

## Ohio

Community Facilities | Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant

### Ohio Celebrates Opening of New Independent Living Facility



Community members and residents joined Ohio Eastern Star Home staff in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, for a ribbon cutting ceremony to open Pine Hill, a new 40-apartment unit independent living facility. USDA Photo.

Ohio Eastern Star Home gathered family, friends, community leaders, and partners to cut the ribbon and celebrate opening of the newest addition to its 60-acre Mt. Vernon, Ohio campus.

Pine Hill, an apartment complex featuring 40 one and two-bedroom units, marks completion of Phase 1 of Ohio Eastern Star Home's independent living home project at Knox County's only long-term continuous care facility.

For more than 70 years, Ohio Eastern Star Home has served its residents through every stage of their life journey offering independent living,

assisted living, health and wellness, rehabilitation services, medical care, and more.

During the ceremony, Michele Engelbach, Chief Executive Officer of Ohio Eastern Star Home, thanked community leaders, partners including USDA Rural Development (RD) in Ohio, her staff, and the board of trustees for making the celebration possible.

"Here we are dedicated to leading the way into the future while preserving the quality of life for all we serve," said Michele. "Pine Hill was built by the community, for the community with more than 85% of sub-contractors contributing to construction coming from right here in Knox County."

"There is no place else like this in our community," she continued. "We want our residents to live life to the fullest, and so for them we believe this is the place for them to be."

To fund this phase of the Pine Hill project - and the next one - Ohio Eastern Star Home worked with the Rural Development team in Massillon to secure a Community Facilities Loan to finance construction costs and a Community Facilities Grant to purchase equipment and furniture.

## Community Facilities Loan and Grant – Ohio Eastern Star Home

“USDA was the very first phone call when we were ready to take this next step,” Michele said. “We would not have been able to afford this without them.”

This project continues a long-standing USDA RD - Ohio Eastern Star Home partnership dating back to 1999. Over the years, USDA has funded an office expansion (2001), a dementia patient care wing (2004), and a nursing home “neighborhood”- the only one of its kind in Knox County (2015).

A non-profit organization governed by a nine-member board of trustees, Ohio Eastern Star Home started construction on Pine Hill Phase 1 in March 2023.

Phase 2, construction of 56 new independent living patio homes, is set to begin in January 2025 and is expected to open sometime in 2026.

“Your work here will have made a difference because Pine Hill will be a place for friendships to grow, help will always be nearby, and life will be lived fully,” said City of Mt. Vernon Mayor Matthew T. Starr.



Pine Hill, a 40-apartment unit independent living facility is the newest addition to the Ohio Eastern Star Home in Mt. Vernon, Ohio. USDA Photo.

Obligation: \$23,000,000 Community Facilities Loan / \$500,000 Community Facilities Grant

Obligation Dates: August 16, 2021 / August 17, 2022

Congressional: U.S. Rep. Troy Balderson (OH-12; U.S. Senators Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance

Impact: Safe, accessible continuous care and independent living for seniors in rural Ohio.