



Oakland CLT Welcomes New Homeowners
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“We often talk about Oakland as being the third largest area of commerce in the state. But what we don’t talk about it being **home.**”
— Majestic Lane, Deputy Chief of Neighborhood Empowerment, Office of Mayor William Peduto



Local Youth Explore the Possibilities
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OPDC ANNUAL REPORT

2018 **OPDC** 2019

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

OPDC Addresses Housing Equity through Construction of New Affordable Apartments

Illustration: Jesus Rodriguez and his two children



Developing affordable housing has long been the focus of OPDC’s work. In addition to advocating for equitable opportunity in Oakland, we create brick and mortar examples of equitable development. We continue this commitment given that our cost of living continues to rise and quality, affordable housing options decline here. Oakland Affordable Living is our most recent development. The 49-unit low-income housing tax credit project in West Oakland is comprised of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units that are 100% affordable, with rents determined by income to individuals earning less than 60% of area median income (AMI).



The apartments are fully occupied; residents include 18 families with young children and four tenants who resided at Allequippa Place before the renovation and elected to return. A handful of residents moved closer to work and family and a dozen tenants returned to the neighborhood after living in Oakland previously. We offer six ADA accessible units, two units with hearing and visual aid accessible adaptations, and 25 family-sized units. Our tenants also have access to a community room space and a natural playground.

Jesus Rodriguez is a single father with mobility restrictions who struggled to find quality affordable housing for himself and his two children. Unable to

secure adequate housing, Jesus spent months apart from his children. “I was staying with my sister, but that environment was not suitable for my kids,” explains Jesus. Even when he could secure an apartment, it was often only a one-bedroom unit. Jesus applied for the three-bedroom, mobility accessible unit at Oakland Affordable Living.

“This is the best place ever,” says Jesus. **“I have enough room for me and my kids and there’s lots of open space in case I need to use my wheelchair.”**

Jesus is also conveniently located to his doctors and public transit. “The hospital is right there,” says Jesus. “My appointments are quicker, because I can get in and out without a long commute. Now, I have more time to spend with my kids.”

Oakland Affordable Living was made possible through the collaboration of numerous partners, including the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), PNC Bank, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), Allegheny County Community Infrastructure and Tourism Fund, and city and state officials.

“Affordable housing is a really difficult business,” says Tom Cummings, Director of the Housing Department at the URA. “Some organizations solely focus on building low-income, tax credit housing, but OPDC does so much more. They run a host of services and programs.”

“This project is near and dear to me,” says Brian Hudson, President and CEO of PHFA. “I did the original funding for Allequippa Place.

It’s great to see partners from the state, local, and federal level unite in partnership. It takes all of us working together to make projects like Oakland Affordable Living happen.”
Liz Bennett is a current Allequippa Place resident who was living in Oakland, but wanted to downsize after retiring.



“I’d been ready to give up my house for a couple years, but I really didn’t want to leave the area or move away from my family,” says Liz. Now, she resides in a two-bedroom unit, near her family who still lives in her previous house down the street.

“The apartments are lovely, but most importantly, having this apartment has provided me a very affordable way to stay in the area with my whole family,” says Liz.

“We are a very close family. We can be together and access everything we need in this community.”
Oakland Affordable Living is a portion of our 100-unit affordable rental housing portfolio.



This year, we received a \$200,000 loan from the Housing Opportunity Fund, managed by the URA, for capital improvements at Parkview Manor, a 15-unit building rented to low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities. Generous support for affordable housing enables us to establish equitable access to the abundant opportunities available in Oakland.



“It takes partnership to make sure that everyone has access to the things that make Pittsburgh a livable city. Not just for some people, but for all people.”

— Majestic Lane, Deputy Chief of Neighborhood Empowerment in the Office of Mayor William Peduto

Pursuing a Shared Vision through Community Programs

OPDC strengthens the relationship between people and the neighborhood we share. We create opportunities to amplify the community's voice and ensure they have influence in the future of the neighborhood. We facilitate collaboration to achieve common goals — with residents, landlords, students, developers, institutions, and public sector partners. OPDC is a source of information about what is going on and how to get involved. We advocate for good quality development, knock on doors to let people know things that are happening, and provide hands-on opportunities to improve our community.

“Here in the city, we often talk about Oakland as being the third largest area of commerce in the state. We talk about innovation and the universities,” says Majestic Lane, Deputy Chief of Neighborhood Empowerment in the Office of Mayor William Peduto. “But, what we don't talk about it being is home. **It's important to consider the residential history and future of Oakland.**”

OPDC hosts regular public forums and, this year, we organized monthly meetings to accommodate the increasing number of projects occurring and to fulfill our requirements as Oakland's RCO.



In September 2018, the City of Pittsburgh passed an ordinance creating Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) to improve public participation and communication between residents and developers. The RCO model requires that developers engage the community prior to commission hearings. As the RCO for Oakland, OPDC facilitates discussions between developers and residents to ensure that the community is informed and has an opportunity to provide input.

This year, we organized eight meetings to invite resident feedback on ten projects impacting the neighborhood.

Additionally, OPDC created an online resource to track the status of current and proposed development and infrastructure projects. Our tracker includes a summary of 62 past and current projects. This tool serves to meet RCO requirements and is a great resource for informing the community about development proposed in the neighborhood. The tracker includes project updates, proposal materials, and input surveys as another way to gather community feedback.

OPDC collects input in a variety of ways to “take the community's temperature” about projects and reflect that back to developers, public boards, and commissions.

This year, we attended 12 Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission hearings to testify in accordance with community feedback.

In the face of significant development pressure, OPDC seeks opportunity to leverage

new development to support our community's needs. In the case of a new high-rise office building proposed for Fifth Avenue at Halket Street, we advocated for reductions in scale and negotiated an agreement with the developer, Walnut Capital, to provide substantial benefits to the community.

OPDC recognized the developer was likely to be successful in their zoning and planning approval processes and saw that community feedback ranged from opposition to enthusiastic support for the project and its potential to activate that section of the commercial core. OPDC negotiated concessions in terms of reductions to density and height to make the project more palatable. OPDC was then able to secure long-term benefits such as investment in permanent affordable homeownership through the Oakland Community Land Trust, retail space for local business opportunities, and proactive transportation demand management to mitigate impacts of commuters on the neighborhood.

OPDC is the vehicle for making lasting and tangible benefits such as these a reality. Equitable development is a high priority and we continue to explore ways to leverage investment to support community needs.

In addition to planning advocacy, OPDC collaborates with many partners for hands-on care of Oakland's public spaces. For the second year, we partnered with the University of Pittsburgh's PittServes office to mobilize students around green waste management. Together, we expanded the university's existing “Clutter for a Cause” collection event to serve off-campus residents. “Clutter for a Cause” is an effort to control litter and waste during student move-out, while recycling unwanted household items for reuse by new tenants.



“Projects like Clutter for a Cause give our students a chance to give back to the neighborhood,” says Erika Ninos, PittServes Sustainability Program Coordinator. **“They get to see and feel the impact that these types of collaborations have on building meaningful relationships between students, residents, and neighborhood organizations.”**

Volunteers collected ten tons of donated household items. OPDC sold the items at an off-campus rummage sale and donated others to the university's on-campus thrift store, “Thriftsburgh.”

PittServes also helped us organize a group of student volunteers to compete in the city's Garbage Olympics. Students and long-term residents gathered to collect litter in competition with other city neighborhoods. Our group received the award for largest volunteer turnout.



Illustration: Erika Ninos and student volunteers

“Even if our students are only residents of Oakland for two or three years, they begin to understand how community dynamics work and what it is to be a good neighbor and community steward.”

— Erika Ninos, Sustainability Program Coordinator, PittServes



OPDC also organized seven “Adopt-a-Block” litter collection events throughout the academic year and collected 330 bags of trash. **A total of 302 unique volunteers dedicated 1,075 volunteer hours to cleaning up Oakland's streets and beautifying green spaces.**

OPDC continues to advocate for effective code enforcement through Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project. We collaborate with community members and city agency partners on neighborhood quality concerns. This work makes a huge difference in maintaining and improving the quality of life here in Oakland.

This year, we submitted over 1,100 complaint tickets to the city's code enforcement hotline, 311. We tracked 17 problem properties in a monthly progress report and, through collaboration with the city, removed seven properties from this watch list. Oakwatch also gives residents the opportunity to discuss neighborhood quality concerns directly with city representatives, including City Council members.

OPDC continues to convene quarterly meetings with Oakland landlords to discuss areas of improvement for off-campus student rentals. Regular roundtables establish open communication and enable us to work together effectively to improve conditions.

“Consistent meetings with

OPDC help us stay informed about what is going on in the neighborhood and with our properties,” says Ken Eckenrode, Oakland landlord. “Together, we discuss ways to make sure our tenants are abiding by the rules and that we correctly and timely address any code violations.

Open communication makes it easier for us to get the resources we need to keep Oakland presentable.”

This past spring, the Office of Councilperson Erika Strassburger led amendments to the city's refuse and recycling code. The legislation is a comprehensive outline of recycling procedures and standards for waste containment. The code clearly states that waste must be stored in a container with a lid. OPDC organized a second bulk order of trash and recycling bins for landlords and residents to purchase approved containers at a wholesale/bulk cost.



We continue to work with city agency partners to connect landlords and residents with resources to help them adequately care for their properties and contribute to a well-maintained neighborhood.



Yes, maybe we are a bit nostalgic for print newspapers. *Read all about it!* in this edition of OPDC's annual report. Thank you for your interest and involvement in our work. We are pleased to bring you stories of connections and progress toward our mission of a better Oakland where neighbors thrive.

OPDC serves neighborhood needs through opportunities like community benefit agreements. Resources serve neighborhood needs such as affordable housing, youth programming, workforce development, entrepreneurship, and neighborhood enhancements. As a non-profit organization, any resources that come through OPDC go back out to the neighborhood. We do not earn a profit or any type of personal gain.

Residents are at a strategic disadvantage in comparison to the many other large interests in Oakland. OPDC helps to address this imbalance as we are all feeling the crunch of development pressure. It is a lot for the community to handle. Together we have success. We focus on positioning the neighborhood well in the face of multimillion-dollar interests that seem to be more and more prevalent here — the seemingly never-ending onslaught of ever more inflated prices — some for sites that are practically unbuildable.

OPDC advocates for equitable development in Oakland. What does this mean? With development on the rise in Oakland, an equitable approach ensures that our residential communities can thrive. That everyone participates in and benefits from economic growth in Oakland — especially low-income residents, people of color, and long-term residents. That development does not result in displacement. That we consider Oakland's needs holistically — and that we find ways to support our residential communities, sense of place, public space improvements, and neighborhood enhancements through leveraging new investment, new tax revenue, etc.

We encourage you to share your priorities with us and invite you to get involved. We are committed to this important effort to ensure our neighbors have access to a healthy, safe, opportunity-rich neighborhood and have influence in the decisions that shape our community.

Julia Erickson, President,
OPDC Board of Directors

Wanda E. Wilson
Executive Director

The Oakland CLT Makes a Tangible Impact on the Lives of Oakland Residents



A fourth generation South Oakland native, Ty Williams, achieved homeownership and housing stability when he and his mother, Mi'Chael, purchased a home through the Oakland Community Land Trust (CLT). Oakland presents a challenging market as housing costs increase and investment properties replace homes previously occupied by long-time community members. Like many South Oakland residents, Ty and his mother struggled to keep up with the high-pressure market.

“In South Oakland, there are many seniors and low-income families,” explains Ty. **“Over time, those folks are not able to compete with outside speculators.”**

CLTs are nonprofit entities that provide lasting community assets to serve a community purpose through shared equity ownership. Homes in the Oakland CLT remain affordable, owner-occupied, and stewarded by the community in perpetuity. OPDC established the Oakland CLT to preserve our neighborhood's rich residential fabric. Through the CLT strategy, we achieve equity through housing affordability for community members from varied backgrounds and incomes.

Ty and Mi'Chael worried about housing security in the face of inadequate housing conditions, poor property management, and uncertain rental costs. “I believe that housing is a human right,” says Ty. “I don't want to repeat a cycle of [housing] not working out.” Ty, who is deeply rooted in South Oakland, was determined to secure stable housing in his community.

Around the time that Ty began exploring homeownership, Betsy Trively was seeking an interested buyer to purchase her late father's South Oakland home.

“[My father] agreed with OPDC's mission to support the community and provide housing that people can afford,” says Betsy. “We could have sold [the house] within a month to a developer for cash, but that's not what my father wanted.”

OPDC's real estate team developed a strategy to help Ty and Mi'Chael achieve affordable

homeownership and for Betsy to achieve her father's wishes. Unlike most of our land trust sales, in which the CLT acquires, renovates, and sells a home directly to an income-qualified buyer, this situation presented a unique opportunity. OPDC facilitated a sale directly between the seller and buyer while also entering the property into the Oakland CLT. We convened all participating parties and contributed our own expertise to address obstacles along the way. It was not a simple process, to say the least.



OPDC contributed subsidy funds to purchase the land and make the home permanently affordable. We also helped Ty and Mi'Chael apply for Housing Opportunity Fund closing cost grants, connected them to pro bono legal services to review their lease, and provided financial counseling support through OPDC's Financial Opportunity Center.

“I definitely appreciated the support,” says Ty. **“The [home buying] process looked different than I expected. It was good to have a team helping us through it.”**

Ty and Mi'Chael now reside in a South Oakland home near family and without fear of displacement. Thanks to Betsy's commitment to OPDC's mission, we have another asset in our CLT. “I feel like I can walk away from it like I did what my father wanted me to do,” says Betsy. “Putting [the house] in the land trust was the important thing.”

This year, OPDC expanded the Oakland CLT to four leased properties and began initial planning for the construction of nine new CLT homes on vacant land.

For many years, one recently renovated CLT home was a target property of Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement

civil rights era.

“[The movies] showed how, together, we can beat the system and take some of the power back from the market. I'd love to see that happen here,” comments Randy Sargent, a long-time South Oakland homeowner.

Increasing access to affordable homeownership strengthens Oakland's residential fabric and cultivates a sense of community.

For existing homeowners, OPDC provides resources for home maintenance to support our community's residential fabric. OPDC is an approved administrator of Homeowner Assistance Program funds through the city's Housing Opportunity Fund. We guide residents through the application process and administer the grant disbursements for the repair projects. We raised funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic

“I think if we can get people excited about homeownership — especially those that think it's out of reach — we can preserve the neighborhood's pride and culture.”

— Ty Williams, South Oakland native and homeowner

Project because it was vacant, abandoned, and in severe disrepair. OPDC's real estate team became the conservator of the property and completed the extensive restoration that the prior owner abandoned, thus eliminating blight and creating a long term community asset for the CLT (see page A5).

OPDC continues to prioritize education and outreach about the Oakland CLT. This year, in addition to several community meetings and one-on-one discussions about the CLT, we showed documentaries on the CLT model, followed by a conversation about the movement's roots in the

Development Keystone Communities Program to offer eligible homeowners access to façade grants to make visible improvements to their homes.



These funding opportunities help low- to moderate-income homeowners overcome the financial burden of home repairs and enable residents to age in place.



Illustration: Ty Williams, and his mother, Mi'Chael Williams

Behind the Scenes: Building Quality Housing through the Oakland CLT



244 Dunseith Street

The house at 244 Dunseith Street had been vacant and blighted for many years. Oakwatch: The Oakland Code Enforcement Project, worked with the City of Pittsburgh to put a lien on the homeowner for neglecting the property.

OPDC then applied to be the conservator of the property. As the conservator, OPDC completed a full renovation that included a new roof, new porch, new front steps, new furnace and duct work, new kitchen, new bathroom, and all new finishes throughout.

In April 2019, the judge granted OPDC ownership. In October, OPDC sold the home to a new owner-occupant.

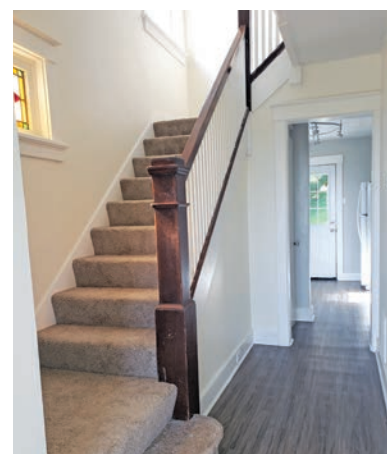


3159 Ellers Street

OPDC acquired 3159 Ellers Street from a relative of the previous homeowner. The home had been vacant for a few years and had interior damage caused by a leaky roof and broken pipes.

OPDC renovated the home to a safe and move-in ready standard. The renovation included a new roof, new furnace, and new kitchen. We restored the historic stained glass windows, repaired the retaining walls, and installed new finishes throughout.

Read more on page A7 for a glimpse into the home's unique history and how its legacy lives on through the newest homeowner.



FUNDER SUPPORT

Oakland CLT Funders Pave Way for Housing Equity, Neighborhood Quality

The Oakland CLT is growing thanks to support from public sector and institutional partners. The CLT strategy aligns with a larger, city-wide mission to provide affordable housing in Pittsburgh, especially securing permanent affordability.

This past year, we received funding commitments from UPMC, University of Pittsburgh, the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE), the Urban Redevelopment Authority's Housing Opportunity Fund (HOF), McAuley Ministries, and individual donors.

OPDC is grateful to our local institution partners, UPMC and University of Pittsburgh, who invested loan dollars to increase the amount of revolving working capital for OPDC's real estate staff to scale up production of CLT homes.

"We are eager to support the Oakland CLT because we believe that what is good for the Oakland neighborhood is good for UPMC, as we always strive to be a good corporate neighbor in all of the communities we serve," says John Innocenti, President of UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside.

Support — big and small — helps us achieve our mission. At this year's annual fundraising event, An Evening of Oakland Storytelling, our guests gave additional gifts totaling more than \$1,850 — the average cost of furnishing one CLT kitchen with the necessary appliances. We are thankful for our network of community supporters who help make our work possible.

"I donated to support the CLT because Oakland should be a livable and vibrant neighborhood for all," says Melissa McSwigan, an Oakland native. **"The CLT makes homeownership possible for people with limited incomes and helps strengthen the integrity of our neighborhoods by having more permanent residents.** We all benefit if Oakland — and Pittsburgh at large — is a healthy place for people to live and work."



YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Discovering the Possibilities: Local Youth Plan for Future Success

Middle and high school students from Pittsburgh's urban core gain access to unique academic and career opportunities through OPDC's School 2 Career (S2C) and Future Makers programs. We connect youth from underserved communities with resources to excel in high school and beyond. In collaboration with university volunteers and our network of employer partners, we provide one-on-one tutoring, hands-on career training, and space for self-exploration.

Our students — Career Exploration Officers (CEOs) — stand out amongst their peers. Through paid, mentored internships, our CEOs gain career experience earlier than most youth.

Nakoiyai, a high school sophomore, applied his passion for media at his work placement, SLB Radio. "I knew I was interested in journalism," says Nakoiyai. "At S2C, they place you where it would be helpful to your future career."

"Getting Nakoiyai in the door early was the best thing that could happen. He's like twelve steps ahead."

— Chanessa Schuler, Director of Programs at SLB Radio

We match our CEOs with industry professionals to guide their experience.

"At SLB, we are really interested in understanding what our interns need or want," explains Chanessa Schuler, Director of Programs at SLB Radio. "We want to nurture Nakoiyai's interests while we have the opportunity."

Nakoiyai developed storytelling and editing skills through his work on a podcast in which older women from the Hill District share their experiences with younger generations.

Nakoiyai is now equipped to build upon these capabilities through independent projects.

"I'm really interested in movies and hope to host my own podcast," says Nakoiyai.

Early access to hands-on experiences prepares our students to succeed post-graduation. "[S2C] is an amazing program and having them start young is exactly what we need," says Chanessa.

Our CEOs demonstrate a remarkable level of motivation towards

achieving academic goals. Even as an eighth grade student, Brittany was eager to explore her passions for art, science, and history. After learning that S2C connects high school youth with work placement opportunities, she applied to the program.

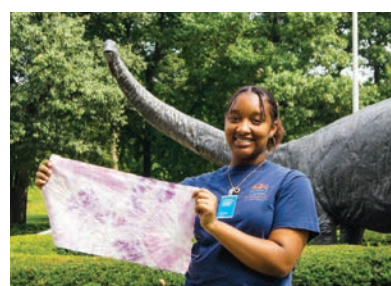
"I wanted job experience and I wanted to be prepared for school," explains Brittany. "I want to always be moving forward so I don't have to depend on others as much. So I don't have to struggle."

Based on Brittany's interests, she was placed with the education department at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Three years later, Brittany is a high school senior with extensive research, project management, and critical thinking skills and experience in career fields of interest.

"Our goal for internships is to focus on the learning of the people we work with," explains Mandi Lyon, Program Development Coordinator in the Department of Geology and Environmental Science.

"It's a chance to take advantage of our interns' passions to drive projects in new and interesting directions."

Brittany discovered ways to intersect her interests. **"The best part of my job is when I take a project I'm assigned and go beyond,"** says Brittany. She merged science and art by supplementing her research on bird species with illustrations. She also helped organize a family-friendly activity that involved natural tie-dye. "I ran dye tests and shared my trial work with the other staff," explains Brittany. "That's something I've always wanted to achieve...other people showing interest in the work I am doing." Her meticulous notes now enable staff to replicate this project in other educational settings.



"Working with S2C's work placement program allows us to develop longer term relationships than we normally have with teens," says Mandi. "It's been so fun tracking Brittany's interests over the years."

Brittany looks forward to studying cultural anthropology and spending a semester abroad.

"I discovered my true passions while working here," says Brittany. **"I'm excited to learn about other things going on around the world that relate to the projects I've worked on."**



In addition to networking with professionals and gaining hands-on experiences, our CEOs receive Microsoft Office training and access to scholarship opportunities.

This past year, our CEOs achieved an average GPA of 3.0, attended over 50 educational events, and logged over 6,000 hours of mentored job shadowing, volunteering, and career training. Our graduating seniors both received scholarship awards through the Hill Youth Partnership for Enrichment, admission into their top choice schools, and Pittsburgh Promise eligibility.

"It's especially important for young people to be familiar with the latest trends, because these tools will be part of their future work environment."

— Karen Alexander, Co-President of XRconnectED



Exploring 21st Century Careers with Future Makers

For the second year, S2C expanded its reach through Future Makers, a weekend enrichment program. Thanks to funding provided by McAuley Ministries, S2C works with provider partners to organize weekend workshops for 7th to 12th grade students to explore 21st century careers.

Karen Alexander, Co-President of XRconnectED, first met our CEOs when she organized a presentation on careers that utilize XR technologies, including Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Mixed Reality, and 360 video. "I'm always excited to introduce people to virtual and augmented reality," says Karen. "It's especially important for young people to be familiar with the latest trends, because these tools will be part of their future work environment."

Our students were eager to learn more, so Karen extended her partnership with S2C and offered a mentored work placement. She then became a provider partner and hosted workshops through Future Makers. "I'm impressed by how professional the students present themselves," says Karen. "Their creativity and perseverance through challenges is admirable. **It's a pleasure to work with S2C and delve into activities that the students enjoy.**"

Students explore a host of career fields with Future Makers. "When I started attending workshops, there was a lot I didn't know," says high school senior, Syreena Jackson. **"Now, my experiences are growing. I've gained knowledge from how to properly wrap a foot for a sports injury to the science behind hair care."**

Through Future Makers, we ignite excitement about the educational and professional journey that lays ahead for our students. We foster that excitement at S2C and equip our CEOs with the resources to pursue their passions.

CLT SPOTLIGHT

From Childhood Home to Community Asset: The unique story of one Oakland CLT house

Every home in Oakland has a story to tell. This year, we added a new chapter to the rich history of one West Oakland home through the Oakland CLT.

Alex Rudenko moved to Pittsburgh from Ukraine to pursue a PhD at Carnegie Mellon University. Far from home, Alex sought to be part of a community. He approached OPDC and purchased a West Oakland home through the CLT at a price he could afford with his limited income.

“When I moved to Pittsburgh, I was renting in apartments all over the city,” explains Alex. **“In Ukraine, my family and I always lived in a home, rather than something temporary. I’ve come to value that stability. The CLT was the perfect opportunity to have stable housing at an affordable price.”**

One year ago, Sheila Carney, a Sister of Mercy at Carlow University, recognized Alex’s new home in the CLT section of OPDC’s 2017-18 Annual Report. She contacted us and shared her story about the house.

In the late 1920’s, Sister Sheila’s grandparents moved to Pittsburgh from Ireland. Her grandfather bought property in West Oakland and built the home on Ellers Street. Sister Sheila and her family lived in that home until 1953.

“We did a lot of entertaining here — big family parties,” Sister Sheila reminisced. “I have a very early memory of sitting on this step,” she pointed out as we walked through the house. “On the day of my uncle’s wedding, he and his groomsmen dressed in the attic and I watched them come down the stairs. It was very dramatic.”

Looking out at the front yard, Sister Sheila remembered the garden. “This whole hillside was covered with rose vines. My grandfather would wade into them and weed. He was a wonderful gardener.”

She spoke of her siblings and neighborhood friends. She recalled how they would sled down the street in the winter. “We would have kids posted at the bottom of the hill to say, ‘Okay, it’s safe to come.’” In the summer, they would sit on the front porch and watch the sparks from the mill. “It was like fireworks,” she said.

This home was part of Sister Sheila’s family for over 30 years. Her grandparents lived in the house with their four children and after Sister Sheila’s grandmother passed away, her parents and siblings moved in. Following their departure, Sister Sheila’s uncle moved in with his wife and eight children. Now, over 60 years later, this West Oakland home is part of the Oakland CLT and remains owner-occupied.



“The CLT is great, because it helps balance Oakland’s transient and long-term population,” says Alex. “If Oakland was only populated by people renting here temporarily, then there wouldn’t be any stability. **It’s important to have a community of residents who are invested in the long-term future of the neighborhood. The CLT makes sure that homeowners always have a place here.**”

Sister Sheila is familiar with the Oakland CLT through her service as a McAuley Ministries board member. McAuley Ministries is a foundation inspired by the compassionate works of the Sisters of Mercy; they strengthen the capacity of community-based programs. The foundation made a multi-year grant to support the Oakland CLT in West Oakland. Sister Sheila is thrilled to know that her childhood home has been directly impacted by this support.

“I have memories of this being a thriving neighborhood, where everyone cared for one another in a nurturing way,” she says. “My siblings and I are so happy to see how lovely it looks and to know that it has been respected and cared for. I’m happy to know that the CLT preserved the house for another homeowner.”

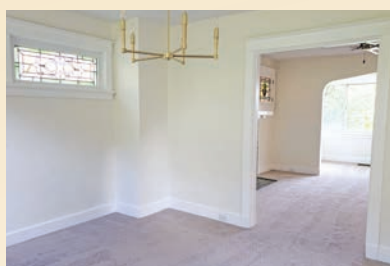


Illustration:
Arnelle Jones
and Sean Luther

FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER

Creating Pathways to Career Success and Financial Security

OPDC’s Financial Opportunity Center (FOC) works with clients one-on-one to overcome adversities, from bad credit to job insecurity, and establish a secure financial future. More than simply a workforce program, our FOC is a robust program of services coordinated to make a big impact on participants’ financial health.

This year, we participated in a collaboration, University Talent Alliance (UTA), to serve economically disadvantaged populations in neighborhoods proximate to the Forbes/Fifth corridor (Oakland, the Hill District, and Homewood).

InnovatePGH and Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education convened four local institution employer partners, the University of Pittsburgh, Carlow University, Chatham University, and Carnegie Mellon University. The program’s aim is to equip residents from surrounding communities with the qualifications and support to secure administrative positions with career growth potential and excellent benefits. OPDC provided case management, financial coaching, and employment counseling for participants.

Arnelle benefited from OPDC’s personalized attention. During the UTA training, Arnelle’s inadequate housing situation consumed her attention. Our financial coach, Camille Smith, helped Arnelle stay on track with the program; she helped Arnelle repair her credit and secure new housing.

“Having someone help with the day-to-day stress was awesome,” says Arnelle. “Camille helped me realize that I needed to take care of myself and my safety, so that I could properly focus on my career goals.”

Arnelle is now the Operations Manager at InnovatePGH, working with Sean and collaborating with OPDC to develop the next phase of the UTA program.

The universities not only present opportunities to secure stable employment, competitive pay, and ample fringe benefits, but also offer employees access to free or discounted tuition.

“We’re talking about, potentially, intergenerational stability and access to higher education that may be out of reach without programs like this,” explains Sean.

“It’s critical that we have engagement from a community partner like OPDC that understands the communities we are working with and knows how to navigate the human side of workforce development.”

— Sean Luther, Executive Director of InnovatePGH



Amber graduated from UTA with Arnelle and is now in an administrative role at the University of Pittsburgh. “I’m three semesters shy of finishing my bachelor’s degree,” says Amber. “UTA sounded like a good opportunity to get connected with the universities.”

Our financial coach also helped Amber repair her credit. “Camille gave me a checklist for improving my credit by a certain date. I didn’t think it was realistic,” says Amber. “After I started working at Pitt, I found the checklist and saw that I had met the deadline. I can’t believe I did!”

Thanks to her new administrative role, Amber has a more structured schedule than when she worked at her previous jobs in retail. She can now set aside consistent time to plan for her future, whether that is taking courses through the university, working on a book she is writing, or saving up to purchase a home.

Program graduates continue to work with FOC staff to track their progress. Our team understands that the road to job and financial security is an evolving journey. We prioritize building strong relationships with clients to help them through every step of the way.

“Knowing that OPDC’s FOC is already deeply rooted in the community, we felt confident that this program would lead to success,” says Sean. **“There’s frankly a lot of work to do, but we’ve identified OPDC as one of the strongest elements of this partnership.”**



With help from the Homewood Children’s Village, OPDC recruited 17 participants from Oakland, Uptown, Homewood, and the Hill District to attend a four-week paid training program. Instructors at the CCAC Homewood-Brushston Center taught the tailor-made curriculum covering a wide range of skills necessary for success in an administrative role.

Arnelle, like many other candidates in her cohort, was stuck in an unsatisfying job. “I was working as a cashier at the airport,” says Arnelle. “As soon as I got in, I wanted to get out. It was stressful and involved a long commute.”

Arnelle received Microsoft Office training and developed soft skills including time management, problem solving, business communications, and decision-making. “I knew I needed help with Excel,” says Arnelle. “I really like educational settings and was excited to have an opportunity to learn without the extra expense of paying for classes.”

Our team supplemented the daily trainings with individualized supportive services to help participants with other needs. **“Case management can be taken for granted in some workforce training programs,”** says Sean. **“Addressing systemic barriers of entry takes a person-to-person approach to make sure that the [UTA] participants find jobs that make sense for them.”**

Remembering Sandy Phillips



OPDC lost a dear friend this year. Sandy Phillips was known to many in Pittsburgh for her commitment to empowering residents to shape the future of neighborhood development. As a student at the University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs (GSPIA), Sandy recognized the peculiar challenges Oakland residents faced with a growing university presence and a rapidly changing local economy. Together with friends from GSPIA and dedicated Oakland residents, she founded Peoples Oakland to be a community advocate and a forum for neighborhood concerns. In 1972 she helped form Oakland Directions, Inc., an umbrella organization of local Oakland neighborhood groups and institutional stakeholders — the forerunner of today's Oakland Task Force — and in 1976 ODI convened a planning committee to develop the first comprehensive neighborhood plan for Oakland, The Oakland Plan. OPDC was a product of that plan — a joint venture of Peoples Oakland and Community Human Services — and Sandy became our first executive director.

“I remember Sandy for her special mix of courage and compassion. She was an essential early mentor and inspiration for me, as well as an extraordinary contributor to the community and the broader field of community development.”

— Rick St. John, former OPDC Executive Director

Under Sandy's leadership, OPDC built more than 160 new housing units including the conversion of St. Regis School into the apartments at Parkview Manor, the re-development of Holmes School into Holmes Place, and the construction of new developments at Saybrook Court, Niagara Square, and Kennett Square in Oakcliffe. JobLinks, which was initiated in 1987 as a program of OPDC to connect people to job opportunities at Oakland's hospitals and institutions, was also a product of her vision. In her years as the director of Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development (now Neighborhood Allies), Sandy remained a resource and an ally for OPDC and the Oakland communities. When she returned to Peoples Oakland as its executive director in 2006, she continued to advocate for Oakland, as well as a care for its most vulnerable residents.

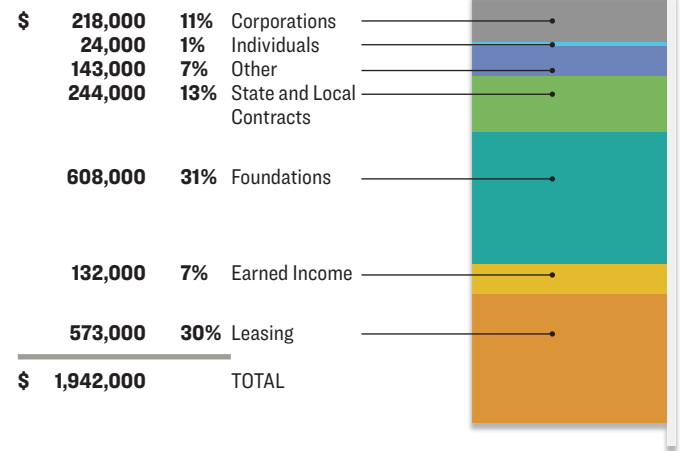
“I always found it remarkable how devoted Sandy was to her elderly friend, Esther. Sandy spent, what seemed to me, most of her free time in tending to Esther's needs or in just keeping Esther company,” reminisces Susan Golomb, former OPDC Executive Director. **“Sandy's career centered on helping others and making their lives better. A book could be filled with stories about her accomplishments, but her caring for Esther was private, quiet, not in the public eye. It was not her job, not a part of what made her career so successful. To me, this says the most about who Sandy was.”**



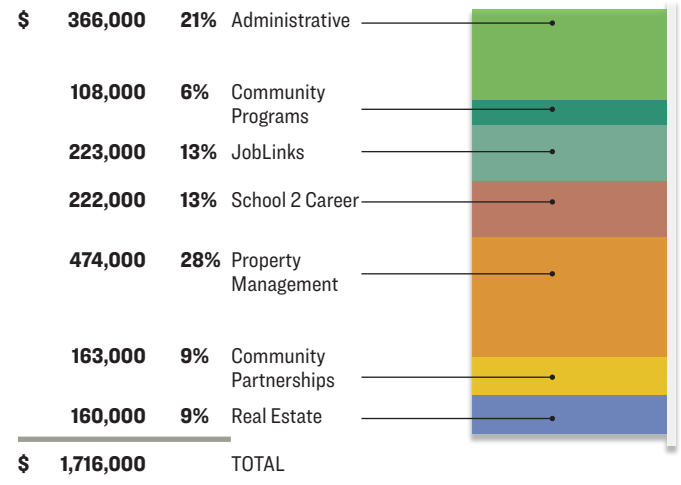
OPDC

Financials: 2018–2019

Revenue



Expenses



Assets

\$ 800,000	Cash and Cash Equivalents
54,000	Contributions and Accounts Receivable
17,000	Prepaid Items
125,000	Notes and Interest Receivable
969,000	Project Development
1,214,000	Property and Equipment, Net
\$ 3,179,000	TOTAL ASSETS

Liabilities

\$ 48,000	Accounts Payable
80,000	Lines of Credit
101,000	Current Portion of Long-Term Debt
29,000	Security Deposits Held
2,383,000	Long-Term Debt
75,000	Forgivable Debt
\$ 2,716,000	TOTAL LIABILITIES

\$ 463,000 NET ASSETS

ALL NUMBERS ARE UNAUDITED

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