

**Report to the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor
February 2018**

It has been a year since we requested support from your committee to build Tiny Homes for formerly homeless adults, low-income senior citizens and young adults who have aged out of foster care. Let me begin by saying once more how much we have appreciated your support. This has been a collaborative project from the beginning. We couldn't have done much without generous partners like you.

Seven of the tiny homes are now occupied. Six more are under construction and should have residents this summer. If the stars align, six more foundations will be poured soon after that so that we expect to have 19 of the homes with residents by Christmas 2018. This is slower than we predicted when we submitted our application to First Presbyterian. The major hold-up was electrical. It took ten months to have power brought into the homes. We have been working closely with DTE so that this won't delay future construction.



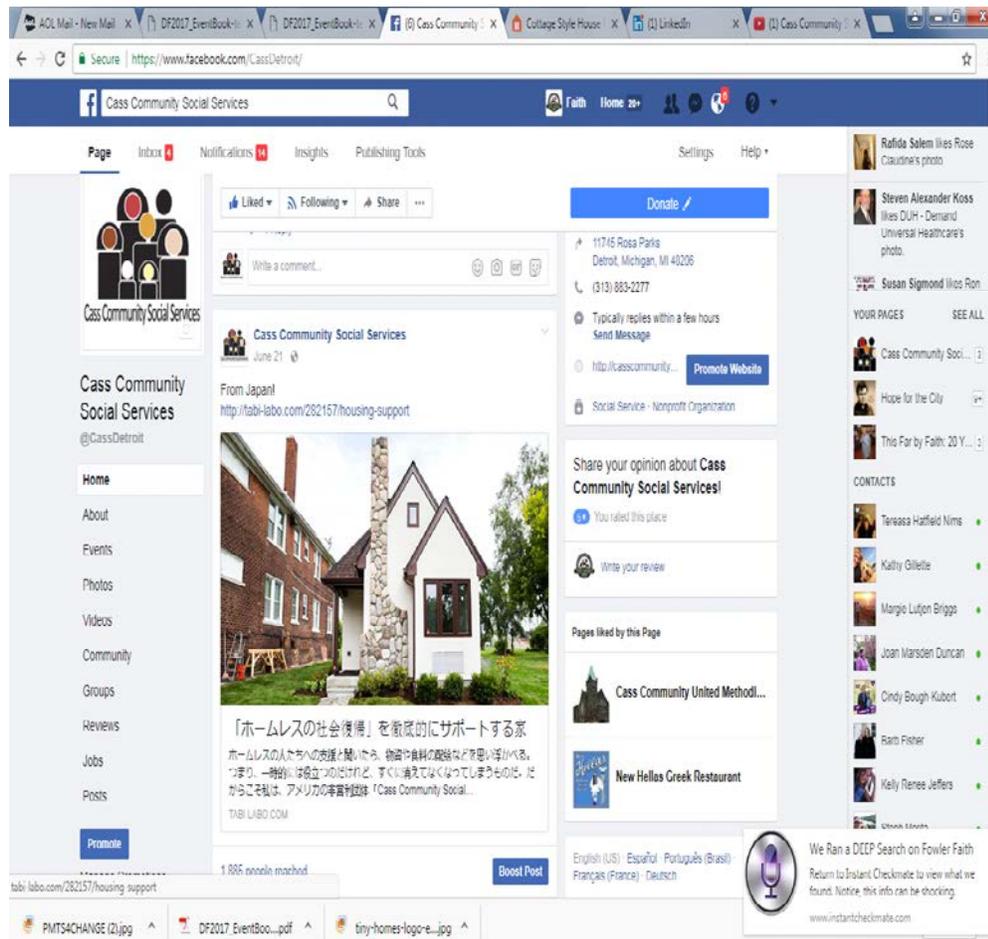
When houses 2-7 were complete in May, we opened them up to the region so outsiders could see the interiors prior to residents moving in. More than 500 guests paid to roam house-to-house on Memorial Day weekend.

Fortunately, money has not postponed the development. Private gifts, like yours, have paid for all of the work and so the tiny homes are debt free before they are occupied. Thus, we have

been able to use the tenants' rent money to cover taxes, insurance, security services and the water bills.

The educational component of the program has been quite successful. All of the residents attend monthly homeowner classes and, individually, they meet with financial coaches. What's more, much like the "sweat equity" concept used by Habitat for Humanity, the renters volunteer eight hours a month to community activities which helps them to get to know their neighbors and improves the quality of life in the area.

Our idea of marrying affordable housing for extremely poor people with homeownership has drawn attention from near and far. Two videos, one released in Jun and the other in September of 2017, have been viewed more than 75 million times. Visitors seeking to learn about the development have come from across the country and around the world. As I write this report, one e-mail came from Russia and another from the Netherlands today.



The social media attention has caused people to contact us from Canada, Mexico, Peru, Columbia, South Africa, Ghana, Liberia, Australia, Japan, the U.K., Russia, Germany, and Italy. We have also been contacted by 42 states.

In response to the interest, a book was written, Tiny Homes in a Big City, to help other organizations, agencies and individuals understand the process we used and the decisions we made so that they might replicate Tiny Homes or a version of it in their respective areas. 2,000 copies have sold in 6 months.

In terms of our objectives:

- 7 homes are occupied and 6 more are currently under construction.
- The residents are all extremely low income. The average income per month is less than \$1,000 meaning that, on average, the residents earn less than \$12,000 annually. Four of the seven homes are occupied by people who were formerly homeless.
- All of the residents have been engaged in financial coaching.
- All of the residents have participated in homeownership classes.
- The Homeowners Association will not be established until after all 25 homes are done.
- The properties have been assessed for Detroit property taxes.

All of this has transpired while the residents have been forming a community. They provide support to one another on a regular basis. In addition, the residents have been providing valuable feedback about construction considerations, neighborhood safety, and the establishment of rules.

I would mention that we have established a new funding stream for the project. Several architects have designed tiny houses to be built and they have given the plans to Cass to sell. Thus, each time someone purchases a set of drawings, Cass will make between \$500 and \$1,000. The nice part for the buyer is that she or he can actually see a house that has been constructed using the same plans.



The recycle house to the left is an example of a home design that we will be selling. FYI – Cass will be building the home as part of the Michigan Build Communities Conference in collaboration with Habitat for Humanity Michigan in May. The event will allow other organizations to consider building tiny as one more affordable housing solution.

We would be honored to give a tour to members of your committee and/or to include members of First Presbyterian as tour guides as part of the fundraising tour that will occur this spring. Thank you once again for your tremendous support.

Faith Fowler, CCSS Executive Director