



Press Release

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San Juan Architect Honored for Outstanding Volunteer Work in Affordable Housing

Spokane, Wash. —Sept. 28, 2011— The Washington State Housing Finance Commission presented a *2011 Friend of Housing Award* to retired Orcas Island architect John Campbell at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane during the annual *Housing Washington* conference.

"John Campbell has been a force for affordable housing in San Juan County for decades," said Washington State Housing Finance Commission Executive Director Kim Herman. "John has hardly retired! As a volunteer, he has never ceased creating home designs and working with great imagination to provide housing for many need people in his community."

Campbell structured his professional volunteerism by founding Homes For Islanders, a nonprofit affordable housing development firm in San Juan County. The firm uses the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development 523 program to develop "sweat equity" homes that allow purchasers to work into homeownership. He volunteered his architectural skills through the firm, designing all of the homes.

The result is that six neighborhoods now provide 49 homes for working families who otherwise could not afford housing in Washington's least

affordable county. Twenty-one additional homes will be completed soon.

Campbell serves on the San Juan County Housing Bank Commission, formerly the Housing Advisory Board, which is a volunteer advisory board to the County Council on affordable housing issues, programs, and policies. Funding was obtained to conduct an affordable housing planning effort resulting in an affordable housing action plan for San Juan County.

Campbell's accomplishments do not end here.

In 1998, he wrote a grant application to the state's Housing Trust Fund to establish a down payment assistance loan fund for low-income, first time homebuyers in the county. The application was rejected since Campbell was not a county employee, but a volunteer. The application was reformatted and submitted by John Manning, director of the county Health Department, who commented that John Campbell did most of the hard work and research for the \$474,000 grant awarded in 1999. An additional Housing Trust Fund grant was awarded in 2002 totaling \$250,000. Since inception, this program has helped over 45 low-income people purchase homes.

Knowing there was also a need for affordable rental housing, Campbell went to HUD to request Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers for county residents. HUD awarded those vouchers and today this program provides twenty low-income disabled residents with long-term, stable housing subsidies.

In 2008, Campbell prompted the county to use some of its 2163 Homeless funds to provide rental subsidies for extremely low-income seniors that were at great risk of homelessness. Through his leadership the Housing Bank Commission developed the San Juan County Senior Rent Subsidy, which currently provides twelve very low-income seniors with stable rental subsidies. This program was expanded to include eight disabled persons.

In 2010, dissatisfied with the County's response to low-income housing issues, Campbell petitioned the Growth Management Hearings Board to force the county to take action. While this Petition was unsuccessful, the advocacy community supporting it was strengthened through the effort.

Obviously, John Campbell has certainly not retired yet!

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