The renovation of Riverside Park Apartments has been life-changing for Phesoya Christian and her son, who uses a wheelchair. Riverside Park was renovated with financing from Hope Credit Union through low-income housing tax credits. The renovations included handicapped-accessible features, such as specially-fitted bathtubs and lowered shelving, in some apartments. Phesonya says the amenities have made all the difference for her family and, for the first time, her son has his own bedroom. “It helps me as far as moving him around. He’s more comfortable here because of this better living space.”

**A Comfortable Home**

In the 1st Quarter of 2017, 100% of HOPE’s new mortgage loans were high-impact loans. These are to minorities, female, low-income home buyers and first-time home buyers.
**Brewing Success**

Raymond Horn used to share his homemade cold-brew coffee with the staff at Table 100, the restaurant where he worked. He always knew there was a market for the artisan coffee, and within a few years he was selling his brew from his Mississippi Cold Drip Coffee & Tea Co. in Jackson. When Raymond was ready to expand, he couldn’t get a line of credit at a bank because of his troubled financial past. HOPE stepped in and provided the loan the company needed to expand. Sales at Mississippi Cold Brew have doubled from the first year and Raymond is preparing to expand in Fort Elizabeth, ME, with his sights set on Memphis, TN; Kentucky and Florida.

**Enjoying Retirement**

A radio advertisement gave John Westbrook the answer he needed to get from under a cloud of debt. Westbrook, a retiree, had taken out high-interest, payday loans for various emergencies. One day, he heard a HOPE radio ad about HOPE’s financial services and products. Westbrook said he was approved for a lower-interest loan to pay off the higher-interest debt within two days. He’s also opened a savings account to create a better financial cushion in his retirement so he can spend more time fishing and farming.
Family Ties
Hope Credit Union has been there for Allison Omelia during tough times in her life. When the preschool teacher’s car needed repairs, she was approved for a loan by HOPE. “Without a car, I wouldn’t have a job. I wouldn’t be able to go to school. I had nowhere to turn and HOPE helped me out.” Allison paid off the loan and improved her credit in the process, opening the door for her to get approved for a cell phone. Later, when Allison needed surgery, her husband secured a loan from HOPE to cover the insurance deductible. The couple has since opened checking accounts with HOPE and plan to one day finance a new home.

Solutions for America’s Economic Divide
At the Aspen Institute Summit on Inequality and Opportunity, HOPE’s Bill Bynum joined Tom Shapiro of Brandeis University, Jose Quiñonez of Mission Asset Fund and Gillian White of The Atlantic to explore the topic “Toxic Inequality: How America’s Racial Wealth Gap Threatens Our Future.” The panel explored strategies for addressing the country’s growing racial wealth divide. Bynum explained how HOPE is working to engage residents and other CDFIs in persistent poverty areas to develop comprehensive, locally-based solutions. Bynum’s column, “Building Barriers Won’t Solve Economic Inequality” can be found at www.aspeninstitute.org.