



Beacon
INTERFAITH HOUSING COLLABORATIVE

Building *on faith*

Spring 2016

www.beaconinterfaith.org

 @BelieveInHome



Photo: Rebecca Zenefski

Jim Kinder at home at The Lonoke.

The Lonoke opens up options

After six years at Lydia Apartments, Jim Kinder was ready to move on - and to make room at Lydia for someone who needed it more.

But Kinder wanted to maintain the connections at Lydia that supported his mental health stability and chemical dependency recovery. And he needed a subsidized apartment he could afford on his income of \$203 a month.

Last November, Kinder was one of the first new tenants at The Lonoke, Beacon's recently renovated property just blocks from Lydia Apartments. The \$3.38 million renovation transformed the 100-year-old, 19-unit building with needed upgrades to heating and plumbing systems, kitchens and bathrooms, and the building's exterior.

"I took one more step towards the mainstream," Kinder said. The apartment features charming woodwork and many windows with plenty of natural light for him to do his artwork. He has space for his aquarium and he and his dog, Pippin, take walks along familiar routes.

The renovation is one of four housing developments created or preserved with Beacon collaborating congregations Plymouth Congregational Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church in honor of the congregations' 150th anniversaries. The others are Nicollet Square, Abbott View and Great River Landing. ■

Letter from Lee

“The whole is more powerful than the sum of its parts.”

(apologies to Aristotle)

Dear Friends,

Every one of the means by which we strive to end homelessness - housing, the Families Moving Forward shelter program, and our Beacon Citizen grassroots advocacy - reflects our nature as a public-private collaborative. It takes the actions of each of you - donors, volunteers, members of faith communities, constituents, elected officials, public influencers - to end homelessness. In fact, together we become a movement more powerful than each individual's or congregation's action on its own.

Speaking of power, on May 12 we hope you'll join us at Acting on Faith, the annual gathering of Beacon congregations. This year's theme is Investing in Potential. We'll ask county and state officials to stand with us to end homelessness by investing in people who need support and stable housing to transform their lives.

Specifically, we'll ask for funding for services that will help youth to exit homelessness and move into independent adulthood, such as those provided at Nicollet Square, Prior Crossing and 66 West.

We'll also ask them to support Unlocking Opportunities legislation that would create state funding for supportive housing such as Great River Landing for people coming back into society after serving a prison sentence, ready to reconnect and rebuild their lives.

When both of our new youth housing developments, Prior Crossing and 66 West open in 2016 and 2017, respectively, we will be adding \$1 million of services for youth who have been homeless. So, even as we make these requests of our public servants, we invite our private supporters to consider the impact their gifts can make. For example, Angel Donors like Chuck and Hertha Lutz are helping us to create homes at 66 West by pledging \$10,000 or more each year for five years.

We are grateful for every action taken, every gift made to end homelessness. Together, we have the power to accomplish that goal. ■

With gratitude,
Lee Blons
Executive Director

Angel Donors give the gift of home



Chuck and Hertha Lutz outside the southwest Minneapolis home where they lived for 28 years.

After 28 years in a southwest Minneapolis single-family home, retirees Chuck and Hertha Lutz decided to downsize. They love the view from their new Richfield senior cooperative overlooking Woodlake Nature Center, where they enjoy wildlife, the lake and the change of seasons.

As members of Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer, a Beacon congregation, they'd toured Nicollet Square and donated many household items to Nic's Closet there.

Then, after learning about 66 West and touring the Edina youth housing site, they made an important decision: They'd donate one-fifth of the income from their home sale - \$50,000 over five years, to be exact - to create a home for a young person.

“We thought since we were benefiting from the sale of a home that we'd been blessed to occupy for many years, why not make some proceeds available for homeless youth?” Chuck said.

By making their gift, the Lutzes joined eight other Angel Donors who have pledged \$10,000 or more a year for five years to sponsor one of the 39 homes at 66 West. ■

To learn more about becoming an Angel Donor please contact Laura Vitelli, director of advancement, at 651-789-6260 ext. 210.

Beacon briefs

Prior Crossing to open this fall



Photo: Dick Foreman

While Don Oliver (left, with Gail Foreman of *The House of Hope Presbyterian Church* at a recent hard hat tour) and the crew from Watson-Forsberg finish construction at Prior Crossing, Beacon continues to work to secure the public and private funds (about \$500,000 each year) needed to provide services to the young people who will live there. Occupancy of its 44 studio apartments for youth and young adults is anticipated in early fall 2016. ■

Save the Date:

A 66 West groundbreaking celebration will be held July 12 at 5 p.m.

Supportive housing changes lives

Jamal, 21, earns \$12 an hour as a part-time assisted living aide - good preparation for the health care career he seeks - while attending Minneapolis Community and Technical College with plans to major in nursing.

He came to Nicollet Square a few months ago after fearing his future was uncertain because he didn't have a place to live and concentrate on homework. “To study you need a quiet place. Coming here, that is one big weight off my shoulders. There is less to worry about,” he said. “Everyone is kind and wants the best for you.”

Despite the hardships he's faced, Jamal is very grateful for the educational opportunities available to him here. “Having a stable place to live means having a peaceful state of mind,” he said. “Nicollet Square is a place to focus and work on rebuilding myself.” ■



Photo: Rebecca Zenefski

Jamal moved to the U.S. with his father and siblings when he was 12 and quickly learned English. His family's struggles left him homeless as a young adult.



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Beacon

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Acting on Faith 2016: Investing in Potential

Thursday, May 12

St. Mary's University Center, 2540 Park Ave., Mpls
More info: www.beaconinterfaith.org/acting-faith

Why should you participate?

Show public decision-makers that the community wants to prioritize the work to end homelessness through supportive housing that changes lives.

Mom of two finds help and hope through Families Moving Forward

Kanesha has some barriers in her background that make it difficult to get a job, she explained, but with the help of Families Moving Forward staff, she's keeping up hope. "They have been a huge support along the way," Kanesha said. "Any problems, they're there. They help me get through the process."

Kanesha recently completed a six-month treatment program. Her younger daughter lived with her while her older daughter visited on weekends. They're all together now. After many job interviews, Kanesha has finally landed a full-time job. This puts her in a strong position to apply for housing and pay rent, giving her girls the stability of home. ■



Photo: Rebecca Zenefski

Kanesha and her daughters posed for a family photo.

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