting to know each other better, I was hired as CHR's property management coordinator.

During the 5 years that I worked for CHR, I learned that the need was greater than I had originally thought. Seniors who didn't own property were desperate for housing in order to age close to their families and in the community where they spent most of their lives. Single moms needed housing stability in order to focus on their children and their work life. Many business owners were calling for housing for their employees too. And I've met some of the most amazing people. One particular family really stands out for me. The mom was working for a local inn and raising her three children alone. For seven years, they lived in a one room hotel room while trying to find housing they could afford. After being selected for housing with CHR, the kid's school teachers pitched in to completely furnish the apartment because the family literally had no furniture. Talk about being part of the solution! It was a real community effort.

Today, I work for MB Management, a regional affordable housing property management company that has clients all over Cape Cod. I no longer spend all my time working directly with residents and families, but I still find plenty of inspiration with the volunteer boards and staff. Nobody makes a lot of money in affordable housing and the majority of the work is done by hard working volunteers and mission driven staff. They all saw the need and what was happening in their communities and got involved with their time and their talent. I love being part of this cape wide community of people who care about each other and who express that care and concern with real solutions.

I'm honored that the CDP tagged me as a celebrity walker for this fundraiser. I've long admired the CDPs comprehensive approach. They help keep people in their homes through the housing rehab program, help people buy new homes through their first time homebuyer classes and house over 49 year round families in their rental properties. And right now, they've got another 12 rental units under construction. I hope you will support my passion for affordable housing by sponsoring me as a walker for the 2010 Housing with Love walk. You can click right here to make a donation directly on their website. Thank you!