

LACASA, INC.

Annual Report 2021

Strong foundations. For everyone.

www.lacasainc.net

Lacasa, Inc. | Annual Report 2021

Chris Kingsley President/CEO

UNWAVERING MISSION

ooking back at 2021, I am humbled by our community's support. Strong support allowed Lacasa to make a significant impact in the community despite the challenges created by a pandemic that did not end when it was supposed to. The year 2021 was not an easy year for our world, our country, or our community. But perhaps that makes the successes all the sweeter.

Lacasa is nothing without a caring community that makes sacrifices to ensure that there are opportunities for personal empowerment, family stability, and neighborhood vitality. So, even as I celebrate the accomplishments of Lacasa in 2021, I am really celebrating our community and the strength of good will.

Lacasa is also nothing without talented and dedicated staff members and a board that lives and breathes our mission. In a season when competition for employees and turnover rates are high, I am blessed to work with highly tenured and committed senior staff members who consistently deliver highly complex projects and programs that fill gaps in the community that no one else can fill.

In a year where housing availability was low and prices were skyrocketing, 21 families succeeded

with their dream of becoming first-time homebuyers through our services. In a year when delivering one-on-one services was complicated by the pandemic, 364 people still benefited from accredited immigration services. In a year of unprecedented construction costs and supply chain volatility, we were able to create nine beautiful new housing units and complete needed repairs on eight owner-occupied homes.

Lacasa is staffed and surrounded by people and partners who see the world as bigger than themselves. People who look to serve, even in times when it would be easy to hunker down and focus on self-protection. That spirit of service has not, and will never be, defeated by a pandemic. In fact, I dare say it is strengthened.

More than ever, Lacasa's mission is relevant and vital to families in Elkhart County. We are ready to rise to the challenge, surrounded by you, our partners and supporters, and to ensure that our community is one where there are firm foundations. For everyone.





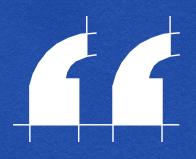
Deb Jones Former Lacasa Board Chair

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT

L acasa's mission - creating opportunity for personal empowerment, family stability, and neighborhood vitality - is the driving force behind all we do. But with change being the only constant, we must continue to think innovatively. With so much uncertainty in the world, we must think creatively and collaboratively to come up with realistic solutions for potential barriers to the important work we do.

During my tenure as Lacasa's Board Chair, I can fondly reflect upon countless examples when staff members were able to "think outside the box" to be the positive change in our community that we all want and need. I am proud to be a part of an organization that holds tight to its mission and impacts so many Elkhart County residents.

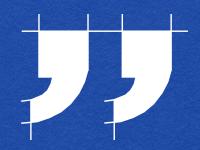
It has been my honor to serve as Lacasa's Board Chair for the past two years and I am pleased to welcome Brett Weddell as my replacement.





I am excited about what Lacasa's future holds in the years to come. The progress that **Chris and the entire Lacasa team has made, continues to improve the community** in which we live.

> Brett Weddell, Optometrist Incoming Lacasa Board Chair





BUILDING WITH PURPOSE

n May 20, 2021, shovels broke the earth at the construction site for a trio of duplexes on State Street. The groundbreaking represented new affordable housing opportunities for individuals or families in Elkhart in need of quality, secure housing with the benefits of near-downtown living.

The new builds are obviously in step with Lacasa's mission, but look deeper and you'll notice that the duplexes are changing the lives of the builders as much as their future residents. This is thanks to Lacasa's partnership with Lifeline Youth Ministries, which is providing opportunities for local youths

to learn trade skills in a safe, empowering environment.

"Lifeline is a faith based after-school program," said Douglas Buckles, who oversees the Lifeline construction crew. "We do a summer camp and this is the fourth year we've been doing the construction program using students from the alternative school who are working with us." Buckles noted the value of the Lacasa partnership for Lifeline. "We've never had a new build. We've always been remodeling, so it's been a great experience for these guys to learn the ins and



outs of the building trade from the ground up." Five to six different students have worked on the duplex project so far, including Robert Denno and Jashaun Robinson. They came in with no building experience. Now, they've taken part in critical building steps in the duplex construction. Denno noted his work on the foundation, putting up walls, working with drywall and installing soundboards. Robinson also contributed a great deal and highlighted his favorite aspect of the work so far.

"My favorite part was the wiring. I got to go up in the attic and work up there with them and the cable wires. That was really fun."

For both students, the project has provided life changing opportunities for personal and professional growth.

"I've learned a lot with electrical and, you know, putting pieces together and being exact with the things you do and making it as precise as possible," Robinson laughed and admitted, "My biggest change in me personally from when I came to Lifeline was probably my patience. I didn't have any patience."

For Denno, Lifeline and the Lacasa duplex project have been a positive turning point in almost every aspect of life.



Lacasa, Inc. | Annual Report 2021

"I didn't have good grades before I came here. I was messing around, doing things I was not supposed to do. Since I came to Life [an alternative program offered through Elkhart Community Schools] and then came to Lifeline, I've been having great attendance, good grades, I've been treating people more respectfully and I have a job lined up for me. I have a place to stay too."

The duplexes, which began construction in June of 2021, will see their first occupants in May of 2022.

"May first we'll have this first building occupied and the other two should follow a month or two after that," said Lacasa Housing Development Manager Aaron Lehman. For Lehman, the Lacasa-Lifeline relationship is something that matters not only for the builders and the residents, but for the community at large.

"Working in partnership with Lifeline, who is also committed to this neighborhood, helps make it feel like these are not just houses, but they're truly community. The people who live around these houses will be benefiting for years and decades to come from this work because Lifeline, because Lacasa had a long term vision for not just building a house, but indeed transforming a neighborhood."

Follow Lacasa on social media for continued updates on State Street construction and renovations.





HELPING FAMILIES, REHABILITATING HOMES

When Liz and Phillip Habecker moved to Goshen with their three daughters, they loved their home. The 1890s historical property was comfortably situated in a kid-friendly neighborhood. Not everything was perfect, though.

"It's an awesome home, but old homes come with lots of quirks," said Liz. Phillip agreed. "We had some issues with the windows. We couldn't open them, we couldn't use them, there were some lead issues with our windows." Liz is a preschool teacher. Phillip was also involved in education, working as a teacher for 15 years before switching careers and working for Entech in Middlebury. Despite both adults working, getting new windows was a financial hurdle for the Habeckers. They turned to Lacasa's Help-A-House program for assistance.

Lacasa helped replace the windows, remove a dropped ceiling, and resolve problems in both the upper and lower bathrooms for the family.

Lacasa, Inc. | Annual Report 2021

"Getting new windows has been amazing," said Liz. "Sometimes it can be kind of embarrassing to ask for assistance from people, but Lacasa never made us feel embarrassed or inadequate in any way. They seemed genuinely happy to help us and help our home and give us the things we couldn't give ourselves, so we're very thankful."

In addition to the benefits of the home upgrades, Phillip also noted the ease of the Help-A-House program's application process.

"We tried other programs too, and for one reason or another it didn't work out. Lacasa made sure to get us what we needed and help us out. Any time you have something like you have some red tape. Lacasa did a really good job of cutting through that red tape and getting us what we needed."

Each year, the Help-A-House program aids aging houses and low-income homeowners with vital repairs. Using a combination of construction experts and volunteers, Lacasa is able to help homes and homeowners in need of electrical, gas, heating, roof, accessibility, plumbing repairs and more. Visit **lacasainc.net/programs/help-ahouse** for the latest on Help-A-House applications and details.





ELKHART RIVER CHALLENGE

efore the sun rose on the Elkhart River, 29 kayak racers lined up for bib numbers and t-shirts in the Interra Credit Union Parking lot. Their destination: 17.2 miles Northwest to Island Park. Their mission: to raise funds for Lacasa.

The kayaks' launch into the water represented the inaugural start of the Elkhart River Challenge, Lacasa's new annual fundraising event. Thanks to the help of local sponsors, participants could join either the 17.2 mile endurance course or the shorter parade float from Studebaker Park to Island Park.

Matt Meersman won and donated the \$2,000 first place prize money, clocking in at 2:17:28. USA Olympic Team member Austin Schwinn followed closely behind with a time of 2:20:13.

"I absolutely would do this again," Schwinn said.

Jeanette Huang also left a winner, receiving \$500 from the participant drawing.

While the event raised money for Lacasa, it also brought awareness of the organization and its mission to a new audience, an audience that will grow as more people learn about the race. Many racers also commented on their excitement about an event happening on the oft-forgotten Elkhart River.

"It feels really good," said race-winner. Meersman in an interview with ABC57, "I mean, it's a great organization, and I appreciate them bringing some attention to the river, which is something I care about a lot."

On Saturday, September 10, 2022, the Elkhart River Challenge will be back. Bigger... better.... and with more racing categories to increase chances of winning across age, gender, and skill levels. Visit **elkhartriverchallenge.org** to keep up on registration deadlines, event news, and more.





Courses



17.2

Mile Endurance Race

\$

Dollars of Prize Money



An Elkhart family accepts keys to their brand-new home, built in partnership with Next Modular.

Lacasa hosted its first annual Elkhart River Challenge on October 4, 2021.

Lacasa hosted an open house event at the Westplains II Apartments in Goshen which consists of eight new construction apartments. (April 29, 2021)





Help-A-House volunteers in Goshen.

Renovations continue at 146 State Street in Elkhart. A beautiful, historic home turned into a duplex.

Community Engagement



35 Conversations with Various Neighbohood Associations



883 Hours Volunteered from 139 Individuals



299 Total Donors (34 New Donors)







7 Neighborhood Leaders Attended the NeighborWorks Community Leadership Conference

Client Empowerment



239 Graduates from Master It Classes



21 Home Purchases Facilitated

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49 Recipients of Matched Savings Dollars

\$

\$202,395.65 Matched Savings Dollars Awarded to **Elkhart County Residents**



527 Immigration Clients Served

Asset Management



347 Total Units Managed



33 Units Dedicated to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Real Estate Development





5 Owner-Occupied Homes Rehabilitated

FROM A DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE: DON STOHLER

When Don Stohler first moved to the Michiana area in the early 1980s, he immediately wanted to learn more about local nonprofits. After completing one term on the Board of a local nonprofit, Stohler was left feeling as if he could have, and should have, done more.

After researching more Elkhart County nonprofits, Stohler admits "Lacasa seemed to me to be collaborating better than anyone else in advancing their mission. They were already working with United Way and various local financial institutions and were open to working with more in an effort to improve the financial literacy of their clientele. They recognized this skill as foundational to improving their lot in life."

When Stohler first made a small unsolicited gift to Lacasa, he was "...immediately recognized... I was thanked and even invited to an event where I became more familiar with Lacasa's current strategic plan." Your donation makes a difference. Visit **Lacasainc.net/donate** to contribute today. "My continued support is based on the fact that I know **my contribution will be used where it can make a difference.** And that's how I feel about Lacasa."



THANK YOU, 2021 DONORS

Individuals Anonymous Audrey Alderfer Anonymous Kathryn Aschliman Sangwook Peter Bahng & Hana Lee Ray & Lillian Bair Paris & Becky Ball-Miller Skip & Laura Barnett Stephen & Jean Barton Merlin & Eileen Becker-Hoover Leonard & Sharon Beechy Chaney & Patricia Bergdall Anonymous Hilary Bertsche Lavonne Bixler John Blosser & Beck Unternahrer John & Tina Bohn Gordon & Cynthia Bontrager Leroy & Joyce Bontrager Wesley Bontrager

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NIPSCO Nuway Construction Obeco, Inc. Old National Bank Foundation PNC Rotary Club of Elkhart Rotary Club of Goshen Schrock Homes, Inc. State Farm - Indiana Office Surf Broadband Solutions Terry's Cleaning and Restoration, Inc. TisBest Philanthropy **Troyer Carpets** Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer, Buckingham, LLP Yoder-Culp Funeral Home **Church Donors** Assembly Mennonite Church Belmont Mennonite Church Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship College Mennonite Church

Foundation Family

Worship Center

Goshen Christian Reformed Church, Goshen City Church Of The Brethren Silverwood Mennonite Church Sunnyside Mennonite Church Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Walnut Hill Mennonite Church Waterford Mennonite Church

Help-A-House Supporters

Leader & Key **Sponsors** See full logo listing on page 21 **Multi-House** Sponsors First State Bank DJ Construction Co., Inc. Miller's Building Supply Inc. Tim & Marisa Yoder Yoder-Culp Funeral Home **Full House Sponsors** 1st Source Bank

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Elkhart River Challenge Supporters

Gold Level

Surf Broadband Solutions Community Foundation of Elkhart County Northwest Bank **Silver Level** Obeco, Inc. Inova Federal Credit Union

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1st Source Bank Catholic Legal Immigration Network Cinnaire City of Elkhart City of Goshen Community Foundation of Elkhart County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) Cooperative Achievement Cora Dale House Crossroads United Wav Dauby O'Connor & Zaleski Dovetail Projects, LLC Elkhart County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Elkhart County Corrections Elkhart County Government Elkhart County Jail Ministry Elkhart Housing Authority Everence Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis First State Bank Goshen College Goshen Chamber of Commerce Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce Habitat for Humanity HUD IHCDA Interra Credit Union La Casa de Amistad Lake City Bank Lifeline Youth Ministries National Immigrant Justice Center NeighborWorks America North Central Indiana Housing Authority Notre Dame Center for Civic Innovation

Oaklawn Psychiatric Services Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing Prosperity Indiana TK Immigration Law Venture International

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Help-A-House Supporters

Key Sponsors



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Empowerment Leader



Builder



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Shopping on Amazon by going to *smile.amazon.com*

Select "Lacasa, Inc." to support, and Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase price to Lacasa.

Charitable Distribution from Your IRA

Taxpayers with a required minimum distribution (RMD) each year and can usa a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to donate directly from a traditional IRA to Lacasa without counting that amount as taxable income. Talk to your financial advisor or tax professional about you specific situation.

MyNeighbor Credit Card by Everence

Select "Lacasa, Inc." as your Neighbor and for every grocery, gas or other purchase you make, Everence will donate 1.50% of the transaction total to Lacasa.

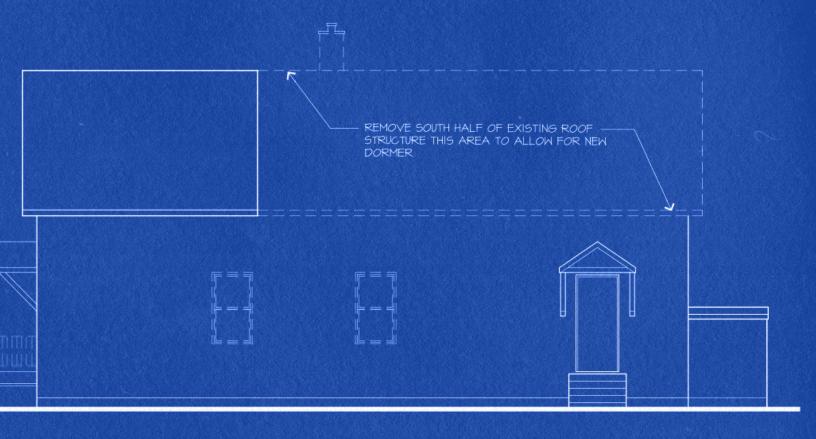
Become a Member of the Lacasa Legacy Society

Planned gifts leave a lasting impact on real people and communities in Elkhart County. Please let us know if you have named Lacasa as a beneficiary to your estate or another form of planned giving, or if you'd like to talk about this possiblity. Contact Heidi Stoltzfus McHugh by email at **heidi.mchugh@lacasainc.net** or by phone at 574.533.4450 ext. 26.

Lacasa is grateful for the many ways you contribute to support our mission. Your gifts help impact our community in a lasting way.



STRONG FOUNDATIONS. FOR EVERYONE.



EVATION



Lacasa Inc. – Goshen 202 N. Cottage Avenue Goshen, IN 46528

Lacasa Inc. – Elkhart 516 S. Main Street Elkhart, IN 46516









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 withour regaurd to race, age, color, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, or status as a veteran.