

Transforming



Neighborhoods and Lives



Dear Friends,



As we celebrate our 19th year in the City of Duluth, I am thrilled to see the impact of our collective work. Transforming neighborhoods and lives through our Building Sustainable Communities Initiative is a process—one that is well worth investment, time and energy.

Our efforts are focused to see people and places prosper simultaneously. What we call comprehensive community development by addressing five quality of life aspects.

Through our At Home in Duluth partners and others, we are seeing neighborhoods evolve, businesses grow and families strengthen.

"Duluth LISC's role in our community is stronger than ever. The staff worked tirelessly to bring \$7,704,956 into Duluth in 2015 from National LISC. These funds were provided to local partners for various projects. Duluth's neighborhoods are benefitting from the collective impact we are making. Our mission has been and will continue to be helping community-based organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity—good places to live, work, do business and raise children."

~ Deb Otto of Alerus,
Duluth LISC Local Advisory Board Chair

Duluth LISC provides technical assistance and financing while bolstering community engagement and leveraging local support. The work at hand has its challenges, ups and downs. It takes visioning, strategy, funding, dialogue, choices and time...but, the journey is worth it. As you review this progress report, you will see it is happening here in Duluth.

In closing, I want to thank our many partners for their dedication and commitment and a special thank you to our generous donors who entrust us with their donations to transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity. You, along with the collective help of our dedicated Local Advisory Board members, the City of Duluth, and our At Home in Duluth partners, ensure this important work continues, helping neighbors build a stronger future for their families and for our community.

Sincerely,

Pam Kramer
Executive Director

TRANSITIONING TO NEW OVERSIGHT

Lives transformed through enhanced employment opportunities are definitely something that works for Duluth. Since 2008, Duluth at Work has been essential in LISC's pursuit of raising the incomes of low wage workers and small business owners. In 2015 alone, the Duluth at Work program served 426 people, 75% of whom were successfully placed in jobs. LISC introduced the model and has been partnering with the City of Duluth and six non-profit partners to offer comprehensive, long-term coaching, job training and support to specific client groups. The program is now ready for new oversight and management within the Duluth community. Going forward, SOAR Career Solutions, a local organization whose mission is to inspire personal transformation through career development, will oversee the activities of Duluth at Work. The success of Duluth at Work is vital to LISC's Building Sustainable Communities Initiative, which has increasing family income and assets as one of its five goals for seeing people and places prosper.

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DULUTH LISC STAFF

Pam Kramer	Executive Director
Rusty Brown	Assistant Program Officer
Lars Kuehnow	Neighborhood Development Officer
Richard Persky	LISC AmeriCorps VISTA
Lauren Mitchell	Administrative Assistant

\$13 Million local investment in
Duluth LISC has generated more than

\$83.9 Million in LISC funding
for community development

1,418 affordable homes and apartments

1,538 jobs created

Child-care spaces for **286** children

148 blocks of lighting and
streetscape improvements

since opening the Duluth LISC office in 1997



Duluth LISC turns every

\$1 into **\$6**

**Bringing
\$7,704,956
in 2015**



As one of 31 local offices of Local Initiatives Support Corporation, we are proud to leverage its national network, expertise, program resources, funding from foundations and federal grants.

Working locally, we financially sustain our Duluth office through financial support from grants and donations from philanthropic, corporate and individual donors (see list on page 3), helping us make a dramatic impact in Duluth's neighborhoods.

Our work is guided by LISC's Building Sustainable Communities Initiative—focusing on five quality of life goals designed to transform neighborhoods and lives:

- **INVESTING IN HOUSING & REAL ESTATE**
- **BUILDING FAMILY INCOME & ASSETS**
- **STIMULATING ECONOMIC ACTIVITY**
- **IMPROVING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION**
- **SUPPORTING SAFE & HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS**

LISC gives financial resources to non-profit and for-profit developers, neighborhood and community-based organizations to further its mission of ensuring people and places prosper.



ENGAGING RESIDENTS

\$2,500 Jumpstart Duluth Active Transportation Initiative

Improve access to jobs to build assets and quality of life

\$2,500 Lincoln Park Cabaret

Strengthen the neighborhood and community engagement (occurring in 2016)

\$2,500 Lincoln Park Business Group Strategic Planning

Plan for a more vibrant business district

\$5,000 Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative's Public Orchard & Meet on the Street Event

Address healthy lifestyles and create neighborhood connections

\$2,500 Zeppa Foundation's Hillside Youth Bike Rodeo

Create public awareness and safety training for youth and parents

\$3,600 Morgan Park Community Club 2015 Centennial Celebration

Celebrate the past and look to the future

\$6,000 1Roof National CLT Conference

Provide best practices for Land Trust housing

DRIVING INNOVATION

\$134,692 Ecolibrium3 Capacity Building

Create a more resilient Duluth through energy conservation, healthy homes, flood recovery, small business efficiency and resiliency, and blueprint development

\$240,000 Community Action Duluth's Financial Opportunity Center

Help people increase their incomes and assets based on LISC's Bundled Coaching Approach

\$2,500 CHUM's Micro Homes and Tumbleweed Small House Research and Training

Address Duluth's need for affordable, supportive housing

\$10,849 AICHO's Eco-Laundry, Housing Development & Training

Building organizational capacity and instilling best practices

\$75,000 One Roof Capacity Building in Housing Rehabilitation and Revitalization

Implement practices benefiting low income residents, families, neighborhoods and the entire community



ATTRACTING OTHER INVESTMENTS

\$7 Million NorShor Theatre and Arts Center

New Market Tax Credit investment for rehabilitation and development

\$37,875 2301 W. Superior St.

Pre-development loan expenses for mixed-income housing, job creation and commercial development

\$91,900 Growing Neighborhood Businesses

Storefront enhancement, technical assistance & creative financing from Entrepreneur Fund

\$34,340 Gateway Tower Preservation

One Roof's pre-development loan expenses to preserve and upgrade 150 affordable housing units

SPONSORSHIPS & CONSULTANTS

\$53,200 Duluth LISC sponsors community events and works with talented consultants to carry out its mission

For a complete list, please call Rusty Brown at 218-727-7761 or email rbrown@lisc.org.



TRANSITIONING FROM POVERTY TO WORKFORCE TO CAREER



Five years ago, the Financial Opportunity Center at Community Action Duluth (CAD) opened with the purpose of engaging participants in a new way to help them successfully transition out of poverty and into the workforce.

The innovative bundled approach was developed by national LISC and fueled by \$885,000 in Duluth LISC funding, largely from a federal Social Innovation Fund grant. It provides services in three key areas: Employment/Career Coaching, Financial Education Coaching and Public Benefits Screening. Referred to as "bundled services" which, when offered together, result in increased assets, incomes, long-term financial stability, and a better quality of life for the recipient and their family.

Armed with the knowledge to make lasting change, CAD is deepening its services to include intensive job skills training to help participants secure higher paying, career-oriented jobs through LISC's new Bridging Career Opportunities model and federal Social Innovation seed funding awarded to Duluth LISC. Named Connect Forward, CAD is working alongside local community partners—ISD 709-ABE, Lake Superior College and City of Duluth's Workforce Development Center—to match participants to contextualized training in math and reading. This is combined with soft skills training aligned with health care, customer service and banking industry career pathways, in partnership with employers and the Duluth Workforce Development Center's Career Pathway's Committee. "Connect Forward will enable under-skilled and under-employed workers to increase their skills, incomes, assets and career potential," states Pam Kramer, executive director of Duluth LISC. "It is a holistic program and will be good for the entire community—the employee, employers and our local economy."

Photo by Michael K. Anderson



ALTERING NEIGHBORHOOD ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Expending energy to help others save theirs was one goal of the LISC-supported Morgan Park Neighborhood Energy Challenge. In 2015, At Home partner Ecolibrium3 worked with local utilities and neighborhood residents to canvass Morgan Park, encouraging residents to complete home energy assessments and energy retrofits. As part of Duluth's entry into the Georgetown University Energy Prize Competition, this exciting approach could help Duluth win a

\$5 million prize and serve as a model for utility companies throughout the nation. "It was exciting to watch a neighborhood come together to improve their homes and benefit the community," describes Ecolibrium3 CEO Jodi Slick. "The beautiful 100-year-old Morgan Park homes were more energy efficient than expected, but many appreciated the low or no cost actions to save money and improve household comfort. We also saw community volunteers who were less familiar with Morgan Park fall in love with its natural beauty and neighborhood spirit."

Thank you to our 2015 DONORS

\$100,000 +

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U.S. Department of Housing
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Dr. Judith and Dr. David Arvold
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Special Appreciation to 2016 Annual Luncheon Platinum Sponsors



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Transforming

LINCOLN PARK

FORMING A CRAFT DISTRICT DESTINATION

A new craft business district is forming on West Superior Street, and visitors to the Lincoln Park Pop-Up Shop got an introduction to its exciting present and bright future. Advance Lincoln Park—a group of neighborhood businesses brought together by Duluth IISC and the Entrepreneur Fund including Frost River Trading Company, Aero-Stich, Bent Paddle Brewing and the Duluth Grill—organized the Pop-Up in the fall of 2015 to give shoppers and entrepreneurs alike an opportunity to experience the momentum. “The Pop-Up is a launching pad for the energy occurring in Lincoln Park,” remarks Duluth IISC’s Neighborhood Development Officer Lars Kuehnw. “The goals were to engage the community, enhance the narrative and attract new businesses. It’s been several months and the Pop-Up’s success is still emerging.” Hemlock Leatherworks, a Pop-Up participant, has announced plans to open a storefront in the Lincoln Park Craft Business District. Six additional businesses are expected to follow—foreshadowing the transformation of what is quickly becoming a new destination in Duluth.



Pop-Up photos by Michael K. Anderson



LINCOLN PARK COMMONS

Old structures can breathe new life into a neighborhood. Sherman Associates led renovations to this 125-year-old school building, keeping the chalkboards, lockers, and murals, but transforming it into 50 quality affordable apartment units for families; seven are for individuals affected by long-term homelessness. Duluth IISC provided pre-development loans for this new community hub that also is home to four non-profit agencies—Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northland, Community Action Duluth, the Duluth Human Development Center Harmony Club, and the Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative. Community Action Duluth Executive Director Angie Miller says, “People from across Duluth come to get help in building their incomes and assets, mental health services, early childhood programming, parenting classes and more.”

MEET ON THE STREET

Energy, enthusiasm and activity bring Third Street between 24th and 27th Avenues West alive for the Meet on the Street event. Duluth IISC provided a seed grant to the Lincoln Park Children and Families Collaborative to promote healthy living. The streets were bustling with bikes, dogs and pedestrians instead of cars. More than a dozen organizations gathered for a day of play and community building. From hopscotch and yoga to minnow races and blood pressure checks, it was for all ages.



Photo by Duluth News Tribune

DULUTH'S BEST BREAD

Ovens aglow and delicious smells are once again the reality for a former pizza restaurant at 2632 W. Third Street. Duluth's Best Bread found a home in Lincoln Park by buying a vacant building. Along with it came a heavy pizza oven and large refrigerator, which was a huge opportunity for the entrepreneur brothers Michael and Robert Lillegard, participants in the Duluth IISC Lincoln Park Pop-Up Shop. Since opening, members of the neighborhood stop by to say how excited they are to see the building being used again. “I’ve even gotten fan mail,” exclaims Michael. “People thank us for opening, saying they remember coming here as a kid and are glad to see the space being used again.”

LINCOLN PARK FAIR FOOD ACCESS CAMPAIGN

Responding to Lincoln Park residents' search for healthier food, the Fair Food Access (FFA) Campaign got its roots from a State Farm/IISC Cause an Effect Contest grant in 2011. The USDA defines a food desert as an area where low income residents have poor access to a supermarket or large grocer. The FFA Campaign, a partnership between the Zeitgeist/Healthy Duluth Area Coalition, CHUM, Community Action Duluth, Duluth Community Garden Program and IISC, prioritizes access to fresh, affordable food in Lincoln Park. After four years, Lincoln Park residents are reaping healthy benefits from FFA's work and the support of a Blue Cross Blue Shield grant through a new Emerald Community garden, the Lincoln Park Farmers' Market at Harrison Community Center, to nutrition education and cooking classes, and recent openings of the new Denfeld Whole Foods Coop and Kwik Trip. This is evidenced by Chanti Calabria, with the Seeds of Success program at Community Action Duluth: “More than half of last year's sales were transactions from EBT customers, so the Farmer's Market is having a positive impact on residents with limited resources.” The campaign's success expanded in 2015 to help residents in Lincoln Park, Morgan Park and West Duluth get access to a large grocer by creating a Grocery Express route with Duluth Transit Authority and the support of Super One. What began with an online fund sourcing contest has evolved in multiple directions—healthy food education, gardening for pastime and profit, economic growth and community building through the many marketing and outreach opportunities conducted by residents to make their neighborhood a place of plenty.



Photo by Community Action Duluth



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AT HOME IN DULUTH COLLABORATIVE

At Home in Duluth is a collaborative of neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations and public sector partners working together to engage residents, business owners and other stakeholders in creating vibrant neighborhoods where people and places prosper. The Core Group, listed below, is convened by Duluth LISC; it meets regularly to address LISC's Building Sustainable Communities goals and to secure resources to implement the At Home neighborhood and other City of Duluth plans, developed with and for residents and business owners of the Hillside, Lincoln Park, West Duluth, Morgan Park and other St. Louis River Corridor neighborhoods.

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Independent School District #709
Lincoln Park Business Group
Morgan Park Community Club
Myers-Wilkins Community School Collaborative
One Roof Community Housing
River Corridor Coalition
St. Louis County (Public Health and
Human Services)



Photos by Michael K. Anderson

REMOVING GAPS AND CHANGING LIVES

Together for Health at Myers-Wilkins Elementary School in the Hillside neighborhood is an innovative, collaborative approach to improving the health and well-being of students, their families and neighborhood residents. The collaborative, led by Generations Health, builds on the strengths of this diverse, community school and the belief that better outcomes occur when the community has a direct voice in decision-making. The school, families and agencies work together to identify barriers and develop comprehensive strategies ranging from access to exercise, mental health support, health care, insurance, dental care, nutritious food, and safe, affordable housing. A leadership team and subcommittees of parents, community consultants, school officials and 14 community organizations, including Duluth LISC, partner in providing guidance, connections, oversight and tracking outcomes. A Family Health Coordinator and Community Health Worker have been hired and are located at the school providing access to services and activities such as: healthy cooking classes, fitness classes, family play nights, resource fairs and direct services. Laura Greensmith, the Family Health Coordinator, highlighted a key success factor: "I've learned I need to gain the trust of those seeking services at a pace that is comfortable for them. We work first on small steps towards better health and wellness, which often creates a ripple effect of change with far-reaching ramifications."

