

Hello, I'm **Cindy Reid**, Director of Housing Development at Cathedral Square. Cathedral Square is a nonprofit affordable senior housing and services provider.

I have been developing housing for 10 years for Cathedral Square. During this time, I have witnessed the need for affordable housing increase exponentially, and I have also experienced the transformative nature of affordable housing, with on-site services, in the lives of low income older adults. It is imperative that we continue to invest in affordable housing for our increasingly older population.

Cathedral Square has 1200 people on its waitlist for independent living and assisted living. In October we opened a 30-unit housing community in rural South Hero called Bayview Crossing, which quickly leased up and already has 89 people on the waitlist. Some residents came from housing insecurity, and some residents sold their homes to move to Bayview – opening up housing for working families. All of these seniors moved into Bayview Crossing because they needed safe, appropriate affordable housing, with SASH – Support and Services at Home on site. What has happened for residents of Bayview Crossing since they moved in? Through SASH, we have provided individualized care coordination and one on one wellness assessments with our wellness nurse; we have offered programs like tai chi, exercise classes, wellness nurse presentations, blood pressure checks, TED-talks, access to transportation, access to food security programs like group and congregate meals, commodity boxes, local food shelf, have all taken off. Our partnership with the local nonprofit CIDER has enhanced what we can accomplish through SASH, in particular with transportation, meals and wellness programs.

The combination of affordable housing and on-site SASH services help older adults not just to exist, but thrive. We need to do more, for the 1200 people on our waitlist, and for older adults all over the State. Funding for Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, at the statutory level of \$27.8 million, is a critical step in making it possible to develop more housing like Bayview Crossing in South Hero. We could not have developed that community without VHCB funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you to underscore the critical need for funding to create more affordable housing, and thank you for your service to Vermont communities.