

## **BUILDING CONNECTIONS**

Better Housing for Tompkins County, Inc. (BHTC) is a not for profit organization that works to improve the housing of low and moderate-income residents in Tompkins County. BHTC strives to ensure that no person in Tompkins County is without a safe, comfortable, and affordable place to call home. To this end, BHTC offers first-time homebuyer assistance, housing rehabilitation, home repairs, and manages elder cottages and other homes for low-income elders and people living with disabilities. With so many programs to oversee, BHTC's staff identified a need for volunteers to support their efforts.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVE:** Our team's objective was to connect Better Housing for Tompkins County with a reliable and sustainable network of volunteers and/or apprentices to support their programs and to develop materials and guidelines to establish a low-key volunteer program that could be easily managed by BHTC's busy staff.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:**

Better Housing for Tompkins County

During the CAP process members of the group contacted more than 25 organizations, businesses, and individuals for input to our project.

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES:**

1. Conversations took place with many area organizations to research the feasibility of a "partnership" which would provide apprentices and/or volunteers to support BHTC's home repair program. It was established that due to a variety of reasons including liability, transport and mentorship requirements that such long term volunteer support of the home repair program was not currently feasible.
2. A "low-key" volunteer program was initiated to support BHTC's administrative staff. Materials developed include: An introduction to BHTC for volunteers, volunteer job descriptions, an application form, a statement of confidentiality and guidelines for recruiting and interviewing volunteers.
3. These materials provide a template for expansion so that BHTC can more fully benefit from the support of volunteers seeking to share their time and talents.