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**Ann Arbor**

## **Ann Arbor suicide prevention nonprofit gets \$4M to build residential center**

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## First Glance View of Garrett's Space Residential Center

A first glance visionary rendering provides a view of Garrett's Space Residential Center. Image provided | Garrett's Space

NEW!

By [Martin Slagter | mslugter@mlive.com](mailto:mslugter@mlive.com)

ANN ARBOR, MI - After providing facilitated support groups virtually, an Ann Arbor-based suicide prevention nonprofit has taken a major step toward realizing its vision of providing a space for in-person connections and activities for those struggling with depression, anxiety and suicide.

[Garrett's Space](#) has received \$4 million in federal funding for the construction of a holistically-focused residential center for young adults ages 18-28 that will provide healing programming and activities, including support groups with peers, yoga, meditation and art to improve mental health, promote connections and resiliency and reduce suicides.

Secured by U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell, D-Ann Arbor, and supported by U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan, the residential center for Garrett's Space is one of 15 projects in Michigan's 12th Congressional District to receive funding as part of the 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Package.

Garrett's Space was founded in 2019 by Julie and Scott Halpert after they lost their son, Garrett, to suicide in 2017. The couple said they saw huge gaps in treatment options for young adults struggling with mental health challenges.

"We believe a space like this, which will be immersed in nature, could have helped Garrett, and we want to provide this important option to the many young adults who need it," Scott Halpert said.

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Since April 2021, the organization has offered professionally facilitated weekly support groups for young adults. Participants benefit from guided discussions, peer support, and movement and breathing exercises.

Up to this point, Garrett's Space has been providing facilitated support groups virtually, which have been "effective in helping this population," Halpert said. From the beginning, the nonprofit has been pursuing a holistically-focused center that promotes wellness, healing, self-worth and resilience.

Halpert said he believes Garrett's Space's support paradigm will be better with in-person connections and activities, with the nonprofit holding a strong belief that the mind-body connection and healthy and grounding activities are critical to mood and feeling better about yourself.

Garrett's Space has started some in-person gatherings, Halpert said, with an "electric" response from participants, who are connecting and supporting each other on an even higher level than what the nonprofit has previously seen.

"Many of our participants have had significant trauma in their lives and we are designing our spaces to make it feel non-medical and less institutional than many existing health care facilities, which oftentimes can create additional trauma," Halpert said. "By incorporating nature and outdoor activities like gardening and therapeutic animals on top of the existing walking paths and beautiful nature, we will putting our guests in a position where they can relax and let their guard down."

Garrett's Space has a 76-acre property under contract in Superior Township, with a plan to close in the spring when the rezoning process is further along, Scott Halpert said. The property includes a home that will be transitioned for in-person programming and offices. When the property acquisition is complete, Garrett's Space will build a residential center for short-term stays and further develop the grounds to support other holistic treatment options.

The \$4-million award will not cover all of the nonprofit's expenses, Scott Halpert said. Garrett's Space currently is working to estimate its total costs, both for the creation of the center and for its operation after it is built.

The nonprofit also is working with a fundraising counsel on a capital campaign to raise additional funds it expects will begin in the next two to three months, Scott Halpert said, with the balance of the funds needed to establish the center expected to come from fundraising and additional governmental grants.

"We'd like to think that the center would still be possible without the funding in light of the tremendous gaps that exist in mental health support locally and nationally," he said. "However, having the support of Congresswoman Dingell and Senator Stabenow and Congressional approval of funding for our project

speaks volumes regarding how necessary and beneficial this project will be. Also, having this \$4 million grant will give us strong momentum early on as we should be able to meet our near-term funding requirements.”

Dingell said the federal funding supports organizations who work every day to strengthen communities and improve the lives of those who live and work here.

“I’m proud to secure this investment for Garrett’s Space, which provides a much needed safe and therapeutic environment for young people struggling with mental health challenges,” Dingell said.

To learn more about Garrett’s Space and its future plans, [visit its website.](#)

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