

LISC DC

at 40

Celebrating a Legacy of Community Development

LEGACY TRAILMAKERS AWARD



Martin Mellet
Vice President
of External Affairs,
Jubilee Housing

Can you tell us about a project that you worked on that was especially impactful? What role did LISC play?

One Project that stands out is Maycroft Apartments. Jubilee Housing builds justice housing—or housing that is deeply affordable with onsite and nearby services in thriving communities. The Maycroft, which was completed in 2019, provides housing for 64 DC families, 41 of which earn at or less than 30% AMI. The Maycroft also includes nearly 10,000 square feet of retail space and the city’s first affordable housing resiliency center. None of this would have happened without [late LISC Executive Director] Oramenta Newsome and LISC. The project was stalled for years in the courts due to predatory developer activity. LISC provided a \$1 Million cash flow loan to keep Jubilee afloat during those years, and, perhaps more importantly, backed Jubilee Housing with a strong voice for our model of affordable housing in high amenity communities.



What is one major accomplishment in your work/the community development field that you’re proud of?

I had the honor of running the Community Development Support Collaborative for over ten years. In addition to providing critical operating support dollars to community development organizations across the city, I’m proud of our role in helping to launch the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development (CNHED). CNHED—and the role they play as a convener of stakeholders across the housing and economic development ecosystems—was essential to key wins in our field including the Housing Production Trust Fund, Housing Preservation Fund, and the ecosystem around DC’s TOPA laws and rent control and stabilization.



What is one aspiration or hope you have for the future of community development in DC?

I hope that the city and the field will continue to sustain their values of inclusivity. As the city continues to grow financially, will its residents, community, and political leaders continue to support the creation of pathways for all people, no matter what their income level or background is, to live dignified lives—to have access to housing that is affordable to them, quality healthcare, jobs, etc.? I hope that the policy and budgetary support for the Housing Production Trust Fund, Preservation fund, TOPA, and all the other crucial ingredients of our city will only continue to improve and grow.

ARTHUR FLEMING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD



Stan Jackson
President and CEO,
Anacostia Economic
Development Corporation

Can you tell us a little about the St. Elizabeth’s project and what made it so impactful? What was LISC’s role in the project?

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How does the work you have engaged in match your values and the legacy you hope to leave behind as an individual?

The St. Elizabeth’s project was a catalyst for showing me the importance of giving groups ownership and ensuring they have a vested interest in a project. For every project I do, I try to bring local small businesses and nonprofits into the ownership component. I believe in changing the narrative and creating wealth-building and other generational opportunities by leveraging resources in a community. I stopped viewing projects as “one-off projects” and instead view them as interconnected with opportunities to achieve broader goals for residents.

What’s one aspiration you hope to see in your work moving forward?

I hope to see the continued leveraging of underutilized resources. For example, the waterfront as a resource can present a unique opportunity for marinas or other recreational use. In addition, there is an existing level of connectivity given the seven metro stops, most of which are underdeveloped. We must be creative with reimagining these resources to not only increase revenue but to improve the quality of life of residents without displacement.



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TRAILBLAZERS AWARD



Rahsaan Bernard

President,
Building Bridges
Across the River

Tell us about the work you’ve done with Building Bridges Across the River and what made it so impactful?

The biggest accomplishment made over the years is developing a strong mutual trust model with the people we serve which has allowed us to engage in the work we need to really ignite, create and amplify the programs. We are a resource engine for residents to solve their own problems. I am most proud of the unwavering trust and it is what led us to be successful.

All our projects are outstanding – The Arc is growing we’re adding a new building to that campus and working with several nonprofit partners to co-create this. The equitable development work done with the 11th Street Bridge Park is a nationally recognized model on how to do community development projects right without displacing residents, and the Skyland Workforce Center recently reached the mark of placing 1,000 people in full time jobs. There is a lot to be excited about. We have been metaphorically building bridges and now it’s happening in real life. That is the manifestation.



Future – what’s one aspiration you hope to see in your work moving forward?

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Capital Market Team
Ashley Drakeford, Brittney Drakeford, Kyle Reeder, and Tarin Shaw

Tell us about the work you’ve done with Capital Market and what made it so impactful?

Capital Market is a community based farmers market that started 5 years ago in response to a local grocer closing and the community came together because we all felt it was important to have local access to fresh foods. We also work with MD Farmers Market Association and partner with SNAP and WIC. We felt it was essential take a hold of the food justice system and bring it back into the community. What has made this work so impactful is that we’ve been in the community for over 6 generations in Capitol Heights, MD. We feel rooted here ancestrally, and we are here to advocate for a better quality of life.



Past – What’s one major accomplishment in your work/in the community development field that you’re proud of? (i.e what’s changed for the better since you started working in this field)

This market started on a whim. We had no resources, no space, and we all worked full time jobs. In the face of it all, we’ve been able to grow the market with the little we have and have made strong connections. As we’ve continued to grow, the importance of what we are doing is only further validated – what we are doing works.

Future – what’s one aspiration you hope to see in your work moving forward?

The immediate future is continuing to build out the program. We are building out a commercial kitchen and space so that farmers have an affordable place to store their food if they aren’t able to sell, and it can be circulated back into the community. We are also purchasing refrigeration vans! This is truly about reclaiming the food system in a space where so much has been taken from us.

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OPEN

TRAILBLAZERS AWARD



Diana Movius
Executive Artistic
Director, Dance Loft

Tell us about the work you’ve done with Dance Loft and what made it so impactful?

Biggest Impact we had was finding Dance Loft and developing 4 studios with one theater arts complex in Ward 4. Starting a new arts facility is difficult work. Every art space makes a huge difference because there are so few remaining in DC. We wanted to serve the artists that would use it and also make it accessible for the community and develop programming that goes into the community and recognize the city. DC needed more art space if it was going to support an art space community and ward 4 did not have what other wards had.

Past – What’s one major accomplishment in your work/in the community development field that you’re proud of? (i.e what’s changed for the better since you started working in this field)

We are thrilled at the partnership with the City government and grateful they realize how important the arts is in this field. When we first started, there were not a ton of resource for the arts and this has changed over the past 7 years. Additionally, there seems to be more creative and critical thinking on new models to support arts with the district using both public and private funds. The latest project happening is the new state of the arts center within an affordable housing building. It’s great to see DC government thinking of creative ways to support the arts and local residents.

Future – what’s one aspiration you hope to see in your work moving forward?

I hope to see more artist stay and grow their work in DC. Artists tend to leave as the city gets more expensive, but I’d like to see more places like ours rooted in DC to support the arts. I’d like to see the residents of DC support more local artists and work here and make DC an even more vibrant place to live.

