

Oakman Place- Detroit



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BACKGROUND

Lutheran Child & Family Service of Michigan (LCFS) has provided service to Michigan's children and families through foster care, adoption, counseling and family preservation services for more than 111 years. Through this work with children and families, LCFS has identified that the lack of safe and affordable housing is one of the most significant challenges facing our

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children and families, particularly young adults. A survey of former Wayne County foster care youth revealed that 47% of the respondents have experienced one or more periods of homelessness prior to age 20 and 23% were homeless immediately upon leaving foster care.

AAB Development Strategies, LLC were hired to help LCFS to pull together a LIHTC project that would provide living accommodations to youth aging out of the foster care system. It's principal Al Bogdan and his Associate Tom Hickner started the systematic process of designing a response. They first introduced them to Focus Hope with the intention of creating a working partnership, applied and obtained a predevelopment loan from MSHDA, recruited the architect firm of Fusco Pappas and the Damone Group who had just designed and built the adjacent senior Presbyterian Village development. The team pulled together a design and projected cost and AABDS Team organized a LIHTC application to MSHDA, and systematically obtained HOME commitments from the City of Detroit, Wayne County and MSHDA. When the market conditions destroyed the LIHTC industry investment market, Bogdan and Hickner obtained a 1602 commitment from MSHDA and the Project closed and was built.



Tom Hickner

OAKMAN PLACE

LCFS and The Damone Group has developed a 9 one bedroom and 15 two bedroom units on Oakman Blvd, just east of the Focus:HOPE campus. The 9 one bedroom units are reserved for homeless youth and one of the two bedroom units for homeless families. The remaining units will be made available to families at 60% AMI (Area Media Income) or below. The project is located in a designated “cool cities” neighborhood.

SUPPORT SERVICES

LCFS will provide an opportunity for homeless youth to obtain housing and supportive services as they move into the adult world of self-sufficiency and independence. Supportive services will be provided onsite. Each resident youth will receive the services of a case manager, an educational liaison and an employment specialist. The case manager will have primary responsibility for developing a service plan with the youth or family and monitors service delivery. The educational liaison will complete an educational assessment, provide input into the services plan, assist the youth in developing an individual education plan which sets reasonable goals for high school completion, vocational training or college and monitor educational progress. The employment



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specialist will complete a career interest and aptitude inventory with each client and prepare employment recommendations for inclusion in the services plan. The employment specialist will also be responsible for job skills training and the financial literacy curriculum. Access to public transportation will allow youth to travel to work, personal appointments and to attend school.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS

Development of Oakman Place has been an ongoing collaborative involving Focus:HOPE, residents of the community, the Wayne County Continuum of Care-Homeless Coalition, the City of Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), the Oakman Boulevard Community Association (OBCA) and LCFS.

The Damone Group of Troy, the construction firm for Oakman Place, has 35 years of experience in developing a broad range of residential, commercial, retail and industrial projects throughout the Detroit area.

Fusco, Shaffer & Pappas, Inc., the architectural firm for Oakman Place, also has extensive architectural experience in designing and building many affordable housing projects throughout the Detroit area.

Oakman Place Apartments are located at 811 Oakman Blvd., Detroit, MI 48238 and will be managed by LHM Asset Management, LLC, an experienced MSHDA and HUD property management company.

Young homeless get a boost

Housing program also offers support to needy families

BY ORALANDAR BRAND-WILLIAMS
The Detroit News

Detroit — It was just a few months ago that LaKeisha Johnson and her small children slept in a car when they couldn't count on a relative or a friend to provide them with a place to stay.

On Thursday, Johnson, 24, showed off her new two-bedroom apartment in Oakman Place Apartments, part of a program to house young, homeless adults, as well as those who have aged out of the state's foster care system.

"This is beautiful," said Johnson, as she showed off the expansive ground floor apartment, fully furnished with new furniture. "It doesn't seem real."

The 24-unit, three-story complex on Oakman Boulevard near Woodrow Wilson includes gated parking and a washer and dryer in each apartment.

The \$5.1 million development is the result of a partnership that includes Lutheran Child & Family Service of Michigan, Focus:HOPE and Michigan State Housing Development Authority MSHDA.

Robert G. Miles, president and CEO of Lutheran Child & Family Service of Michigan, said the Oakman Place program provides adequate housing and other support services for homeless youth and those who "age out of the welfare system."

"Very few of our own children



LaKeisha Johnson, a mother of three who had been sleeping in her car over the summer, is most excited about having a washer and dryer inside her new apartment at Oakman Place in Detroit.

make the transition into adulthood without ongoing support and supportive services," Miles said. "Through this development, we have become more sensitized to the number of families who are challenged to find adequate, safe and affordable housing."

Miles said Thursday he hopes the residents will "love each other, support each other and become a community."

Selecting the first families to live in Oakman Place was a difficult task for social worker Carolyn Rayford, the deputy regional director for Lutheran Child & Family Service.

"That was pretty emotional deciding which person to

choose," Rayford said Thursday. "We had well over 100 applicants."

Rayford said there is no time limit to how long the residents can stay in the apartments. They also receive job assistance and support programs for continuing their education.

Johnson, who is six months pregnant, said she is looking forward to re-enrolling in college to become a math teacher so she can support herself and her kids.

The residents pay between \$2 and \$300 a month rent for their apartments on a sliding scale depending on their income.

Department of Human Services Director Maura Corrigan,

who attended the grand opening of Oakman Place, said the program shows "compassion is alive in our city and our state."

Sterra Spencer, another resident of Oakman Place, said Thursday she had exhausted all options for a place to live, and the opportunity at the complex came along at the right time.

"Thanks to Lutheran Family & Child Services, he's able to have a home," Spencer said of her infant son, whom she cradled at Thursday's luncheon.

"I didn't know what I was going to do," said Spencer. "It's amazing how lucky we both got."

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