



PARTNERING TOGETHER IN MISSION FOR KALAMAZOO

The Dream Fund is a three-year capital campaign to raise \$1,000,000 to partner with five local agencies to fund affordable housing projects. We will work with our Kalamazoo partners to generate several housing units that will provide over 100 individuals with stable housing. We will also work with the Eastside, Northside, and Vine neighborhoods in addressing the needs identified in their neighborhood improvement plans.

The Dream Team is excited about this opportunity for the church to make a positive impact in our community. To read more about the Dream Fund Capital Campaign and how people have already benefited from the work of the partner agencies, please see page 4.



On Sunday, May 12, we invite you to be a part of our church's long history of reaching out in love and generosity to make a difference in our community. On that morning we will dedicate our pledge cards toward the Dream Fund Capital Campaign that will work toward addressing the housing needs of our neighbors, who for a number of reasons do not have a place to call "home." Please keep the church in your prayers as we begin to lay the foundations to this partnership.

The Dream of providing affordable housing for ALL

by the Dream Team

In the past three *First Word* issues, the Dream Team has reviewed the history of the Dream, its two-year process, and detailed the five non-profits chosen as partners.

As the opportunity to pledge to the Dream approaches, we want to remind you of some of the guidelines that led the team to this point. They are:

1. The Dream should be a project where our expenditure of time, effort and resources will make a significant difference in the lives of our Kalamazoo neighbors and our congregation.
2. We will be unable to complete this Dream on our own. Rather we are the encouragers, facilitators, and fundraisers. We will partner with existing organizations and assist them in meeting shared goals. This project will not add ongoing expense to the annual church budget.

As we anticipate making a significant difference in the lives of others and in our own lives, we hope you will be inspired by the stories from the people who have already benefited from the work of some of our partnering non-profits:

From a former resident of Kalamazoo Collective Housing: *"(During my time living in the co-op) I learned how to work together with a group and how a community can be a very powerful force for good among its members."* Another former resident said, *"KCH has been the place where I've formed the most fulfilling relationships of my life based on respect, humility, honesty, and fun."*

Lara was frustrated with the state of her street and ready to move but instead she and her husband joined **Building Blocks** in 2012. Since then, Lara has remained an active leader in Building Blocks' Sustained Program which is designed to build relationships, trust, community and the capacity of resident block-action groups to address issues, complete projects and defend the well-being of their street. It is because of Building Blocks, that Lara and her husband stayed and they remain confident that they can work with neighbors, undertake new projects and cope with any emerging problems

that may threaten their street.

From a former Open Doors and Next Door Shelter resident:

"The program helped transform my life by providing support when and where I needed it. It also facilitated many of my early-recovery growing pains that were necessary for me to become a whole person. I had lived at the shelter for 6 months and saved enough money to move into one of the Open Doors houses. I was asked to be the house leader and I gladly accepted the responsibility. The part that helped me grow was when I had to ask two of my friends who were residents to leave because they were not staying substance free. I had to choose between them and my recovery. Thankfully, I chose recovery! This is only one example of how the safe environment of the Open Door and Next Door helped me become who I am today. The people who work for the Open Door and Next Door are truly dedicated to helping."

In the years to come, there will be ample opportunities to not only give financially, but to get involved with our neighbors and our partnering non-profits and together create new stories. The housing market is fluid and the needs of our partners may vary from our original plans, but the goals of The Dream will remain the same and 100% of the funds raised will go to housing.

We kick-off this capital campaign on Sunday, May 12 with great anticipation, confident God will continue to lead us as we "live The Dream of providing affordable housing for all." ***You will soon receive in the mail a booklet on the capital campaign with a pledge card.*** Prayerfully consider how you can help with this campaign: your pledge, offering hands, and/or hands that pray. On May 12 we invite you to bring your pledge card to worship so that we may dedicate it to God. An addressed return envelope is included in the mailing for your pledge card if you are unable to be in worship with us that morning. May we who have been blessed, be a blessing!



For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:21