

## It starts with a Vision.



neighborhoods are eligible to receive up to \$50,000 in college scholarships. In addition, our Future Centers, located in La Crosse high schools, help students prepare for life after graduation to maximize their potential for college and career success.

La Crosse Promise is a non-profit organization working to economically transform La Crosse, Wis., and improve the quality of life for all citizens through a strong commitment to education. Families or individuals that renovate an existing home, or build/buy a new home in select La Crosse

**Our mission:  
La Crosse  
Promise is a  
catalyst for  
community  
vitality through  
educational  
success.**



## How it began

The organization that became La Crosse Promise has its roots in conversations with local leadership and community members as far back as 2006. La Crosse County Community Development Specialist Brian Fukuda had investigated a place-based scholarship program in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and challenged La Crosse community partners to consider how such a program might enrich the La Crosse region. The neighborhood program need was identified after an examination of core La Crosse neighborhoods with deteriorating, aging housing stock, a highly transient population and depressed property values. The City of La Crosse and County of La Crosse provided ample data to reflect the deterioration of the neighborhood.

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## La Crosse Promise Place-Based Scholarships



Through the generosity of three donors of \$1.5 million, we will provide scholarships to qualifying families or individuals who build, renovate or purchase new homes in select La Crosse Promise neighborhoods. We believe that a multi-faceted solution is needed to revitalize our challenged neighborhoods and a key component is to provide an infusion of families who are committed to and understand the importance of post-secondary education. We do this in collaboration with the city, the county, the school district and our supporters in the community.

The LP neighborhood revitalization program currently provides up to \$50,000 in education scholarships for 30 households in the Powell-Poage-Hamilton and Washburn neighborhoods of the city. To date, five new homes have been built since the program launched in 2015 and five Promise families occupy these homes on Denton, 7th Street, 9th Street and 6th Street in the Powell-Poage-Hamilton and Washburn neighborhoods. In addition, three more Promise approved homes are being built in the summer of 2017 on Johnson Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Street with three more in the works pending closing dates. One Promise home is currently being renovated on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well.

Our place-based scholarship program is the only one in the country that offers scholarships to residents who build, buy or renovate homes in select neighborhoods.

## La Crosse Promise Future Centers



Simultaneously, we are making sure that all of the high school students in the School District of La Crosse understand that they can have a successful future. Since the Fall of 2012, we have connected more than 2000 students to the resources necessary to achieve their post-secondary goals. Our Future Centers are advising offices located in both Central and Logan High Schools in La Crosse and deliver a wide variety of college prep and career counseling services to all high schoolers in the School District of La Crosse.

The Future Center program was identified as a need through the community input for additional college/career guidance services. Students can visit the centers throughout the entire school year, Monday – Friday, during school hours. If needed, our advisors will also hold workshops and schedule meetings with parents and students after school hours. We also offer services to those students who live in the district who attend Aquinas and Luther high schools.

Our advisors assist students with college selection and enrollment, scholarship applications, career counseling and perhaps most importantly, help with financial aid planning. We take students to visit college campuses across the region (three a year) and host financial literacy events, essay workshops, and financial aid application sessions. All of these services are provided free of charge.

Our goal is to dramatically and immediately increase the percentage of graduating seniors who follow through with post-secondary plans, especially first generation college students. This not only develops the workforce in our region, but statistics show that education-minded communities experience decreased crime, better health, more stable



families, and increased civic participation. Many students come to us not knowing where to start in discovering educational and career opportunities and it is our job to help them make solid decisions that will contribute to their success in school and in life.



## La Crosse Promise Staff

The current staff composition of LP is full time positions of Executive Director, communications officer, two Future Center advisors and a part-time book-keeper. They are as follows:

- Executive Director Brian Liesinger
- Outreach and Communications Coordinator Kristen Lueth
- Central High School Future Center Advisor Hayley Moe
- Logan High School Future Center Advisor Andrew Lam
- Book-keeper Tamra Thomas

## La Crosse Promise 2017 Board of Directors and Advisors

Margaret Dihlmann-Malzer, M.Ed. – President  
Community Volunteer  
Retired - Mayo Clinic Health System

Denise Vujnovich – Vice President  
Vice President for Student Development & Success  
Western Technical College

Brad Sturm – Secretary/Treasurer  
CEO  
Coulee Bank

Brian A. Liesinger  
Executive Director  
La Crosse Promise

Ralph Heath – Ex-officio President  
Managing Partner, Author  
Synergy Leadership Group

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Andrew Bosshard  
Attorney  
Bosshard Parke Ltd.

Jeni Burckart  
Pharmacist  
Gundersen Health System

Kenna Christians  
Community Volunteer

James Fowler  
President/Owner  
Fowler & Hammer, Inc.

Tara Johnson  
Chair, La Crosse County Board of Supervisors  
La Crosse County

Tim Kabat  
Mayor, City of La Crosse

Mike Keil  
Owner  
Doerflingers 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

Randy Nelson  
Superintendent of Schools  
La Crosse School District

Amy Noel  
Vice President, Specialty Care  
Mayo Clinic Health System  
Franciscan Healthcare in La Crosse

Steve O'Malley  
Administrator  
La Crosse County

Michael Richards  
Executive Director, Government Relations & External Affairs  
Gundersen Health System

Brent Smith  
Attorney/Managing Partner  
Johns, Flaherty & Collins, S.C.

Randy Van Rooyen  
Vice President, Investments  
Trust Point, Inc.

Marcie Wycoff-Horn  
*Dean, Professional and Continuing Education*  
School of Education/ UW-La Crosse

### Advisors

Brian Fukuda  
Community Development Specialist  
La Crosse County

Jason Gillman  
Director of Planning and Development  
City of La Crosse

Karl Green  
Professor, Dept. of Community Resource Development  
La Crosse County UW-Extension

Caroline Gregerson  
Community Development Administrator  
City of La Crosse

Jerry Kember  
Interim Dean – School of Education  
Viterbo University

Dawn Reinhart  
City of La Crosse