

a tiny home  
for good.

# A Tiny Newsletter

Spring 2024

## THE FORGOTTEN ONES

The neighborhoods in which we build tend to be forgotten. They are typically considered “too far gone” to be worthy of investment. A 2023 housing study conducted for the City of Syracuse found that 1/3 of ALL residential properties in Syracuse are in visible decline. As one might expect, these properties tend to be concentrated in certain neighborhoods. To be specific, in 15/28 Syracuse city neighborhoods, the distressed properties outnumber the healthy ones by as much as 80%. This includes the south and west side neighborhoods where most of our properties, and our office, reside.

Now, it’s important to remember, a neighborhood isn’t just houses. It’s people, too. And it’s one thing to forget about a house, and another to leave the people behind who have no choice but to live there.

In the city of Syracuse, 28% of all households have incomes below \$20,000 and can afford to pay no more than \$500 per month on housing. If you have any awareness of the rental market, it will come as no surprise that there are very few respectable units available for under \$500 per month. Compounding the problem is the fact that the average rehab cost to make a dilapidated property decently livable in the city is \$165,000. These households obviously can’t afford to buy and renovate a property at this cost. And even if the money was there from a private landlord, there is no incentive to invest that kind of money into properties that will not generate enough rent or resale value to make the investment payoff.

This market gap can really only be filled by nonprofit landlords (like, but not limited to, A Tiny Home for Good), who aren’t burdened by needing to make a profit from the properties in which it invests and are motivated to house the under-resourced.

We are passionate about this because when we think of who our tenants are, these are the people we serve. The forgotten. The odds may be high and the outlook bleak, but we know we can help. When the market can’t provide, it’s up to us to intervene. In this newsletter, we’ll take a look at the intentions behind our latest housing projects, and how we’re seeking to go beyond being an essential service provider to our tenants by creating opportunities for connection.



ANDREW LUNETTA  
Executive Director





Some of our tenants, staff, and community members joined us for a field trip at Green Lakes State Park.

## A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Back in December, we launched a walking group. The concept is simple. Every Tuesday at 10am, our staff and any interested community members leave from our office and walk to our tenants' homes in the surrounding area to see who wants to join. Typically, we wrap up the walk back at the office with a few snacks before we go our separate ways.

The success and popularity of the weekly walk led to us launching a monthly activity group. Our first outing was a field trip to Green Lakes State Park.

These activities aren't mandatory. We don't demand that anyone attends, or that they need to be there every week. There is no sign-in sheet, no attendance records, no boxes to check. They are open to whoever wants to come--tenant or community member--no strings attached.

Unsurprisingly, there is no mandate requiring landlords walk with their tenants. It's not something that makes us money. It's not something that gets more houses in the ground. It doesn't end homelessness. But, we're not a typical landlord serving the average population.

These walks are a simple way of acknowledging that the burdens of homelessness don't magically disappear once housed. It's recognition that for a healthy and happy life,

we need more than just shelter. We need connection. We need belonging. We need shared experiences.

It's easy to shy away from activities like this because it's difficult to measure the impact. For a non-profit that is reliant on grants and donations, it's easy to lose sight of why we exist and who we exist for when we need to prove the worth of our work. And while accountability is important, we never want to forget to connect with the individuals we're serving.

Steve isn't a number. He's the guy eagerly waiting for us on his front porch. Reggie isn't a budget. He's the dad who just gained shared custody of his kid. Jill isn't a bed count. She's the woman next door making friends with her neighbors.

At A Tiny Home for Good, we aren't afraid to think small. It may have started with "tiny" homes, but at the core of our mission is a dedication to honoring each individual. That often goes unmeasured and unnoticed by the greater populous, but it makes all the difference in the lives of the people we house.

If you could stand for some more connection in your life, join us for a Tuesday walk. All are welcome. Questions? Email Lori Clapper: [lclapper@atinyhomeforgood.org](mailto:lclapper@atinyhomeforgood.org)



# THE HOME STRETCH

On the corner of Richmond Avenue and Wall Street sits a building that in reality, should have been torn down a decade ago. The big 3,000 square foot home started as a two-family built in 1940. It then turned into a three-family. Then a two-family with a bar on the first floor. And then its final iteration: a shoddily constructed, wildly non-code-compliant, four-family. It then sat mercifully vacant for ten years—collecting dust and all the other odds and ends that abandoned houses tend to collect.

All vacant buildings pose problems, but the particular problem with this building is its prominence. Due to its size, it has an imposing presence in the Richmond/Wall neighborhood. And it has been some time since that imposition has been welcoming. So, instead of waiting for it to be torn down, we flipped the script. We saw a building that is close to important amenities, on a bus route, close to our other properties, and could potentially set a new tone for this historically tired neighborhood. And we got to work.

We currently have 11 housing units under renovation. Most of these projects are located on Richmond Avenue or Wall Street. A decidedly “forgotten” neighborhood; rental properties plagued by out-of-town owners who don’t care for the property or the people they house and renters who struggle to make ends meet, further burdened by living in questionable conditions.

In partnership with the Greater Syracuse Land Bank and supported with funding from the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County, we’re working to make Richmond/Wall a little more welcoming. We are committed to investing in the people who need a fresh start, and the neglected properties that are all too common in our city neighborhoods.

## You might be thinking, “Where are the tiny homes?”

Tiny homes will always be a part of our work, but our model of housing is expanding to support the growing number of families facing homelessness, and to contribute to uplifting neighborhoods burdened by excessive vacant properties.

Despite the increased square footage, the most important parts of our housing model remain the same; a commitment to offering a permanently affordable, respectable place to live that we will maintain, and personalized support to all we house to encourage long-term housing stability.

# SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars for **Thursday, October 3rd** from 5-8pm for our annual fundraiser. This year’s event will be at Harvey’s Garden. Tickets will go on sale late summer. More info to come!

Are you a company looking for some great PR from supporting your favorite non-profit? **Sponsorship opportunities are available.** Contact Katie Weaver: [kweaver@atinyhomeforgood.org](mailto:kweaver@atinyhomeforgood.org)



116 Wall St  
Two-family



115 Wall St  
Single-family



608 Richmond Ave  
Two-family



362 Richmond Ave  
Four-family behemoth

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\*Denotes a tenant of A Tiny Home for Good

# LOVE WHAT WE DO?

Consider making a gift online at [atinyhomeforgood.org](http://atinyhomeforgood.org) or by using the included envelope. Checks can be made out to A Tiny Home for Good. Every monetary donation goes directly toward our work to provide permanent housing and support services for individuals and families facing homelessness, but there are other ways you can help!

## Even More Ways to Support



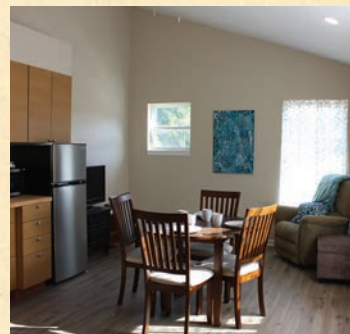
### SECURITIES

Donate stocks, bonds, and mutual funds, and take advantage of tax benefits.



### LEAVE A LEGACY

Include A Tiny Home for Good in your estate plans with a gift bequest.



### HOME GOODS

Each home is supplied with appliances, furniture, and the everyday items that make life comfortable.



### HOST AN EVENT/FUNDRAISER

Invite us to speak, or put your passion to work and donate the proceeds to A Tiny Home for Good.

We are grateful for all the ways this community contributes to our work. For questions about donations, contact Katie Weaver at [kweaver@atinyhomeforgood.org](mailto:kweaver@atinyhomeforgood.org).

A Tiny Home for Good is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax exempt.

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