

## Affordable Housing for Community Needs



*For 50 years, the LIFT Foundation has quietly and steadily helped people with very low incomes access affordable housing in the Kalamazoo area.*

**LIFT IS A NONPROFIT DEDICATED TO BUILDING, PRESERVING, OPERATING AND MAINTAINING PROPERTIES.** But housing alone is not the goal. LIFT's mission is to connect residents with the larger community and ultimately stabilize lives.

The LIFT Foundation grew from a cross-sector collaboration of business, corporate, civic and nonprofit leaders. In 1966 they banded together to respond to a growing community need to provide low-income families with low interest loans. Not long after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was allocating funds to increase housing for people with low incomes. But in the Kalamazoo area no entity was structured to receive that funding. LIFT stepped forward to fill the gap—to access available funding and manage resources in a way that would create and preserve affordable housing.

Since that time, LIFT has emerged as a capable and creative ally for people with low incomes and disabilities.

Today LIFT operates and maintains more than 500 apartment homes for individuals and families in our community. Through efficient management, steady governance and a wide range of working partnerships, LIFT broadens access to housing for people unable to afford market rate properties and in the process helps to improve their quality of life. ▲

**THE LIFT FOUNDATION** is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to building, preserving, operating and maintaining homes for people with low incomes. LIFT is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors that oversees and monitors the organization's focus on four essential approaches to serving the community:

- ▲ accessing *funding* for low-income housing to meet community needs;
- ▲ ensuring efficient *management* of properties and resources;
- ▲ providing steady *governance* to connect LIFT with the community as a whole; and
- ▲ building greater *stability* for residents who desire to improve their quality of life.

### LIFT BOARD MEMBERS

David Anderson, *President*

Brenda Earhart

Daniel McGlinn, Esq., *Vice President*

Carole McNeese

Jodi Milks, *Secretary*

Tom Nehil

Rosalie Novara

Stacey Randolph-Ledbetter

Dee Velkoff

Karen Wile, *Treasurer*

Michael Williams

Claudia Wink-Basing

*For more information about LIFT and a complete list of LIFT PARTNERS, please visit [www.thelifoundation.org](http://www.thelifoundation.org)*

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## ▲ STEADY GOVERNANCE

LIFT business meetings keep Board members abreast of the organization's operations overall. But Board Members agree it is the monthly report from *Resident Initiatives Committee* meetings that provides a snapshot of how well LIFT is working on the ground. "The Resident Initiatives Committee meetings help us keep the focus on what it's like to live in LIFT properties," says Board Member Claudia Wink-Basing. "Our mission is to house people, but we're not done when we give them four walls."

Around the Resident Initiatives table at **INTERFAITH HOMES**, property managers sit down with LIFT Board Members Wink-Basing and Stacey Randolph-Ledbetter and the LIFT management team to discuss issues, share timely information and recap activities. Summer youth programs, workforce development opportunities, resident concerns, community gardening plans and upcoming



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~ CLAUDIA WINK-BASING  
LIFT BOARD MEMBER

events are all on the agenda. So, too, are safety issues and social successes.

At one recent meeting, the **GLADYS STREET APARTMENTS** manager told how attendance at a social gathering skyrocketed when residents chose both the movie and menu. For Randolph-Ledbetter, the residents' menu selection is about more than a preference for rotisserie chicken over pizza. It points to a deeper respect for residents and highlights an essential element of LIFT's mission. "They choose, and that's important," Randolph-Ledbetter says. "LIFT is concerned about what residents want, about their wholeness as people." ▲



## ▲ EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT

For LIFT, efficient management can mean streamlining process, avoiding duplication, managing expenses to produce cost savings, reducing energy use—or *all* of these things depending on the property and emerging opportunities that might benefit residents and the community as a whole.

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~ STACEY RANDOLPH-LEDBETTER,  
LIFT BOARD MEMBER

At **AZURE HEIGHTS APARTMENTS**, efficient management of 10 apartments for persons with a disability means partnering with experts to provide top-notch services to residents. **RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES, INC.** provides 24/7 on-site staffing through funding from **KALAMAZOO COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**. LIFT's professional



management company, **LOCKHART MANAGEMENT & CONSULTING (LMC)**, handles all aspects of professional facility maintenance plus compliance monitoring to meet HUD regulations. The result is independent living environments that give residents steady support.

Efficient management at **DOUGLAS APARTMENTS** is an example of LIFT's adaptive capability to identify opportunities that will benefit of residents and the community alike. In 2011 LIFT sought American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding to transform the stately building into a "green" marvel. Energy-saving insulation, roofing, lighting, and heating and cooling systems gave Douglas Apartments a top-to-bottom overhaul. Since then, the building's reduced energy footprint has saved thousands in utility bills. For residents—and taxpayers—energy savings have meant no increase in rental rates.

Board Vice President Dan McGlenn believes that LIFT's community contribution is rooted in projects like these. "The LIFT story is about partnerships and innovative problem solving," he says. "As a nonprofit, LIFT is continually creating new ways of doing things that expand and preserve affordable housing." ▲



# LIFT BY THE NUMBERS

## ACCESSING FUNDING

The redevelopment planned for **HEATHER GARDENS**—perhaps better known as New Horizon Village—showcases LIFT’s service on a large scale. In 1972, the complex represented cutting edge investments in modular affordable housing. Forty years later, many of the 245 units—which included 161 designated as Section 8 housing for very low income residents—had fallen into a hazardous state of disrepair. “They had become impossible to maintain,” says David Anderson, LIFT Board president. “Without significant investment the property would have been shuttered, reducing considerably the number of affordable housing units in the Kalamazoo area.”

Beginning in 2010 LIFT acquired the New Horizon Village properties and took the lead on exploring funding opportunities and partnerships to preserve and rebuild the units. In 2012, 152 of New Horizon Village’s affordable housing units transitioned into **NEW VILLAGE PARK**. That same year LIFT

secured \$18 million in HUD, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and **KALAMAZOO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION** funds for a comprehensive rehabilitation to preserve the 152 New Village Park units for family housing. In January 2016, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) announced a \$9.2 million award in LIHTC funding to support rebuilding for the 79 remaining units in New Horizon Village.

Local cooperation, especially from the **CITY OF KALAMAZOO**, **KALAMAZOO COUNTY** and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, was crucial in securing resources throughout the process. “The MSHDA funding will improve the quality and availability of affordable housing at Heather Gardens,” Anderson says. “It represents quite an investment in our community, and is an important part of LIFT’s focus on widening access to affordable housing in the Kalamazoo area.” ▲

## LIFT PROPERTIES

### AZURE HEIGHTS APARTMENTS



### DOUGLAS APARTMENTS



### GLADYS STREET APARTMENTS



### HEATHER GARDENS

(formerly New Horizon Village)



## LIFT PROPERTIES

### INTERFAITH HOMES



### NEIGHBORHOOD APARTMENTS



### NEW VILLAGE PARK



### PORTAGE PINES



50  
years of service  
(1966–2016)

542  
apartment homes in  
Kalamazoo County

472  
units for people with very low incomes

56  
units for people with special needs

839  
adults in one- and two-bedroom apartments

439  
children living in well-maintained housing

1278  
residents in LIFT properties in total

34  
partnership organizations engaged with residents at LIFT properties

\$18 million  
in HUD funding awarded to New Village Park in 2013

\$9.2 million  
for renovation at Heather Gardens (formerly New Horizon Village) in 2016

## GREATER STABILITY FOR RESIDENTS

On a spring afternoon at **INTERFAITH HOMES**, the complex's *Neighborhood Network Center (NNC)* is buzzing with activity. But two-and-a-half year old Tony Gunn appears completely at home in the middle of it. His mom, Ashley Butrick, says they are regular participants in the **KALAMAZOO PUBLIC SCHOOLS (KPS)** Lift Up Through Literacy program held at Interfaith's NNC. "We live close by," says Butrick. "It's convenient and he loves it."



*"LIFT is concerned about the development of the clientele they're serving and open to partnerships."*

~ BRENDA EARHART  
LIFT BOARD MEMBER



While Parent Education Coach Leona Burns talks participants through the day's project, Tony happily sings the alphabet song. "A, B, C, D..." blends with the sound of scissors cutting construction paper, laughter and the occasional cry of a toddler. When Tony is tired of sitting, he pops over to the bookshelf and pulls out a favorite truck book.

Interfaith's NNC was the first HUD-designated Level 3 Model Center in Michigan, and one of only 33 centers in the U.S. to have achieved this status. HUD describes Model Centers like the Interfaith NNC as "shining examples of potential and possibility." But for Interfaith's 450-plus residents, more than half of them children, the Center is where LIFT's partners—**KPS**, **MICHIGAN WORKS**, **KALAMAZOO COLLEGE** and many others—provide

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~ DANIEL MCGLINN, ESQ.  
LIFT VICE PRESIDENT

services, programs and access to community resources.

As the KPS parent education program wraps up, school-aged children start arriving for CAPS (Community Advocates for Parents and Students), an afterschool tutoring program. CAPS has been bringing Kalamazoo College students to Interfaith Homes for a decade. LIFT Board Member Brenda Earhart, one of CAPS' founders, says



the flow of students putting down backpacks and working at tables or computer screens alongside their college student tutors is the result of LIFT's commitment to collaboration on behalf of residents. "LIFT is concerned about the development of the clientele they're serving and open to partnerships," Earhart says. "Kalamazoo College has been a steady participant and very supportive of this partnership." ▲