

Supporting Our Youth in Housing *at East Bay Flats*



2018

**Greater Grand Traverse Area Continuum of Care's
Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project**



Supporting Our Youth in Housing

A Partnership between the Traverse City Housing Commission and the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project at East Bay Flats

Background

In January 2017, the Greater Grand Traverse Area Continuum of Care (GGTACOC) was awarded a \$1.3 million dollar demonstration grant by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) called the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP). As part of this competitive opportunity, GGTACOC joins nine other communities across the nation in creating a local coordinated community response to prevent and end homelessness for young people experiencing housing instability by 2020. The demonstration covers the counties of Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Antrim, Kalkaska, and Benzie.

The Traverse City Housing Commission has partnered with the YHDP team to dedicate 10-14 units at East Bay Flats for young people who are experiencing homelessness. Outside of the 10-14 units dedicated to youth, the remaining 46 units being developed by this project are committed to workforce housing which is housing for individuals making around \$17.00/hour.

Housing is the only solution to ending homelessness.

“We want a safe place to live”

Youth Advisory Board member

The Need

In preparation for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant application, focus groups and surveys were developed in order to gain a greater understanding of the need among young people experiencing homelessness within our communities. Focus groups then formed into the current Youth Advisory Board which is made up of young people who have lived experience of housing instability. Through working with young people we learned some of the reasons they are experiencing housing instability are due to sexual identity and sexual orientation, neglectful parents, and homelessness among family members.

“It is not always our choice to leave” — young person experiencing homelessness.

The exceptional young people serving on the Youth Advisory Board have informed this project type and have stated that apartment style living that is close to resources and has live-in support is their “ideal” living situation.

Supportive Housing

Each of the 10-14 units dedicated to youth through this project will come with housing supports provided by a Housing Based Case Manager from the Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency (NMCAA). Case managers are able to meet with youth living at East Bay Flats as often as needed in order to ensure the safety and stability of their housing within this project. Some of the areas case management staff are able to address with youth include: increasing income, gaining access to benefits (if needed), creating linkage to the education system (college, high school, GED programs), improving physical and mental well-being, increasing community connections, creating linkages to job training programs, assisting with job placement programs, etc. The case manager will act as an intermediary regarding landlord/tenant concerns and other community supports.

NMCAA will be the lead agency in providing housing support to young people entering East Bay Flats. NMCAA has been providing housing support services to individuals and families exiting homelessness for the past 15 years.

Resident Mentor

In addition to case management services, a resident mentor will live within East Bay Flats and will work alongside the young people living at East Bay Flats in order to provide ongoing support and independent living skills. The mentor will focus on building social, emotional and community supports around the young people living within East Bay Flats. Mentors will host community building activities both outside of and within the property in order to provide outlets and avenues for young people to give back and build lasting relationships.

Outcomes

Not only will East Bay Flats provide young people exiting homelessness with a safe, stable and affordable place to live, it will affect the trajectory of the rest of their lives. Proposed outcomes of the project include:

- *Increased exits from the homelessness system into permanent housing*
- *Reduced returns to homelessness*
- *Increased income and employment rates*
- *Educational attainment*
- *Permanent connections made among service providers and community members,*
- *Improved physical and social/emotional well-being*
- *Reduced domestic violence incidents*

These outcomes will be the focus of the goals case management staff and young people will be addressing through their work together.

Project Partnerships

Greater Grand Traverse Area Continuum of Care, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan, Rotary Charities of Traverse City, Corporation for Supportive Housing, HUD, MSHDA, Child and Family Services: Third Level, Traverse City Area Public Schools: Students in Transition Empowerment Program, Northwestern Michigan College, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start, Networks Northwest/Michigan Works, SOS Learning Lab and the Traverse City Health Clinic.