

E-Newsletter

SUMMER 2025



Hello Everyone!

I hope you're enjoying the sunshine and long days of summer! It's the perfect time to be outside, connect with neighbors, and take in all the things that make our communities so special.

I'm glad you're part of our Homes Within Reach family! Together, we're building strong, connected neighborhoods where everyone has the chance to put down roots and thrive.

As a CLT homeowner, you play an important role in caring for your home and keeping it in good shape for years to come. Summer is the perfect time to show your home a little extra love! A few simple tasks—like cleaning your gutters, checking your roof and siding, trimming trees and bushes, and giving your exterior paint a quick touch-up—can help protect your home and keep it looking its best.

Your home is not only a place for you and your family but also a part of the bigger HWR community. Thank you for everything you do to be a great neighbor and homeowner. If you ever have questions or just want to connect, Homes Within Reach is always here for you.

Best Regards,

Executive Director
Homes Within Reach



We are incredibly grateful for the generous support of our vendors and donors. Your partnership plays a vital role in helping us build stronger communities and expand access to affordable homeownership. Whether through services, materials, or financial contributions, your support makes a lasting impact. We truly appreciate you and hope you're enjoying a joyful, restful summer season!



Free Summer Reading Help & Activities at Hennepin County Library

Keep your kids learning and engaged this summer with **free reading tutors and fun programs** at Hennepin County Library!

- **Let's Read! Tutoring** – Weekly, drop-in reading help for kids in grades K–5. No registration needed.
- **Family Events All Summer** – Storytimes, STEM workshops, art activities, and more at all 41 library branches.

Programs are **free**, easy to join, and perfect for preventing the summer learning slide.

Find a location and view the calendar at:

hclib.org/summer-learning

Need a Hand with Home Projects?

We know that small home and yard projects can pile up—whether it's painting, fixing a leaky faucet, or general yardwork. If you have skills and want to earn a little extra cash or if you're looking for help, we're building a network of homeowners who can support one another.

Join our private Facebook group just for Homes Within Reach homeowners! It's a space to:

- Ask for help or recommendations
- Share resources and tips
- Connect with your neighbors

To join, **search FB; friend request our staff page: STAFF WHAHLT** and we'll add you to the group.

Let's build a stronger community—one project at a time!

If you are not a FB user and have the ability to help others—call us!



Beat the Heat & Lower Your Bills with Home Energy Squad

With summer heat driving up electric bills, now is a great time to make your home more energy-efficient—and more comfortable.

The **Home Energy Squad**, a program offered through Xcel Energy, CenterPoint Energy, and the Center for Energy and Environment, brings energy-saving help right to your door.

For older homes, the **Energy Planner Visit** is a perfect fit. For just \$100 (or **free if your household income is at or below 80% of the area median income**), energy experts will:

- Install LED bulbs, weather-stripping, and smart thermostats
- Run a blower-door test to find air leaks
- Check your insulation and heating system
- Provide a custom energy report and connect you with rebates and financing

Many local cities also offer **discounts** to make the visit more affordable—even if you're above the income limit.

Why it matters this summer:

- Stay cooler without sky-high utility bills
- Get expert advice and access to rebates
- Make your older home more efficient, safe, and comfortable

Schedule your visit:

Call **651-328-6220** or go to mncee.org/home-energy-squad



Raising Walls, Raising Hope: Our Collaborative Home Build in Bloomington:

On a warm June afternoon, community partners gathered together to ceremoniously raise two walls on a new collaborative housing project in Bloomington. In a continuous stride towards addressing affordable housing needs, Homes Within Reach initiated the construction of two new single-family homes, each accompanied by an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), at 9030 and 9036 Park Avenue South. This project is a collaborative effort involving the Bloomington Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, and Homes Within Reach, aiming to provide sustainable and affordable housing options for local families.

A Collaborative Effort for Community Development

Jennifer Mueller, Chair of the Bloomington HRA Board, expressed enthusiasm for the project, stating, "I am thrilled to be here to support this project. It goes hand in hand with the HRA mission of creating stable and inclusive communities through safe and dignified housing choices."

Sarah Abe, the HRA Administrator, highlighted the project's significance, noting, "This is a start to the HRA's project to bring some more single-family development into Bloomington."

Building Homes and Hope

The ceremonial raising of two walls on one of the units, marked the beginning of the project. These units are designed to be energy-efficient, meeting or exceeding Energy Star standards, and constructed with quality materials. Volunteers, guided by experienced site supervisors and AmeriCorps members, will play a crucial role in the building process.

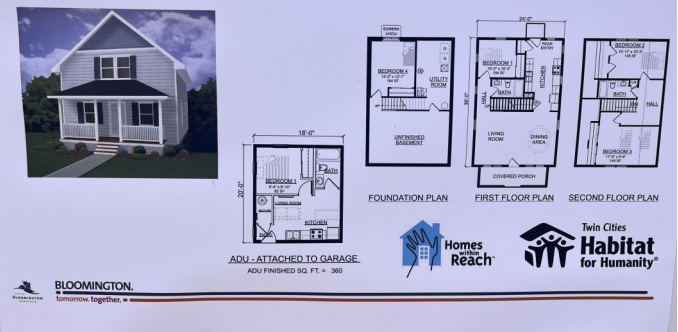
Noah Keller, from Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity shared, "Each house is four bedrooms and two baths, and each ADU is one bedroom, one bath. Habitat is thrilled to continue their tradition of building really high-quality, affordable housing."

Long-Term Affordability Through Land Trust

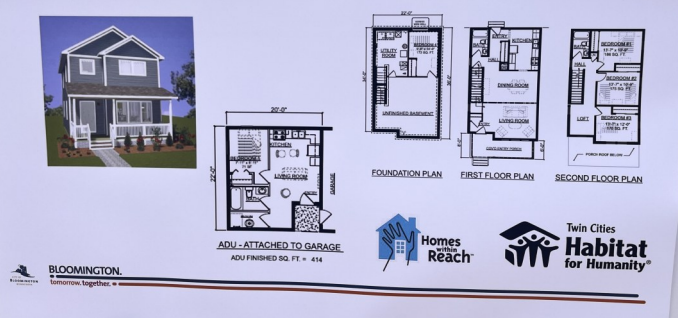
Homes Within Reach is instrumental in ensuring the long-term affordability of these homes. By incorporating the properties into a community land trust, the organization aims to maintain affordability for future generations. Brenda Lano-Wolke, Executive Director of Homes Within Reach, emphasized that the initiative is designed to support either multigenerational families living together or homeowners who choose to rent the ADU to income-qualified tenants—ensuring affordable workforce housing options.



Proposed Residence – 9030 Park Ave S



Proposed Residence – 9036 Park Ave S



Community Support and Future Outlook

The project has garnered support from various entities, including the Metropolitan Council and Minnesota Housing, which have provided grants to facilitate development. Local residents have also expressed appreciation for the initiative. Vicki Hoogheem, HRA Commissioner, remarked, "I am really happy to see such a project in my neighborhood. It's great to see the city collaborating with other organizations to bring affordable housing into my area."

With construction underway, the first home is expected to welcome new owners by early spring. This project represents a meaningful step towards expanding affordable housing options and fostering inclusive communities in Bloomington.





Finding Home: Tonisha's Journey to Stability and Joy

After a year and a half of navigating a competitive housing market, Tonisha was beginning to lose hope. Tight timelines and missed opportunities made homeownership feel out of her grasp — until she discovered Homes Within Reach.

Her journey began with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity, a program she learned about through her employer and family. Her father found a newspaper article about a first-time homebuyer grant with Habitat, it was then that Tonisha decided to give it one more try—and she's so glad she did.

"When I learned that my home could possibly be mine, I prayed really hard each night and kept it a secret," she said. "My hopes had been crushed so many times before." It was understandable that she was very nervous it would happen again.

Everything changed when she found a home in the neighborhood she had always dreamed of. "The neighborhood and the people were welcoming," she shared, "The home had everything we needed and wanted,"

Since moving in, Tonisha says her life has transformed: "My life is less stressful and I enjoy life a whole lot more. I was stressed about finding a home for my daughter and I for a very long time." Now, she says, her daughter is thriving, their dog is loving the yard, and their new routine includes neighborhood walks and visits to the nearby park. Plus there is ample space for Tonisha and her daughter to invite family over for game night fun!

For Tonisha, homeownership through Homes Within Reach means more than just having a house—it's about security, peace, and community. Her message to other families who are struggling in their search: "Keep going. Keep praying and never let anyone tell you that you cannot accomplish homeownership. Everyone has a different path but no matter how fast or slow the journey, there will always be the reward of having your own home, which in the end is so worth it."

HOMES WITHIN REACH	952-401-7071
www.homeswithinreach.org	5100 Thimsen Ave, Ste 120
