

# NEWSLETTER

*"No one is more cherished in this world than someone who lightens the burdens of another"*  
— Unknown

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[www.brickways.org](http://www.brickways.org)

*"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."*  
Margaret Wheatley, American writer and management consultant

**"HIGH-COST REGIONS ... NEED TO BE PARTICULARLY INNOVATIVE."**  
— LISA A. STURTEVANT

Alexis DeWitt is bright. She's ambitious. "She's extremely gifted with children," says Karen Cooney, director of Angel Care Child Care in Traverse City, where DeWitt was lead preschool teacher in 2017. Working a second job at night, she also attended classes at NMC in between the two.

"I want to finish up and get my bachelor's degree," says DeWitt, who plans to major in education. Unfortunately, 2018 has seen a temporary hold put on those plans.

"Over the summer, I was camping and living out of my car," says the articulate 21-year-old.

Changing seasons and colder temperatures meant jumping around temporary accommodations with friends and relatives.

This past January, DeWitt moved downstate, to a new job with Bay City Public Schools childcare. It pays less but offers health insurance, vision and dental benefits and she'll be able to live full-time in one place, house-sitting for a relative who spends much of the year in Arizona. She'll also enroll in classes down there once she gets herself established.

"I would love to have stayed in the Traverse City area" says DeWitt.

"It's the third employee I lost this past year due to housing issues," says Cooney, who works hard to get staff living wages. "Housing costs here are outrageous."



After 15 years of homelessness around the country, Erin Dunner arrived in Traverse City three years ago and ended up at Goodwill Inn, hoping for change.

With help from Goodwill's housing advocate Tim Carey, she was linked with BrickWays and moved into her own small space at the Community Living Center on Barlow Street in Traverse City. Settled in over a year now, Dunner is working on improving her independent-living and job skills. She's made such great strides that



**Erin Dunner works out at Planet Fitness**

**"EVEN IF IT ENDS UP NOT BEING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ME, IT'S A WONDERFUL THING."**  
— ERIN DUNNER

BrickWays is helping her move to the next step: sharing a two-bedroom apartment with a roommate at their Community Living Apartments next door.

"I want to pursue a life of independence," says Dunner. She hopes to someday be able to afford her own one-bedroom apartment.

"I'd love to have the ability to have people over, rent that's affordable, well-made fixtures, windows," she says, adding, "and control of my own heat, since I like it cool."



"Nice, affordable studios and one-bedroom apartments are such a key need in this area," says Goodwill's Carey, whose job is to help a plethora of individuals and

families find adequate housing.

"Nobody's going to deny the need for quality, affordable housing," says Susan Onan-Swartz, BrickWays executive director.

"High-cost regions ... need to be particularly innovative and strategic to find ways to evolve," writes Lisa A. Sturtevant, PhD, author of "Seven Innovative Strategies to Increase Affordable Housing" for the Housing Association of Non-Profit Developers ([handhousing.org](http://handhousing.org)). Building more mixed-income housing near transit, inclusionary up-zoning and developing creative housing designs that offer multiple families or individuals independent yet connected abodes are a few of the ideas.

All this sounds like Sandy's Fairway six-plex, BrickWays newest in housing model and the primary focus of the current fundraising efforts.

"This is a high-quality build with efficient use of design and open space," says Onan-Swartz. "Donor support makes it possible for these units to be offered at hundreds below market rents in the area. So many vulnerable individuals in the area need housing, as do working families, retirees and young professionals. We'll offer blended occupancy with some units set aside for our highest-need individuals such as those with disabilities, veterans and endangered homeless, while other units will be available to any applicant who qualifies as low to moderate income."

Thanks to the recent Swingshift and the Stars fundraising dance event, BrickWays' project is that much closer to being built.

"We attended the dance and thought dancers B.B. Brick and Danny Brizard were fabulous. And BrickWays' board members did a fantastic job raising the \$80,000 plus," says donor Kelvin Shaw.

"We couldn't have done it without B.B. and the generosity of all," says Beth Footh, BrickWays Foundation President.

"It was everyone," says Brick. "Everyone did their part."

"It was a pleasure to be one of the sponsors," says Ken Hornyak, director of sales & marketing/new business development, Teter Orthotics & Prosthetics Inc. In addition to owner Todd Stone being

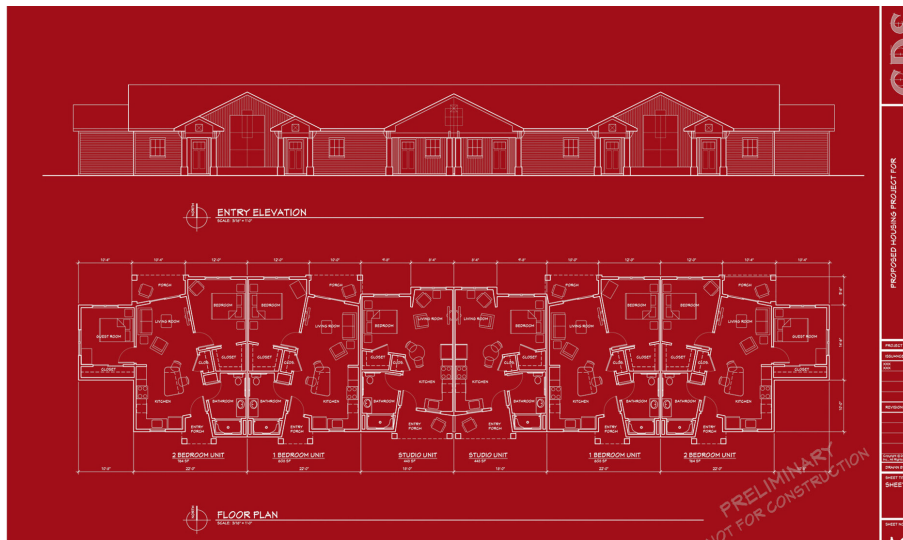
## HOUSING STATS

Many people report that housing costs have had an adverse effect on their mental health. According to Shelter/YouGov polls:

- 33% (about 15 million people) say housing costs are causing stress and depression in their family
  - 25% (equivalent to 12.2 million people) are kept awake at night by the stress of paying their rent or mortgage
  - 25% say housing costs are causing arguments with their partner and other family members
- The Guardian, US edition

“When people have stable housing, they no longer need to prioritize finding a place to sleep each night and can spend more time managing their health, making time for doctors appointments, and adhering to medical advice and directions. Housing also decreases the risk associated with further disease and violence. In many ways, housing itself can be considered a form of health care because it prevents new conditions from developing and existing conditions from worsening.”

— National Health Care for the Homeless Council



37% of American households (over 43 million) currently rent their housing — a 50-year high.

The supply of rental housing has not kept pace with demand. 11 million renters spend more than half their income on housing. Housing affordability and lack of supply remain critical issues for American housing policy.

— Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies, 2017, State of the Nation’s Housing Report, June 16, 2017

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**THURSDAY, APRIL 5**

**BEER PAIRING DINNER**

Boone’s Long Lake Inn, with beer

from Right Brain Brewery

Tickets are \$65 per person

[www.brickways.org](http://www.brickways.org)

5:30 PM social hour 6:20 PM seating

- Boone’s Cream Ale, Assorted Cheese and Charcuterie Spread
- Lustrous Lemon Ale, Flash-Fried Calamari with Spicy-Sweet Chili Pepper Dip
- Concrete Dinosaur Brown Rye IPA, Cream of Portabella Mushroom Soup
- Dead Kettle, Baby Romaine Caesar Salad
- Naughty Girl Mint Stout, Braised Lamb Shank with a Beer Reduction Demi Glaze
- Peanut Butter CEO, Flourless Chocolate Cake with Dark Chocolate Cocoa Dusting

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25**

Eileen McNamara, author of “Eunice”

A National Writers Series event

sponsored by BrickWays and Re/

Max Bayshore Properties

City Opera House, 6:30 p.m.

Tickets on sale at the City Opera House



## HOUSING ... FROM PAGE 1

committed to supporting local organizations, Hornyak is a personal friend and admirer of the Brick family. He’s known Terry Brick — BrickWays’ founder Mary Jean’s youngest son and B.B.’s husband — since first grade and was a frequent visitor at the Brick home growing up.

“I remember seeing Mary Jean’s excitement and enthusiasm about helping individuals and families,” Hornyak says.

“This offers more opportunity to expand who BrickWays is helping,” says Peter Oleszczuk, WestWind Construction’s vice

president of construction. “Our WestWind family was extraordinarily proud to support BrickWays at the

“Our WestWind family was extraordinarily proud to support BrickWays at the Swingshift event. We passionately believe in the BrickWays cause and look forward to continuing our partnership.”

— Peter Oleszczuk, WestWind Construction

Swingshift event. We passionately believe in the BrickWays cause and look forward to continuing our partnership.”

“We just really want to recognize and thank our sponsors and donors who have brought us this far,” says Onan-Swartz. “Sandy’s Fairway is a doable project. When you look at the challenges that clients and future tenants face as part of their daily lives, supporting

Sandy’s Fairway housing option on their behalf is an easy choice.”



# JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT DONATES TO BRICKWAYS

BrickWays housing manager Sherry Oppen went to Traverse City Central High School in January to receive a lovely surprise donation from the school's Junior Achievement (JA) group. While there, she shared more about BrickWays with the interested and supportive student members.

JA meetings are actually classes that teach about starting and marketing a business, and members choose a project as part of the learning. The process of choosing what to sell is a lesson in itself, says Ryleen Frusti, 17, a senior at TC Central and public relations manager of the project.

"We start off with bouncing ideas off each other while someone takes notes," she explains. "Then we put the options on a whiteboard, discuss which would benefit the company or be the most successful and whittle them down through voting."

As an idea of selling gift boxes rose to the top, they had to decide what to put in them. Another round of voting determined products, then students went to local companies and negotiated prices. Calling it "Treasure Chest," students interviewed for leadership positions.



**The JA Treasure Chest**

"Just like for a real job," Frusti says.

With experience promoting and selling products previously, Frusti was a shoo-in for heading PR. One of her responsibilities was researching and presenting nonprofit organizations to JA members to determine who to share the profits with.

"Not only do we want to create something for ourselves, we also want to give back in the process," says Frusti.

The class decided BrickWays was a natural fit. Frusti credits many of her special-needs classmates at TC Central with helping make the decision; she says everyone thrives on their friendships.

The business was a raging success — JA sold 345 Traverse City gift boxes resulting in \$13,000 in sales. Stockholders got an 82 percent return on their investment — and BrickWays got a wonderful holiday gift. The money went to BrickWays' Activity Fund, which is used for many experiences — including a recent outing to a TC Central hockey game.

Learn more about TC Central's Junior Achievement on its Facebook page.

## GRAB YOUR SUNGLASSES, HAT AND A SMILE!



Plans for a trip to Disney World in Orlando, Florida in 2019 are well under way, says Nancy Kollhoff, BrickWays Activities Director, who has worked tirelessly on the expedition.

Open to BrickWays clients and tenants, departure will be from Flint's Bishop Airport, arrival Orlando, Florida, on May 6, 2019. A \$300 non-refundable deposit is due before July 16, 2018, for those interested in going.

"This is a really unique experience," says Kollhoff.

Once everyone is committed through their deposit, other details will be nailed down over the upcoming months. Out of six parks including Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney Hollywood, African Safari and two waterparks, the group, once formed, will vote on the top three. Once they are actually at Disney, people will have a choice to visit two of the three parks in small groups that will stay together as they enjoy the various attractions inside. There will also be a day to just hang out at the hotel and relax.

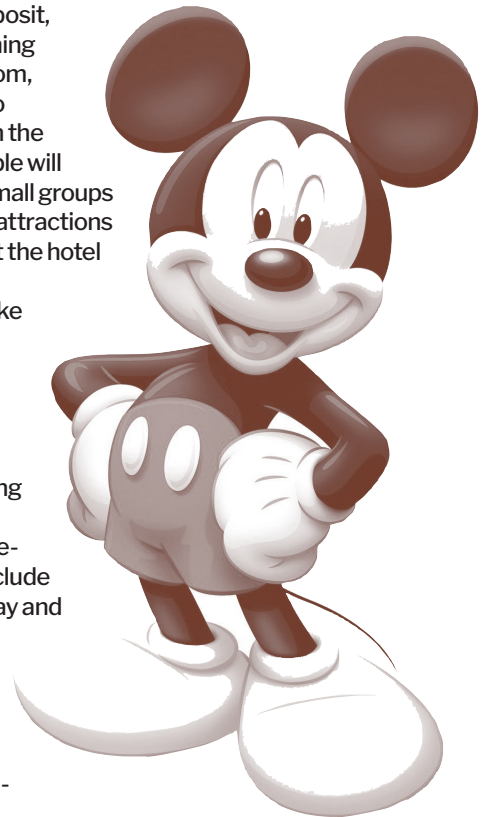
Leading up to the trip, Kollhoff says they will take participants to visit Cherry Capital Airport and design other activities to acclimate them to various aspects they'll encounter on a typical holiday of this nature.

"Part of this is all about learning about how to get along with other people and also about coping skills," says Kollhoff.

The trip will cost \$1,500 per person (unless one-on-one staff assistance is needed) which will include all transportation, on-site hotel, three meals a day and two full-day theme park passes. Individuals will need to bring their own spending money.

"Trip participants will have the opportunity to raise money through several events, the first of which is the Beer Pairing at Boone's," says BrickWays Executive Director Susan Onan-Swartz who originated the idea.

"We were talking about different trips we could take and Sue said, 'you know what, I'd bet people would love a trip to Disney World,'" says Kollhoff. "It's going to be a once-in-a-lifetime trip for some people so we want to make it really special."



## FOUNDATION

Invests money for the long-term growth and support of BrickWays, including operations, construction of projects, and fund-matching for large projects.

Beth Footh, President  
Pete Currie  
John Sonnemann  
BJ Brick  
Bob Brick  
Karen Wiand  
Dennis Wiand

## STAFF

Susan Onan-Swartz, Executive Director  
Nancy Kollhoff  
Janet Brzezinski  
Shawn Carrier  
Kathy Nowak  
Danielle Flaska  
Meredith Gafill  
Jacki Warner  
Julie Murray  
Sherry Oppen  
Jerry Morse  
Sally Woodward  
Kesha Stevenson  
Jody Cascagnett  
Rose Martin  
Susan Wilson  
Michele Money  
Lynn Morton

## MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

Manages housing, programs, services

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John Sonnemann, Treasurer  
Ashley Wahl, Secretary  
Kathy Britten  
BJ Brick  
Jim Rossi  
Diana Longton  
Dan Johnson



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