



Lower 9th Ward
Homeownership
Association



The **L9WHA** envisions a diverse and thriving Lower 9th Ward Community with record-setting African American homeownership through the **preservation** and **creation** of homeownership and the **resident driven revitalization** of our history community, **built on the LEGACY** of those who have gone before us.



*L9WHA Preservation Program exists to help existing homeowners remain in their homes, continuing the **LEGACY** of homeownership left to them by their parents and grandparents.*

The LeBeauf Family

Ms. Gisele LeBeauf grew up in the Lower 9th Ward. Her dad Robert worked in construction and in 1972 purchased their family home on Jourdan Ave (pictured below). She and her dad moved back to this home after Katrina, and this is the home her father left her when he passed in 2018. Unfortunately, because of increasing taxes, this **LEGACY** was in jeopardy. However, in 2021 the L9WHA had the privilege of assisting Ms. LeBeauf, who was overdue for a disability and age freeze. The L9WHA preservation team filed an appeal with the Louisiana Tax Commission to get her taxes lowered. Today we proudly report she has been granted a full refund for 2020 and 2021 property taxes.

Preserving the LEGACY

In 2021, with so many people at risk of losing the **LEGACY** of homeownership because of tax increases and COVID 19, **we redoubled our efforts to preserve and protect existing affordable housing**. We helped existing homeowners remain in their homes, preserving a key resource not just for them but for our community. What we have learned is that households without resources to fall back on when a disaster hits—weather-related or otherwise—are the least able to retain their housing and, ultimately, rebuild their lives. As such, in 2021, we:

- saved 14 homes from being over-taxed and possibly lost at tax sale
- partnered with the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance to reform practices of the Orleans Parish Assessor that disproportionately harms African Americans
- helped 10 families complete successions and clear titles to their properties working with Clerk of Court Chelsey Napoleon and the Bonin Law Firm



Join the Krewe of House the 9 TODAY by signing up as a sustaining donor at www.L9WHA.org/Donate

Creating a LEGACY

In 2021, the L9WHA used the power of virtual meetings to offer monthly classes on homebuying and homeownership. We kicked off this education series targeting both current and future homeowners. The classes were streamed on Facebook (and have now been viewed 1,800 times) and preserved on the L9WHA's YouTube channel for future viewing as well. Topics covered included "Understanding Your Property Taxes, Foreclosure Intervention, and Hurricane Preparation of Homeowners." The seminars were facilitated by L9WHA staff and guest speakers included Giazlyn Duncan, of the Louisiana Fair Housing, Director of

Homeownership Protection and Errol Williams, City of New Orleans Tax Assessor. Our vision in 2022 is to use both virtual and in-person classes to prepare future homeowners for the home-buying process, in addition to creating an understanding of the responsibilities of homeownership. As funding increases, we will hire a Housing Creation Specialist who will focus on homebuyer education, working with developers, and facilitating community advisory boards on homeownership.



The Kuhns Family

Having grown up during the Great Depression, Alvin Ungerbuehler knew the value of homeownership. After serving in WWII, Alvin returned home to marry his sweetheart Elaine. They purchased their first home together in Cincinnati, OH. Little did they know that the **LEGACY** they left in Ohio would be carried on 75 years later in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans. Following her grandparents' footsteps, Elaine and Alvin's granddaughter Sarah Bruzzi purchased her first home with her husband and daughter in the Lower 9 in 2015. And in 2020, when the L9WHA motivated NORA to donate the 10 lots to be built for homeownership on Andry, just across the street from the Bruzzi family, Sarah's mom Ms. Donna Kuhns began inquiring about purchasing in the neighborhood as well. Using money received from her parents after their passing in 2001, Donna was able to purchase 1 of these incredible homes.

Through her purchase in February 2021, Ms. Donna continues the **LEGACY** of family & community becoming family in the North Claiborne section of the Lower 9th Ward. She attends the L9NA meetings to stay informed and share the information with her neighbors. This is in between welcoming her granddaughters to her home to swim in the blow-up pool in the front yard and decorating her porch for Christmas. These two homes, and the memories that have been created, are now apart of the Ungerbuehler/Kuhns/Bruzzi **LEGACY** that they will be passed on to Ms. Donna's 2 granddaughters to continue for generations to come.



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The Smothers Family

Harrison Smothers, Jr. (1917-1976) and Alice Blakes Smothers (1923-2013) owned several pieces of land in the Lower 9. Upon Alice's death, she left the property to her children. Being the grandchildren of sharecroppers in rural LA and MS, the Smothers family knew the importance of leaving the **LEGACY** of homeownership to their children. When Gaynell (L9WHA Executive Director) met Earl Smothers, he was cutting the grass on his family property. He mentioned that maintaining the grass was starting to wear on him physically, and he wanted to give it to his niece. Mr. Smothers indicated there was a barrier preventing him from giving it to her - the cost of succession. So, the L9WHA jumped into action. Cynthia Guillemet, L9WHA Client Service Specialist determined that Mr. Smothers may qualify for a low-cost succession with Bonin Law Firm. Cynthia worked with the Law Firm to investigate the property history and gather information to prepare for succession. Unfortunately the case is more involved than we projected, and there may be some complications that may prohibit the succession from going through. Cynthia is currently working with Mr. Smothers to find a way to resolve the issues so that the land can remain in the family. Our ultimate goal is to make sure that Harrison and Alice's **LEGACY** lives on in the Lower 9 and that the property remains in the family.



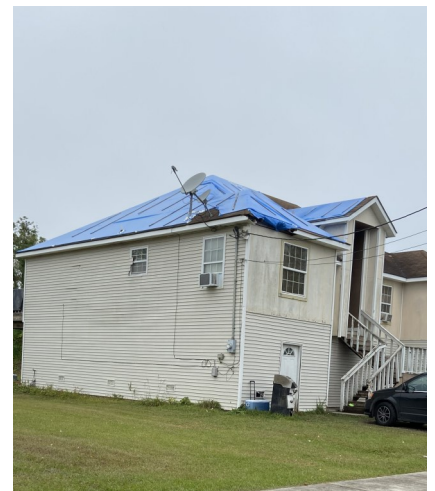
Revitalizing the LEGACY

One of the chief complaints by Lower 9 homeowners, residents, and businesses owners is the abundance of lots filled with debris and tall grass and water, all of which threatens the **LEGACY** of homeownership. As such, Revitalization at L9WHA means putting blighted properties back into commerce. It also means proven environmentally friendly ways to beautify the community and manage this water.

In 2021, we participated in neighborhood clean-up days, assisted landowners with code enforcement issues, and neighborhood beautification projects. We also entered into a partnership with Waterwise Gulfsouth and the Urban Conservancy to create a 2 year plan for using green infrastructure as a tool to eliminate blight and manage standing floodwater in the future (Pictured Left: L9WHA staff at our planning session). In December, we formalized this Partnership; and with this additional funding we will hire a full-time coordinator for our green infrastructure projects to enable homeowners to revitalize the **LEGACY** of homeownership in the Lower 9.

Hurricane Ida & Disaster Recovery

Hurricane Ida hit the Lower 9 on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Using the lessons learned by Katrina, we know that fast and immediate is the most effective road to recovery. Days before Ida made landfall, our staff worked with community partners to communicate information about evacuation and storm preparation resources. After Ida's landfall, we called our neighbors and surveyed the community. We noticed homeowners' roofs were destroyed, people needed food and access to internet services. We contacted our Councilwoman and Lowernine.org to make sure homeowners received blue tarps and access to hot meals. Once power was restored to the area, we used our office and internet service to assist homeowners with FEMA and homeowners insurance claims. Through this recovery work, we helped to save the **LEGACY** of our community.



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Our Team

The Lower 9th Ward Homeownership Association is directed by an active and diverse Board, with a balance between residents of the L9W, making up a majority, and community partners with strategic expertise in fundraising, community development and nonprofit management.

Our staff and board are the heartbeats of our organization. Each member plays a strategic role in serving every L9 homeowner to the best of their unique ability. From designing outreach campaigns, to raising funds to supply services, to creating relationships with vital community partners, the L9WHA team bands together to continue the legacy passed on to us.

Staff

Gaynell Brady

Executive Director

M.A. Sheehan (retired October 2021)

Housing Director

Cynthia Guillemet

Community Engagement and Client Services Specialist

Sarah Bruzzi

Development Coordinator/Outreach Specialist



Pictured Above: Our L9WHA financial partners were celebrated this year with a one of a kind poster honoring the LEGACY of homeownership and music in the Lower 9th Ward, created by New Orleans native Roan Smith.

To receive your poster, donate to our End of the Year campaign at www.L9WHA.com/donate



Pictured Above: After 10 years of incredible service in the Lower 9th Ward, MA Sheehan, our Housing Director, retired at the end of October. Through the years she helped hundreds of L9 residents preserve or rebuild & work to get new homes built in the L9. Her time at the L9WHA was so much more than a job, but rather a passion to preserve the LEGACY of homeownership in this phenomenal community.

Board

Tonya Boyd Cannon, President

Educator at Bricolage Elementary School

Professional Singer

Betty Bell

Department of Children and Family Services (retired)

Steve Marshall

Founder, Mass Timber Strategies

Charles Stern Jr, Treasurer

Partner at Steeg Law Firm

Tegan Jones, Secretary (rotated off November 2021)

Freelance writer/editor & Social media expert

Krewe of House the 9

As we seek to preserve the **LEGACY** of homeownership in the L9, we celebrate YOU, our partners. We, therefore, have created a community of sustaining donors called, in true New Orleans fashion, the Krewe of House the 9, and **we invite you to join the Krewe!** Simply go to our website at L9WHA.org/Donate and give at least \$10/month. For more information, please call us at 504-943-6000.

As a member of the Krewe, you will be one of our most important supporters—making it possible for each resident of the L9 to be connected to all the resources they need.

Join the Krewe of House the 9 TODAY by signing up as a sustaining donor at www.L9WHA.org/Donate

Vital Partnerships

Preserving LEGACY in the Lower 9th Ward is all about partnership - partnering homeowners with resources. **And it is because of you and your partnership that we are able to preserve the LEGACY of homeownership in the L9.** Each of you are a part of this program, playing your own unique role, and we couldn't do it without you. So, THANK YOU! Thank you for stepping in making the LEGACY of homeownership a reality!

2020 Krewe of House the 9 - Sustaining Donors

Abby Arnold
Alex Wilson
Alexis Marceaux
Alicia Wilson
Anita Lee & Jim Armstrong
Anne Granatino
Anne Moore
Anne Sheehan
Anne Wolfe
Bev Baird & Nancy Fitz
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Bob Lane
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Carolynn Fowler-Smith
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Cathy Hayes Duffy
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Stephanie Stromath
Steve Burrows
Steve Marshall

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Troy Barnhart

2020 Grants

Ben & Jerry's Foundation
Enterprise Community Partners—Covid Relief
Foundation for Louisiana
HUD Sec. 4 Capacity-Building Grant through Enterprise Community Partners
Pew Matching Grant
New Orleans City Council - Harrah's Community Partners

2020 Individual Donors

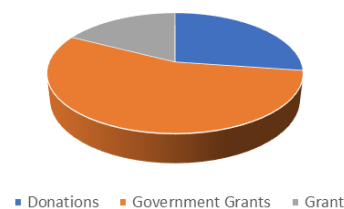
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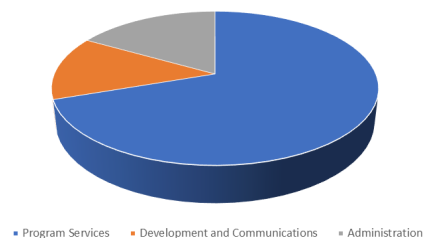
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Walter Goodwin

L9WHA Revenue 2020



L9WHA 2020 Expenditures



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