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## **Michigan Land Bank partners with Mama Shu, revitalizing Avalon Village neighborhood**

*Nearly 100 properties in 2017 moved to productive use by the Michigan Land Bank*

**Lansing, Mich.** – Neighborhood revitalization continues in Highland Park’s Avalon Village as the Michigan Land Bank has deeded seven properties to Shamayim “Mama Shu” Harris, the award-winning founder and CEO of Avalon Village. This move further enhances efforts to strengthen the area and create a safer place for residents.

“We are happy to continue working with Mama Shu and Avalon Village as she proactively rebuilds and revitalizes her neighborhood in Highland Park,” Michigan Land Bank Director Josh Burgett said. “Land Banks all over the state are working hard to put properties back to productive use and continue Michigan’s resurgence.”

With these seven properties, the Michigan Land Bank has now worked with Harris on 11 properties since 2016. By redeveloping Avalon Village, the quality of life for the residents and neighbors has been improved, Harris said.

“Partners like the Michigan Land Bank help us continue to strengthen our community,” Harris said. “These seven properties will help us take Avalon Village from blight to beauty faster and more efficiently than we would have been able to do on our own. We are building a sense of pride for the people who live here and are working hard to make this a better, safer place; one property at a time.”

Harris began revitalizing the neighborhood nearly 10 years ago after the hit-and-run death of her son, Jakobi, 2. She started by cleaning up her yard and surrounding vacant lots, then slowly began acquiring property as part of her vision. Today, Avalon Village owns 30 properties on Avalon Street between Woodward and Second, including a park, a Goddess Marketplace for women entrepreneurs and a new village headquarters donated by comedienne and talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres.

A former blighted home is also being transformed into “The Homework House” to give students of all ages a safe place to study and socialize after school.

Other projects up and down the block are ongoing or in the development phase.

Helping revitalize communities across The Great Lakes State, the Michigan Land Bank has put nearly 100 properties back to productive use since the beginning of 2017.

Information about available Michigan Land Bank properties is available at [www.michigan.gov/landbank](http://www.michigan.gov/landbank). To learn more about Avalon Village visit [www.theavalonvillage.org](http://www.theavalonvillage.org).

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