

920 King Announcement

When Hearts & Hands began rehabilitating its second home, 932 King Avenue, President Tom Egold knew the organization's commitment to transforming the street had only just begun. Soon after renovations began, Tom was approached by the next door neighbor, Naomi Campbell. Naomi was thrilled that Hearts & Hands was dedicating their time to rebuilding the Near West, and told Tom she knew just the spot for their next rebuild. Walking three doors down, Naomi pointed out a house completely hidden by overgrown shrubs and trees. As they took a walk around the property, which had been abandoned since 2005, it was clear to Tom the house was both an eyesore and danger to the community. Tom assured Naomi that Hearts & Hands was "here to stay" and promised Naomi that he would take the necessary steps to acquire and rehabilitate the house. So began the story leading to the rehabilitation of Hearts & Hands third house, 920 King Avenue.

Background

Hearts & Hands of Indiana, founded in June of 2009, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping families attain affordable long-term home ownership on the Near Westside by providing education, mentoring, and quality rehabilitated homes. With only three years under its belt, Hearts & Hands has already made a significant impact on the community. It has completely rehabilitated two homes and placed well deserving families in each. Hearts & Hands does not pick out houses at random, but strategically focuses on the Near West, an area with rich history and great potential. Sadly, one in four houses in the area is vacant and 60 percent of the community rent their property, often at inflated prices from neglectful landlords. To combat these issues, Hearts & Hands has created a model that will remove abandoned eyesores from the community while providing affordable opportunities for home ownership.

On April 27, 2011 Hearts & Hands gained the Right of Entry from the City of Indianapolis for 920 King, and officially purchased its third house in January 2012. The Hearts & Hands Housing Selection Committee immediately observed this was not going to be a quick and easy project. The interior was in shambles, the exterior was dilapidated, and the yard was so overgrown you could not even tell a house was behind it. It was clear from the start this house was going to need a complete makeover – with only the foundation and some framing being salvageable. However, Hearts & Hands had promised the neighbors to remove this eyesore from the community.

Volunteers Making the Difference

To control costs, Hearts & Hands relies heavily on volunteer labor and support to maintain its mission. 99 volunteers from an array of groups and backgrounds logged over 3,000 total service hours to help with the rehab process. It is estimated that Hearts & Hands saved over \$130,000 in terms of donated labor and services by US Department of Labor standards. Steve Rasmussen, Chair of Housing Selection Committee, has volunteered an average of 30 hours a week as project manager for Hearts & Hands. Steve, an extremely skilled tradesman, will settle for nothing less than top quality when putting his efforts in to the rehab of these homes. His passion for rebuilding the community has rubbed off on his family as well. His wife Nancy and son Casey are often found dedicating their time at 920 King as well.

Transforming 920 King Avenue

Under the leadership of Steve Rasmussen, rehabilitation of 920 King began in 2011. The first step was for volunteers to remove the enormous amount of overgrown vegetation hiding the property. Once the

house was actually visible, the group was ready to get to work on the rehab. Over the next few months, significant changes were made to the interior and exterior of the house. The damaged siding was torn down and replaced with high quality cement board siding. The roof, which was in shambles, was soon laid with new shingles and gutters. The front porch was replaced and extended, attached to newly added steps and concrete walkway. Energy efficient windows and doors were installed. And at the request of the neighbor, new fencing was put up as well.

The interior structure was totally remodeled. New plumbing, electrical, and light fixtures were installed throughout the home. The kitchen was completely refurnished with new cabinets, countertops, a built-in microwave, dishwasher, refrigerator, and pantry. New laminate flooring was laid in the kitchen and living room, carpet in the two bedrooms, and linoleum in the bathroom. Volunteers then painted the interior and baseboard trim throughout the home. The house is also equipped with a high-efficiency furnace and home security system.

Building a Lasting Impact

After countless hours of logged by volunteers and supporters, Tom Egold is proud to say he kept his promise to Naomi and the neighborhood. Hearts & Hands homeowner, Debbie Lane, who lives at the previously mentioned home at 932 King was happy to see 920 – “the last blight on the street” – transformed into a beautiful new home. Now that the house is completely rehabilitated, Hearts & Hands is excited to offer the opportunity of homeownership to a deserving family. The neighborhood revitalization does not stop at 920 King. Planning has already begun for the next project, located on North Warman Avenue, with three additional properties in the pipeline. The Hearts & Hands team and their supporters are happy to have one more project finalized, and are excited to continue their mission of helping families. Together, they are rebuilding the Near Westside one house and one family at a time.