• Organization: Friends of the Dwight Historic District/Greater Dwight Development Corporation

• Full street address of organization (Fellows must be provided with a desk and computer at placement site and cannot work remotely): 230 Edgewood Avenue, New Haven, CT 06511

• Website:
  • GDDCNH.org
  • FriendsOfTheDwightHistoricDistrict.org

• Name and title of person who will be the Fellow’s direct supervisor (the supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis): Patricia M. Wallace, LMSW

• Phone number and e-mail address of proposed direct supervisor: 203-285-5077, patwallace200@comcast.net

• Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 26 and Friday, August 7, 2020): flexible within that time period.

• Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe: yes, completely flexible.

• Proposed work schedule (placements should be equivalent to full-time and not more than 37.5 hours/week): 10-5 with some evening and weekend hours required.

Placement Description

• Organization description (mission statement, population served. 150 words or less.): Friends of the Dwight Historic District exists to preserve the places and stories of our historic neighborhood, and to assist our neighbors to maintain their historic properties and our neighborhood’s streetscapes. We are a National Historic District. There are 4,403 people in the neighborhood, 39%
Dwight has the highest percent of low-income people in the City. Seniors may own a home in Dwight, but paying taxes, insurance and upkeep on an older home may be a challenge. Utility costs may be high on an older home, but going to solar may seem risky. Finding qualified, licensed building tradespeople and fair prices may be challenging. When developers come knocking, people may be tempted to sell rather than tackle these challenges.

• **Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (50 words or less. This will be used as your organization’s project description summary on the PPSF website, so be succinct):**

To carry forward the work begun in 2019 by neighbors, with assistance of a Yale Presidential Fellow, to document blight in our historic district, and to assist property owners to obtain the information and resources to fix up their homes.

• **Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow. (Suggested length: one to two pages.)**

**Background**

In May, 2019 Pat Wallace initiated a project to create a snapshot of the state of the historic houses in the Dwight Neighborhood National Historic District (DNNHD). This seemed important because of proposed developments on Howe Street not in keeping with the historic district, and a proposal from Alders that would allow developers to do more of the same more easily. Many people in Dwight that bought our homes did so not because we were preservationists, but because they were affordable. At a time when the neighborhood is getting to be “hot”, how are people doing with caring for our homes and with finding the resources to do so? Developers are starting to knock on doors to offer to buy homes, presumably as cheaply as possible, possibly with a goal of an eventual tear-down. Gentrification could mean the loss of houses and neighborhood character, but also could mean the loss of the community if everyone sold out and left. People have the right to sell their property. But how to help people so they do not sell their homes

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because they didn’t know about resources that could help them to fix and keep them?

Blight Survey
In 2019, NHS of New Haven agreed to provide the services of a Yale Presidential Fellow, a student in the Public Health Program at Yale. Volunteers were recruited to go door-to-door to do two things:
1. to use a written survey to write down information about the outside of the house; and
2. to leave a page of written information about where to get resources to fix up the house.
We focused on 1-4 family homes owned by individuals, not LLCs. Every house was surveyed. Pat got permission from NHS, from the New Haven Preservation Trust and from the Community Action Agency to put information in the handout about the kind of help they could provide to the home owners in the DNNHD. The response from the people we talked with was almost universally positive. (One or two people were worried that we were there to cause them trouble.) Helen entered the information into a database we created, and turned the data into a map. Thus it is possible to see where all the houses are located that need paint, or a porch repair, etc. We are not making this data public, because we don’t want to cause trouble for people, nor do we want to make it easy for developers to go after houses.

Next steps
1. It would be a good idea to create a committee of people to look at the data to see what the neighborhood might want to do. For example, should we try to get a program created to help people to paint their houses? Get volunteers recruited to help the elderly and/or disabled to fix porches or do painting or clean up the yard? What resources could be tapped?
2. Should we do an open house event for homeowners where they could meet and talk to staff from the non-profits that are prepared to assist, and to meet licensed tradespeople from the neighborhood that could be hired to do work? To be able to learn about funding they could apply for by talking to staff that could explain and answer questions?
3. It would be a good idea to create a committee to look at the rest of the houses in the neighborhood that are owned by LLCs/absentee
landlords, to see what shape they are in, and to press the City to make these companies tend to them so that there is no more “demolition by neglect.”

- List specific skills/experience required for the project:
  - Project planning and implementation experience
  - Experience with recruiting and coordinating volunteers
  - Ability to work as part of a small group
  - Familiarity with Microsoft Office programs (Word, Excel, Powerpoint) and a mapping program.

- Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement):
  A car is not required, but a bike would be helpful.

- Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your organization in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, describe any work that Yale students have done with your organization.
  We received assistance from a Yale Presidential Fellow in the summer of 2019 thanks to our partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven.