

ARTS & STYLE

Machismo reason for divorce

ADVICE, 10B

Thoughtful DESIGN

New Freedom Hill duplexes in Hamtramck are designed to help refugees overcome trauma



Three new duplexes opened earlier this fall in Hamtramck as part of a project called Freedom Village to provide transitional housing for refugees.

BY MAUREEN FEIGHAN
The Detroit News

Interior designer Carolyn Dwyer can still picture the caved ceiling and black furniture when she visited a local shelter for women and children escaping domestic violence years ago. She remembers how it made her feel.

“It brought me to tears,” she said. Surroundings matter when you’re recovering from trauma. So in 2009, Dwyer decided to create Interior Designers Coalition for Change. The Michigan-based coalition’s mission: bring together local designers and provide free interior design services for certain nonprofit projects to infuse them with meaningful, intentional design.

Now the coalition has worked its magic on a new \$1.5 million housing development for refugees that opened earlier this fall in Hamtramck called Freedom Village.

Five families who’ve resettled in the Detroit area after fleeing conflict and persecution in Iran, Somalia, South Africa and elsewhere will spend their first holiday season in new duplexes, surrounded by furniture, decor and accents, all selected to set them on a path to success. Loves Furniture and IKEA provided much of the furniture.

“It gives people an opportunity to thrive,” said Dwane Adle of Comprehensive Design Group in Royal Oak, who is an interior designer and licensed architect and worked on the project with Dwyer.

The three-bedroom, two-full bath, 1,326-square-foot duplexes were developed in partnership by Wayne County, the Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency, the nonprofit Samaritas and the city of Hamtramck. A \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development went toward the project.

DeeDee McVety, Samaritas’ director of major and planned gifts, said the new tenants, all of whom were selected by Samaritas and will live in Freedom Village until they can find more permanent housing, are just amazed by their new surroundings. Some came with a few belongings, others with very little, she said. Each of the six units is designed to accommodate a family of six.

One new tenant “asked her caseworker if she could bring her rug with her — that’s basically what she had,” said McVety. “...These families have been through so much. We want them to feel like the welcome mat is out and they can be their full potential.”

But opening a new housing development and furnishing it amid a worldwide pandemic was anything but easy, leaders say. Dwyer and Adle struggled to find furniture retailers that could meet their needs on a shortened timetable. Shipments were delayed so the designers had to regroup.



A living room area in one of the duplexes at Freedom Village includes a sectional sofa and ottoman to maximize seating.



/Samaritas

Every design element of the new Freedom Village was carefully selected, from the kitchen cabinets to the paint colors.

Freedom Village

- New transitional housing in Hamtramck for refugees.
- Six three-bedroom, two-full bath, 1,326-square-foot duplexes developed in partnership by Wayne County, the Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency, Samaritas and Hamtramck.
- Each unit is different with furniture, decor, linens selected by Michigan-based Interior Designers Coalition for Change (idcf.org).

“We faced challenges like we’ve never faced before,” said Adle. “We reached out to Ashley, Gorman’s. Every piece of furniture (in the duplexes), there were four iterations (of it).”

Dwyer said the project required an intense amount of logistics.

“We had this original vision and we had to keep going and going to find stuff that would ship on time,” she said.

Dwyer’s decision to create Interior Designers Coalition for Change was inspired by a trip to Ghana, where she met a woman who’d built 900 homes. The woman asked about Dwyer’s background and told her there was no word for “interior design” in her country.

“It just struck me,” said Dwyer. “It’s hard enough to be in a country that no one even bothers to (consider) interior design or the behavioral aspects of a space. It just really hit home.”

But with no organization in place to regularly do pro bono interior design work in Michigan — or even in the United States — Dwyer decided to create one. The coalition primarily designs commercial spaces and has worked on roughly 15 projects all over Metro Detroit, including Turning Point in Mount



Interior designer and architect Dwane Adle and Carolyn Dwyer, founder of the Michigan-based Interior Designers Coalition for Change, stand in one of the duplexes.

Clemens, Grace Centers for Women and Play Place for Autistic Children in Sterling Heights.

For Freedom Village, the coalition fully furnished and decorated three of the six duplex units; the three remaining units were partially furnished.

Adle created a general floorplan, but each of the three fully furnished units has its own aesthetic. Designers picked

all of the furniture, linens, artwork, rugs, lamps and lighting.

For the unit Adle designed, his inspiration was “joy, pattern and life.” The colors are brighter — mango, an orange hue, for example, is part of the color palette — and there are multiple textures.

“These families have been depressed and they’ve been through a lot,” said

Adle. “I wanted to create a happy space.”

Dwyer, meanwhile, chose to emphasize protection, peace and tranquility in her design, using water tones and “welcoming them to Michigan.”

“Some of the warmer tones and blues and green, I wanted them to feel protected in a place that was relaxing,” said Dwyer.

The furniture design was very intentional — ottomans were used instead of coffee tables to create more seating, there are bar stools so kids can sit at the kitchen counter, and each bedroom has a desk and chair so kids can study. A dining room table provides a secondary surface for the kitchen.

Adle said they were told tenants will likely stay 18 months at most before they move on to other housing and new families arrive.

“We created a base with the furniture pieces selected so when the next families move in that the base is still there,” he said. “The base pieces will still be there but we can refresh the artwork, beddings or rugs.”

Dwyer said it’s all about creating beautiful spaces for people no matter where they are — spaces where they can excel. The coalition, which gets request for its services from all over the world, now is working on a project at the Detroit Gaelic League.

“Our mission is it doesn’t matter (what the project is), why can’t it still be beautiful?” said Dwyer. For some spaces, “it may be even more important that it’s beautiful.”

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DuMouchelles to sell politician’s art collection

BY MICHAEL H. HODGES
The Detroit News

Former state Sen. Jack Faxon, who died in January, was an avid collector who filled his Birmingham house with art and objects ranging from African masks to choice pieces of American arts-and-crafts.

It made for rooms of dizzying complexity. (You can take a video tour of Faxon’s house by clicking here, or going to the top of the DuMouchelles website.)

“I never let any spot be empty,” Faxon said in a video the Detroit Institute of Arts produced on him. “I have this incredible need to recreate a Victorian environment where everything is covered, top to bot-

Auction - Estate of Jack Faxon

DuMouchelles, 409 E. Jefferson, Detroit

11 a.m. Thurs. & Fri.
313-963-6255
dumoart.com

tom.”

DuMouchelles Art Gallery in Detroit will begin auctioning Faxon’s remarkable trove Thursday and Friday. But the artifacts, from modern art to Oriental rugs, are so numerous — somewhere in the neighborhood of 1,000 — that there will be another auction in January and one beyond that.

“Jack’s house was just mesmer-

izing,” said Bob DuMouchelle, noting that the politician started purchasing at the downtown Detroit auction house as early as the 1960s.

“He was a buyer,” DuMouchelle added. “and a really great person. He became friends with many people in my family and staff, so it was an honor to be called to handle the collection.”

He added, “Jack had a tremendous African art collection, but we’re not tackling that first round. We’ll do that in January and subsequent sales.”

Instead, the upcoming sale will focus on the politician’s rich stock of Asian “cameo glass,” or etched or layered glass of high artistic quality. Also on the block will be some modern art collect-

ed by Faxon, who never married and had no children.

“Jack had a lot of modern art and furniture,” DuMouchelle said, “though it was sometimes hard to tell because there was so much else around it,” albeit all meticulously organized and displayed.

Contemporary artists represented in the Dec. 17-18 sale include the abstract expressionist Al Held and works by the Mexican artist Rafael Coronel, muralist Diego Rivera’s son-in-law.

“And there’s a Matisse that’s attracted interest,” DuMouchelle said.

That’s in addition to the Harry Bertioia “sound sculpture,” and Faxon’s collection of arts-and-crafts lamps by Tiffany and



/Picasa

The family room of the late state Sen. Jack Faxon’s Birmingham home, much of which Dumouchelles will auction starting Dec. 17.

Duffner Kimberly, among other designers.

Not everything from the house will be sold. Some pieces are going to the Kalamazoo

Institute of Arts as well as the Smithsonian Institution.

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