Celebrating 25 Years
Building Affordable Homes
and Strengthening Communities
Thank you for joining us in celebrating 25 years of Avenue!

From our beginnings as a group of volunteers wanting to preserve and improve their neighborhood, we have grown into one of Houston’s most respected community development organizations.

Today, more than two decades after our organization was founded, we continue to advance our mission to build affordable homes and strengthen communities. For us, creating healthy homes and communities is more than bricks and mortar. We work in close collaboration with residents, businesses, schools, and other partners to enhance the quality of life in our community: promoting economic development, arts and culture, and historic preservation. We help communities come together and build leadership from within, enabling residents to effect the improvements they want to see in their neighborhoods.

Avenue has benefitted many thousands of people over the years: from the families who have purchased their first homes, to the seniors who have a safe, affordable place to live, to the children who learn and play at our after-school programs. As we look forward to future, it is our sincere hope that you will continue with us on the journey, as we work to promote Houston’s future as a world-class city of healthy, vibrant, and economically diverse neighborhoods.

Mary Lawler
Executive Director

Cassandra Silvernail
President

Our Mission & Vision:

Avenue’s mission is to build affordable homes and strengthen communities. We improve our communities to enhance the quality of life of working families, and to promote Houston’s future as a world-class city of healthy, vibrant, and economically diverse neighborhoods.
OUR PROGRAMS

Affordable Housing
From rehabilitating owner-occupied homes to building new multi-family apartment complexes and single-family houses, Avenue provides a range of housing options for working families and individuals from a mix of income levels.

Family Asset Building
We help Houstonians improve their economic circumstances by strengthening their personal financial management skills, and achieving and maintaining homeownership. Our Homeownership Center provides pre-purchase homebuyer education, foreclosure prevention counseling, and financial capability training.

Comprehensive Community Revitalization
By cultivating civic participation and resident leadership, and by collaborating with partners from the governmental, business, and non-profit sectors, Avenue promotes healthy, sustainable communities through improvements to education, safety, and quality of life issues.

Economic Development
We support job creation and the success of local businesses through strategic investments. From façade improvement grants for local businesses, to transforming an old furniture factory into affordable studio space for local artists, we are helping to stimulate our local economy.
Avenue is founded by Old Sixth Ward residents to develop affordable homes and preserve the diversity of the community. Soon afterward, we partner with Preservation Houston to save the two historic Cannata Houses.

Avenue launches Art on the Avenue to raise funds for community revitalization, and to support local artists. The event has generated over $600,000 in income for Houston artists over its 20-year history (and is still going strong!)

Avenue completes the first of 29 historic homes which are saved, moved, and rehabilitated for purchase by first-time homebuyers. The Move Home program later receives Good Brick Award from Preservation Houston.

Avenue develops Washington Courtyards, our first apartment complex serving families and individuals from a range of income levels. We begin to provide after-school and adult education programs to enrich the lives of residents.

Avenue and Artspace restoration of the historic Old Jeff Davis Hospital creates Elder Street Artist Lofts, 34 affordable live/work spaces designed for artists. The rehabilitation of the 1924 building (Houston’s first municipal hospital) merits Avenue’s second Preservation Houston Good Brick Award.

Avenue forms partnership with Jon Deal to create artist workspaces at Winter Street Studios. The partnership later creates additional artist workspaces in the renovated Spring Street Studios building.
Avenue creates our NeighborWorks Homeownership Center by renovating an historic building in Near Northside. Homebuyer education and foreclosure prevention programs continue to help 600+ families purchase and maintain their homes each year.

Avenue provides homeownership opportunities for 22 first-time homebuyers at Avenue Villas, a newsubdivision of energy-efficient homes developed as part of the Houston Hope initiative.

Avenue sponsors Fulton Gardens, our first affordable senior living community, which provides 49 apartments for very low income seniors on Metro’s new light rail line, across from Moody Park.

Avenue opens Avenue Terrace, a new complex of 144 apartments affordable to families and individuals at a range of income levels. This is the first phase of our mixed-use redevelopment of a former freight terminal.

Avenue celebrates five years of successful collaboration with residents and partners through GO Neighborhoods, a comprehensive community revitalization initiative launched in partnership with Houston LISC.

Avenue creates our 47th new homeowner at Avenue Place, part of our redevelopment of a 20-acre former freight terminal. We finish a new playground and walking trail, the vibrant centerpiece of what will soon be a 95-home community.

Avenue currently has over 156 affordable apartments under construction to meet the overwhelming need for housing for low-income seniors and working families. These developments include: Avenue Station and Avenue Terraces, rental apartments for families and individuals at a range of income levels, and Fulton Gardens II, apartments for very low income seniors. With these additions, our after-school and adult enrichment programs will grow to serve 2,000 households each year. We are also expanding our nationally-recognized model for resident-led, place-based, comprehensive community revitalization into the Northline.
Nancy Garcia became a single mother of two and was forced to face the reality of providing for her children alone. With no savings, Nancy and her children moved into a two-bedroom apartment and began living paycheck to paycheck. Buried under credit card debt and feeling the pressure of her two growing children in their small apartment, Nancy knew she had to do something to change her family’s situation. By writing a budget and prioritizing her spending, Nancy was able to save for an emergency fund and began paying off her debt.

Nancy, like many prospective first-time homebuyers, did not know much about the process and the available assistance programs – that is where Avenue’s Homeownership Center came in. By working with an Avenue homebuyer advisor, Nancy was able to learn all the aspects of the home buying process as well as create a realistic financial plan for her family. “It was starting to become a reality,” said Nancy. In May of 2016, Nancy closed on her brand-new home – and even had extra funds to furnish her new place. “Buying a home has been a challenging and rewarding experience,” said Nancy Garcia. “I learned how much strength and determination I have. We love being in our home and are looking forward to making many memories here!”

Lorenza and Pedro Martinez signed up for Avenue’s home repair program at one of Avenue’s community engagement meetings. The 1940 bungalow that they have called home for almost 40 years was badly in need of repair. They had hoped to restore their home themselves, but financial stresses and health concerns had made it impossible to get started.

In 2014, Avenue created a place-based home repair program to address the poor quality of the neighborhood housing stock. Over 80% of Northside homes were built before 1969, and low incomes and deferred maintenance led many homes to fall into disrepair. Volunteers from the community and partner organizations provide repairs for owner-occupied homes, and Avenue raises funds for contractors to fix plumbing, electric, and other systems. The program is focused on residents who are elderly, disabled, and veterans. Home repair is an important strategy to stabilize the community and allow elders to age in place.

Mr. Martinez explained, “We appreciate everything that Avenue has done for us. Maybe before too long, we can give back to Avenue. I’m a believer, when you give, you will receive. This house is sturdy. We’ll be here for another 40 years. We’ve been blessed.”
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Thank you for your commitment to our mission to build affordable homes and strengthen communities.

www.avenuecdc.org

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