PHARE
Pennsylvania Housing Affordability & Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund

THE PHARE PROGRAM: AT A GLANCE

The PHARE Act was established in 2010 to provide funding throughout the Commonwealth to assist with the creation, rehabilitation, and support of affordable housing. Currently, the program is funded by two funding sources, the Realty Transfer Tax Fund and the Marcellus Shale Fund.

Did You Know?

Supportive Housing is a combination of housing and services intended to be a cost-effective and evidence-based approach to ending the cycle of homelessness and providing housing stability for those most vulnerable populations who may suffer from chronic disabilities, substance abuse, and untreated mental health conditions.

Mercy Center for Women

JUNE 2024

Holy Rosary Building Project

Erie, PA

In 1994 the Sisters of Mercy in Erie, PA purchased a vacant convent to provide transitional housing for homeless women and children.

Twenty-five years later, the organization made the decision to expand both its campus and impact on the community based on the growing needs of individuals in Erie. The Holy Rosary Elementary School Building was purchased in 2019 to create a community center and provide new, permanent housing residential units.

According to the Center's Executive Director, Jennie Hagerty (pictured above), the

5.3-million-dollar project to rehabilitate and reuse the school building was made possible with the support of various funding sources, such as The Neighborhood Assistance Program, Allegheny Health Network, UPMC Healthcare, and PHFA's PHARE program. Over the course of three PHARE funding rounds, $650,000 was awarded to the Center to support the completion of the Mercy Anchor Community Center, provide additional resources for its permanent housing program and the wrap around services provided to residents, and funds to complete renovations at its original transitional living building.

The Anchor Community Center created thirteen, 2-bedroom furnished apartments for men, women, and children. The Center also provides full wrap around services for residents, including a GED and digital learning center, career readiness training, behavioral health office space, daycare services, a diaper depot, and a thrift store. The Center's also houses Dress for Success, yoga classes, art therapy sessions, and a food pantry that serves 250 neighbors each month.

Jennie Hagerty spoke to the impact that the wrap around services have on the individuals in the program, giving families the opportunity to have safe and affordable housing while providing the resources needed to remain in housing successfully. When asked about the greatest housing challenges in Erie, she commented "We can't throw infrastructures up to house our unsheltered friends without having the right services that are needed and the right people in place. It is more than just building; it is making sure the people we serve have what they need."

To hear more about what Mercy Center is doing in Erie, you can visit their website at https://www.mcwerie.org/.

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PA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY