

COURT STREET VILLAGE REPORTER

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NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Berridge Hotel: Court Street Village, in partnership with the Genesee County Land Bank and LISC, has begun pre-leasing the Berridge Loft Apartments in downtown Flint. These modern loft apartments are expected to be complete by the end of 2008. Tenants will be given the option to purchase their unit as a condo at the end of the rental period. The high-end apartment building will operate as a gated community and include many amenities. Court Street Village participated in this year's Back to the Bricks in downtown Flint to promote pre-leasing of the apartments. Every Tuesday and Thursday beginning November 4th, the Berridge will offer tours from 11:30am – 1pm. Call Linda at 810 813-0771 for more information or visit the website at www.berridgeplace.net.

Grand Traverse Neighborhood Playscape: In 1953, William Ballenger created Memorial Park in honor of his late wife, Minnie. The park is 4 acres and sits at Grand Traverse, Church St. and Fifth St. in downtown Flint. The park has seen no serious re-investment in 55 years. Memorial Park has remnants of former amenities that are no longer usable including an outdoor stage, field house with restrooms and a community room. Through time, the park has lost many of its great features and now stands as a shell of what it once was. There is now a collaborative effort to re-invent the park. The Grand Traverse District Neighborhood Association (GTDNA) has an agreement with the IMA and the Ballenger Trust to install 2 playscapes in the park. Partners of this project also include the Ruth Mott Foundation, Community Foundation of Greater Flint and Court Street Village Nonprofit Housing Corporation. These are organizations and foundations that want to help give new life to the park. Memorial Park is located in the heart of downtown Flint, surrounded by business, government, churches and residential. GTDNA's plans are to build 2 playscapes; one for children aged 2-5, and the second designed for ages 5-12. This project will also include continued beautification with gardens, benches and picnic tables. The playscape is designed to be a two day community-build project, saving in labor costs. GTDNA's first fundraising event was a benefit concert held at Memorial Park on June 14, 2008 where they raised over \$6,000. In addition, the Ruth Mott Foundation has donated \$50,000 and the Community Foundation of Greater Flint has donated \$2,500 for a children's rain garden. The White Horse Tavern has agreed to sponsor a fundraising event in the coming months, so please visit our website as fundraising plans develop. Only \$20,000 more is needed to make this project a reality. Currently, the GTDNA holds its annual Family Block Party at the park and looks forward to sponsoring more community events in the future. Please consider a donation by going to our website, courtstreetvillage.org, and click on the "Donate Now" button to the left. If you are interested in volunteering when construction begins in spring 2009, or would like to make a personal contribution, please call Heidi Phaneuf, President of the GTDNA, at 810 444-2202.

EVICT YOUR LANDLORD!
Realize the dream of your own home!

Court Street Village Nonprofit Housing Corporation, Metro Housing Partnership and the City of Flint Department of Community and Economic Development can help you buy a newly-renovated home in the Grand Traverse District neighborhood for what you may be paying in rent. DOWN-PAYMENT ASSISTANCE can give you **\$7,500 to \$40,000** in down payment and closing cost assistance that is forgiven after five, ten or fifteen years of home ownership and residency (depending on the program).

Through the **FREE** Metro Housing Partnership **SmartBUYER**© Education class, you will learn:

- How to be a successful homeowner
- How to apply for a mortgage loan
- How to budget to buy a home
- How to avoid predatory lending
- How to maintain your home
- Money management and savings plans
- How to negotiate a contract
- What lenders look for when approving mortgages
- How to access grant and loan programs
- How to understand your credit
- What happens during the closing process

The **SmartBUYER**© education course consists of six hours of classroom time that can be completed in either one or two sessions. All graduates are eligible for down-payment assistance and one-on-one counseling. **BUILDING YOUR MONEY MUSCLE** workshops designed to give you money management and consumer skills. Topics include Budgeting, Savings, Banking, Credit, Taxes, and Insurance.

Call Nicole @ (810) 767-7008 for information or to register!

NEWS ALERT: Genesee County Habitat for Humanity, Court Street Village Nonprofit, the Genesee Co. Land Bank, The Stockton Center and the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood Association (GTDNA) met on November 6th at Court Street United Methodist Church in a unique partnership to bring about comprehensive revitalization of the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood. This is part of the GTDNA's Vision 2020 Program. Its mission is to develop and transform neighborhoods by eliminating substandard housing and its causes by the year 2020.

Board Member Profile LOIS CRAIG “keeping roots firm”

Lois Craig wants to retire by the age of 80. She did retire once before. That lasted two weeks. Maybe part of her desire to work hard stems from the harsh days of the depression. Lois was born in 1929 and grew up in Ishpeming, Michigan, in the UP's Marquette County. Times were hard back then. Her memories include being hungry and moving over 15 different times. A strong sense of family got her through those rough times. Lois was raised by her Swedish grandmother and says her strong will must have come from grandma. “She was the first woman-libber I ever knew”. Lois says she was also lucky because “I had a father who thought a woman could do anything a man could”. He was a union supporter and a member of the famed Wobbly's.



Lois remembers a story about her dad during the depression. One Sunday, he asked Lois where she was going. Lois told him she was going to church. “Why do you go to church”, dad asked. Lois responded, “to see God”. Lois was stunned by his reply, “God is in the White House, he's Franklin D. Roosevelt. I call him a God because he is the man who let us eat again”. That sums up the tough times during that era, and how any relief was seen as a

Godsend. Lois also remembers the Sit Down Strike in Flint in the 1930's. She lived just a few blocks from the strike and was fascinated by the women wearing red berets, called the “Red Brigade”. They were the wives of strikers who marched in support of their men and made sure they were fed.

Lois started working at age 14 in retail and at the downtown Strand theater. She graduated from Central High School and married within a year. Married 26 years, her 3 sons are her pride and joy. Lois loves watching them interact with each other. She says, “they attack life so differently, it's fun to watch them together”. No matter how tight things got, she would often take in neighborhood kids who needed help, until they got back on their feet. Like their mom, her sons are passionate about politics and history. Most of us know Lois's involvement in politics, but you may not know she graduated from U of M Flint at the age of 54 with a degree in History.

Lois has been involved in politics for nearly 40 years. She left AC to work for the Democratic party when she was in her early thirties. Because work was not steady at party headquarters, she commuted to Lansing for 12 years as part of the research staff for the Democratic party. Lois was campaign manager for Bobby Crim when he ran for the Michigan House of Representatives in 1963, then served as his Administrative Assistant for 10 years. She became the Executive Director of the Genesee County Democratic Party in 1964. Lois started working with the Crim Race in 1976. Along with working for Bobby Crim, Joe Conroy and Phil Hart, Lois worked on the “get out the vote” drive for John F. Kennedy during his Presidential bid. And it gets even better...

In the 1930's, a group of women named the Genesee County Women's Division set up clubs so women could become involved in local politics. In 1963, Lois was President of the group and received the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for “outstanding organization” for the Democratic Party. Lois was presented the award at the White by Mrs. Roosevelt herself. When they met, Mrs. Roosevelt told Lois to “keep your basic roots firm and maintain that clean root”. I think Lois was probably a little confused until Mrs. Roosevelt continued, “your basic roots are with local 581”. Lois got it. It's where you start in life that helps move you forward. Lois was impressed that Mrs. Roosevelt had done her homework and learned something personal about her. As you can imagine, it's a conversation Lois will never forget.

The recognition didn't stop. In 1989, she was presented with the Key to the City of Flint. That same year, the Mayor designated “Lois Craig Day” in the City of Flint. In 2001, she received the Nina Mills Women of Achievement Award from the YWCA of Greater Flint and in 2007 Lois was nominated for the Chamber of Commerce Athena Award. After working for 51 years, 17 of it for the Crim Race, Lois decided to retire in 1994 – for 2 weeks. That's when she found one of her passions. Special Olympics. “I am hooked on these kids. Even if I retire, I would continue volunteering for events”, says Lois. “I just don't know what the world was like for these kids before Special Olympics”. She brings that same passion as a Board Member of Court Street Village Nonprofit Housing Corp.

Lois has been on the Board of Directors for Court Street Village for 16 years and believes in developing strong communities. She got involved with Court Street Village because her neighborhood, Fairfield Village, is one of 4 associations Court Street Village sponsors. She wanted to be active in stabilizing her community. Now her reasons have expanded. Lois says, “there is not a finer group of people to sit on a Board with, and I've sat on a lot of Boards. This Board is caring and contributes so much time and energy to the community”. She currently sits on our Fund Development Committee and with her experience and knowledge she is a great asset to the organization. Thank you, Lois for your dedication to Court Street Village and to the entire Flint community.

SENIOR HOUSING ACTIVITIES & UPDATES

MDOT Van: Court Street Village senior apartments has been approved to receive a new van through an MDOT grant. This will save us in fuel expense and maintenance repairs. We hope to receive the van by the end of 2008.

QUILT SHOW: Court Street Village West participated in a Quilt show September 11th-13th sponsored by the Greater Flint Arts Council. Court Street Village was one of 7 host sights for the show, and had over 100 visitors. The beautifully crafted quilts were draped over the interior balconies of the apartment building and were eye-catching. Court Street Village has plans to participate next year, so if you missed this years' display we'll looking forward to seeing you next year.

APARTMENTS AVAILABLE: For those of you aged 55 or better, there are still a few available apartments at our Apartment buildings on Court Street. Stop by and enjoy a tour of our beautiful community, check out our photo gallery at www.courtstreetvillage.org, or call Linda at (810) 813-0771 for more details.

VOLUNTEER AUXILLIARY COMMITTEE: Board member Duane Poole helped establish a volunteer committee to help expand activities geared for the elder. They include computer classes and "getaways" like a fall color tour.

SENIORS \$5 DRIVE

Court Street Village is challenging its readers to donate just \$5 so we can continue our senior programs. Seniors who live on fixed incomes struggle paying for basic necessities. We have established 3 funds for seniors facing special costs this winter.

Medicine Cabinet: Through Medicare, seniors must choose a prescription program, and can only change their plan once per year. If their medication changes, they may not be covered under their current plan. The Medicine Cabinet keeps funds available to help seniors who run short paying for prescriptions.

Food Pantry: There are at least 20 seniors in our apartments who regularly rely on food banks to help feed them. By having an in-house food pantry, we can help with their nutritional needs as well as reduce their costs for transportation. Most of them have to pay for transportation to a food bank.

Heat Assistance: Paying heat bills this winter will be a problem for some of our residents. We have established a Heat Assistance program for our most needy seniors (one of whom has an income of slightly over \$6,000 per year) in order to keep them warm this winter.

If you can help our residents, please mail a check payable to Court Street Village, 727 East Street, Flint MI 48503.

Court Street Village Nonprofit 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Court Street Village, in cooperation with the County Sheriff, Flint Police Department and the local National Guard unit, held a "Center City Neighborhood Preparedness Teach-In" to provide emergency information to residents and encourage family preparedness plans.
- The Grand Traverse District Neighborhood Association (GTDNA) has partnered with Habitat for Humanity for the construction of 12 homes in the neighborhood. This is the first year of the 3 year project.
- The Central Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) approved a motion to be one of the pilot neighborhoods for the Community Challenge Visual Change Outcome Group.
- Court Street Village secured a grant from The Home Depot to install energy-efficient appliances in 2-3 homes on S. Grand Traverse St. These homes are part of our "Purchase, ReHab, ReSell" program and should be complete by summer, 2009.
- The Central Park Neighborhood Association sponsored a neighborhood clean-up in September. Garbage trucks from the City of Flint were used to clean trash, along with help from many volunteers.
- Bulb planting at the new community garden (8th Street & Gd. Traverse) took place in October. This was initiated by the Grand Traverse District Neighborhood Association and funded by Keep Genesee County Beautiful and the Ruth Mott Foundation.
- Fairfield Village Neighborhood Council was awarded a grant to publish a cookbook. Call Nicole 810 767-7008 if you are interested in purchasing a cookbook.



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*"Providing quality Senior housing
& promoting healthier neighborhoods"
Near downtown & the Cultural Center.*

At Court Street Village we have a compassionate,
caring staff of professionals dedicated to providing
a safe, affordable place to live.

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