



Genesis Fund Wins Inaugural NDFC Trailblazer Award

The National Disability Finance Coalition (NDFC) is proud to announce The Genesis Fund as the winner of the first-ever NDFC Trailblazer Award. The Genesis Fund, which works across Maine and in other New England Communities, was honored with a special recognition at our OFN Conference breakout session *Diversity Includes Disability* on Friday, October 20 and will receive a \$10,000 stipend.

NDFC's Board of Directors chose to award Genesis Fund because of their exemplary work in the following areas:

- Track record of success offering financial products and services to people with disabilities
- Incorporating accessibility into diversity, equity, and inclusion for internal and external strategies

“On behalf of the entire NDFC Board of Directors, congratulations to The Genesis Fund on receiving the inaugural NDFC Trailblazer Award!” said Charles D. Hammerman, NDFC Board Chair. “In 2015, we created NDFC to highlight the exemplary efforts by CDFIs around the country to address the needs of people with disabilities and their families. By 2017, NDFC successfully advocated to have disabilities included in the annual CDFI Fund Award program. Five years later, with the support of a private donor, we launched the Trailblazer Award to further highlight the work of CDFIs which embody the NDFC mission. We are proud to bestow the first Award on a great organization - The Genesis Fund!”

The award will further enable the Genesis Fund to benefit individuals with disabilities. Genesis Fund makes loans to create, rehab and/or preserve safe, accessible and affordable multifamily rental housing for individuals to live independently without being cost-burdened by unaffordable rents. In addition, for people with disabilities such as intellectual and development disabilities (I/DD) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic mental illness, and substance use disorders, Genesis Fund makes loans to develop transitional and permanent supportive housing in which residents receive services in a community-based setting.

“We’re grateful and proud to be recognized as trailblazers expanding community-based housing options for people with disabilities,” said Liza Fleming-Ives, executive director of the Genesis Fund. “This is a central part of our work and substantial amount of our loan portfolio. The

transformative power of that work is confirmed when I hear feedback such as what a new resident recently shared: 'Living here is a breath of fresh air.'"

Executive Director of NDFC Pam Porter commented, "we are impressed that 30% of Genesis Fund's loans over the past three years have benefited nearly 800 people with disabilities."

Three other applicants are also being recognized for their work in disability finance. Those receiving honorable mentions and smaller stipends include:

- Solar Energy Loan Fund (SELF) – for affordable and innovative financing for home improvements for people with disabilities
- Justine Petersen – for providing credit builder loans to people with disabilities
- Mobility Trust – for financing wheelchair accessible vans and accessibility equipment

The Coalition congratulates these organizations and thanks them for their outstanding work.

About NDFC

Our mission is to bridge the CDFI industry and the disability community, to ensure that CDFIs can respond effectively to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, and to offer technical assistance and support to CDFIs developing financing products and services.

The National Disability Finance Coalition (NDFC) is the only national organization in the United States promoting the socially impactful work of community development financial institutions (CDFIs) serving communities with disabilities.

Launched in 2015 and incorporated in 2017, NDFC operates as a 501c3 membership network of CDFIs, financial institutions, disability service providers and advocacy organizations, and individuals with disabilities addressing the unique set of challenges faced by people with disabilities and their families.

About the CDFIs being honored

Since 1992, the Genesis Fund has been dedicated to expanding access to capital, and to building and preserving equitable, resilient and prosperous communities for all people in Maine and beyond. As a CDFI, the Genesis Fund brings together resources to create housing and other economic and social opportunities for underserved people and communities. We make projects happen that otherwise wouldn't, for people and places being left out of the mainstream economy.

SELF is a non-profit CDFI with a mission to rebuild and empower underserved communities by providing access to affordable and innovative financing for sustainable property improvements. SELF is a national leader in home-health equity and a pioneer of accessible financing for historically marginalized and disabled homeowners.

Justine PETERSEN furthers the legacy of Justine M. Petersen, a social worker who was awarded on two occasions in the 1980s as "Social Worker of the Year" from the Missouri Association of Social Welfare. Justine was a progenitor of financial asset-building as a means for families and individuals to lead better lives and to build intergenerational wealth. Justine believed that ALL could build financial assets, and that ALL should have access to mainstream banking products and services.

Mobility Trust is a mission driven financial service provider dedicated to the needs of the physically disabled community. Since making our first wheelchair accessible vehicle loan in 2014, the ladies and gentlemen of Mobility Trust have worked tirelessly to make financial services affordable for the disabled community.