

From Steve, Our CEO



With growing expertise in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, ASI will keep moving forward.

It's hard not to use superlatives when describing the past three years. Challenging. Thrilling. Affirming.

When the federal government closed access to Section 811* and Section 202** funding to nonprofit participation, it was time for Accessible Space, Inc. to get creative. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC) was the best fit, but the switchover would touch virtually every aspect of ASI's work—from how we compete for financing to what our developments look like. And the change had to happen fast.

Fortunately, ASI has seen its share of transitions over the years and we knew that survival depended on diving in. Discovering the way forward was less like wading through a shallow pool than navigating tsunami waves. But ASI has always thrived in challenging environments, so we dove into comprehensive LIHTC regulations. Not long afterward—

on October 13, 2011—Coronado Drive Apartments in Henderson, Nevada opened as the very first ASI development outside of 811/202 funding.

More complex developments

What do these changes mean for ASI's future?

We will work harder to put together packages that offer accessibility and affordability to consumers. I anticipate going back to the basics—walking the halls of state office buildings, becoming supplicants who also think like innovators. ASI is blessed to have many knowledgeable people who can do that with skill and grace.

We will resurrect relationships with some of our partner agencies and organizations. Fifty-two of our previous 145 developments were cosponsored or created with partners so we know that partnerships and cosponsorships work.

Because we will need additional funding to support our developments, we will probably be limited to buildings in fewer states, those where we have an established presence and relationships (Nevada, Montana, Colorado, etc.).

Accessible Space will broaden connections with friends and benefactors through mailings, social media, and fundraising events. The generosity of contributors will help fill gaps. Their enthusiasm will get the word out to other kind people who support our “housing with care” mission.

Services that enable “aging in place”

Unique LIHTC parameters means that ASI will serve a mix of

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consumers of varying ages, levels of disability, and income. That will challenge us on the service front. Our goal: figure out how to deliver services in these building so that residents can age in place.

Access to better post-acute care plus 24/7/365 services is having an impact on the health and well-being of residents. They're growing older! When ASI began, most of our consumers were in their 20s. Today, the average age is 50+. We need to determine how to best serve the changing needs of people with mobility impairments or brain injuries who are also getting older.

The door is also open to residents who came to ASI when they were young, moved out to access their own apartments and independent supportive living services, and are now returning as senior adults.

Keeping up with upkeep

We're a mature organization, and some of our early buildings are showing signs of their age. We are investing attention and funds in older properties and assessing the need for improvements. Renovations and repairs to ASI buildings are ongoing—new roofs, siding, appliances, windows, upgrades in accessibility, adaptive technology, etc.

Tenure and employment

We have been fortunate in the long tenure of our employees and board members. Our site supervisors average 10 years of employment and some of our board members have been kind stewards of our mission for twice as long. A decade from now—maybe sooner—we will experience a natural and significant turnover.

Preparing for that change proactively will be a key strategy for ASI. The newest generation of workers is bright, quick, and tech-savvy. We'll be nurturing those talented individuals who also care deeply about our mission. Nonprofit organizations can't compete with for-profit markets when it comes to salary and benefits, but we can offer challenging and satisfying careers to people who care about others.

Mindful motivation

Under HUD's*** 811 program, Accessible Space was fortunate to have more developments funded than any other nonprofit in the country. It was our bread and butter,

resulting in 2180 units in 30 states.

The funding equation has changed but the need hasn't. With 5,000 people on our waiting lists, our drive to build and serve is stronger than ever. We are committed to finding innovative ways to provide independent living options to our residents.

As we grow, we invite consumers and family members to alert us to areas of need. They are the driving force behind our mission and the heartbeat of the organization.

Stephen Vander Schaaf, President/CEO

* Supportive housing for persons with disabilities

** Senior housing

*** Department of Housing and Urban Development

