

lacasa  
50 Years  
1970-2020



# 2019 Annual Report

Strong Foundations. For Everyone.

# 50 Years of Strong Foundations



*Chris Kingsley is the President / CEO of Lacasa, Inc. He previously served as Lacasa's Vice President Resource Development.*



*Deb Jones is the Chair of the Board of Lacasa, Inc.*

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Just over fifty years ago, a group of concerned community members took action to better the living conditions of migrant farm workers. Elkhart County would truly be different without this agency and the group of determined pioneers who formalized a mission with action in 1970. Hundreds of quality, attractive, affordable housing units have been created. Thousands of immigration processes have been supported. Nearly 800 households have achieved first time homeownership. Nearly 600 homeowners have benefited from needed repairs. This only scratches the surface.

What a testament to a consistent community of supporters who have fueled this mission through board service, volunteerism, donations, partnerships, service as staff members, and so much more; a community who has believed in creating opportunity for personal empowerment, family stability, and neighborhood vitality. Throughout 2020 we are celebrating both what has been accomplished and what will be.

In the following pages, we're pleased to share with you not only the impact of the past year, but also stories from the previous 49. While the "what" of Lacasa's activities has grown and evolved over the decades, the "why" has not. We still believe strongly in work that respects human dignity. We continue to equip people and communities to unlock their potential and we strive to do it with excellence.

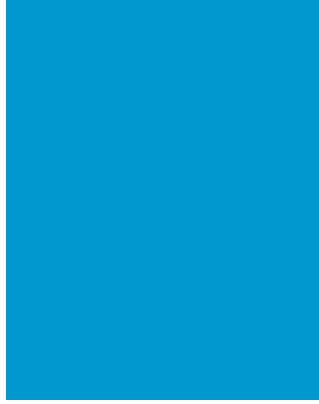
We invite your ongoing involvement with Lacasa's mission to consider commemorating this involvement in special ways that are meaningful to you during our 50th anniversary year. We invite conversations with you about ways to contribute and further the sustainability of this mission. On behalf of everyone at Lacasa, we thank you for helping to continue our mission and provide strong foundations, for everyone!



*Chris Kingsley,  
President / CEO  
of Lacasa, Inc.*



*Deb Jones,  
Board Chair*



# Taking on the Impossible



*Larry Gautsche served as Lacasa, Inc's Executive Director/President/CEO from 2001 until his retirement in 2018. He currently serves as Vice-Chair of ADEC's Board of Directors.*

Larry Gautsche joined Lacasa's Board of Directors in 1995 as an employee of ADEC. By 2000, he was the Board Vice Chair and a member of the Executive Director transition team, which began a discussion that Larry was not expecting. Larry recalled that "Mike Leaser, Board chair at the time, looked at me and said, 'well, what we need is someone like you to run the organization, so why don't you take the job'." In 2001, Larry accepted the position and became Lacasa's third Executive Director.

Partnerships with NeighborWorks America and Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority were essential in providing resources and grant opportunities in the Elkhart County area. Larry found an opportunity for Lacasa to help downtown Goshen revitalization efforts through the restoration of two historical buildings. The Shoots and Hattle buildings, in 2006, were in need of either full-scale renovation or to be demolished. "I think the community saw that as an impossible project. We had over 1,000 people work on those two buildings over an 18 month construction," Larry said "We were able to keep residents of those buildings housed during the renovation and I think those buildings really contribute to downtown Goshen."

Following up the Hattle and Shoots redevelopment, Larry was approached to take on a new redevelopment project. Larry said, "We went from one impossible project to another." Lacasa was able to work on two major Elkhart projects in 2008, the Roosevelt Center and Water Tower Place. The success of these projects lead Lacasa into another big opportunity, The Hawks building in 2013. Built in 1870, **The Hawks** is a former furniture factory along the historic Mill Race canal in Goshen that Lacasa transformed into 35-loft-style apartments uniquely designed for artists and entrepreneurs in a live/work environment. Professions from brewers, photographers, and potters have been cultivated from their time at the Hawks.

Looking ahead to his own retirement, in 2017 Larry identified that a long-term strategic plan was important to continue building Lacasa's sustainable impact in the community. The strategic plan lead to the development of the Impact Fund, an aggressive fund-raising effort focused on long term investment efforts for Lacasa. Larry was able to build on the work of Moses Beachy and Arden Shank to deepen Lacasa's impact in the community and to bring new opportunities for Lacasa.



Photo by Stuart Meade Photography



## GRANT BEACHY

Grant Beachy was new to Goshen in 2008 and looking to establish himself in the community as a recording engineer and photographer. These pursuits required some sacrifices that he was happy to make. "I was living with a friend and other places so I could pursue [music] recording and photography. I could learn what I was doing with a little less risk of things like high living expenses."

Then in 2015, "there was conversation happening among fellow artists, saying that there's a building coming up that's going to be really cool for artists with their needs in mind," Grant said. "I remember saying 'if this happens, I will be one of the first people to apply'. So, day of [the application opening], I showed up 20 minutes early and there was already a line out the door."

*"You find yourself working to the level of people around you."*

The Hawks allowed for local artists to meet and collaborate with other artists. For Grant, the space was very inspiring. He said, "it kind of rubs off just walking by people in the hallways who are working hard at what they do. You find yourself working to the level of people around you."

His time at The Hawks gave Grant opportunities to grow his business and expand the types of projects he could work on. He also went on to take Lacasa's homebuyer education class and subsequently purchased his first home from Lacasa.

## Eyes on the Long Term Need



*Arden Shank was Lacasa, Inc.'s Executive Director from 1988 to 1999. He currently resides in Miami, FL as a Community Development Consultant and Board Chair, Community Reinvestment Alliance of South Florida Miami, Florida.*

Arden Shank began a connection with Lacasa when he volunteered, which then led to a part time job with Lacasa and continued to expand his role at Lacasa as needs grew by the end of 1985. After two years, he transitioned into the role of Executive Director in January of 1988. Arden said, "The biggest takeaway I got during my transition with Moses (Beachy) was to never take your eye off of the actual need in the community."

Lacasa was beginning to transition from an agency responding to immediate needs, to an agency providing solutions to long-term issues. "I wanted to understand how people got into unfair or unjust situations to address those," Arden said. Lacasa looked to address long term housing needs by helping to simplify and clarify outdated housing codes for both tenants and landlords. During the process, it became clear that Lacasa could provide long term assistance by offering housing. Arden said, "the other way to address this is if there is a housing need, let's build houses and let's build apartments." Lacasa rehabilitated and built dozens of properties including the 72-unit apartment complex, Arbor Ridge.

Along with the creation of affordable workforce housing, Lacasa was making long term impact in neighborhoods by establishing the **Help-A-House program** in 1991 to help homeowners with high cost repairs. "I tried to replicate Help-A-House in Miami," Arden reflected. "We did it a few years, but it was difficult to get any support like you get in Goshen. It was the exact right fit here for what this community needed."

As Lacasa grew under Arden's leadership, the need for more space became more apparent. Arden remembers, "we would hire a new employee and not really know where to put them. There were times where the landing on our stairs was just wide enough to fit a desk and we would put people there." In 1992 Lacasa found the current Goshen location at 202 N Cottage Ave.

Arden reflected on his time with Lacasa as a time for transition for the organization. He said, "There was a transition from meeting immediate needs to addressing long-term needs. We put into place the steps needed to address issues that were affecting the community."



*"I couldn't have done it without Lacasa. I feel safer now, knowing that lead is not a threat for my children."*

**ROSA ALBA**

In 2012, Lacasa's Help-A-House and Lead Abatement programs replaced Rosa's roof and windows and remediated the home's lead issues. Rosa is a single mother of three.

"I couldn't have done it without Lacasa. I feel safer now, knowing that lead is not a threat for my children. I have not had any issues with the house and am thankful for the lasting benefits of the help."

*"It allows me to actually save money that I can use for future maintenance."*

**JENNIFER OKLAK**

In 2015, Jennifer was emerging from the difficulties of the Great Recession. A day after graduating from college, 20 volunteers took her house by storm. Along with major landscaping work, Jennifer's house benefitted from insulation and new windows.

"It's made a huge difference in terms of affordability. I used to spend up to \$300 in utilities on an 800 square foot home. Now, I never even hit \$150, unless it's a polar vortex! It allows me to actually save money that I can use for future maintenance."

## Setting the Foundation



*Moses Beachy served as Lacasa's first Executive Director in 1974 after being one of the founding members in 1970.*

*Moses passed away in September 2019 at the age of 94 after more than 70 years of service around the world.*

In 1968, Moses "Mose" Beachy and his family moved from Puerto Rico to Goshen, IN after 8 years of serving rural communities as a pastor and chaplain. Moses soon became a pastor at East Goshen Mennonite Church, which along with other churches in the area, identified a growing need in the growing community. Members of these churches, including Moses, were looking to address the needs of migrant farm workers in the Goshen area. This led to the establishment of the Spanish-American Committee.

The Spanish-American Committee was established in 1969 to solve immediate needs for low-income migrant workers who recently immigrated to the Goshen area. The Goshen churches also identified a growing need for affordable housing for low-income residents of all backgrounds. Man-to-Man was also formed with a mission to help low-income individuals and families find safe, affordable housing. In 1970, the Spanish-American Committee and Man-to-Man merged to form a single organization, Lacasa, to carry on the mission of both organizations.

In 1974, Lacasa, Inc. was in need of leadership to carry out the organization's mission. Moses Beachy became Lacasa's first Executive Director, filling a role he was passionate about. In an interview with the Goshen News in 2007, Don Yost, a Lacasa employee from 1973 to 1979, said "Moses was a guy who lives what he believes. He doesn't just talk about things. He takes action."

Moses was passionate about working with families and individuals on a personal level. In an interview with the Goshen News in 2007, Moses recalled, "I was working with a family with 13 children and they couldn't find a place to live. Thankfully we were able to find them a home in Benton before the mother had twins."

Moses was the Executive Director of Lacasa until 1988 when he retired and promoted Arden Shank to the role of Executive Director. Moses continued to advocate for immigrant rights and inclusion in the Goshen area after his retirement. Arden said in a 2019 statement, "Moses was profoundly committed to the causes of economic and social justice. His passion for the work was contagious and inspiring."





# 2019 Impact

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 176** Neighborhood Residents  
Becoming Neighborhood Leaders
- 4,732** Hours Volunteered From  
667 Individuals
- 333** Total Donors (45 New Donors)



## CLIENT EMPOWERMENT

- 352** Money 4 Life Graduates
- 27** Home Purchases Facilitated
- \$489,529** IDA Dollars Invested in  
the Community
- 422** Immigration Clients Served



## ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 327** Total Units Managed
- 33** Units Dedicated to Permanent Supportive Housing
- 88** Community Events Hosted at the Roosevelt Center



## REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

- 8** Owner Occupied Homes Rehabilitated
- 4** Housing Units Built
- 31** Housing Units in Development



# 2019 Donors

Lacasa's 50 year history has included so many accomplishments, none of which would be possible without the support from individuals, families, church partners, and businesses around Elkhart County. With your support, we impact our community in a lasting way.

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State Farm Insurance  
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Lacasa, Inc. is a Community Development Organization serving Elkhart County. Our programs are designed to improve neighborhoods and strengthen families.

All Lacasa activities and services are provided without regard to race, age, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, or status as a veteran.

## MARIA TORRES



Maria Torres was renting a house for 13 years and always paid on time. Her landlord gave her 1 month's notice to move out. She begged him to let her stay longer, and he agreed that she could stay for a little longer and increased her rent by \$100/month. The first thing she did was come to Lacasa. "I didn't have any idea what the whole homebuying process was before I came to Lacasa, but I've learned

a lot. All my questions were answered, and beyond that, I learned answers to questions I didn't even know I had!"

Maria liked the Homebuyer Education course so much, she took it twice. "I don't know how anybody could go through the process of buying a house and not take this class! When I saw how much interest you have to pay over the years, I thought I'd never be able to buy a house. It seems like you pay as much in interest as what you're paying on the house! I didn't realize there was another way to do it. Now I tell everyone to power pay on their mortgage. I tell people that by paying one

*"I haven't met anybody that isn't amazing. Everybody was SO knowledgeable and helpful."*

extra mortgage payment per year, you can reduce your mortgage payment timeline by 7 years! My boss was so interested, she asked me to write that down for her."

"Of course the down payment assistance was very helpful. I was able to make an \$8,000 down payment after saving \$1,600. It would have taken me years to save up \$8,000, but \$1,600 was manageable. Now my mortgage payment will only be \$41 more than what I was paying to rent, and nobody will be able to tell me that I have to leave in 1 month."

"People might be surprised by how helpful and friendly and kind and compassionate every single person at Lacasa is. I haven't met anybody that isn't amazing. Everybody was so knowledgeable and helpful."