Design and mission philosophy

When seniors are faced with limited housing options and are forced to pay too much of their income for housing, they often have no other choice but to cut back on other critical necessities, such as healthcare and food. St. Mary develops new high-quality apartment communities with safety features for seniors and rents lower than nearby market-rate apartments. Because our apartment communities are created with energy efficiency in mind, residents have lower utility bills, too. This increased affordability allows residents to remain more independent and puts less of a burden on other community resources. Our apartments are often immersed in communities where there are a variety of housing options, making them indistinguishable from market-rate housing.

Only about one percent of existing housing in the United States includes universal design elements such as zero-step entries, wide halls and doorways that can accommodate a wheelchair, light switches and other controls reachable from a wheelchair, and lever-style handles on faucets and doors. All of St. Mary’s senior independent-living apartments include these universal design elements as well as amenities such as roll-in showers that can be used with a wheelchair. Some units even include features for seniors with sight or hearing impairments, such as doorbells that trigger a flashing light rather than a sound. All apartments come with full kitchens, one or two bedrooms, one or one and a half bathrooms and central air conditioning. Local bus stops along with access to healthcare and other amenities within walking distance are high priorities when new housing sites are considered.

Isolation is a common cause of physical and mental health issues in seniors. St. Mary properties are built with common spaces that encourage socialization. Amenities include fitness rooms, computer centers, TV/media rooms, libraries, community gardens and group meeting spaces, among others. Some properties include noon meal programs. All include optional resident-led social activities, such as game nights, Bible studies, and potluck dinners.

Creating affordable apartments

Over the past 28 years, St. Mary Development Corporation has developed 60 affordable housing projects for seniors and families, with a total of 3,900 apartment units in nine states (Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, W. Virginia). More than 85% of our projects have been in southwest Ohio.

Because of our success, we are often sought out by affordable housing developers who ask us to co-develop apartment communities. Our work has won more than 30 awards for housing development, including Community Development Corporation of the Year (Ohio CDC Association), Excellence in Construction Award (Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing) and the Ohio Governor’s Award for Excellence for Outstanding Achievement for Exemplary Low-Income Rental Projects.

St. Mary is also a state CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) in Ohio and a member of NeighborWorks America, a national network of nonprofit housing developers. In 2017, St. Mary received an Exemplary rating by NeighborWorks America, the highest possible rating.

St. Mary’s faith-based mission benefits both its poor residents and the larger community. Seniors living in our communities get more affordable rents and access to services, while taxpayers benefit from savings created by keeping seniors independent. For every month a senior remains living independently in one of St. Mary’s apartment communities, taxpayers save approximately $4,200 compared to the cost of a Medicaid nursing home.
Experienced development team

With decades of experience, our development team has the ability to assume different roles depending on the project type, risk and return. We complete projects as the sole developer and also as a co-developer in partnership with for-profit developers and other organizations. We’re flexible, and can act as a nonprofit sponsor and a community liaison.

Access to funding

Most of our housing projects are accomplished through the low-income housing tax-credit program. We have access to debt and equity funding sources including construction loans, permanent loans and supplemental funding. Our funding sources include Community Housing Capital, NeighborWorks America, NeighborWorks Capital, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Ohio Housing Finance Agency and the Federal Home Loan Bank, to name a few.

On time and on budget

We take great pride in completing projects on time and on budget. We anticipate problems and solve them. Over the years we’ve developed strong strategic partnerships with architects, engineers and other professionals who assist in our housing projects.

"Miller-Valentine Group has had the privilege of working with St. Mary Development since 1994. St. Mary has an exceptional high standard of excellence in both real estate development and caring for its residents. Their caring spirit clearly separates them from other affordable housing developers."

David R. Liette
Partner and President,
MV Property Management

Strong partnerships

Much of our success comes from our strong strategic partnerships. Our housing development partners include:

- Bowen National Research
- Cities including Dayton, Xenia, Eaton and Huber Heights
- Community Housing Capital
- Counties including Montgomery, Greene, Preble and Miami
- Dinsmore & Shohl, LLP
- Federal Home Loan Bank (Cincinnati, Ohio)
- Federal Home Loan Bank (Topeka, Kansas)
- Flagel Huber Flagel
- HUD
- Miller Valentine Group
- National Church Residences
- NeighborWorks America
- NeighborWorks Capital
- Oberer Companies
- Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing
- Ohio Housing Finance Agency
- Red Capital
- Veterans Administration

Building relationships with potential partners is what we do best. We are always looking for opportunities to work with for-profit developers, healthcare organizations, churches and other organizations with complementary missions. If you have an idea for an affordable apartment community or related project, let’s talk.
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A few of St. Mary’s current affordable housing developments

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