



# SUMMER 2024 UPDATE!

Eyad Salha with  
Dorin Ben-Ami  
of Bohemian  
Organic Salon



Aerial view of Prospect Place



Laurel Street  
rendering

Donna Cabana with client



**Valley Community Development**  
works to ensure everyone has a home and  
small businesses thrive. Read on to learn more.



# Support Small Businesses and Support the Community!



Heather Beck, photo by Heather Beck Designs

Valley believes that thriving communities are powered by local small businesses, and we are lucky to work with some great entrepreneurs. Our small business team, Eyad and Sarah, supported over 250 existing or soon to be local businesses across all stages of business development in the past year.

We know capital is crucial to getting businesses up and running and we pride ourselves on staying up-to-date on grant opportunities for business owners!

*I had an excellent experience working with Eyad and felt very well supported. The process [of applying for a grant] was easier to navigate with his help – he also helped me dream bigger for my business and I asked for more than I'd originally planned. The encouragement and a streamlined plan for pulling together all the information I needed to submit for the grant was super important.* – Heather Beck, Heather Beck Designs

One-on-one consulting plays an important role in Valley’s support of small businesses. While anyone can go online and find a business plan, meeting with staff ensures that your questions are answered, you understand the next steps, and that you can check in with a person who is invested in your success.

*Sarah is a wealth of knowledge and is so helpful. She goes beyond her job description to help small business owners have what they need to succeed.* – Mary Gabis, Iridescence Healing Arts



Mary Gabis, photo by Iridescence Healing Arts

## Everyone Deserves a Place to Live!

If you keep up with the news you may have heard: “A new poll shows that availability and affordability of housing is, by a large margin, the top priority Massachusetts residents want state legislators to address.” (*Boston Globe*, 6/3/24) or “Massachusetts residents view the housing crisis as the most important issue currently facing the Bay State, with 75% of those who tried to buy a new home and 83% who tried to rent a new home in the past year saying that they encountered challenges during the process.” (UMASS Amherst Donahue Institute)

While we cannot solve the statewide crisis, we are working hard to make an impact in our community. East Gables in Amherst is full, with 28 folks loving their new apartments. Laurel Street in Northampton is under construction — we look forward to moving 20 families into their homes in the summer of 2025. We are gearing up to start construction at Prospect Place in Northampton this summer, adding another 60 affordable homes for individuals and families at the former blighted and abandoned Northampton nursing home in the coming years.

With several other developments coming up, we hope to add another 190 affordable rental and ownership homes to our community in the near future.



Interior of Prospect Place



Attendees at the Laurel Street groundbreaking



Donna Cabana and Mariam Khan, Homeownership Program staff

## Helping people realize their dreams!

We hear from first-time homebuyers all the time about how challenging this market is, how they’re getting outbid by cash buyers, and how there are so few homes even for sale. So, when we have someone succeed at buying a home, it is a joyous event for us!

*Working with Valley made the process of achieving my dream of owning a home both completely doable and 1000% less intimidating. I never would have imagined a home in Northampton was within my reach. Working with Donna meant that I had a sounding board for every step of the process. She was my cheerleader and whenever we encountered a stumbling block, we found a way through! It was so valuable to have an individual who had nothing to gain from my purchase pitching for my team and wanting the best outcome. I’m so grateful that everything fell into place and that I had the opportunity to work with the folks there at Valley.* – Léa, Northampton

This limited market and availability is impacting existing homeowners too – some seniors who have mobility challenges might be better served in a different home, but there aren’t any for them to move to. We are grateful to be able to offer zero interest loans to modify existing homes so seniors and people with disabilities can safely stay in them.

*Valley was extremely helpful managing the Home Modification Loan Program for me to finance and install a stairway lift. This lift is a life-changer, making it possible for me to stay in my own home overcoming my walking handicap. Valley helped with the paperwork for a 0% interest loan to finance the purchase, including interfacing with the stairlift vendor and final inspection.* – Richard, Monson



Completed stair lift installed for HMLP client, photo by client





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## How you can help!

Want to help? Stand up and support affordable housing development and economic development in your town or city! There are two critical pieces of legislation called the Affordable Homes Act and Mass Leads. The funding in those bills is absolutely necessary to build more affordable housing and help businesses thrive. You can support creating vibrant communities by supporting those bills or doing the following:

- » Write an op-ed in your local paper
- » Email your legislators and let them know that access to housing and funding to support healthy small businesses are important to you
- » Attend your local select board or city council meetings when they are discussing housing or small business development and voice your support
- » Make a donation to Valley; contact us for information about our Community Investment Tax Credit program



Mayor Sciarra and Carolyn Misch,  
Laurel Street groundbreaking