



# real estate

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## Durham neighbors pay it forward

Story by Sally Keeney // Photo contributed

Across the Triangle, homeowners in 55-plus active-adult communities are finding ways to connect to each other and lend expertise or a helping hand when another neighbor needs it.

When Vicky Clay, a cancer survivor, moved to Creekside at Bethpage, a new-home neighborhood at 3500 Page Road in Durham, she helped a Creekside husband who was navigating his wife's terminal illness.

Her experiences receiving and giving help encouraged her to found "Paying It Forward," a non-profit organization of homeowners in Creekside managing an informal network of more than 60 volunteers — all residents of Creekside at Bethpage.

These volunteers provide support, compassion and companionship to their neighbors whenever a helping hand is needed. Neighbors can simply name a need and participating Pay It Forward members lend a hand or help find someone who can.

"Our volunteers support a wide range of requests," Clay said. "From meal deliveries to coffee chats, we are all able to do something to help our

fellow neighbors."

Creekside resident Charlotte Paul has been a volunteer and a recipient. She describes what happened after her husband, Andy, tripped on a rug in their home. "He took a terrible fall," Paul said. "While he was in the hospital, I realized the rugs needed to come up."

Paul placed a call to Kevin Walls, the Pay It Forward board secretary-treasurer. "In no time, Kevin and another neighbor came over to roll up the rugs and store them in our attic," Paul said. "They made our home ready for Andy's return. It was a gesture I won't forget; it alleviated the burden at home while I was focused on my husband in the hospital."

Pay It Forward has been operating informally for the past year with a goal of making life easier for neighbors. The group is now developing rules and bylaws, establishing protocols for receiving and assigning requests and promoting their initiative to more neighbors. Much like Clay and Paul, Walls wants to see the grassroots movement turn into a lasting endeavor.

Walls, one of the first homeowners in Creekside,



Creekside Pay It Forward Founder Vicky Clay delivers groceries to her Creekside at Bethpage neighbor Charlotte Paul. The grassroots initiative has taken on new life in the 55-plus active adult community with more than 60 volunteers ready and willing to help each other out in times of need.

has taken on much of the research and legwork to formalize the initiative and set it up for expansion in 2018. Creekside at Bethpage currently has 295 homeowners. When built out, there will be 650 homes. A new series of townhomes are available that range in size from approximately 1,294 to 1,342 square feet with two or three bedrooms, two or three bath-

rooms, and attached two-car garages.

At this point, there are more people signed up to volunteer than requests coming in, which Walls describes as a "good problem to have." Pay It Forward volunteers are in the process of "buttoning up our organization to ensure it is ready for that equation to flip as we grow within the Creekside

community," Walls said.

Community developer AV Homes Carolinas has committed to support Creekside's Pay It Forward with a year-long sponsorship to cover the organization's insurance costs, host its meetings and events, and provide miscellaneous support as requested.

"We're proud of this Creekside at Bethpage community and the unique atmo-

sphere we're nurturing for our active adult homeowners with our activities and events, but this special initiative was one they started on their own, and we're happy to sponsor it," said Bill Kiselick, President of AV Homes Carolinas. "This effort is what being a neighbor is all about."

Creekside at Bethpage is a 55-plus active adult community at 3500 Page Road in Durham being developed by AV Homes, which offers spacious, ranch-style houses and master-down townhomes with floor plans ranging from 1,294 to over 2,600 square feet. Home prices start in the \$240,000s.

The community clubhouse contains social rooms, arts and crafts studio, amphitheater, computer center, hobby and game room, billiards and fully equipped fitness center with aerobics and dance studio. Outdoor amenities include swimming pool, tennis, bocce ball and pickleball courts as well as lawn bowling and gardening plots. There are walking and biking trails, ponds, and open park space.



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