

Rafael Garcia is a Real Estate Developer, as well as the Executive Director and founder of Community First, a Non-Profit Organization that fosters affordable housing. By helping homeowners and their families avoid foreclosure, providing them with essential home repairs, health and safety items, and resources that help to promote aging in place, Community First is Milwaukee's leader in sustainability and revitalizing neighborhoods.

Rafael is passionate about solving the affordable housing crisis and knows it will not be solved by homeownership alone. It will take public, private, and non-profit partnerships along with socially responsible investors that truly care.

A carpenter by trade and success story of Milwaukee training initiatives (ESHAC), Rafael is responsible for helping over 2200 homeowners avoid foreclosure and remain in their homes since 2004, administering over \$13 Million dollars in Federal HOME and CDBG dollars at a high level through these initiatives. A participant of the 2016 United Nations Habitat III conference on housing in Quito, Ecuador, Rafael has intimate knowledge of the global housing crisis. Rafael in conjunction with his development team has completed a \$10 Million dollar Tax Credit 43-unit Development called Villard Commons. Rafael has developed 37<sup>th</sup> Street School, a \$12M adaptive reuse of a vacant and blighted MPS building into Historical 49 units of senior apartments. Rafael is also developing a state of the art performance center for Victory Christian Academy (VCA) on Milwaukee's Southside

Rafael is a lifelong resident of Milwaukee's central city. He is very happily married, a father of five children and a grandfather to 4 beautiful granddaughters. Rafael was appointed by the Mayor to the Historic Preservation Commission and is currently the vice chair of that Commission. Rafael is the former Chair and member of the Near West Side Partners (NWSP) Housing Committee as well as the Washington Park Housing Committee. He has coached youth baseball, is active in his church and neighborhood groups and is currently a mentor for Shawndell, his little brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Rafael holds a Bachelor of Science (Cum Laude) from the College of Business and Management from Cardinal Stritch. A graduate of the ACRE Program and current ACRE Practicum Fellow, he is also a member of the inaugural Mission Fuel class. He has been featured in the Milwaukee Business Journal, Urban Milwaukee, Newaukee and a special guest on several local TV and radio shows.