

MORNINGSIDER

The Official Newsletter of Morningside



Robert Anderson arrives to his new home in Detroit's Morningside neighborhood.

LEAVING DETROIT'S DELRAY: A FAMILY SWAPS HOMES FOR BETTER LIFE

Report by Shawn D. Lewis, The Detroit News

Detroit — The roof sags and steps crumble on the forlorn yellow house in the blighted Delray neighborhood. Gaping holes in the walls, a garage with missing doors and sidewalks filled with cracks expose years of neglect.

Robert Anderson knows this.

The 34-year-old stares at the floor and shakes his head inside a grease-stained muffler shop on Fort Street near his house in southwest Detroit. Slowly wiping his hands across his grime-covered overalls, he begins:

"The house we're in needs a lot of repairs. I mean a lot of repairs, from the roof to the foundation, and I'm the one to get them done. But I'm working at this muffler shop six days a week, and there just isn't time."

Putting food on the table trumps repairs for the house built in 1901 still with the original walls in the kitchen, "which are cracked and all messed up." Story continued on page 2...

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LEAVING DETROIT'S DELRAY: A FAMILY SWAPS HOMES FOR BETTER LIFE

Anderson lived for five years in the cramped 900-square-foot house with his wife, Grace, four children, niece, nephew, whom they consider their kids, four cats and a dog. It is a galaxy away from Detroit's much-heralded rebirth.

But last week, their lives dramatically changed after they closed on a 1,600-square-foot home in Detroit's Morningside neighborhood on the east side. It's not a new house, but it is to the Anderson family, who have lived in Delray most of their lives. The house was owned by the Detroit Land Bank and required work before it was ready to be inhabited.

"It is amazing," Anderson said. "The kids are ecstatic, and we already started putting some things up on the wall."

The Andersons participated in a voluntary house-swap program launched in June 2017. No money exchanges hands. It's a deed-to-deed transaction, explains Bridging Neighborhoods program director Heather Zygmontowicz.

And it is just for those Delray residents who meet certain criteria and want to leave while construction on the nearby \$5.7 billion, six-lane Gordie Howe International Bridge continues. When completed, estimated to be by the end of 2024, it will be the largest cable-stayed bridge in North America.

The Canadian government put in \$32.6 million for the relocation program in Delray. So far, it's had 21 agreements, and four other families have moved, Zygmontowicz said.

"We're excited to keep residents in the city of Detroit because if they do decide to move, we've kept one more family here," she said. Story continues on page 3...



The family of eight lived in this 1901 home on Melville in the Delray neighborhood of southwest Detroit.

(Photo: Daniel Mears, The Detroit News)

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Neighborhood in transition.

Delray, one of Detroit's oldest neighborhoods, near Zug Island, is marked with burned-out houses, vacant lots and overgrown fields. The 48209 ZIP code was once a gang stronghold. It has a median income of \$27,811, and 43 percent of the residents live below the poverty level, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Detroit City Councilwoman Raquel Constañeda-López, who represents District 6, which includes Delray, attributes the neighborhood's deterioration to "decades of disinvestment in Detroit."

"The roads were not maintained, there were empty lots, and then people started moving out with the first mention of the bridge years ago," she said. "Folks who could leave left, and some chose to stay."

Constañeda-López, who voted in favor of the Bridging Neighborhoods program, said that when talk of a new bridge began at least 15 years ago, southwest Detroit residents came together to discuss possible benefits, which evolved into a community advisory group.

"The group was one of the results of negotiation around community benefits," she said. "The intent and original design was great for residents outside of the plaza footprint. It was created for families stuck there with no options. They then would be able to relocate to another part of the city, which would be healthier, cleaner and safer."

But she takes issue that the only houses available for swap are land-bank houses. "There are not enough land-bank properties where people actually want to live," she said. "Some people have two, three or more kids, and the land-bank houses usually are small. So I think some people are not applying because the houses don't meet their needs."

She added: "All of the houses need work, including some being completely gutted. People also are coming from a tight-knit community and want to have that same sense of community."



The Anderson family proudly poses in their new dining room with a framed letter from Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan congratulating them on their new Bridging Neighborhoods home. From left, niece Laura Jimenez, 16, Robert, 9, Faith, 11, Shashana Gutierrez, 14, mother Grace, 32, father Robert, 34, Emily, 7, and nephew Ricardo Jimenez, 15. (Photo: Todd McInturf, The Detroit News)

Claims Process For The Recent Water Main Break

The recent water main break near River Park Place on St. Maron Place happened on lines controlled by the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). For those who experienced any damage to property or injury to self as a result of the recent water main break near River Park Place, claims can be filed with the GLWA. All claims must be filed within 45 days of the date of the damage.

5 Ways to Make New Habits Stick

By Aimee Richardson, MCHES, CHWC, CTTS, for Henry Ford Health System

There's nothing quite as appealing as a fresh start. That's why, every New Year, we tell ourselves we're going to—finally—embark on the path to the very best version of ourselves. We'll exercise every day, keep up with our heart healthy diet and drink more water (but for real, this time).

For most of us, though, those good intentions don't last as long as we want them to. In fact, according to U.S. News and World Report, 80 percent of New Year's Resolutions fail by February.

So what can you do to ensure you're part of the 20 percent of go-getters who beat the odds and make lasting lifestyle changes?

1. Set S.M.A.R.T. goals

When you set a goal saying something like, 'I want to lose two pounds in a week,' that's a good start, but the key is to get more specific about how you're going to achieve that goal. That's where S.M.A.R.T goals can help—an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timebound. In the case of shedding a few pounds, get specific about how you're going to drop the weight (cutting calories, walking, running, etc.) Make sure you can measure your progress (keeping a journal is a great idea.) Ensure your initial goal is within reason or attainable. Ask why it's relevant or worthwhile (maybe it's for your health). And give yourself a specific time in which to achieve your goal (days, weeks, months, etc.) Continued on page 4...

Celebrate Black History - DIY Crafts @ DPL

Kids and grown-ups celebrate black history by making African-inspired earrings on Feb. 16 or painting a piece of African artwork on Feb. 23. Time: 2-4 p.m. Cost: Free

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The eight Andersons left behind a three-bedroom home and moved into a home with two bedrooms that potentially has space for a third.

Grace Anderson said she initially hesitated on the swap.

"When we got this house, I was so excited," she said of the Delray house while sitting inside the muffler shop her husband manages and where she works as a secretary. She spoke animatedly, gesturing with her bright blue manicured nails. "But we're surrounded by railroad tracks on both sides, and if there's a medical emergency, it's difficult for the ambulance to get to us."

She said what she'll miss most is the proximity to her parents.

"They're getting up in age," she said. "But I feel all right about leaving, I guess. It's different."

What else will she miss?

"Not a thing," she said.

Grace, who has the names of the six kids tattooed on both ankles, emphasized several times that the children come first.

"I wanted to move to have a different environment for my kids," she said.

"When I looked at the new community where we're going, my first thought was, will they be happy? I never think of myself. I always think of my kids first."

Her husband said he won't miss anything either, especially since he'll continue managing the muffler shop in the heart of Delray. To learn more about the home-swap program and to view available properties, visit www.bridgingneighborhoods.org.

Grow Detroit's Young Talent Accepting Applications

The 2019 application for Grow Detroit's Young Talent (GDYT) program is now open! If you are between the ages of 14 and 24 and are interested in applying for a summer job through GDYT in 2019 please visit the website at www.gdyt.org.



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5 Ways to Make New Habits Stick

2. Think ahead and visualize

When you're trying to make a change in your life, planning and visualizing can be a big help. Ask yourself: Three months from now or three years from now, what types of things do I want to be doing consistently that are going to get me to live the happy, healthy life that I desire? If you have a clearer picture of what you and your daily habits look like in the near future you're more likely to see them play out.

3. Track progress, not perfection

Building a new habit takes time, and although you may have heard about studies that put a concrete number on how many days it takes before a new habit sticks, the reality is that it varies from person to person and from goal to goal. While you're working toward that goal, however, it's vital to monitor your progress.

4. Embrace the power of scheduling

Whatever the new habit is that you're trying to implement, make it as easy as possible for you to see it through. Sometimes, that means carving out a specific time in the day to do it — whether that's meditating for five minutes every morning or getting to the gym every Tuesday and Thursday after work.

5. Reevaluate and refine your goals

As you try to make a change in your life, it's OK — and even beneficial — for your goal to change so you can get the results you want. Once you've been at something new for a while, it's important to reevaluate so you can continue to make progress. How is the change to your diet making your body feel? How does the new workout feel? Are you too sore? Are you too tired? Is it too easy? Too hard?

As you move forward with your New Year's resolutions, remember that

trying something new can be uncomfortable at first. So if you find it to be too difficult or you seem to keep dropping the ball, don't be so hard on yourself. Making changes requires a balance. Going to the gym can be intimidating. Eating healthfully takes a lot of education and discipline. As a health coach, that's what we're here to help with.