Reservoir Hill is like many of Baltimore’s neighborhoods – rich in history and bursting with character, while battling population loss and vacancies. First developed by Baltimore’s economic and social elite in the 1840s, it was originally a retreat from the city’s bustling downtown. Affluent families strolled through lush lawns and enjoyed waterfront views in nearby Druid Hill Park. Grand trees lined the streets dotted with new three-story Victorian mansions.

The neighborhood’s population dropped significantly in the late 20th century as stable homeowners left for the suburbs and industrial jobs disappeared. Vacancy and crime filled the void, carving out pockets of blight and disinvestment. Baltimore experienced crippling rates of drug use, and a growing HIV/AIDS epidemic. As lives were lost and families broken, urban neighborhoods like Reservoir Hill suffered.

Today, that bleak situation may be changing for the better as the community’s home prices are increasing and nearby commercial districts are showing signs of growth. Since 1983, Enterprise Community Loan Fund has invested more than $8 million to expand the supply of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Purchased with a $1 million loan from Enterprise Community Loan Fund, a 12-unit apartment building on Lakeview Avenue with new floors and appliances provides a stable, affordable home for formerly homeless residents with HIV/AIDS. Rents are restricted to 30 percent of income, so residents can cover other living expenses, such as groceries and transportation.

Managed by AIDS Interfaith Residential Services, Inc. (AIRS), the Lakeview Avenue supportive housing program ensures that residents receive counseling and access to health care so they can lead productive lives. Most importantly, Enterprise and AIRS gave individuals who once had no place to turn a platform for success: the keys to homes they can call their own.

Since 1983, Enterprise has invested more than $800 million in Maryland communities, including Baltimore. This total investment has helped improve lives and provide stability and comfort for those most in need.
From The Street to a New Home, Enterprise Brings Hope

Anthony “Tony” Graham came to Baltimore from North Carolina when he was just a toddler. Growing up, he saw his parents struggle with drug as well as alcohol. He started using heroine by the time he was 11. He can’t be sure, but he believes a dirty needle was the source of his HIV diagnosis many years later.

Embroiled in their own struggles, his 15 siblings weren’t able to help. Recounting his life story, Graham says, “I’ve been in jails, institutions, psych wards … I’ve been homeless – begging and doing drugs.” His story is one of ups and downs, of opportunities seized and lost.

Today, Graham’s life is on an upward trajectory. He is off the street and living in the Lakeview Avenue supportive housing program financed by Enterprise. Thanks to a personal plan with goals developed in partnership with his caseworkers, Graham attends weekend classes at a nearby community college, pursuing a commercial driver’s license. He looks forward to the day when he holds a well paying job. In the meantime, Graham works as a driver for a local nonprofit transporting people from soup kitchens to homeless shelters.

When asked to name his happiest moment since enrolling in AIRS housing, his answer is clear and direct: “When they gave me those keys” – the keys to his own apartment at Lakeview.

Once lost in the shuffle of homelessness, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS, today, thanks to his hard work and determination and to AIRS and Enterprise, Tony is in a better place.

He has those keys.