



BEFORE & AFTER 2017

How collaboration among Legal Aid of Western Missouri, The City of Kansas City, neighborhood organizations and others is making Kansas City a better place to live.

INTRODUCTION

For nearly thirty years, Legal Aid of Western Missouri has represented Kansas City, Missouri neighborhood organizations to acquire vacant, abandoned, and blighted properties for redevelopment as safe and affordable housing.

Legal Aid works in close collaboration with various Kansas City, Missouri municipal departments, volunteer attorneys, and nonprofit community organizations to propel community-driven redevelopment throughout the inner-city. This collaboration results in the reduction of blight and crime, increases tax revenues, and stimulates additional investment. Most importantly, it greatly improves the quality of life for Kansas Citians living in the urban core.

This book shows some of the success stories that the collaboration between the City, Legal Aid, neighborhood associations, private developers and other community partners has achieved over the past two years.

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Adopt-a-Neighborhood project comes from the Legal Services Corporation and The Healthcare Foundation of Greater Kansas City.

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316 BRIGHTON - BEFORE

316 BRIGHTON

The Indian Mound Neighborhood Association asked for Legal Aid's help to gain control of and rehabilitate this vacant, blighted property. Legal Aid negotiated with the owner and mortgage holder, and was able to secure a donation, with clear title. The house has been rehabilitated and is now owner-occupied.



316 BRIGHTON - AFTER



4136 TRACY - BEFORE

4136 TRACY

This long vacant six-plex was owned by a financially under-water investor in New York. Legal Aid filed a lawsuit for nuisance and receivership on behalf of the Historic Manheim Park Association which compelled the bank to release its mortgage and the owner to sell the property to a local, neighborhood-approved rehabber. Since purchasing the property the new owner has regularly provided the neighborhood with tours of the work progress and has become a member of the neighborhood association. The building is now being rented.



4136 TRACY - AFTER



4136 TRACY - INTERIOR BEFORE



4136 TRACY - INTERIOR BEFORE



1414 E. 75TH TERRACE - BEFORE

1414 E. 75TH TER.

This long vacant, abandoned house was owned by an Australian company. Through Legal Aid's Adopt-a-Neighborhood Project, a volunteer attorney from the Stinson Leonard Street law firm filed an Abandoned Housing Act lawsuit on behalf of the neighborhood association. Once the Court granted entry to the property, the neighborhood and their contractors found that the property had sustained significant fire damage. The neighborhood association worked with their contractors—a father-son team who live in the neighborhood—to rehabilitate the property. When the rehabilitation was complete, the Court transferred title to the neighborhood association, which then transferred it to the contractors. The contractors have since been able to sell this home to an owner-occupant, replacing a blighted vacancy in the neighborhood with a new neighbor.



1414 E. 75TH TERRACE - AFTER



1414 E. 75TH TERRACE - INTERIOR BEFORE



1414 E. 75TH TERRACE - INTERIOR AFTER



2613 DENVER - BEFORE

2613 DENVER

At the time East 23rd Street PAC identified this abandoned home, it was one of several vacant houses on a block in the neighborhood. The neighborhood association acquired the property following an Abandoned Housing Act lawsuit, and it was rehabilitated by a family through Legal Aid's Urban Homesteading program. The family has rehabbed the home, taken ownership, and moved into it and intends to stay there for at least another two years. Rehabilitation of this home has sparked transformation of the entire block, where three other homes are now being rehabilitated.



2613 DENVER - AFTER



2613 DENVER - INTERIOR BEFORE



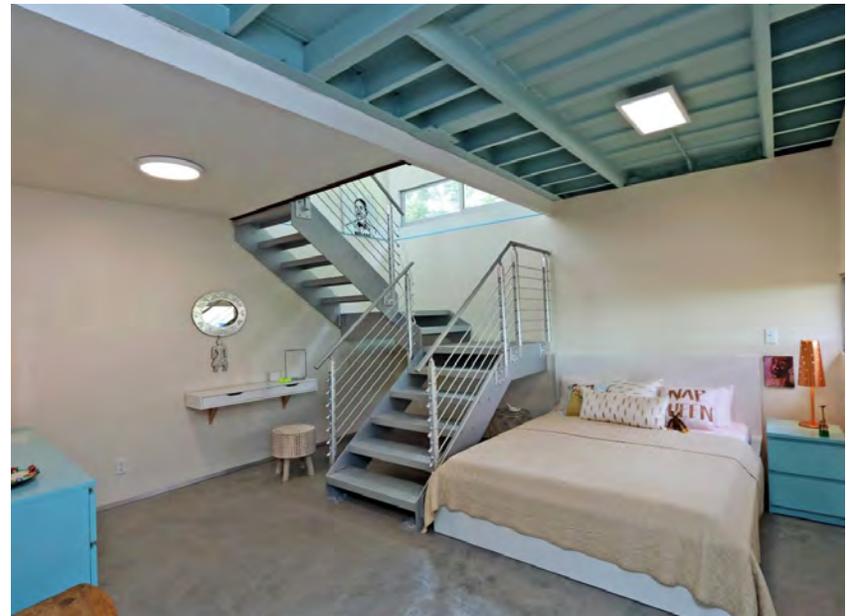
2613 DENVER - INTERIOR AFTER



3008 E. 20TH STREET - BEFORE

3008 E. 20TH ST.

It's fairly uncommon that the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood of Kansas City sees new construction of single family homes. But in 2016, the neighborhood association partnered with a private developer, Legal Aid, and the Land Bank of Kansas City, Missouri to build a shipping container home on the vacant parcel at 3008 E. 20th Street. Legal Aid paved the way for this development by clearing the title after a faulty Jackson County tax foreclosure. The result is this stunning and unique design that is currently operating as a bed and breakfast, spotlighting Washington Wheatley's great location near downtown and the 18th and Vine Historic District.



3008 E. 20TH ST. - AFTER



4414 PARK - BEFORE

4414 PARK

For the last several years Legal Aid has represented the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council in their partnership with Jackson County's Constructing Futures program. The program entails remodeling long vacant houses, providing on-the-job training to members of the community who may be unskilled in a specific trade and/or have struggled with securing employment to do construction work, and giving a homeless family a new place to call home. Legal Aid cleared title defects on this property and facilitated transfer of title to the new owners.



4414 PARK - AFTER



5008 WOODLAND - BEFORE

5008 WOODLAND

The Blue Hills Neighborhood Association requested Legal Aid assistance with this vacant, abandoned home near a daycare center. Legal Aid represented the neighborhood association to acquire the home through the Abandoned Housing Act. The home was quickly rehabilitated by a neighborhood resident and has been returned to occupancy.



5008 WOODLAND - AFTER



5546 E. 27TH TER. - BEFORE

5546 E. 27TH TER.

The owner of this house was referred to Legal Aid by the Municipal Housing Court for a donation. The house is on a block in which every other house on the same side was abandoned, which was inhibiting anyone from acquiring it. Tikkun-KC, a non-profit corporation dedicated to urban renewal for the public good, agreed to accept the donation and chose this block as the focus of its efforts. After Tikkun-KC completed renovations a married couple who were renting in the Ivanhoe neighborhood moved into the house and are exploring the option of purchasing it, which is the goal of Tikkun-KC, to allow it to invest those proceeds into the next house on the block.



5546 E. 27TH TER. - AFTER



5618 FOREST - BEFORE

5618 FOREST

Legal Aid represented the 49/63 Community Action Network to acquire this home. The owner of the property died without a will in 2014, and the property had been vacant since then. The heirs took some steps to prepare the property for a sale, but abandoned that effort. Legal Aid worked with the heirs to cure title defects and facilitate a donation to the neighborhood organization.



5618 FOREST - AFTER



7935 HICKMAN MILLS - BEFORE

7935 HICKMAN MILLS

This house had been abandoned by its owner. Through Legal Aid's Adopt-a-Neighborhood Project, a volunteer attorney from the Stinson Leonard Street law firm filed an Abandoned Housing Act lawsuit on behalf of the neighborhood association. The property owner responded by donating the property to the neighborhood association, ending the lawsuit. The neighborhood transferred ownership to a contracted rehabber, and the rehabber now rents out this property and acts as a responsible, local landlord.



7935 HICKMAN MILLS - DURING



PALESTINE APTS. - BEFORE

PALESTINE APTS.

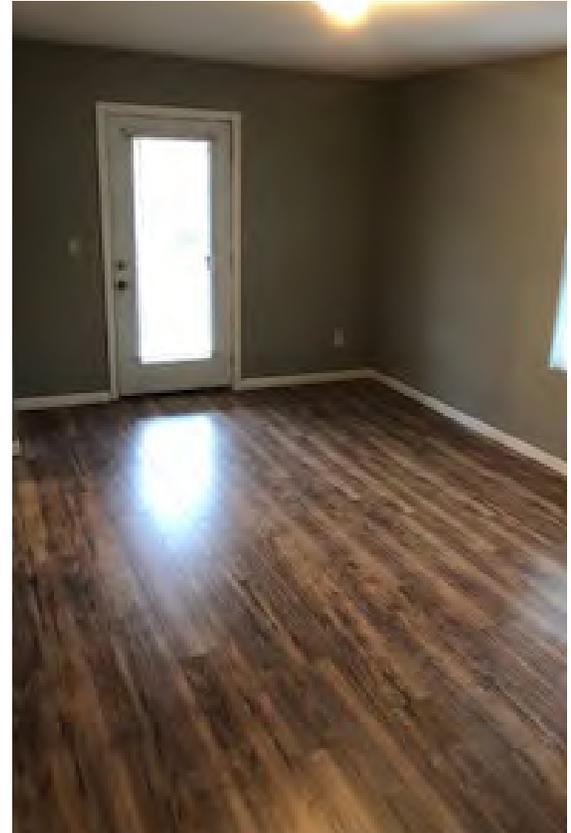
In 2013, the eight vacant apartment buildings that comprised the 3300 block of Indiana Avenue may have been the worst blight in the entire City . . . until Legal Aid stepped in. The buildings were owned by out-of-state investors and tied up in an illegal Ponzi scheme. The City was prepared to spend hundreds of thousands in taxpayer money to demolish the whole block. Legal Aid represented the Palestine Neighborhood Development Corporation to file suit against the owners of the properties, resulting in the entire complex being donated to the neighborhood association. Legal Aid then worked with the client to find a local developer to rehabilitate the properties. After two years, and nearly \$1.5 million in private, unsubsidized development dollars, the 32 units are fully rehabbed and occupied as affordable rentals.



PALESTINE APTS. - AFTER



PALESTINE APTS. - AFTER



PALESTINE APTS. - INTERIOR AFTER



1911-1921 E. 55TH ST. - BEFORE

1911-1921 E. 55TH ST.

This commercial structure on 55th Street corridor of Blue Hills sat vacant for decades. Initially, Legal Aid was able to partner with the Blue Hills Neighborhood Association and Blue Hills Community Services to put the property into receivership. Unfortunately, the property's former use as a dry-cleaning business increased rehabilitation costs beyond the point of feasibility. As a result, a consent decree was entered into with the owner to return the property to his control in exchange for immediate demolition, saving the City substantial demolition costs. This lawsuit is part of a multi-year strategy to address vacancy on this corridor. To date, the focused effort has resulted in almost a half-million dollars in private improvements to the corridor.



1911-1921 E. 55TH ST. BEFORE & AFTER



1611 E. 30TH ST. - BEFORE

1611 E. 30TH ST.

As part of Legal Aid's Volunteer Attorney Project, the law firm of White Goss represented Habitat for Humanity to acquire this property through Missouri's Abandoned Housing Act. The rehabilitation was substantial and took more than a year. The property has been sold to the needy family who helped rehabilitate the property.



1611 E. 30TH ST. - AFTER

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