



Charlottesville Police Chief Timothy J. Longo (from left), Charlottesville Area Community Foundation President John Redick, Charlottesville Police Department Foundation President Randy Castleman and Sgt. Joe Hatter celebrate a \$75,000 grant to assist police officers with downpayments on homes in the city.

\$75,000 grant to subsidize city living for police officers

By Ted Strong

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The Charlottesville Area Community Foundation on Friday announced a \$75,000 Catalyst Grant to help city police officers find housing in Charlottesville.

Right now, fewer than a dozen of the city's 117 officers live within Charlottesville's boundaries.

The only city employees required to live within the city are department heads, such as Police Chief Timothy J. Longo.

The funds will go to the Charlottesville Police Department Foundation to help officers with downpayments on homes.

Longo said the program would help officers move into the city, or into the area immediately outside the city limits.

Some officers live as far away as Augusta and Nelson counties, Longo said.

"It's exceptionally important for a couple of reasons," Longo said. "Not only does it help connect officers to the people that they serve, makes them a stakeholder, but it's better for their families."

Longo said much of his force

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is relatively young, and may be looking to settle down in the years to come.

The starting salary for Charlottesville police officers is \$35,256. The median value for owner-occupied homes in Charlottesville from 2005 to 2007, the most recent period for which data is available, was \$242,700.

The average sale price of homes in Charlottesville in the first nine months of 2009 was \$247,000, according to the Charlottesville Area Association of Realtors.

John Redick, president of the community foundation, said this is the third and final year of the group's special focus on affordable housing. Previously, the group gave money to the Albemarle Housing Improvement Program and Virginia Supportive Housing.

The foundation hasn't yet picked a topic to address in next year's catalyst grants, but expects to have more unrestricted money to donate, he said.

The group, founded in 1967, is a permanent endowment that invests donations so that it can provide grants to qualified charitable organizations.