

Affordable Country Living: Northfield Firehouse

Bob Petricone, president of Litchfield Housing Trust, is proud of their record in providing housing opportunities for families that earn below the median income. Litchfield has primarily owner-occupied housing, with few rental options. Younger families, service employees and people with handicaps tend to get closed out of the region's escalating real estate market, but the town needs the energy they can bring. "We need to find some way to bring younger families into the community, to

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help Litchfield maintain vitality and population growth. We can't all be retirees! We need young people to do volunteer work, go to school board meetings and fill local jobs." When the town built a new firehouse it abandoned the old schoolhouse building it had previously used. Litchfield Housing Trust saw an opportunity to rehab the property and create two energy-efficient apartments, accessible to limited and moderate-income families. "It's occupied by a young man with a disability, who was raised here and can now live here with his own family, allowing him to function independently."



Brandon

"I can go outside in my wheelchair to take walks without worrying about traffic. We have lots of space. I've never been anywhere I could move around so freely."

SUCCESS

Brandon and Jen moved from nearby because they needed more room for her family to join them. They had heard about Northfield Firehouse when it was being developed, and drove by to take a look during construction. They really wanted to stay in town because of the school system, and also to be close to Jen's job in Torrington. The prime consideration was accessibility for Brandon, who is confined to a wheelchair and whose job allows him to work from home on his computer.



Jen

"It's beautiful and quiet – we love it here. There's lots of light. Since I work second shift, it's a huge relief to be able to leave Brandon alone, knowing that he's comfortable and safe."

SUCCESS

Dana lives in the second apartment, behind Brandon and Jen. Part of Jen's large, extended family, she moved to Litchfield to be with them. Having her so close by provides additional security for Brandon, Jen, and the kids.



Dana & her niece

"I like that it's quiet and convenient, because I work in town. We are part of a family."



When and Where

Located at 12 Main Street in the Litchfield village of Northfield, the building started as a two room schoolhouse and then, with cinder block additions, served as a firehouse. Renovations in 2010 brought the building back to the original schoolhouse look.

What

The complex resembles a family compound with two spacious apartments. One of them is completely handicapped accessible. Both are affordably priced, below market rates, for residents with limited or moderate incomes.

Why and How

LISC supported Litchfield Housing Trust with a grant to help design the geothermal heating and cooling system for this property and with years of technical assistance through the Housing Connections program.

Who

The other funders for this development include the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, using Small Cities Community development Block Grant funds, the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, and The Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund. We sincerely thank them for their support of this important effort.

Thank you to the funders who support LISC's work in Connecticut

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