Jefferson Oaks construction begins

$17.6 million adaptive reuse of Oak Park school, grounds, to become 60-home community.

We broke ground June 27 on our largest development to date, an affordable housing community in Oak Park, which includes the adaptive reuse of the Thomas Jefferson School. The school will feature 20 one- and two-bedroom homes and the campus will host 40 three- and four-bedroom homes. Twenty-one of the homes will be set aside for supportive housing.

The high-quality residential homes, which will be built and maintained to be appealing and affordable for hard-working families and individuals, are expected to be available for leasing in the spring of 2018.

“The $17.6 million investment in the City of Oak Park will be a model community that brings quality homes with on-site amenities for individuals and families who want a wonderful place to live and play,” Marc Craig, our president, said at the groundbreaking ceremony. On-site amenities for residents will include a community room with a library, computer lab and meeting space, and a playground. There will also be controlled entry and security features, along with 120 off-street, surface parking spaces.

“This is an important moment for our community as we work together to bring new, quality homes for individuals and families in Oak Park,” said Marian McClellan, mayor of Oak Park. “With the support of so many partners, Jefferson Oaks is a visionary model on how we can lift up and support residents as they build their future for themselves and their families.”

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) approved the use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits for Jefferson Oaks with Cinnaire and its strategic partner MEF securing $14.6 million in equity funding from UnitedHealthcare, the largest investor in the new development. Cinnaire is also providing a $2.3 million loan, and we are providing $692,000

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“UnitedHealthcare’s investment in Jefferson Oaks is part of a company initiative to help people live healthier lives by connecting quality and affordable housing to better health,” Dennis Mouras, CEO, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Michigan, said at the groundbreaking.

“Today marks an important milestone in helping create new models for quality, affordable housing in Michigan,” said Earl Poleski, executive director, MSHDA. “Jefferson Oaks will provide new hope and opportunity for the families and individuals who get to call it home.”

Mark McDaniel, president and CEO of Cinnaire, said, “This investment will help meet a critical need in Michigan and we are proud to be a partner and help break ground on such an important housing community in Oak Park.”

Additional information on Jefferson Oaks is available on our website, communityhousingnetwork.org, under the Housing Developments dropdown.
Bring it Home is October 12

The evening includes time for networking, an open bar, a sit-down dinner and a silent auction.

One of the highlights of the evening will be the presentation of the seventh annual Emmett Jones Memorial Award. The annual Emmett Jones Memorial Award is presented to a person in one of our programs deserving recognition for hard work, perseverance and accomplishment.

We will also show our annual “Welcome to My Home” video allowing guests to “meet” some of the people who benefit from the generosity of our donors.

Proceeds from Bring it Home will be directed to our Critical Needs Fund that helps conquer barriers not solved by traditional housing programs.

Sponsorships are still available and tickets are on sale. For more information on either, please contact Lisa Fuhr at LFuhr@chninc.net or 248-824-7313 or visit www.communityhousingnetwork.org/support/bring-it-home.

Every time a bell rings...

In the classic holiday movie “It’s a Wonderful Life,” little Zuzu utters “Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings.”

There’s a new meaning for the well-known quote in our Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) and Community Programs departments.

Every time a bell rings here, it marks the triumph of someone being approved for housing. “When we hear the bell ring, we know someone will be signing a lease, getting keys and moving in,” says Renee Pelligrini, Housing Resource Community coordinator. Thanks to the efforts of the teams in the two departments, a total of 89 people were able to move into housing in 2016.

The bell and the new tradition is thanks to the idea and parting gift from Jessica Jasurda, who was a PATH/SOAR specialist before moving out of state with her family earlier this year. Prior to that, housing victories were celebrated with an announcement and clapping.

For those who work day after day meeting people who are homeless where they are staying - under viaducts, a car in a parking lot, a park, a shelter, or on the streets – the ringing of the bell is a joyous occasion for the entire team. “There are frustrating days when people are turned down for housing because of lack of income, past evictions and any other kinds of situations, so hearing the bell ring gives you a boost knowing that someone else made it,” says Renee.

In 2016, the PATH team reached out to 556 people who were homeless and 310 were enrolled in the program after meeting eligibility criteria and providing consent.

In addition, 111 in Oakland County received Rapid Rehousing assistance and 37 received prevention assistance through the Michigan State Housing Development Authority’s Emergency Solutions Grant program. An additional 69 were assisted with temporary rental assistance through HUD Rapid Rehousing. There were also 16 families served with short-term housing assistance through the Oakland County Rapid Rehousing grant from HUD.

Hearing the brightly colored bell ring is a cause for celebration for those who worked with someone who was homeless as well as the entire team.
We have always worked to ensure that the people we serve also benefit from community opportunities, We commit to people in our housing programs as partners and work in many ways to assist in their new life. much more than just securing a place for a person to live. true to our mission providing access to housing and housing resources. For us, it has always been about so receiving great access to resources providing furniture, transportation, healthcare, employment, food, and life skills, all of which play a vital role in a person’s success. Our supportive services coordinators become their allies, traveling the journey with them and providing the tools and resources in the path toward independent living. Recently, across the nation, and even closer to home, there has been a big push toward integration of behavioral health and physical health with an emphasis on social determinants including housing, employment and food. There is wisdom in the realization and acknowledgement that each of these factors are not only beneficial, but often critical, to one's success. While some funding sources are revising requirements to reflect this push, there are also new economic options available for organizations utilizing this model. Other agencies may need to scramble to coordinate sustainable services to receive funding from non-traditional partners, while we organizations utilizing this model. While some funding sources are revising requirements to reflect this push, there are also new economic options available for acknowledging that each of these factors are not only beneficial, but often critical, to one's success. Our supportive services coordinators become their allies, traveling the journey with them and providing the tools and resources in the path toward independent living. Recently, across the nation, and even closer to home, there has been a big push toward integration of behavioral health and physical health with an emphasis on social determinants including housing, employment and food. There is wisdom in the realization and acknowledgement that each of these factors are not only beneficial, but often critical, to one's success. While some funding sources are revising requirements to reflect this push, there are also new economic options available for organizations utilizing this model. Other agencies may need to scramble to coordinate sustainable services to receive funding from non-traditional partners, while we are very well aligned to pursue these new funding streams. We are positively positioned because from our very beginning, we built programs with the realization that while housing is a major step, is not the only factor in the multi-faceted path to stability.