



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A new house opens for individuals who are experiencing homelessness, providing safe, affordable, and supportive housing

Five organizations collaborate to support a growing, vulnerable population in GR

GRAND RAPIDS, MI (January 13, 2020) — Five agencies have come together to renovate and open an affordable, supportive housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness, with specific supports for youth who identify as LGBTQ+. 3:11 Youth Housing, Grand Rapids HQ, Inner City Christian Federation, Mars Hill Bible Church, and Mel Trotter Ministries contributed diverse financial and in-kind resources and local expertise to ensure that individuals are fully supported in their journey from crisis to stable.

This partnership provides safe, affordable housing to individuals. Additionally, specific holistic supports will be offered to LGBTQ+ youth, a population who is arguably one of the most vulnerable groups experiencing homelessness today. LGBTQ+ youth are 120 percent more likely to experience homelessness than their straight/cis-gender counterparts. In Grand Rapids, at least one third of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+. Homelessness leaves youth at risk of compounding trauma and being victims of crime and human trafficking. These youth also have higher rates of substance abuse and mental health concerns.

The Union house is completely renovated and features a first floor unit, which includes three bedrooms, full bath, kitchen and a large dining room that will be used by the youth. The second floor unit has two bedrooms, full bath and a deck off the kitchen that will be utilized by a 3:11 Youth Housing mentor. The in-home house mentor will provide regular support to the residents. Additionally, a case manager will be available to support individuals in reaching long-term educational and vocational goals as well as budgeting for rent and utilities.

Donations and volunteer help are needed to make this house a home! Sign up to help at www.3-11.org/news.

Organization leaders will be available the week of January 13 for interviews. Please contact Lauren VanKeulen, ivankeulen@3-11.org.

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3:11 Youth Housing Quote

“At 3:11, we believe that any and all people who are experiencing homelessness deserve a safe and stable place to call home, especially our most vulnerable community members,” said Lauren VanKeulen, Co-Executive Director. “We know that supportive housing is imperative to breaking the cycle of homelessness, and we’re thrilled to be a part of a project that collaboratively focuses on supporting youth who have been repeatedly marginalized in our society.” <https://www.3-11.org/about/>

HQ Quote

“HQ believes deeply that all people should have equitable access to safe and affordable housing. We know that the challenges and barriers that youth, especially LGBTQ+ youth in this community, experience are unique. This collaborative project is exciting because it demonstrates the impact we can have when we come together with a common goal, challenge each other and try bold things!” says Co-Founder and Executive Director, Shandra Steining. <https://hqgr.org/about-hq/>

Inner City Christian Federation Quote

“As a Christian organization this house aligns well with our mission and values. We believe people from all walks of life deserve safe, clean, affordable housing and we are so happy to be a part of this collaboration” said Ryan VerWys CEO/President of Inner City Christian Federation.” <https://iccf.org/>

Mars Hill Quote

“Mars Hill seeks to engage the most marginalized people, places, and issues of our day. We believe at our core that *all* people are made in the image of God, and we want to come alongside and empower people to reach their God-given potential,” said Christine Mutch, Community Mobilization Pastor with Mars Hill Bible Church. “Finding quality housing and experiencing a sense of home are critical steps in that process, and we are privileged to collaborate with these organizations to help make this a reality.” <https://marshill.org/about-us/>

Mel Trotter Ministries Quote

“Grand Rapids becomes a better place to live for everyone when we work together to address and solve problems,” explained Dennis Van Kampen, President/CEO of Mel Trotter Ministries. “This partnership is an example of five organizations coming together and each bringing their expertise to the table to multiply the impact. It is an honor to be part of this project with organizations that are committed to helping individuals realize their God-given talents and help them end their homelessness, for good.” <https://www.meltrotter.org>



Before Kitchen



After Kitchen



Before Living Room



After Living Room



