

# Riverport Landings—An Intergenerational Community

**Kentucky Housing Corporation**  
Special Achievement

**HFA Staff Contact**

Nathan Hall

[nhall@kyhousing.org](mailto:nhall@kyhousing.org)

## **Riverport Landings – An Intergenerational Community**

[Click here to watch the synopsis video for the entry.](#)

### **Innovative Achievement: Background and Issue**

In this time of extreme competition for scarce resources, a housing model in Louisville, Kentucky, was created to cut across traditional housing lines, create deeper connections among residents, and support an entire community. Riverport Landings – An Intergenerational Community is the perfect solution to bridge the growing generation gap while satisfying shared needs of seniors, families, and youth. This project truly reflects an innovative response that solves not just one, but a number of community needs. The development integrates a broad spectrum of residents in three different types of affordable housing developments merged with community services, neighborhood retail, and a community park in an area of Louisville in dire need of revitalization.

### **Innovative Response to Need**

Through the creation of a Community Revitalization Plan, the intergenerational housing model was designed to help revive the Cane Run Road Neighborhood and support the creation of new affordable housing units in a Qualified Census Tract (QCT). Situated on a 34.5-acre site, the combined development created 412 new affordable housing units in an underserved neighborhood in southwest Louisville. Riverport Landings was part of a commitment from Metro Louisville Government’s “Develop Louisville,” which resulted in the donation of 15.64 acres of the 34.5-acre site intended to spur economic activity and commercial development in a QCT. Although the vast size of the project alone is quite impressive, the benefits this type of comprehensive living community provides to its residents is inspiring and refreshing.

Riverport Landings includes three types of affordable housing developments: Riverport Landings Senior Living—a 108-unit senior property; Riverport Landings Family Apartments—a 240-unit affordable family property; and Riverport Landings Family Scholar House—a 64-unit community for low-income single parent families and young adult foster alumni enrolled in Family Scholar House’s educational program. The development also includes a community park, retail space, and other amenities that residents from all three properties will be able to access. Placing these developments that serve different populations together was intentional to create an “intergenerational community.”

According to Generations United’s Annual *Best Intergenerational Communities Awards* program, an intergenerational community:

- 1) Provides adequately for the safety, health, education, and basic necessities of life for people of all ages;
- 2) Promotes programs, policies, and practices that increase cooperation, interaction, and exchange between people of different generations; and
- 3) Enables all ages to share their talents and resources, and support each other in relationships that benefit both individuals and their community.

An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations and housing units reside. It is where individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting. An intergenerational community builds on the positive resources that each generation has to offer one other and those

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around them. It advances policies and practices that both acknowledge and promote intergenerational interdependence<sup>1</sup>.

In an area in need of revitalization and support, Marian Development and LDG Development made sure to deploy the successful Scholar House model as part of the solution, as well. The Family Scholar House provides four years of housing assistance for individuals with low incomes working to obtain a college degree and move beyond public assistance for self-sufficiency. Because many Scholar House participants are single parents, the program design includes child care to eliminate that substantial barrier to attending college. The program also makes health care and numerous other services readily accessible to help these individuals and families succeed. This Riverport Scholar House is extending these services for the first time to also target youth aging out of foster care, where many of the youth are not yet ready to be living self-sufficiently in housing or do not have access to post-secondary education opportunities.

In addition to housing, the Riverport Scholar House campus includes a Family Scholar House educational services center that serves not only residential families, but also neighbors and residents from the other components of the development. The educational services center provides space for program staff to offer counseling, academic coaching, and workshops for participants and community members. The facility also includes a technology center, art studio, a children’s creative play space, tutoring rooms, community meeting rooms, a clothes closet, and food pantry.

**Intended Results**

The most important aspect of the Riverport Intergenerational Community is the expected outcomes of this type of interaction. The resources that different generations or age groups can provide to each other are invaluable. For instance, young adults aging out of foster care and seniors can be valuable assets to each other. Instead of seeing foster youth as victims of circumstance and seniors as victims of age, both groups are seen as agents of change in the world around them. Emancipated foster youth need stable environments. Families and seniors living in the community will assist these individuals by providing a sense of safety and by being a constant in a young adult’s life. Alternatively, seniors who rent in this community not only gain a sense of purpose from their help with both former foster youth and parenting households, they establish meaningful relationships that happen because of intentional programming from community staff and contributing to an overall healthy and positive quality of life<sup>2</sup>.

More retirees are resisting the “Shady Acres” model of senior housing where age restrictions rule and separation from children and young adults is established through a gated community. Seniors would prefer the ability to age-in-place and live in an environment where there is access to services, retail establishments, and events for entertainment and learning. Locating senior housing within a community environment meets these goals.

The added component of the Scholar House model will augment the successful outcomes of this housing model. Of those who participate in the Family Scholar House, 93 percent earn college credit hours, and to-date, 100 percent of participants have exited the program to stable housing. Replicating this model at

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<sup>1</sup> Kaplan, M., Mariano, S., & Hoffman, J. (2017). *Intergenerational Pathways to a Sustainable Society*. Springer International Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> Students, C. P. (2016). Hope through Housing: A Model for Addressing Pressing Community Challenges. *UNC School of Government*.

## **Kentucky Housing Corporation Riverport Landings – An Intergenerational Community Special Achievement**

Riverport Landings and expanding the services to youth-aging out of foster care, coupled with the intergeneration community support, will result in an innovative housing model that supports a growing population of underserved youth through a tested model that guarantees success.

### **Cost Versus Benefits**

Kentucky Housing Corporation has made it a priority to deploy resources under our control to revolutionary projects like Riverport Landings. We understand that these types of investment produce extremely high value for the community by complementing needed affordable housing with unique access to higher education, child development, health and wellness supports, and community engagement to definitively transform the lives of low income families and individuals. Riverport Landings developers worked with KHC staff to identify the right mix of financing options from our existing programs and successfully followed the standard competitive application process to obtain the funds necessary to bring their vision to full realization. An important characteristic of this project is that the developers did not seek the infusion of *new* sources of funding. Instead, this project tapped into *existing* resources that are also regularly available in every other state.

LDG Development and Marian Development collaborated on this project to further maximize resources and achieve greater impact. Combing land donation and soft funding allocations, allowed the team to contemplate more amenities for all three sites. This involved rezoning of land and an overall design development plan. Riverport Landings was also able to create a unique architecture design with cohesive community branding because of shared costs. It created a neighborhood identity through common logos on street and monument signage. Additional cost containment benefits include achieving an economy of scale to allocate resources for all three housing developments. The development achieves an intergenerational approach complimented by commercial development and shared neighborhood amenities.

Beyond the cost containment efforts, the long-term benefits of this project outweigh the costs. Older adults who are able to age in place not only enjoy a higher quality of life, but they also rely less on public assistance. Those who do not have access to independent living opportunities often must move into nursing home facilities that come at an extremely high cost to the residents as well as public resources, such as Medicaid. Similarly, providing a nurturing living environment for former foster youth will help save public dollars. Data show that about a third of emancipated foster youth experience homelessness at some point. Some of these young people have traumatic pasts that can cause them to become chronically homeless – a situation that takes an enormous toll on public resources such as health care services, emergency response systems, corrections, and other public-sector enterprises that serve people in crisis. Enabling these young adults to earn a college degree will put them on a path to successful careers. Instead of becoming heavy users of public assistance programs, they will be able to obtain gainful employment and contribute to public coffers.

The Riverport Intergenerational Community is now a tremendous asset to southwest Louisville. It provides stable housing to seniors, families and youth, helps spur commercial development in the neighborhood, and its community centers and park are an excellent resource for those living in the community and surrounding areas.

### **Visual Aids**

[Photos of Riverport Landings](#)