



**For Immediate Release**

**Date:** May 11, 2022

**Contact:** Ashley Lacenski, Community Development Director

**Phone:** 608-782-5520

**Email:** [Ashley.Lacenski@couleecap.org](mailto:Ashley.Lacenski@couleecap.org)

### **Couleecap Showcases Latest Housing Development in the La Crosse Washburn Neighborhood and Welcomes New Homebuyers into their Home**

Couleecap, the City of La Crosse Community Development Committee, and other supporters celebrated the latest new home built under the Couleecap Coulee Housing Development program. The home, located at 529 Winnebago Street, was developed as affordable housing with support from the City of La Crosse Community Development Block Grant fund.

The new home was built on a vacant lot donated to Couleecap by a former client. The City of La Crosse awarded \$151,201 in Community Development Block Grant funding to build housing that could be sold to a family earning up to 80% County Median Income.

“There is a critical lack of quality, affordable housing in the City of La Crosse. We have had great success working with city government to identify opportunities to address the need,” says Ashley Lacenski, Couleecap Community Development Director. “We can find the right place, build or rehab, and provide homebuyers the tools to be successful. We just don’t always have the financial resources to push projects forward. That’s where the city comes in.”

“Homeownership is still the American dream. Through critical partnerships we can work together to make dreams come true for people of all income levels,” says Diane McGinnis Casey, Community Development Administrator with the City of La Crosse. “These opportunities are a win-win by creating affordable housing, increasing the tax base and stabilizing neighborhoods.”

Couleecap has been an affordable housing development agency since the 1980’s. Since that time, the organization has built or rehabilitated more than 22 homes within the City of La Crosse. Many of those homes are within the Coulee Community Land Trust, a nonprofit subsidiary of Couleecap that provides affordable homeownership opportunities to residents while ensuring the housing remains affordable in perpetuity by keeping the land in a trust fund.

“Homeownership is a powerful tool to fight poverty,” says Lacenski. “Our best days are the days we can hand keys over to someone and say, ‘Welcome home!’”



Couleecap supports homebuyers through homebuyer education classes, financial counseling, and other support during and after closing. Down payment and closing cost assistance are provided to ensure the home is affordable and the family can be successful long-term.

New homeowners, Michelle Manzy and Jesus David Gonzales, were celebrated at the event. “We were debating whether to stay in the La Crosse area,” said Gonzales. “Programs like this give opportunities to families and we are excited to make La Crosse our home.”

Couleecap homebuyer education courses are not limited to people wishing to purchase homes built by the organization. Any member of the public interested in becoming a homeowner can take classes and are encouraged to do so. Classes are offered monthly online. A schedule can be found on the website [www.couleecap.org/homeownership](http://www.couleecap.org/homeownership).

###

### **About Couleecap**

Couleecap, Inc. is a private non-profit 501c3 charitable organization. Couleecap helps people in need with housing food, transportation, and more. Created in 1966, we are a community action program that fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency in Crawford, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties. Couleecap is a member of the Community Action Network, originally created in 1964. Learn more at [couleecap.org](http://couleecap.org).