

Dear Friends,

ACTS, in partnership with the City of Milwaukee, aims to help 60 families to purchase tax foreclosed properties in 2015. Through May, we have already helped 27 families reclaim such properties. Featured below is Stephanie Reel, who purchased a city tax foreclosure in 2013. We hope you enjoy reading about Stephanie and ask for your support as we partner with families like hers to revitalize some of Milwaukee's most challenged blocks.



Michael Gosman, Executive Director

## Alumni Profile: Stephanie Reel

Erect and proud, Stephanie Reel perched on the edge of the fireplace in her light and airy living room and marveled over where she was last year and where she now is.

The newly painted and carpeted three bedroom home is in a clean and quiet neighborhood not far west of the Bay Shore shopping center.

"I couldn't even have rented a two-bedroom apartment in this neighborhood for twice what my monthly housing payments are here," she said with a toothy smile.

Three bedrooms were a near necessity but previously unaffordable for Reel, single parent of preteen Breenee, Bryan, 10, and Brittany, 4. As it has for thousands of other Milwaukeeans, ACTS Housing has made home ownership possible for the Reels.

Stephanie had several things going for her in her quest to give her children a better life. Born and raised in Milwaukee, in an apartment over her parents' store, Stephanie had saved enough to buy her home while working 11 years for a

successful Milwaukee corporation.

She paid half the \$19,000 purchase price, and ACTS assisted her in obtaining a loan from the City of Milwaukee for the rest. "With ACTS' help," Stephanie said, "it's not hard to own a home. I found this one on the Milwaukee City website."

The one-story stone home has an attractive garage and half a dozen large trees providing morning and noontime shade.

"The house was in bad shape," Reel recalled, "and there was a lot of paperwork, so I needed a broker." ACTS housing specialist Mary Leach-Sumlin provided that expertise and Stephanie

handled the cosmetic work when she wasn't attending accounting classes on a scholarship at the Milwaukee Area Technical College.

So, as it has for two decades, ACTS' help combined with Reel's sweat equity to provide a newly safe and bright dream home and yard. There, Stephanie, Breenee, Bryan and Brittany will enjoy their first summer while turning new neighbors into friends.



## Hot Property

2214 S. 19th St. Milwaukee, WI 53215

Price: \$3,500.00

Bed: 5 Bath: 2

For info Call Hilaria Rios at

414-649-9762



## Much Thanks to State Farm

Kelly Savage, State Farm® Community Relations Specialist for Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota, was originally introduced to ACTS Housing through a local friend and community leader.

“I was impressed right away and then I kept seeing all the stories in the media about the work they were doing,” she said. “When we started focusing our funding toward financial literacy it made a lot of sense to get this partnership going.”

What stood out the most to Savage was ACTS’ approach.

“It is so unique,” she said. “They take these vacant, vandalized properties and help families make these places into a home. It’s amazing how many people are interested in putting forth the work to turn these houses around.”

ACTS executive director Michael Gosman said the first-time gift from State Farm will play an essential role in help-

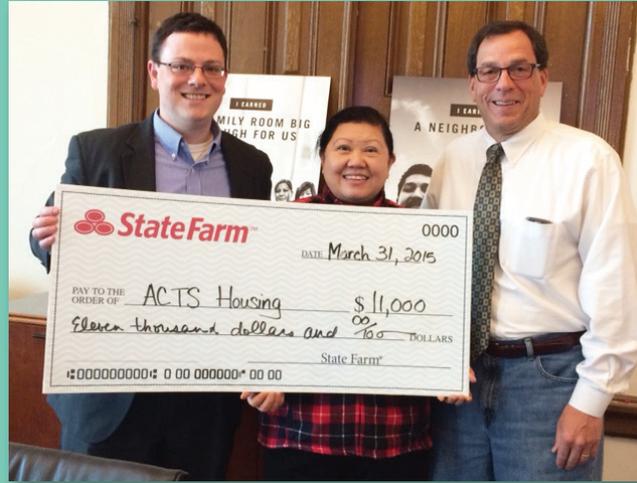
ing families become better educated about the home-buying process.

“The grant from State Farm will help families realize their dream of homeownership,” Gosman said.

Savage said she would have benefited from some of ACTS’ home-buying counseling and financial literacy services when she was looking for her first home.

“I had so many resources with family and friends and it was still a struggle,” she said. “ACTS lets people know these type of resources are available so they have a better chance of succeeding.”

In May, Savage celebrated her 15th anniversary with State Farm. “State Farm makes a real commitment to employees with professional development and to the community by building better, stronger neighborhoods,” she said. “It’s just part of the culture of the organization.”



## 2015 Impact Report

137  
SALES

87  
REHAB JOBS MANAGED

\$386  
Avg. Monthly Housing Burden

**Our sincere thanks to the following organizations and individuals who have provided significant support for ACTS Housing over the last quarter:**

- Adonai Employment, Inc.
- Fabricated Metal Products
- Guaranty Bank
- Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council
- MGIC Investment Corporation
- Northwestern Mutual Foundation
- PNC Bank
- Tri City National Bank
- Wells Fargo Housing Foundation
- Natalie Beckwith
- Bob Gosman
- Johna & Jeff Rogovin
- Andrew Ruehl Meagan Porter
- Deanna Singh and Jusitn Ponder
- HN Co

## Meet the ACTS Team: Eileen Lazich

When Eileen Lazich left her job at a large Milwaukee corporation to come to work at ACTS Housing, she didn't do so for good karma -- but she found it anyway. She started her position as ACTS' Bookkeeper on May 8, 2014. Four days later, she went out on a first date and ended up meeting her future husband who she just married in April.

"It's been a pretty incredible year," she said with a smile.

Added Michael Gosman, executive director: "From day one, Eileen has made a positive contribution to ACTS. We're lucky to have her."

It was actually a side project at her previous job that helped her realize that she liked having more autonomy and ownership of her work. "That's when I started to look around," she said. "I realized I wanted to do something in the community where I could contribute to the greater good in a bigger way.

ACTS' culture impressed Eileen right away.

"I was used to bigger companies and the cohesion staff had with each other was amazing," she said. "Everyone was so enthusiastic about what they were

doing. Having the chance to meet the people who work here was the final selling point."

One year into her new position she wouldn't change a thing.

"It's a very exciting job where you get to make a contribution to the community that is very appealing," she said.

The newlywed, a native of Round Lake, Ill., also makes the most of her time away from work. She and her husband enjoy cycling and attending Brewers games.

"As long as they're not playing Chicago, I'll support them," she said.

Eileen may have retained her allegiance to her hometown team but it's clear her heart is focused on contributing to her adopted hometown.



## ACTS Lending Enhances the Work of ACTS Housing

Since our founding, ACTS Housing has helped more than 1,800 families become homeowners. We are proud of this number but in no way satisfied. In fact, we recently have spent a great deal of time thinking strategically about how we can help support additional families access homeownership.

As a result, we are excited to update you on the success of our affiliated non-profit, ACTS Lending, Inc.

ACTS Lending allows us to partner with more families and provide rehab financing on the purchase of their homes, which are often City tax foreclosures costing \$3,500. ACTS Lending's 70-loan portfolio (\$280,000 in outstanding indebtedness) is a remarkable 98.98 percent current, giving us confidence that

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we are building a sustainable and scalable model.

In 2015 we anticipate deploying at least \$200,000 in additional capital through a significant grant from the Metropolitan Milwaukee Fair Housing Council and a very favorable line of credit with Town Bank.

This will allow ACTS to help 30 additional families that without these loans would be stuck spending hundreds of dollars more in rent than what they will pay to own their new home.

As you can see, this is an exciting time for ACTS and for families in Milwaukee that want to realize their dream of homeownership. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

## Our Mission

ACTS Housing's mission is to promote affordable homeownership opportunities that fosters a low-income family's ability to be self-empowered, thereby reducing community blight, neighborhood deterioration, and poverty.

## Our Vision

ACTS Housing's vision is that each block inside the church neighborhoods we serve is made up of at least 60% homeowners who are self-empowered.

## Our Services



**Homebuyer Counseling** - One-on-one, HUD approved homebuyer counseling for individuals interested in developing a personalized homeownership road map.



**Neighborhood Housing** - ACTS' licensed realtors represent families in the purchase of affordable central-city homes.



**Rehab Management** - Rehab management staff represents families during coordination and execution of rehab plans, with a focus on the reclamation of vandalized foreclosures.



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