

MARCH 2024

NEWS LEAF



Important Dates

April 3 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Virtual Coffee & Conversation- Learn about area Earth Day celebrations and where you can get outdoors.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/yjw8dfsk>

Meeting ID: 836 0485 5182

Passcode: 469360

Dial by your location:

+1 309 205 3325

April 24 | 12:00-1:00 PM

Virtual Lunch & Learn - Staying Positive in Challenging Times with Dr. Ed Creagan

Join Zoom Meeting:

<http://tinyurl.com/3z9y5trv>

Meeting ID: 846 5703 8274

Passcode: 621273

Dial by your location:

+1 305 224 1968

May 1 | 9:00-10:00 AM

Virtual Coffee & Conversation -Recognizing & celebrating 80 years of RAF community investment.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://tinyurl.com/yjw8dfsk>

Meeting ID: 836 0485 5182

Passcode: 469360

Dial by your location:

+1 309 205 3325

*As a reminder to our Donor Advised Fundholders – grant requests are processed on the 15th and last business day of each month.



Rochester Area
Foundation

President's Letter

Since 1944, you have joined us in supporting our community with your expertise, engagement in learning, and philanthropic investments in area nonprofits.

This year, 2024, is the Foundation's 80th Anniversary and we are excited to recognize past accomplishments of the Foundation, while also looking ahead to the next five years, ten years, and beyond.

We are committed to our vision of building better communities for all. We work to achieve this audacious goal through creating and preserving affordable housing, supporting nonprofit organizations with competitive grant awards, providing students with financial support for continuing education and much, much more.

We will soon have our 2023 Annual Report available highlighting the work we have done together last year. On May 16, at Cascade Lakeside we will host a public event as a way to say thank you and celebrate together. More details to come!

Thank you for your partnership and joining us to make a difference in the communities where we live, work and invest!



Rochester Area Foundation is here to support your generosity and community giving.

Consider how you can make a positive impact through your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Join weGive365 - a \$1 a day giving circle.

Volunteer with the Grant Distribution Committee or Scholarship Committee.

Join RAF monthly for virtual Coffee & Conversation to learn more about our community.

Consider opening a Donor Advised Fund or meeting with RAF staff to include charitable giving in your estate plan.

For more information contact Ellen Hegge - ehegge@rochesterarea.org or 507/424-2407

Lisa Lundquist - First Homes

Lisa Lundquist's career working for various nonprofit organizations has given her the opportunity to take on many different roles and move throughout the upper Midwest. When she found a new position that would bring her to Rochester, an area she loved, she was excited. As she planned her move, she was concerned with the housing costs in the area, and it seemed like an impossibility to find a good fit.

"I was making a pretty good salary and I still needed help," detailed Lisa.

A friend, who was studying urban planning, introduced Lisa to First Homes. Lisa contacted First Homes and learned about the Community Land Trust (CLT) model.

By using a CLT model, First Homes provides a subsidy investment into the home, keeping the home affordable. An income qualified buyer can then purchase the home and enjoy the traditional benefits of homeownership, including building wealth, becoming a part of the community, and having a place to call your own. This program appealed to Lisa, she qualified, and in 2005, Lisa bought her new-construction CLT home.

Lisa would live in that home for the next 17 years, getting to know her neighbors and becoming involved in the community. She joined the board of the Rochester Public Library, served as President of the Board for the local Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, participated in a local writers group, and also joined the First Homes Board. She was happy to serve in the community and enjoy her life.

2020 proved to be an especially challenging year for Lisa, as she started experiencing some medical issues, struggling with a series of falls.

"I thought it was my hip," Lisa recalled.

After one of many fall incidents, in which Lisa needed to call 9-1-1, she was strongly encouraged by an EMT to accept a ride to the Emergency Room and have a physician look into the cause of these repetitive episodes. Within 24 hours, Lisa was diagnosed with a tumor on her spine and underwent surgery to remove it. Although the tumor was successfully removed, Lisa became paraplegic and required a wheelchair.

The home she had loved for 17-years suddenly became a challenge. The doorways were too narrow; the flooring was difficult to navigate with a wheelchair; the basement of her home was completely inaccessible. She worked to renovate her home to improve accessibility, but she still struggled. Living in an inaccessible home was untenable. Lisa was now a person living with a disability, on a fixed income, with not a lot of affordable, accessible home options.

By chance in 2022, First Homes purchased a single-level home that could easily be made accessible. Our First Homes staff team thought of Lisa and if this home could be a better fit that could resolve her accessibility issues. It turns out it was a great fit. The change in Lisa's life after moving into her new home was almost instantaneous. Lisa recalls the joy she felt when for the first time in two years, she was able to physically leave her home with ease and treat herself to a coffee from local café before attending the First Homes board meeting in person. This newly realized independence has been great for the ever-social Lisa.

She beamed as she recalled, "Today my friend came over and I was able to meet her out in the driveway."

Lisa is excited to embrace her independence in an accessible home that has charm and space that suits her.



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