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HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: *Housing Solutions: Community-Led*

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Across the Northeastern United States, many communities are being challenged by their respective housing problems. Whether it is aging housing stock, affordability of rental or owner-occupied properties, valuations, foreclosures, natural disasters and more, all are having to look for solutions to present conditions and future changes to come.

As I work with many communities in Upstate NY there are some encouraging discussions and positive actions taking place.

For example, service providers and affordable housing developers are teaming up to tackle homelessness, victims of domestic violence and mental illness, in cooperation with funding opportunities from state and federal sources. They are realizing the benefits of combining services and housing to produce better positive health outcomes.

Recently, I have spoken with many code enforcement officers and other officials from towns and villages, about their housing problems, challenges, and barriers. In one particular conversation with a Code-Enforcement Officer in Central New York, I was very impressed with the level of discussions they were having.

Among his colleagues, they were discussing if it was possible to better utilize vacant and/or abandon properties in their respective towns and villages, by matching them up with families in need of housing. Many agreed that these families or individuals would need the support of a human services agency and other community stakeholders. The benefits for the municipalities

would include keeping properties on tax-rolls and preventing further decay of housing stock, thus becoming a liability to the community. For the Family and individuals, the quality of life would improve

significantly. The opportunities for skills training and employment for these people would be high. Their children would be able to attend the local schools, benefitting the local school district. It could be a win for everyone and the quality of life in the community would improve.

Healthy communities are grounded in the quality of their housing stock. Housing solutions require our entire community to expand these types of discussions and to take positive actions.

What are your thoughts on how we do this?



Source: Mullins, D. (2014). The Potential for Community-led housing: recent developments in England. *University of NSW*. Retrieved from <https://www.be.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/upload/pdf/cityfutures/cfupdate/DMullinsCommunity-ledhousing.pdf>