I grew up in Seattle, coming of age in the early nineties, and with my own maturity, the city grew up alongside me. That cute street on Queen Anne, where my mom still lives, is a microcosm of what’s happening in Seattle. Where small houses were torn down to make way for large houses, and the reasonably priced bungalows, once the homes for middle incomes, now suitable for those making six figures.

Four years ago, after getting divorced, I found myself renting a small basement apartment, for myself and my kids, who live with me for half of each week. I didn’t know that I would stay there four years. With my kids, and the years going by, the idea of having a place, where we could live with comfort and put down some roots in a neighborhood felt so appealing, even if unattainable.

When you’re twenty and you’re going to the community college, life is elastic. You can move from place to place or even city to city. Life is such a contrast when more than one family makes a move every month. And there are too many people living in this city, who are too young and too poor to have caught the housing bubble while it swallowed Seattle.

At the suggestion of a friend, I attended the Homestead orientation. I had managed to keep my credit intact, and was slowly building a modest savings. With rent for a decent two bedroom around town averaging from steep to downright depressing, the idea of owning my own condo or townhouse took hold for me. Once I saw what I’d be saving in my mortgage payments with the combined grant from the City of Seattle and Washington State, factored in, and the mortgage being 30 year fixed, and not some sloppy hands deal, I felt hopeful that for me I didn’t need to feel excluded from the city where I live and happen to have pretty much always called home.

So we’re all settled in now. I bought a beautiful built green townhouse in the redeveloped Rainier Vista neighborhood, just blocks from the new Light Rail mass transit system. Even if I never make a lot of money, when I’m older, it will be paid off and I will have the security of having a home.

I think home ownership has meaning when economic security can so easily slip through our fingers. I don’t need to feel like a failure because I’ve chosen to work in an arena where my life has a focus on the community, and where I just don’t...

Homeowner Story
By Ezra Basom, Homestead Homeowner #24

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So we’re all settled in now. I bought a beautiful built green townhouse in the redeveloped Rainier Vista neighborhood, just blocks from the new Light Rail mass transit system and a short bike ride to Columbia City. My boys and I love the neighborhood, designed with great urban design and in such a friendly way. The emotions of buying a house and moving in are hard to describe. I think for me, having moved around so much as an adult, the idea that I could live in this house for the rest of my life is hard to understand. But there is also a feeling of stability, knowing that this home is mine and even if I never make a lot of money, when I’m older, it will be paid off and I will have the security of having a home.

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I think home ownership has meaning when economic security can so easily slip through our fingers. I don’t need to feel like a failure because I’ve chosen to work in an arena where my life has a focus on the community, and where I just don’t make a lot of money. Seattle has largely become a city without much opportunity left for those between the wealth and the poor. Lucky for me Homestead is a program that bridges that gap, and because of that, I can feel part of this city, not through memories from a city long gone, but as an adult, living here now.

Thank You Washington Mutual!
Washington Mutual Bank provided a leadership grant of $45,000 to Homestead for 2008 to continue to grow and expand its work in support of first time homeowners.

Washington Mutual has a long legacy of making the communities they serve better places to live, work and do business. Washington Mutual has continued to be an integral part of Homestead’s success with its first investment in 2001.

"Washington Mutual Bank is pleased to partner with an organization that provides great value to our community and we hope our contribution will assist you in continuing to provide great services," said Paula Mahoney, Community Affairs Relationship Manager.

Thank you, Washington Mutual, for your legacy of supporting Homestead homeowners!
Ten and Thirty-Two (and counting)
By Sheldon Cooper, Executive Director

My daughter just turned 10 months old last week and is bursting with energy for life. It seems that every day she is acquiring new skills and capacities. The visible and audible joy she consistently expressed when seeing a cat has recently expanded to include dogs, favorite people, phones, cell phone chargers, coffee grinders and metro buses. Yesterday she was struggling to coordinate her arms and legs to produce an effective forward crawl, and today she charges around the room on all fours exploring every nook. Her brain synapses (so I’ve read) are developing at an exponential rate. It’s all her parents can do to keep up with her.

In many ways, Homestead is in a similarly exciting growth phase.

We’re growing fast. We recently added our 32nd house to the land trust and have five more homes scheduled to be added in the next 6 weeks. At this pace, we’ll double our stock of affordable homes and the number of homes added to the land trust over year.

We’re planning for more growth. We’re almost fully budgeted but still have a few opportunities to add capacity. With Homestead’s Annual membership meeting approaching, we wanted to reach out to you and let you know that we currently have open volunteer positions for Board members in three categories: Community-At-Large, General Member and Leasing Member (Homestead Waiting List and/or Homeowner) positions.

Homestead’s Board is comprised of 9 members. The Board includes equal numbers of three types of board members – members who own homes on Homestead land, general Homestead members, and those representing the broader community at-large. In this way, governance of the organization is structured to represent homeowners, members and the community as a whole.

Board members are voted into service through Homestead’s General Membership for staggered 3-year terms and are responsible to set organizational priorities and make policy decisions, approve the annual operating budget, develop and steward organizational resources, and evaluate recommendations of Homestead committees.

The commitment level of a Homestead board member is:

• Attend Homestead’s monthly board meetings (second Wednesdays of each month from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM)
• Participate in Homestead’s work in a way that works for you outside of monthly board meetings (examples of this participation could include serving on one of Homestead’s committees)
• Participates in fundraising
• 3-year Board term
• Approximately 5 hours per month time commitment

If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Sheldon Cooper at 206.323.1227, ext. 113 or sheldon@homestead-clt.org and he will provide you with a board application and discuss the nomination process.

Save the Date! 2008 Annual Membership Meeting!

Come and join us in community at Homestead’s 2008 Annual Membership Meeting. It will be a fun evening at the Central District’s own Central Cinema with desserts and wine, community building, membership activities and voting.

The event will be held Tuesday, October 21, 2008 > 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Central Cinema > 1411 21st Avenue > Seattle WA 98122

Homestead Community Land Trust’s members and supporters help us accomplish a vital mission in our community and keep homes affordable for generations.

Please contact us if you would like to help with 1) volunteer at the event with set up and coordination, or 2) help promote Homestead membership in your community

We will be voting to elect new Board of Delegate members toward the end of the evening.

There is no cost to attend. For more information about the event, please contact Kristin Bolken at 206.323.1227, ext. 114 or kristin@homestead-clt.org.