



## 321 N. High Street: Ross Endsley and the House That Started It All

The house was somewhat long, but only about 10 feet wide throughout. The second of its two rooms stood directly behind the first. You could have fired a shotgun through the front door and it would have exited unobstructed through the back—hence the expression “shotgun shack.”

That’s the house that Ross Endsley—born in Marshall, Tennessee in 1897—moved into in November of 1934, having purchased the 50’ wide, 150’ deep lot from James and Florence Allen, who had bought it from Charles and Estelle Hughes in 1925.

Endsley lived in his North High Street home from 1934 to 1994 when, at 97 years old, he was no longer able to live alone. He sold the lot, house and all, to Richard Zopf.

Zopf intended the place as sort of an investment property for his daughter, Magdalena—more so the land than the house itself. When Magdalena reached the age of majority, which was still several years off, she could sell it, live there, or do anything else she chose. In 2001, daughter and father decided to sell the property to a fledgling affordable housing organization.

Thus begins the next chapter, one involving an old house becoming new and the birth of a crucial movement toward sustainable, affordable housing in Yellow Springs.

Most of the Home, Inc. house that now stands at 321 N High is only 22 years old. The

1,100+ square feet are made up of what you would expect of a modern house, including three bedrooms and two full baths. Disinclined to obliterate its original history by razing the original home, local architect Patty Rice volunteered her services to design the new house *around* the existing home—now still standing in the new house as a 10-by-12-foot entrance-way. In fact, if you were to brave the spidery confines of the crawlspace, you would see remnants of the original foundation.

Since the 2001 additions, four families have called the North High Street property home. Lindie Keaton and her son moved in that same year, becoming the first ever Home, Inc. residents in the first ever Home, Inc. home. In 2007, Lesley Horton and her family purchased the house. In 2014, Lucas and Suzanne Szempruch bought the place not long after their first child was born. In 2017, the current residents Lauren Shows, Anthony Fife, and their daughter Lucy bought the house.

Someday the current residents, too, will move on, and new residents will move in. Such is the nature of housing that was built not only to last, but also, to stay perpetually affordable. Ross Endsley might be gone, but his old/new house, now with more bedrooms than Endsley had rooms, has already served four families in its first 22 years, and that story is just beginning. Stay tuned.

## Board Members Linda Cox and Artie Isaac Discuss What Home Means to Them

**Artie:** What does home mean to you?

**Linda:** Home is a place that we come to, a place we make peace. It reminds me of the peaceful places in my life, like the home that I grew up in. My mother and father are both from the South. They really made it homey. My mother believed in cooking. My father would go out and work and come home and everything would be in order. I had a really good childhood. My husband Chris also came from a peaceful home. And so, when we put together this home, I put up pictures of the family.

We both came from strong family backgrounds. We had family reunions, vacationing in the homes of our extended family wherever they lived.

Now home is a place we can just kick back and be ourselves, exhale, and be able to think. There're so many things going on in this world and in our lives, and you just want to be able to be in a place where you can talk to each other and relax and gather up your energy and spirit. So when you go back out into that world, you have the strength that you need to face the day or whatever comes your way. What about you?

**Artie:** I like how you describe it, Linda. Home is a place I go to recover. There used to be the concept of Valhalla. The Vikings would go to Valhalla after a battle, and that's where they would be healed for the next day. For me, home is that way. I know some people go home, and home for them is another battleground. I am lucky that it's not a battlefield for me. What makes it home is that Alisa is here. In fact, sometimes when we're on the road, you know, if we're traveling somewhere together, I still think I'm home, because Alisa is with me.

You mentioned orderliness and I feel the same way. I like home because I can put the furniture where I want it. That might sound insignificant,

but it's our place. We can mess it up the way we want to, and clean it when we want to.

What else makes home different from every other place? I don't like to take pride, but I think



Board members Artie Isaac and Linda Cox

I do take pride—not in the luxury of a roof over our heads, but in the orderliness of it. It may not look orderly to a visitor, but I know where everything is, and I take comfort in that.

The way you spoke about peace in the home reminds me of a Jewish concept, *shalom bayit*, which means a peaceful home. It's the ideal, because a community can only be as strong as the sum of its households and businesses. A healthy community is responsible for the homes and businesses of everyone, because the failure of any becomes a challenge for the community.

**Linda:** Our summers were spent going to visit my grandmother and grandfather on a farm. We loved that. He grew sugarcane and made sorghum. My grandmother would stay at home, where she cooked and cleaned and had a little garden beside the house. They got used to just appreciating simple things. They were peaceful people, not hollering. Just grounded...very grounded people.

**Artie:** Oh, I know some people who grew up in very turbulent homes. And then when they get their own home, they have the chance for peace. I've seen some people take the opportunity to live in a peaceful home that's just completely different from where they came from.

## Home, Inc. Celebrates Chris Hall's Ten Years As Program Manager

This year, Home, Inc. celebrated Chris Hall's 10th year with the organization.

The occasion was highlighted by a video shown at Home, Inc.'s annual meeting, featuring videos submitted by clients and colleagues alike. They had a lot to say about Chris: adjectives such as "professional," "intelligent," "dedicated," "kind," "compassionate," "caring," "responsive," and "on point" were just a few among the many that marked the clearly heartfelt comments.

Chris describes his job as the "starting point" for anyone interested in owning, or taking care of, a home. "I meet with applicants where they are," says Chris. Some need a great deal more than others, he says. "But it doesn't matter. As long as you're willing to work, I'm willing to work with you." As a result, he's pleased to say, we've never had a determined client who didn't end up reaching their housing goals.

A good part of the credit goes to Chris, who is just as determined to overcome obstacles when they arise. In one case, a US Department of Agriculture (USDA) mortgage was held up for months. The problem concerned what Chris felt sure was a mistaken view about the home's appraisal.

"I called my contact at USDA and told him it was a mistake. And then I called his boss

and his boss's boss and told them they'd got it wrong. No luck." Months later, Chris got all the way to the top. "I finally talked to the national chief USDA appraiser and he sorted it out."

In recent years, Home, Inc. has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars of home repair money available to income-eligible homeowners. The money is intended to provide health, safety, and accessibility improvements to homes where they are needed. Chris also administers these repair funds. He brings the same determination to this part of his work as well.

One grateful village resident tells the story of a broken down furnace in his house and the discovery of half a foot of water in the crawl-space below. "I was afraid my house would be condemned," he said. "But over a period of two years, Chris helped me get one small grant and then another for preventive measures and finally, a larger grant to take care of the structural damage."

Enthusiastic applause from the many who watched the video at the annual meeting made it clear that those attending were in full agreement with the toast offered by another Home, Inc. client: "I have really loved working with you...here's to another 10 years!"

### STAFF MEMBERS

- Emily Seibel  
Executive Director
- Brittany Parsons Keller  
Development Coordinator
- Christopher Hall  
Program Manager
- Alexandra Scott  
Outreach and Fundraising Manager
- Tom McCaffrey  
Client-First Specialist
- Lori Lotts  
Rental & Office Manager

### BOARD MEMBERS

- Shadia Alvarez
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- Becca Bayman
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- Truth Garrett
- Artie Isaac
- Lela Klein
- Len Kramer (emeritus)
- Kevin McGruder
- Steve McQueen
- David Scott
- Susan Stiles (emeritus)
- Malte Von Matthiessen
- April Wolford



Susan Stiles, former Executive Director of the Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority, received the 2023 Tony Bent Affordable Housing Award at Yellow Springs Home, Inc.'s 25th Anniversary Annual Meeting on August 31, 2023. Susan has served two terms on the Home, Inc. Board of Directors—one as Board President. She has been with Home, Inc. for most, if not all, of the organization's 25 years in existence and continues to serve as a super volunteer, mentor, and the organization's second ever *emeritus* board member, a role reserved for those who have contributed outstanding and distinguished service to the board during their tenure.

# Adult Homecoming 2023: Silver Screen



Photo credit Alex Scott (above); Truth Garrett (below).



(Top left) The event took place in the Glen Helen Vernet Building, with the main portion of the event in the atrium.

(Bottom left) Kyle "X" Harewood (left) and Truth Garrett pose in front of the Home, Inc. photo backdrop.



(Top right) From left to right, Alexandra Scott (Outreach & Fundraising Manager), Emily Seibel (Executive Director) and Lela Klein (Board Member) pose in front of the Home, Inc. photo backdrop.

(Bottom right) DJs Gnarled Lee/Lee Wade (left) and Pay-Day/Peter Day (right) set the mood with beloved dance songs and slow jams from many decades.

Photo credit Alex Scott (above and below)



## 2023 Repair Programs Result in Record Number of Projects, Funding

A combined 19 homeowner repair projects were completed in 2023 through grants secured and administered by Home, Inc., resulting in over \$300,000 in emergency repairs and accessibility modifications. These projects were funded through both the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati's Carol M. Peterson Housing Fund and a 2021 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Housing Preservation Grant received by Home, Inc.

Repair projects included roofing, plumbing, siding, bathroom accessibility modifications, and others benefiting local homeowners at no cost. This is Home, Inc.'s sixth consecutive year administering the Carol M. Peterson program and closes out the group's first USDA Housing Preservation Grant, in which Home, Inc. received nearly half of Ohio's statewide allocation.

These projects benefit homeowners of low-to-moderate income, assisting with maintaining quality, safe housing. In the words of one recipient, "I can not thank you and all involved enough to let you all know how grateful I am. My home feels so secure, stable now...It really took the stress off of how I was going to fund these projects."

Home, Inc. works with many partner organizations and companies to administer these programs, including the USDA, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, the Huntington National Bank, the Yellow Springs Community Foundation (which is helping with interim financing during construction), and the Yellow Springs Credit Union (which administers a short-term line of credit) as well as local contractors and home inspectors.

The Village of Yellow Springs also played an important role in the USDA grant by contributing \$12,000 in matching funds, a key tool in

strengthening applications for the competitive funding. Home, Inc. looks forward to building upon its success in 2024 by applying for, and administering, additional grant funding.

Grant funds can make a huge difference. According to another grant recipient: "I appreciate not only the financial support I received but also the fact that Home, Inc. was able to gather an excellent team of professionals, which I wouldn't have been able to find on my own. And along the way other things were done too, which significantly elevated my quality of life."

To learn more about future opportunities,



2023 Carol M. Peterson Repair Grant Recipient Cheryl Thomas in her kitchen.

please complete the short interest form found at: [yshome.org/2023-homeowner-rehab-grant-interest-form.html](https://yshome.org/2023-homeowner-rehab-grant-interest-form.html)

## Couple Enjoys Long-Sought Small Town Living

Long-time Cincinnati residents Valerie and Tim Bickett can thank their children for helping them find their way to a Home, Inc. house they love in Thistle Creek. Both Marianne, their older daughter, and Valentine, their youngest son, chose to go to Antioch College.

"I have always wanted to live in a small town," Valerie says, "One where we could feel part of a real community." Visiting their children at Antioch and driving them back and forth over the years, "we grew to love Yellow Springs and decided to move here."

The next step was to find a house they could afford. Once again, help arrived through their daughter, who had a friend working at Home, Inc. It took a while. The Bicketts were on Home, Inc.'s waiting list for close to seven years! "We had a few false starts," Tim recalls, before moving into the two-story, three-bedroom house with their son last December.

Tim is a man of many talents and interests. During his working days in Cincinnati, he worked in construction for 20 years, did a stint as a truck driver, and another as a warehouse manager. His talents as a painter and sculptor are on display throughout their new home, although the objects of his interest as an amateur herpetologist are—perhaps blessedly—not. A deeply spiritual

man, Tim is also engaged in a continuing search for the nature of the higher power he believes in and the ways in which people are connected.

Valerie taught writing classes in Cincinnati for many years, both in person and via Zoom, although she considers herself as much a facilitator and participant as a traditional teacher. She is currently planning to begin teaching here in Yellow Springs. However, at the time of this interview, both she and Tim were having trouble even keeping their eyes open. The reason? A four-and-a-half-month old grandson they are helping to care for.

Baby Daniel is the son of Marianne and her husband Sam, who moved back to Yellow Springs last spring, much to the joy of his grandparents.

Both Tim and Valerie recognize full well that they have not landed in Nirvana. Nevertheless, they are thrilled to have their immediate family gathered around them in close proximity, and are grateful for the help and warm friendships extended to them by new neighbors and fellow villagers, such as Sue Parker and Dan Dixon.

The couple bought their home from its original owner, Tamar Totty, who lived in it for 17 years with her children (now graduated from Yellow Springs High School), before moving to Columbus to take a new job.

## The Cascades Phase I—Fully Funded!

In July, following a rigorous application process, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) invited Home, Inc. to submit a full proposal to its competitive Housing Development Gap Financing program. Nearly \$1.5 million was reserved for the first phase of The Cascades project, which consists of eight rental units of senior housing divided among three cottages. Also included is funding for building the infrastructure required for the development.

With this approval, Home, Inc. staff members worked tirelessly to complete the full application in the allotted 90 days. Surveys and environmental work began immediately. The final application, which was submitted in October, consisted of over 1,000 pages of required information about the architectural work, community engagement, engineering, and financial predevelopment. Permanent financing will come from Wright-Patt Credit Union, with whom Home, Inc. is partnering for the first time. Other committed funding sources include the Finance

Fund, Village of Yellow Springs, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, CenterPoint Energy Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, and Federal Home Loan Bank.

With over 300 people on Home, Inc.'s rental interest list, there is little doubt that these eight units of affordable senior housing will go fast. Home, Inc. anticipates that construction will start in the summer of 2024, pending OHFA board approval. The total project cost for Phase I and needed infrastructure is estimated at \$2.29 million.

Phase I is part of a larger plan for 32 units of mixed rental and homeowner housing to be located at Herman and Marshall streets, across from Friends Care Community and Miami Township Fire and Rescue. When completed, the project will include 10 for-sale townhomes. The 22 rentals will be focused on the senior population while the townhomes will be designed for all generations. To follow progress, visit Home, Inc. at [yshome.org](https://yshome.org), Facebook, or Instagram.



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### Announcement of Baby Virginia

On March 30,  
Home, Inc. staff  
member Brittany  
Keller welcomed  
baby Virginia  
Louise. She and  
her husband Kirby  
are delighted to  
have baby Ginny  
join big brother  
Casper!



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