

2019 Annual Report



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE, INC

Helping Build Communities, One Piece at a Time



Funding



Development



Leadership



Events



Volunteerism

CDA assists communities with flood relief

As the rains continued to pummel Southwest Wisconsin in 2019, flooding remained a topic on a lot of people's minds, and unfortunately, a significant problem for a lot of property owners. With its expertise in securing creative funding solutions for small and low-to-moderate income communities, Community Development Alternatives played a pivotal role in flood recovery planning and implementation.

CDA assisted eight Villages in Southwest Wisconsin with development of flood recovery strategies, including Gays Mills, Soldiers Grove, Chaseburg, Mazomanie, Readstown, Viola, Ontario, and La Farge. CDA helped with the acquisition, relocation, and site clearance of more than 60 flood-prone single-family homes and 6 commercial properties; as well as elevated 15 flood-prone homes. CDA has applications pending to the

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for 44 additional flood-prone properties.

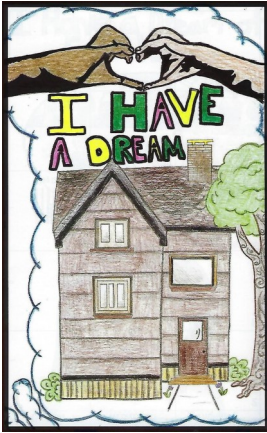
CDA also secured funding to construct a new Fire Station/ EMT building and a new lift station in a flood-free area of La Farge. From flood mitigation strategies to public facility improvements, CDA has built a reputation in Southwest Wisconsin as a facilitator for Village Boards to solve problems and find funding sources.

Highlights Inside:

- HOUSING IS ABOUT PEOPLE
- THE APPEAL OF THE DRIFTLESS AREA ART FESTIVAL
- HELPING MEET PUBLIC FACILITY NEEDS
- TOURISM SEEKS TO DIVERSIFY
- LOOKING FORWARD

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Housing is about people



Housing is a word that conjures up a variety of images, from single family homes to duplexes to condominiums and apartment buildings. That covers only the physical side of the equation.

The thought of “home” conjures up a much different image: family, a place of comfort and safe haven for most.

Over the course of time we have heard state officials declare that housing programs are about ‘rehabbing properties, not people’. Yet

when we visit a property for housing assistance, we cannot help but focus on housing assistance that will result in a better home for the occupants. CDA takes the time to understand the occupants personal housing challenges to match needs with available resources.

Recently a county employee made CDA aware of a resident living in a home damaged by a rain event and lacking in certain amenities. It took months of personal contact before the occupant was comfortable in sharing

with our staff some of the most severe housing issues, which included lack of running water.

With a number of different home improvement programs, CDA has helped to address the major deficiencies. The occupants fear or embarrassment changed to confidence and self-worth. By taking time to build a relationship, CDA was able to rebuild a house into a home. We are of the opinion that our work is all about people.

We can do
anything we want
to do if we stick to
it long enough.
Helen Keller



A CDA Housing Rehabilitation Project

No stopping the appeal of the Driftless Area Art Festival

Winds and rain threatened but did not discourage several thousand art lovers and the 72 artists who brought a wide variety of works from across the region to the 15th annual Driftless Area Art Festival, Sept 21 – 22 in Soldiers Grove.

Pouring rains and flash flood warnings prevailed on Thursday, as committee members and volunteers from the Department of Corrections prepared to set up the grounds. The decision was

made to move the setup to Friday, which proved to be a day of challenges, as committee members searched for new volunteers for setup, artists called to inquire about the status of the event, and the logistics of setting up the expansive grounds. The committee met the challenge.

The event opened on Saturday morning under good weather. Saturday evening was a different story. A severe storm hit, blowing over tents and causing damage

throughout the grounds. In a farsighted decision, the committee had stockpiled straw and was able to lay down enough ground cover to open again on Sunday.

Artists reported good sales over the entire weekend, a demonstration of the creativity of artists, the resilience of volunteers, and the loyalty of area art lovers. Wind and rain and flooding were no match for the powerful appeal of the Driftless Area Art Festival.



The 2019 Award
for Best in Show
Amy Arnold of Viroqua

CDA helps small communities meet public facility needs

Every community has public facility needs. Meeting those needs within the budget constraints of a small community requires the time-proven expertise of Community Development Alternatives.

CDA works with Southwestern Wisconsin communities in need of costly public facility improvements spread over a small taxpayer base. The budget constraints are further complicated by a majority of low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents unable to absorb large utility rate increases.

To mitigate the financial

impact of expensive projects, CDA offers utility rate and debt restructuring analysis as part of project planning. CDA also provides income survey service to make communities eligible for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). In 2019, CDA completed DOA certified community-wide income surveys in the Village of LaFarge, Village of Hollandale and the Village of Blue River that makes these communities eligible for CDBG grants through 2024.

Town of Glen Haven Fire Station – A \$420,000 CDBG

grant helped fund the \$900,000 project, which consisted of the construction of a 7,000 sq. ft. fire station on 5 acres of donated land in the Township. The project will provide 23 volunteer firemen and 11 emergency medical first responders with adequate training space and the maintenance of all equipment in a controlled environment, allowing for a quicker response time. This project became eligible through a Township-wide income survey that verified the Town was at least 51% LMI. Fire Department volunteers were instrumental in the survey process.



Fennimore 4th Street Project



Glen Haven Fire Station Site Preparation



Completed Glen Haven Fire Station

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said. Peter Drucker

Crawford County Tourism Council seeks to diversify

The Crawford County Tourism Council continues to promote the county through advertising and marketing collaborations. Where our limited tourism dollars are most effectively spent is an on-going question – print advertising vs social media. The constraints of zero-based budgeting encourage us to constantly re-examine how and where we spend

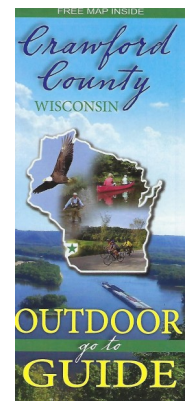
promotional dollars.

Record sustained flooding of the Mississippi River in 2019 limited recreational boating and forced cancellation of the Prairie du Chien Rendezvous, which contributed to a 'down' year in tourism. The Council will want to diversify and expand the base of tourism activities, relying less on the unpredictable Mississippi

River.

We have much to market in Crawford County - trout fishing, history, specialty farming, scenic rural roads, promoting bus tours and birding – to name just a few.

It's a new world – and time for new thinking.



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Looking forward...



Black Hawk, Chief, 19th C.
Mississippi River
Sculpture Park

The work Community Development Alternatives accomplished in 2019 informs our work looking forward. Each year we learn something new and apply it to our vision of what lies ahead. This can certainly be said of the Coronavirus Pandemic, an event none of us expected, yet each of us will learn from. The pandemic presents challenges, but also opportunities to reinvent ourselves. With its experience in managing state and federal grants, CDA stands ready to help the recovery.

Our work is also informed by our empathy for those suffering from challenges beyond their control. *For Pete's Sake* is one of those projects. The sober house project is named after Pete Zibrowski, a recovering

alcoholic and drug addict who found himself in and out of rehabilitation centers with no place to go other than back to the environment that reinforced his addiction. CDA is currently looking for a building in Prairie du Chien that will serve as a sober house for regional residents recovering from addiction.

None of our work would be possible without the support and expertise of volunteers. Dedicated individuals staff the organizations under the CDA umbrella, including the Driftless Area Art Festival, Mississippi River Sculpture Park, and others. Passionate volunteers serve as the driving force behind the scenes of these community-based projects. Many of these volunteers come from the "baby-boomer" generation,

and as their efforts begin to sunset, it will be critical for the younger generation to bring their expertise and energy.

CDA also wishes to recognize the Village Clerks and Village Boards who do the vital work of communities. Village clerks, the smile behind the desk, are also the force behind the village work. Finally, CDA wishes to thank our dedicated staff and Board of Directors listed above. Like many of CDA staff efforts that fall outside our revenue generating projects, our Board's energy finds reward in the completion of work to the benefit of our regional community.

As we look forward, we do so with the vision and guidance of our board, volunteers, and community members.