

NCSHA 2015 Annual Awards Entry Form

(Complete one form for each entry)

Deadline: Wednesday, June 10, 2015

Visit ncsha.org/awards to view the Annual Awards Call for Entries.

Instructions: Type entry information into the form and save it as a PDF. Do not write on or scan the form. If you have any questions contact Matt Cunningham at mcunningham@ncsha.org or 202-624-5424.

Fill out the entry name *exactly* as you want it listed in the program.

Entry Name: _____

HFA: _____

Submission Contact: (Must be HFA Staff Member) _____ **Email:** _____

Please provide a 15-word (maximum) description of your nomination to appear on the NCSHA website.

Use this header on the upper right corner of each page:

HFA: _____

Entry Name: _____

Select the appropriate subcategory of your entry and indicate if you are providing visual aids.

Communications	Homeownership	Legislative Advocacy	Management Innovation
Annual Report	Empowering New Buyers	Federal Advocacy	Financial
Creative Media	Encouraging New Production	State Advocacy	Human Resources
Promotional Materials and Newsletters	Home Improvement and Rehabilitation		Operations
			Technology
Rental Housing	Special Needs Housing	Special Achievement	Are you providing visual aids?
Encouraging New Production	Combating Homelessness	Special Achievement	Yes
Multifamily Management	Housing for Persons with Special Needs		No
Preservation and Rehabilitation			

Michigan State Housing Development Authority Creative Use of Historic Schools in Michigan

Overview

Old schools are sometimes likened to the city of Detroit – down and out for the count. Not so says MSHDA. Old schools can make powerful comebacks, just as Detroit has. MSHDA sees old schools as cornerstones of a neighborhood with rich histories, just waiting to be brought back to their glory days while fulfilling a need in Michigan for solid, well-built affordable housing. All it takes is a little elbow grease, partners with a vision, effective use of available resources, dedicated and passionate people with a dream and a lot of tender loving care.

Such was the case for three historic schools in Michigan – one in Flint and two in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Objective

MSHDA is all about preservation and keeping up with the demand for affordable rental housing in Michigan. What better way to satisfy both objectives than to convert existing buildings into attractive and affordable rental housing. That is how MSHDA came to the creative solution of turning school buildings into housing stock for Michigan seniors and families. Not only are the transformations cost effective, the communities and neighborhoods benefit as well when unsightly abandoned buildings that are eyesores suddenly become eyecatchers where people want to live, work, play and contribute to the community.

Oak Street Senior Apartments – Flint



What was once an elementary school built in 1898, Oak Street Senior Apartments is now home to many low-income Flint seniors, some of whom actually attended elementary school there before the school closed in 1976. **(See photo to left).**

The Oak Street Apartments are located in the center of Flint, just outside downtown, and are already full of residents, just three months after opening.

The massive undertaking was a collaborative effort between MSHDA and Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Communities First, Inc., HUD, the city of Flint, Michigan LISC and the Genesee County Land Bank.

Even though Genesee County's population has decreased by 3 percent since 2000, the number of people 62 and older has increased significantly, according to new 2013 Census estimates.

A few years ago when the idea was first proposed for senior apartments at the Oak Street facility, most people scoffed at the notion but now it's part of Flint's Master Plan. In fact, the CEO of the nonprofit developer, Communities First, said he was told there would not be a demand for senior housing. Now the apartments are fully occupied and, with community support, the project is a huge success. In fact, the success of the project prompted [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) show recently to do a story entitled "A Vision for Low-Income Housing" that was broadcast nationwide. **(Click the link above for the video clip).** The developer, Communities First, and LISC officials were interviewed in the video.



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MLive news coverage: http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/08/flints_100-year-old_oak_school.html

MLive news coverage of Southwest Airlines grant:
http://www.mlive.com/news/flint/index.ssf/2014/12/oak_street_senior_apartments_g.html

Michigan's Upper Peninsula – Two Schools Become Affordable Multifamily Housing

Michigan's Upper Peninsula is known for attracting tourists to its beautiful historic and natural landmarks but it is also a vast area with a smaller population density than the Lower Peninsula. That is not to say that affordable housing is not in demand, because it is and MSHDA answered that call, again with the conversion of two school buildings into low-income, affordable multifamily housing to meet those needs.

Phelps Square Apartments – Ishpeming



The old Phelps Middle School in Ishpeming, Michigan, was dedicated in 1959 and closed in 2010. It was sold in 2014 to a developer with a vision of transforming the vacant school into 24 living units for low- to moderate-income families. MSHDA agreed and the project was awarded Housing Tax Credits as well as HOME funds.

Phelps Square will be a multi-use facility when it opens later this year. The developer knows already that there is a great deal of interest and demand for the 24 rental units. In addition to living units, there will be space in the old gymnasium for overflow activities from the Ishpeming schools. The Marquette

County YMCA also has plans to use some of the space in Phelps Square for a child development center.



Phelps Square Apartments in progress

Apple Blossom Apartments – Iron River



The original Central School (placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2008) was built in 1904 and held many memories for the people of Iron River. It was built to meet the needs of an ever-increasing population due to intense mining and logging operations going on at the time. It closed in 1980 and began deteriorating until the right people came along to save the memories and the school. Thanks to MSHDA (Low Income Housing Tax Credits) and cooperative

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efforts from developers, investors and community leaders, it came back once again to serve the people of Iron River as Apple Blossom Apartments.

There were many challenges, but all the partners were able to navigate through them to bring the old school back to life. It is now restored as a 22-unit masterpiece nestled in the picturesque city of Iron River.

Eight of the apartments have been set aside to house people with special needs, domestic violence survivors and the homeless.



News Articles for Apple Blossom Apartments

Upper Peninsula's Second Wave coverage: <http://up.secondwavemedia.com/features/ironriver52213.aspx>

Iron Mountain Daily News early coverage of the project:

<http://www.ironmountaindailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/539886/-Apple-Blossom--soon-to-bloom.html?nav=5002>

Iron Mountain Daily News later coverage of the project:

<http://www.ironmountaindailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/544968/New-life-for-an-old-school--Apple-Blossom-Apartments-to-open-soon.html?nav=5002>

Summary

Like the city of Detroit AND Michigan, these schools have come full-circle to once again shine with new life and a vibrancy that reflects Detroit's and Michigan's nationwide recognition as the "comeback state." These three Michigan communities are reaping the benefits that MSHDA has brought to them by spreading a little elbow grease, by partnering with visionaries and those with a dream, by effectively using available resources and by applying lot of tender loving care. That's all it took – not that much when you consider the end result.