

EDGEMERE DEVELOPMENT INTERNSHIP

KRISTI BONO / FSC '22 / SUMMER 2021

EDGEMERE IS A DEVELOPING CONSULTANT FIRM IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, THAT SPECIALIZES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING. THEY GIVE SERVICE-BASED ORGANIZATIONS THE ABILITY TO CREATE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR LOW-INCOME OR OTHERWISE DISADVANTAGED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES BY SERVING AS A TRANSLATOR FOR CONVOLUTED TAX POLICIES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT.

MY ROLE

At Edgemere, I served as the manager of two different applications--The Consolidated Funding Application and The Historic Preservation Award. I also researched energy-efficient design methods including electric vehicle (EV) chargers, and participated in meetings to discuss implementation strategies and funding opportunities.



[ST. BERNARDS] Edgemere led the historic preservation of this old catholic seminary that was turned into affordable senior housing in Rochester, NY. All aspects of construction and design used original site plans and specs to maintain architectural and historic accuracy.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

I completed the entire application for the Historic Preservation Award for the project at St. Bernard's Park (as seen above). Through construction meetings, research, and more questions than I can count, I familiarized myself with this incredible site and the scope of work. The application included letters of support from local officials as well as a narrative detailing the history and economic impact of the site.

The 1891 building underwent an 18 month construction period with a total project cost of \$28,000,000. The most significant feature in the renovation was a \$3.5 million restoration of the red slate roof and copper fittings that had experienced many years of wear. Today, this building houses 160 individual and small senior families that qualify as low-income.

CONSOLIDATED FUNDING APPLICATION (CFA)

As part of the New York Governor's plan to make specialty housing funding more accessible, he began the CFA program. This allows developers to apply for over 30 different programs through a single application.

I served as the manager of the CFA application for the Apartments at the Lyceum--a historic preservation and adaptive reuse project in Buffalo, NY. It will create 37 apartments targeted to families and individuals earning below 60% of Area Median Income. The 7,600 sq. ft. of commercial space will be used to provide free after school activities for children/youth in the community, including individuals with developmental disabilities.

For this project, we applied to two of the funding sources through the CFA: EPF and ESD, which focus on two different aspect of the development. EPF focused on the project as a whole and the building's historic significance and ESD focused only on the commercial space and the jobs the space will create. I completed over 50 questions on this application which was submitted for review at the end of the summer.

CARBON FARM

In the face of mounting climate-driven threats to human welfare, attention is focused increasingly on greater control of the carbon emissions, especially in the world of development.

Through the recently acquired land (pictured), Edgemere plans to start a new tree farm, or "carbon farm," in order to sequester carbon from the air. This land will serve as an offset for the emissions of development projects, making projects completely "net-zero."

In early July, I attended a site visit to meet with a NYSDEC Regional Forester to discuss the best options for sequestration. We used land surveys to plan which types of trees would perform best in certain areas, and what work would be needed to prepare the land.

Edgemere believes that this will soon be normal practice and that they could even sell these emission offsetting plots to other developers who are interested in maintaining "net-zero" emissions. It was incredible to be a part of this brainstorming and creative design process.



OUTCOME

Overall, I learned a lot more than the ins-and-outs of affordable housing development. I learned what it meant to work on a small team, facing very daunting governmental policy and funding. I learned the feeling of seeing a project come to life, as non-profit organizations are able to provide stable housing for extremely disadvantaged individuals and families. While there is no shortage of people wanting to help the community, there needs to be someone to help navigate funding, managing, and execution of the project. Edgemere is the key to making these projects tangible and in my internship, I learned that sometimes this grunt work can be the most rewarding.



EV CHARGERS

The most independent work I completed in my internship was researching EV chargers and how they could be implemented in a variety of projects with full state funding. I participated in meetings with local providers and green-initiative leaders to discuss the addition of these stations at our multifamily properties and the installation of EV chargers is now planned for every future project at Edgemere, using many of these same funding sources.



[WOLLENSACK BUILDING] This project restored an extremely blighted historic optical building into 41 affordable apartments for individuals and small families earning up to 50% of Area Median Income. The photos above show the before and after of the exterior. This project qualified as a "brownfield," meaning that the sit had contaminated soil that had to be entirely cleaned and replaced to ensure the safety of the property. The total project cost for this project was \$14,000,000.