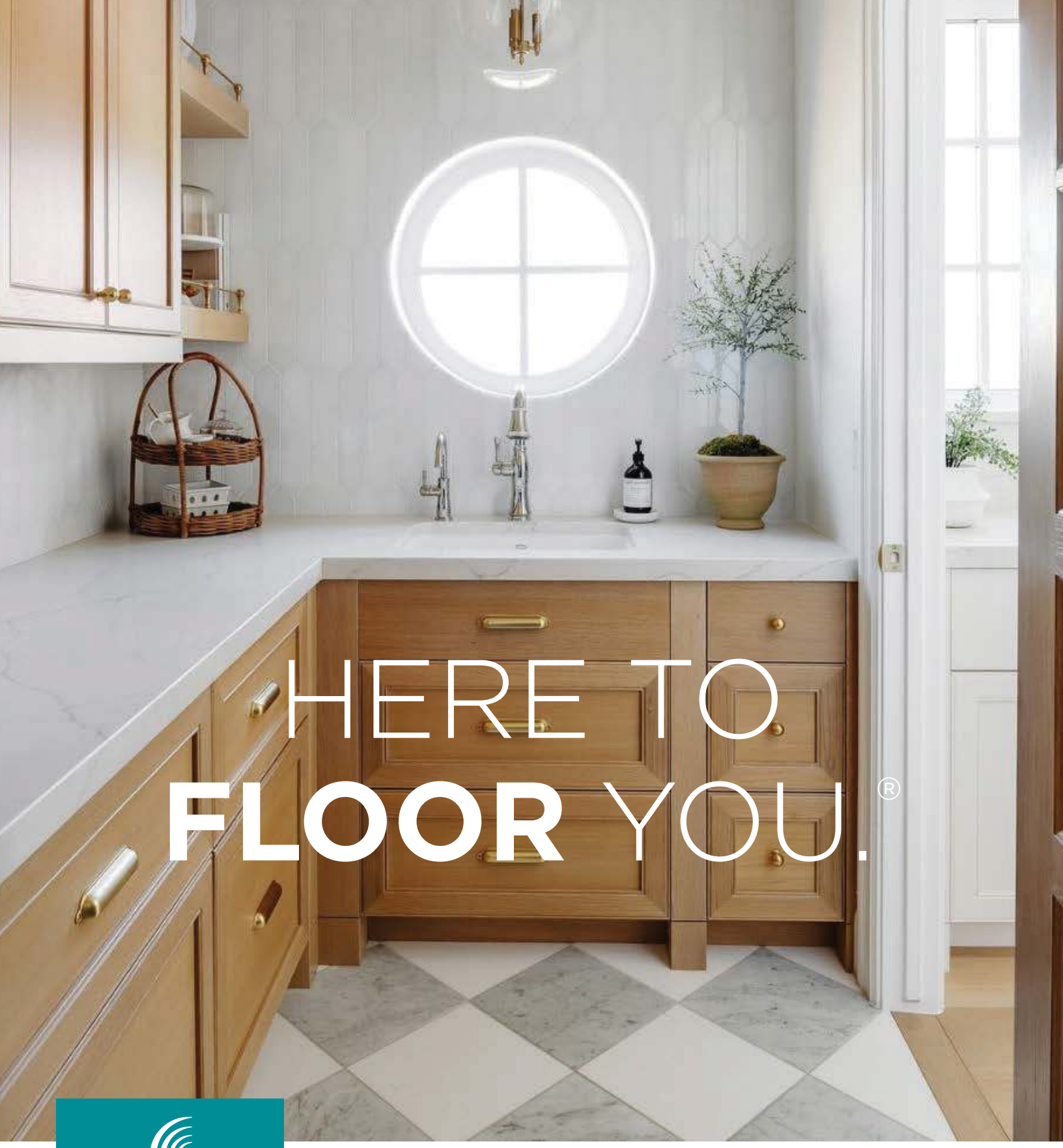
GREATER KALAMAZOO HOME IDEA GUIDE & LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE *COMPLIMENTARY* Fall 2025

Building the Future Onto the Past

Portage Public Schools

The YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo

Reflecting on Bird Safety



MIGALA CARPET ONE
FLOOR&HOME®

Kalamazoo Showroom
Gull Road East of Sprinkle
269.342.0109

Portage Showroom
Shaver Road South of Centre
269.327.3071

daltile®
IMAGINE WHAT'S POSSIBLE™

migalacarpetone.com | rugs.shop

Our energy saving Andersen® 400 Series windows help keep your heating bills to a minimum. Their Low-E glass, wood construction and tight seal can lower your bills and increase your comfort level all year round.

ANDERSEN™
WINDOWS & DOORS

We are celebrating almost 60 years of experience in designing window and door projects and helping our customers discover their own personal styles. Stop by any of our 8 locations and speak with one of our experts.

Dowagiac (269) 782-7788 • Kalamazoo (269) 372-0340
Niles (269) 684-4050 • Portage (269) 323-0660
St. Joseph (269) 429-1707 • Sturgis (269) 651-5388
Bridgman (269) 465-9484 • South Haven (269) 639-7788

www.hannapel.com

Hannapel
KITCHEN | BATH | WINDOW | DOOR

andersenwindows.com

Feature Home

(ON THE COVER)

16

When the homeowners of our Feature Home were looking for a home that would suit them into retirement they rediscovered a familiar lake cottage. With the help of Valentina Velkova, of ADIDA, they kept the rustic look while blending the cottage with the new construction.

CONTENTS

Heirloom Tomato and Zucchini Galette

Portage Public Schools

Reflecting on Bird Safety

The YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo

When You Need a Helping Hand

WELCOME HOME magazine
VOL. 33, NO. 3 FALL 2025

PUBLISHER
O'Keefe Publishing, Inc.

EDITOR
John O'Keefe

ACCOUNTING MANAGER
Donna O'Keefe

ADVERTISING
John O'Keefe
johno@jbprinting.com
269-547-0333
349-9601 (JB Printing)

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Zinta Aistars
Barbara Fisher
Linda Hoard

PRODUCTION
O'Keefe Publishing, Inc.

PRINTING & MAILING
by JB PRINTING CO.*
Terri Bennett, John Fahl,
Mike Fahl, Randy Fischer,
Brian Fulbright, Carl Gillespie,
Shannon Long, Mike Majors,
Ella McAllister, Bert Meinema

*** JB Printing is an O'Keefe Publishing company, and is the first printing company to be designated as a Clean Corporate Citizen by the Michigan DEQ**

Welcome Home Magazine© is published quarterly

Welcome Home Magazine
3111 Lake Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048

Phone 269-547-0333 / 269-349-9601
okeefepublishing@sbcglobal.net
www.welcomehomekzoo.com

Publisher is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or photos, and they will not be returned to sender unless accompanied by return postage.

Copyright©. All Rights Reserved - No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher.

Errors: The Publisher will not be responsible beyond the charges for the advertisement itself, for errors, misprints, or omissions.

Welcome Home Magazine reserves the right to edit or reject advertising which may be objectionable by law or considered undesirable by the Publisher.

Information in this magazine on products and projects is from sources believed by the publisher to be authoritative. The publisher, however, cannot assume responsibility for damages, losses or injuries resulting from the use of any of these products or involvement in any of these projects. Before undertaking any project, you should be certain that it is suitable to your skills. Consult with professionals, if necessary, and observe safety precautions. Before using any product, you should study and understand the manufacturer's instructions.

Welcome Home Magazine is owned and published by O'Keefe Publishing.

Printed on American made Paper by JB Printing Kalamazoo, MI

NEED CABINETS?

Contractors | Builders | Homeowner | DIY Enthusiasts

High-end cabinets without the high-end price tag

Located in Paw Paw, MI

HAROLD MARIE CABINET CO.

- In-stock inventory
- All-plywood boxes
- Soft-close hardware
- Real wood finishes
- Dovetail drawers
- Tongue-and-groove construction
- Ask us about our 15-piece special for $2,900 !

Use promo code *welcomehome* for a discounted quote

haroldmariecabinetco.com | 269.491.9320 (call | text)

J&J Glass

COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL

- Glass Railing
- Shower Enclosures
- Screen Porch
- Mirrors
- Replacement Windows

509 East Vine Street
Kalamazoo
Mon.-Fri.
7:30am-5:30pm
Sat.8am-12:30pm

269.344.2834

www.jjglassmi.com

PELVIC FLOOR MOMMA

Teaching moms how to labor easier, birth quicker, sleep deeper, and move without pain with pelvic floor coaching that restores and relieves.

Info@pelvicfloormomma.com

www.pelvicfloormomma.com

Belly Birth Beyond

@pelvicfloormomma

Heirloom Tomato and Zucchini Galette

Photography and recipe by Linda Hoard

A Rustic Slice of Summer

This Heirloom Tomato and Zucchini Galette is summer wrapped in a golden, flaky crust. Sweet caramelized onions, tangy blue cheese, sharp cheddar, and fresh basil come together with garden-fresh zucchini and juicy heirloom tomatoes for a burst of flavor in every bite. A light drizzle of honey before baking brings out the veggies' natural sweetness, making this galette just as perfect for a casual lunch as it is for sharing with friends.

Ingredients:

For the Cornmeal Crust
1 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup cornmeal
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
10 tablespoons cold unsalted butter cut into 1/2 inch cubes 1 stick + 2 Tbs
(I used Kerry Gold Garlic and Herb Butter)
1 egg beaten

For the Toppings
3 tablespoons butter
1 sweet onion thinly sliced
Salt + pepper
4 fresh thyme sprigs chopped
8 ounces blue cheese crumbled
4 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
1/3 cup fresh basil
1 small zucchini thinly sliced
1-2 small to medium heirloom tomatoes, sliced
1/2 cup cherry tomatoes sliced
Honey for drizzling

Instructions:

Pulse flour, cornmeal, salt, and pepper in a food processor. Add butter; pulse until pea-sized. Add 1/4 cup ice water, pulsing until dough forms, adding more water if needed. Shape into a disk, wrap, and chill 30 min.

Sauté onions in butter with 1/4 tsp each salt and pepper until soft (5 min). Cook, stirring, until golden (20 min). Stir in thyme; adjust seasoning.

Roll dough to 1/8-inch thick; place on parchment-lined sheet. Layer blue cheese, cheddar, onions, basil, zucchini, tomato slices, and cherry tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil, season, and add honey. Fold edges over filling; brush crust with egg. Chill 15 min.

Heat oven to 375°F. Bake 45–55 min, until crust is golden and tomatoes are lightly charred.

Cool 5 min. Top with remaining cherry tomatoes and a honey drizzle. Slice small for easier serving.

THE QUALITY YOU DESIRE
THE PEOPLE YOU TRUST

We listen and we deliver. Let us put our 42 years of remodeling expertise to work for you. Confidence and trust...are just a couple of the things we build well.

(269) 343-3757
DeHaanRemodeling.com

DH DEHAAN REMODELING SPECIALISTS, INC.

KITCHENS | BATHS | ROOM ADDITIONS | LOWER LEVELS

THE FURNACE GUY INC
HEATING & COOLING

Heating & Cooling Kalamazoo, Calhoun & Van Buren Counties since 2004

Helping to keep your Home Comfortable!

(269) 544-0904
WWW.THEFURNACEGUYINC.COM

Try Us and See for Yourself Why Most of Your Neighbors Already Use Us!

$37 OFF ANY REPAIR
When you mention this ad

Our designs accentuate the beauty of the home, the land, and the character of each client.

Sandstone Creation
LANDSCAPE DESIGN & INSTALLATION

By Barbara Fisher
Photos Courtesy of Kayla Miller, Portage Public Schools

PORTAGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Every student. Every future.

Southwest Michigan is home to numerous large and small public schools as well as many private schools. The education of our youth is a top priority not only for families with school-age children but also for the community at large. From wanting well-educated and rounded graduates capable of leadership in the future to rallying around the home team in sports; schools are everyone's business. One of the larger systems in the area is Portage Public Schools with its 8,600 students divided across two traditional high schools, an alternative high school, three middle schools and eight elementary schools. Notes Michelle Karpinski, Community Relations Manager, "We are so grateful that the Portage community has been so supportive of our schools over the years. We are excited to have opened two new school buildings (Haverhill and Central Elementary) thanks to that support. We have already begun work on replacing Woodland Elementary which will open in the fall of 2027. We look forward to finishing the job as we plan for the funding and construction of the new Angling Road and Amberly Elementary Schools, as well as new facilities for the early childhood program and Community High School. A bond request for those projects will be on the November ballot."

As a larger school system Portage Public Schools are able to offer a curriculum boasting 250 subjects and special offerings. Augmenting the core curriculum, Portage Public Schools offers students the opportunity to take college-level work (earning college credit) while a high school student, through Advanced Placement. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is internationally recognized and offers an academically challenging common curriculum for 11th- and 12th-grade students around the world. Combining both traditional high schools, more than 50% of juniors and seniors are taking an IB course. Students have a number of learning tools available including online/virtual opportunities for middle and high school students to expand course opportunities or recover credit.

In addition to Portage Northern and Portage Central High Schools, Portage Schools also has an alternative high school, Community High, offering a supportive atmosphere for students who haven't found success at a traditional high school but are nonetheless committed to their education.

For youngsters just starting out, there's Curious Kids for three and four year olds. Kindergarten is offered at all eight elementary schools for children having birthdays September 1 and earlier for the school year. For those

children with birthdays between September 2 and December 1 of the school year there is Young 5s. Portage Public Schools also offer programs for children who might need some extra help getting started, an Early Childhood Special Education program as well as speech and language therapy.

As parents seeking a school system, we all look to numbers as part of the decision making process.

• The vast majority (95%) of students attending the two traditional high schools graduate within 4 years with most going on to post-secondary education.

• The State SAT average is 958 with Portage Central and Portage Northern students averaging 1050.

• All students are provided with Chromebooks.

• About 75% of certified faculty hold a master's degree or higher.

• Portage Public Schools safely transports 5,500 students daily during the school year.

• Portage Public Schools ranks 17th (of 554) as Best Places to Teach in Michigan; 26th (of 580) for Best Districts in Michigan and 26th (of 557) for Districts with the Best Teachers in Michigan. (US News & World Report)

Portage Public Schools promotes four guiding pillars to promote excellence:

• Student Success. Students are welcomed, valued, known by their strengths and needs and supported along their paths.

• People & Culture. Employees are valued and connected by the focus of ensuring success for every student, every day.

• Service Excellence. Strong relationships with families and the community are the shared anchor to a common commitment to student success.

Great Things Local©

• Stewardship. Valuing what is given and responsibly using resources in the best ways possible to support student success.

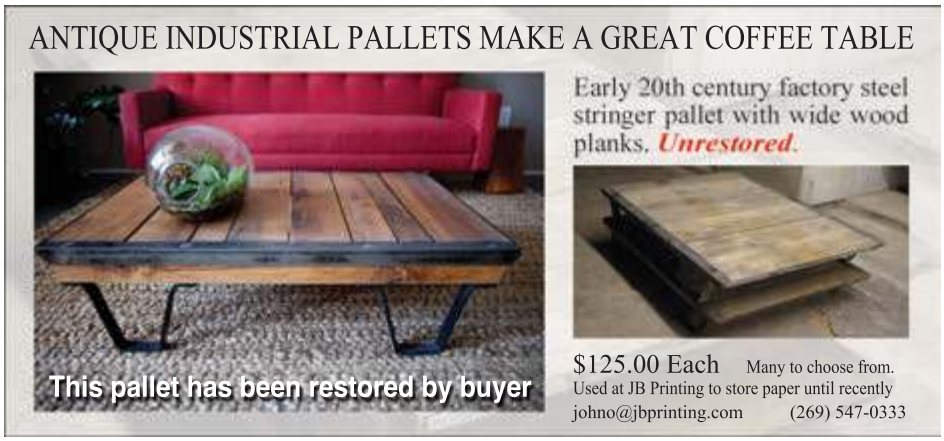
A strong commitment translating into success is important for every school system. Extracurricular activities are also a strong component toward student enrichment and education. Portage Public Schools students have earned more than 50 state championships in athletics, forensics and debate, and club activities and Portage Public Schools proudly counts two Olympians among its alumni.

Portage Central High earned its first State Championship in Men's Basketball in 1932, State Forensic Championships from 1994-2023, Women's Soccer in 2000 and again in 2009 with its last State Championship coming in 2023 in Archery. Multiple other championships dot the Portage Central honor roll.

Portage Northen High School has an equally impressive honor roll including Women's Tennis representing their first State Championships (1976-77), Northern was also a formidable presence in Forensics (16 championships between 1981 and 2015), Women's Softball (4 championships) and their final championship coming in 2008 in Debate. Again, multiple other championships dot Portage Northern's honor roll.

For the more artistic or musically oriented, various musicals and plays provide students with opportunities to perform and the greater community with quality entertainment. Music spans the high school orchestra, band and choir all the way to music lessons for youth in the elementary schools. Student musicians also put their marks on the map by winning districts and state awards for solo and ensemble competitions.

For more information about the Portage Public Schools, please visit www.portageps.org.



CUSTOM REMODELS

1 of 1

EVERY CUSTOM REMODEL WE DEVELOP IS 1 OF 1 – UNIQUELY CRAFTED TO REFLECT YOUR LIFESTYLE, YOUR TASTE, AND YOUR VISION.

SCHEDULE A FREE CONSULTATION
penningsandsons.com
269.372.1930

PENNINGS & SONS
BUILDING CHARACTER INTO HOMES

J.B. PRINTING

PRINT COPY DESIGN BIND MAIL

3111 Lake Street • Kalamazoo, MI 49048 • (269) 349-9601 • FAX (269) 349-5314 • www.jbprinting.com

342-6894 • www.corklanedecorating.com

Reflecting on Bird Safety

By Zinta Aistars

As new homes go up and new skyscrapers go up, up, up, windows cover more and larger surfaces. Beautiful, right? We love those expansive views.

Then there's that soft, almost unnoticeable, thump against the glass. It is not a sound any of us wants to hear—the soft thump of a bird flying into our window.

"We lose one billion birds every year nationwide due to windows," says Gail Walter, doctor of veterinary medicine and board member with the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo. "Yet it is a solvable problem. In the Kalamazoo area, we see 77 species of birds killed by collisions with windows and buildings. Hummingbirds are often victims, but we also lose thrushes, warblers, juncos, and other birds."

These collisions are monitored by The City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Bird-Window Collision Monitoring Program Protocol with the help of the Audubon Society, Walter says. According to the program, "During daylight hours, birds collide with reflective surfaces when they stop to feed or rest, when avoiding a predator or flying from tree to tree. Shiny glass exteriors, internal plants near windows, glass corners, and greenery close to buildings can all be deadly as birds are unable to distinguish reflection from open flyway."

"Spring and fall are the worst for birds, because these are the migratory seasons," Walter says. "People assume tall skyscrapers are the worst, but they account for only about 1% of bird collisions. Buildings that are one to three stories tall account for 44%, but four to 10 stories come in with 56% of bird kills."

Walter became interested in bird safety by monitoring peregrine falcons that have been nesting atop what was known as the Fifth Third Bank building in downtown Kalamazoo.

"They've been nesting there since 2012," she says. "The falcons are a threatened species in Michigan, so we have a camera 24/7 on them to monitor them. The DNR helped us build a nest box for them, and we watched them raise a brood of four chicks the first year."

The falcon camera may be viewed at kalamazoofalcons.com. While removed from the Endangered Species list nationwide, they remain on the list in Michigan.

"The falcons inspired me to become an advocate for safe bird design," Walter says.

Since 2014, three falcons have been lost due to window collisions, inspiring Walter to offer presentations on how to prevent such collisions.

"A bird-safe building should not add significant cost, if it is planned ahead of time," she says. "The bird-safe glass for new construction should be less than 1% of the total costs. For a couple of recent local projects, bird safe glass was 0.4% of the total cost. Bird-safe glass for new construction is better than post construction mitigation because it will be more economical, aesthetic, and longer lasting."

Examples of incorporating bird-safe glass can be seen at the Charles Pratt Justice Center, Dunbar Hall on the Western Michigan University campus, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy office, and others.

Strategies for bird safety include decreasing exposure to glass by using decorative screens or louvers between panes so as to break up the reflection; creating a pattern across the window; or applying a special window film to the exterior of the window that allow for a view to the outdoors but not from the outside in.

"The important thing to remember is that birds will try to fly through any space bigger than two inches by two inches," Walter says. "That's why putting up a window decal of a hawk won't work. Window film can provide privacy while improving insulation. Feather Friendly, CollidEscape create such films, and locally, you can check with Great Lakes Window Films Solutions for customized film."

Photo Courtesy of Great Lakes Window Film Solutions

A CLEAR SOLUTION

Audrey Randall is the owner of Great Lakes Window Films Solutions (glwindowfilmsolutions.com), based in Kalamazoo and serving Michigan and northern Indiana. In business since 2021, Randall became fascinated with bird safety after hearing an engineer speak on the topic.

"Our films are applied to the outside of the window with patterns that break up the reflection birds see," Randall says. "It has to be on the outside or else birds won't see it. Yes, you can see the pattern from the inside, but it can be so subtle that it soon becomes invisible to the viewer."

Randall agrees with the no more than two inches by two inches openings in patterns, but many of the film her company produces incorporate 1/8" spaced lines or 1/4" spacing for dots. Films are also available with horizontal or vertical patterns. Her company works with both residential and commercial clients.

"It's all U.S.-made product," she says. "We meet with the customer for an on-site free consultation, go over options, measure the windows, and put together a quote. The film comes in 60" and 48" rolls. At ground level, the film costs $12 to $15 per square foot and $15 to $20 per square foot at higher levels."

Depending on weather, the window film can last a minimum of 10 years but is under warranty for three years, Randall says. Added benefits are privacy and temperature regulation for interior spaces that can lead to energy savings. The film can also cut down on glare, reducing damaging ultraviolet rays, and even prevent window breakage. The film is available in clear, bronze, gray, silver, or reflective hues.

And that soft thump against your window? Even if the bird flies away, most such collisions result in death later due to internal injuries or predators capturing the injured bird.

"Bird safety has been a niche market, but as we have more homes and buildings being built and intruding on migratory paths, we are losing more birds to collisions," Randall says. "Birds think reflective glass may be another tree or water, and the strike kills them. Our window films are a solution that can solve that."

Visit American Bird Conservancy (abcbirds.org) to learn more about how to prevent imminent bird extinctions and how to create habitat that is safe for birds. .

Quality Solutions for Workplaces, Public Spaces, and Homes
Bird Safety • Decorative • Distraction-free
Privacy • Safety / Security • Solar Control
www.glwindowfilmsolutions.com
269.377.8181 | info@greatlakeswindowfilmsolutions.com

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED, WHATEVER IT TAKES.
What's the difference in choosing a Bryant® Factory Authorized Dealer? We say it's 100%. Because that's the satisfaction guarantee you always get in writing when you choose the best. From offering big savings to handling the smallest details, it's all about you and your needs. Put them to the test. Hold them to our promise. Bryant Factory Authorized Dealers are with you all the way. **Whatever it takes.**℠
METZGER'S HEATING & COOLING
Quality Service Since 1903

269-385-3562
www.metzgers.biz
bryant Factory Authorized Dealer

4015 Portage Road • Kalamazoo
269-342-2878

301 S. State Street • Gobles
269-628-2185

Shaw FLOORS

Building the Future Onto the Past

By Zinta Aistars

Feature Photography by Jim Schuon Photography

When the homeowners, both pilots with a passion for soaring through the clouds, wanted a place to land, they chose a rustic, older cottage on the shores of Corey Lake near Three Rivers, Michigan.

They purchased the cottage in 2017, but the three-bedroom cottage dated back to the 1940s. Built on a hillside, the structure was on several levels to accommodate the slope of the landscape, earning the name of The Ups & Downs.

"We knew the cottage well, because my parents had rented it already back in the 60s," the homeowner said. "So when it was time to think about a home that would suit us into retirement, we bought it."

The parcel of land was too enticing to pass up. With 126 feet of waterfront frontage, a deep lot nearly two acres in size and wooded, it was the perfect plot if not quite the perfect home. The cottage would need to be expanded.

"The cottage is maybe about 1,000 square feet," she said. "We wanted to add a home of about 2,000 square feet or a bit more. And we wanted to keep that rustic look throughout for that old feel, blending the cottage with the new construction."

Friends living in the area offered a recommendation for Valentina Velkova, president and custom home designer of ADIDA—Architectural Design/Interior Design/Art—in Portage. Velkova has a reputation for her attention to detail and stunning design.

"Val was easy to work with," the homeowner said. "We gave her an idea of what we wanted, she started with a sketch, and we sealed it then."

"With so many levels on that hillside, I knew this would be a challenge," Velkova said. "But I love a good challenge. They wanted something along the rustic Craftsman style. I like to start with different colored markers and sketch by hand—I'm old school that way. Only I can understand that first sketch! Then my sketches get more and more precise."

Velkova brought in Tom Palarz, a structural engineer, to calculate how to make the multiple levels work and to remain stable. A transition area would connect old and new.

"We used some of the largest footings I have ever worked with to create a stable home," Velkova said.

Builders broke ground in the spring of 2023. The new addition would have only one bedroom—the primary suite with a large en suite. A wall of windows look out on the lake and allow for access with a sliding door. Transom windows above the bed bring in even more light.

"The lake view was a must have," the homeowner said.

The wall of windows continues into the great room, giving that "WOW factor" upon entry that Velkova says she

Before - Photo Courtesy of ADIDA

adida.design | 269.599.6050 | Valentina@adida.design

COREY LAKE

always strives to work into her designs. Four glass panels slide aside to allow for access to the outdoors. It would be nearly impossible to find a spot in the new addition where one might not enjoy the water view.

Another eye-catching feature of the great room is the cathedral ceiling of alder wood. Wood accents throughout the new addition echo the knotty pine of the cottage. A stone fireplace also matches a similar stone fireplace in the cottage.

"Another of my must-haves was to have a wood-burning fireplace," the homeowner said.

The great room opens to the kitchen and dining area, where wood features continue with the cabinets and wine rack under the alder wood ceiling. Counters are white quartz.

"We put in a really large island with seating," the homeowner said. "The kitchen, after all, is where family gathers, and we are looking forward to family and friends spending time at our home. We both cook, and with a double stove and separate gas cook-top, there's room for both of us to prepare meals."

White subway tiles are a gleaming backsplash from countertop to ceiling. A walk-in pantry offers easy access to whatever a cook may need. The hardwood floor ties the kitchen to the rest of the home.

"No carpet anywhere," the homeowner said. "Living on a lake and with a couple cats and puppy, we would be tracking in too much wet for a carpet."

Only the en suite off the primary bedroom has a ceramic tile floor throughout, even as the design of the tile mimics wood. A pebble stone floor in the shower echoes the stone of the fireplaces as well as the stone outdoors used for retaining walls and trim along the exterior of the home. The double vanity is over wood cabinets, and a white soaker tub invites relaxing moments. The toilet is tucked away in its own room for privacy. The connecting walk-in closet holds all the apparel needs for the homeowners, eliminating the need for any other furniture in the bedroom.

A lower level in the new addition sports a bar beneath a fun conversation-starter: an airplane wing is suspended over the bar that points to the homeowners' passion for flying. The lower level also has a sitting area and a workout space when sitting too long beckons for movement.

While a deck leads to stairs down the hillside that leads to the lake, the homeowners said their favorite spot to relax is on the opposite side of the home.

"Lakes can get busy, you know," the homeowner smiled. "Boats and skis and such, so we find ourselves enjoying the quiet and the privacy of the patio on the street side of the home. With a long driveway and the woods, we have privacy there away from the road."

Another aspect of the privacy the homeowners enjoy is that their guests can stay in the cottage, which has its own kitchen area, sitting area, and three bedrooms.

"With all those levels and transition from one space to the other, this was one of my most challenging projects, but I never say no to a challenge," Velkova added. "And the end result made it all worth it."

Pro Water Treatment

Your West Michigan WaterCare Dealer

HAVE A WATER SOFTENER ISSUE? CALL OUR HELP LINE.

269.694.9000

40 Years Experience In The Water Treatment Community

SALES - SERVICE - RENTALS
SALT DELIVERY - WATER TESTING
WATER SOFTENERS
WATER PURIFICATION

WATERCARE®
Making water good for life.®

269.694.9000
5716 D Ave W Unit B
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
www.1prowater.com

A House Isn't a Home Without a Floor From
Wenke Flooring & Design.
Now two convenient locations!
3428 Ravine Road, Kalamazoo
(269) 385-3111
12374 US-131, Schoolcraft
(269) 679-5909
www.wenkeflooringanddesign.com
Call us today
for all your
flooring needs.
Shaw
FLOORS
WENKE
FLOORING & DESIGN

More Than Just a Swim and Gym

By Zinta Aistars

Photos Courtesy of the YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo

When it was founded in 1844, the YMCA—Young Men's Christian Association—was known as an international youth association geared specifically to young men. Its counterpart, the YWCA, was for women. No longer true.

"It could have been as late as the '60s that the Y incorporated services to women as well," says Vicky Kettner, association director of marketing, community relations, and member engagement at the YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo, located at 1001 West Maple Street in Kalamazoo. "When the YMCA began to offer services to women, the YWCA looked for other ways to serve the community, and that is how they evolved to provide services for domestic assault, promoting equality, and other women's issues."

The YMCA in Greater Kalamazoo (kzooymca.org) was established in 1866, but it disbanded just a few years later, in 1871. Fifteen years later, the organization opened again, moving through different iterations and buildings until moving into its current location on West Maple Street in 1970 with 2,250 members. By 2025, membership is expected to reach 30,000 members.

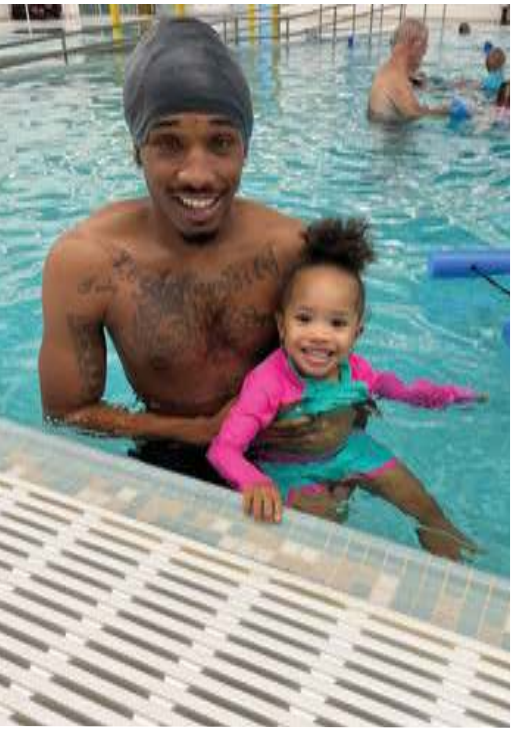
While the YMCA is based on Christian principles, membership is based to any and all, regardless of age, race, gender, gender identity, gender expression, income, faith, sexual orientation or cultural background.

THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP

Vicky Kettner has been with the YMCA for 10 years. "I've had a relationship with the Y since my boys were little in the late '90s and were taking swim lessons here. The way the Y comes in and out of many people's lives is pretty much how my personal story goes. As family needs change, eventually we come through the doors again as the boys grew. When this marketing opportunity came up, I was always a strong believer in community development, and so this was a perfect match."

Membership, Kettner says, is a no-contract month by month arrangement. Membership application can be started online but must be completed in person at either the Kalamazoo location or its partner location at 2900 West Centre Avenue in Portage.

"We have multiple tiers of membership," she says. "Membership ranges from families with children to an



individual. At the core of the Y's mission is to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to have a Y experience. This is what separates the Y from other organizations. We are non-profit. No one is turned away based on their ability to pay. If you can't afford a membership, we offer financial assistance."

Memberships can range from a monthly fee of $107 for a family of three with an additional $20 per additional family member, to as low as $12 for children in the Kids Zone, ages 6 weeks through 7 years. Financial aid applications are available online and on site for those needing assistance.

Membership, however, isn't only for what the YMCA calls "swim and gym."

"We do have this history of providing free meals, having the logistics and the methodology to do that," Kettner says. "During the Covid pandemic years, we provided 137,340 meals to those in need. After Covid, when it became apparent that there was an opportunity to contract with the State of Michigan for this Rural Non-congregate Meal Program to combat summer hunger, we continued to provide meals. That's brand new to us. We just started it in June. We felt confident that we could meet the needs of that program, because we had already done it in the past."

The YMCA has prepared 1,400 meals weekly as part of the new program. No application is needed. The meals are packaged to provide two meals per day for a week for young people under the age of 18, first come, first serve. The packages include a gallon of milk.

"We run out in 30 minutes," Kettner adds. "We are only touching the surface of a growing need."

AN EXPANSE OF PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

Health and wellness take many forms in the programs at the YMCA, from feeding and exercising the body to nurturing wellness of the mind and spirit.

At the beginning of life, children in families with memberships may either participate in programs or have educational play time in the Kids Zone (6 weeks through 7 years), a childcare center within the organization. Parents may drop their children off in the center for up to two hours at a time while they participate in other programs.

For older children, swim lessons, tennis lessons, nature walks, and various educational curriculum are available. Prime Time is an Out-of-School-Time program that offers care before and after school for students in grades K-5. Youth football and basketball leagues are available for children aged 4 up to eighth grade. Summer camps are open for different ages through the summer months.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, Silver Sneakers© within the YMCA offers classes for older adults in yoga, swimming, arthritis aquatics, muscle building and balance. Chronic disease programs help older adults deal with diabetes, Parkinson's disease, cancer, or high blood pressure and other health issues.

"The important thing for people to know about the Y is that we have something for everyone on their health journey," Kettner says. "The whole idea behind a health journey is that it extends beyond exercise. We are talking body, mind, and spirit. We have people in their 90s working out beside teenagers in the weight room. We are one of the very few organizations where every age comes through the door."

One of every four members at the YMCA, Kettner adds, is on financial aid. She stresses that fees should never hold one back from coming through that door.

"Last year, we gave away more than $820,000 in memberships to 6,900 community members," she says. "We rely on donations to provide that. When you pay for a membership, you are helping others in our community."

To support the work of the YMCA in the Greater Kalamazoo, donations may be made online or mailed to 1001 W. Maple St., Kalamazoo, MI 49008, or stop by any branch location. For more information, contact Rhonda Ludwig, associate VP of fund development, by email to rludwig@kzooymca.org email or phone: 269.345.9622 x122.

SPARTAN
INSULATION & COATING

- ☑ Nu•Wool Premium Cellulose Insulation
- ☑ Closed Cell Polyurethane Foam
- ☑ New & Existing Homes
- ☑ Pole Buildings
- ☑ Licensed and Insured

269.668.3445
spartaninsulation.com

Let us show you how to make your home or business more comfortable & efficient!

NU-WOOL PREMIUM CELLULOSE INSULATION

HBA MEMBER

Todd Modderman Nate Modderman

MODDERMAN BUILDERS, LLC

New Homes • Remodeling • Commercial

269.353.5738
todd@moddermanbuilders.com
www.moddermanbuilders.com

J.B. PRINTING
PRINT COPY DESIGN BIND MAIL

We really appreciate the quick service.
Carol

You guys have really helped us out. We really appreciate the work and effort your crew puts in.
Mark

The mailing was perfect and we could have not have asked for a better election cycle.
Shelby

3111 Lake Street • Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048 • (269) 349-9601 • www.JBPRINTING.com

When You Need a Helping Hand

By Zinta Aistars

The garage is groaning with boxes of old Christmas decorations, unused tools, the sofa you were sure you would be able to use in the guest room, only to find out there was no room. You have lived in this house for several decades, and the accumulation of stuff in the garage can attest to each year past.

Next door, a new family has moved in. The towers of boxes, however carefully packed and taped and labeled, await unpacking. With a new job for you and new schools for your children to attend, the family is distracted and just can't find the time to unpack.

The eldest child in the family has moved out and moved on to college. A dormitory room awaits. Unfortunately, the dorm room has the junk of the previous resident left behind. Back home, the old bedroom can now be renovated into a new crafts room—but not until all the belongings there can be moved out. Storage seems like a great solution, because, well, sometimes those college students move back in during the impending job search after graduation.

The holidays are approaching. What fun! Decorations will go up in every room and all around the exterior of the home, flashing joyful lights in every hue. You have made an investment in the decorations, and you want to be sure that they will be packed up safely for next year.

The moving company did a great job with the stressful process of the move, but now that the transfer of property is done, the equally immense job of arranging life in a new household has stalled.

What to do? Where can one find that extra helping hand?

Unpacking, removing junk, storing decorations for another year, or transferring belongings into storage units when not quite ready to let go—these are all scenarios where helping hands are available. No need to look far.

The companies that move people into their new homes are available for more than just the move. In greater Kalamazoo, two such moving companies are Two Men and a Truck, located at 3521 East Cork Street, and College Hunks, located at 2927 Millcork Street. Typically available for moving, both also offer services beyond the move.

According to College Hunks, "Looking for some extra help but don't want to hire a moving company? We've got you covered. College Hunks Hauling Junk & Moving® offers hourly moving and labor services that can assist you with any part of your move. We can pack and unpack boxes, load and unload trucks, portable storage, or storage units, and help arrange furniture after you move in."

College Hunks, along with moving you to your new home, will also remove junk, pick up donations, move furniture, stage a home for sale, and even offer demolition services. Pricing is based on the job and how many movers will be needed to accomplish it.

Two Men and a Truck can move you into your new home, but if you wish to do the move in your own or another rented vehicle, their crew can be hired to help you pack and unpack or rearrange furniture, saving you time and effort. The company also offers materials for safely packing your holiday decorations, including a garment bag for storing that artificial Christmas tree. Their storage facility is available for storing items you don't want or can't store at home but still want to keep. Request a free quote.

THE HOW AND WHERE AND WHY

Online sites can direct you to find the right helping hands for your needs. U-Haul offers a platform called Moving Help that lists local moving companies that can do more than just move your belongings, providing the

labor to accomplish your move from beginning to end.

HireAHelpler is another platform that can connect you to local and independent movers. Websites like LoadUp Junk Removal also offer moving labor services. Some even offer cleaning services to prepare your old home for sale to a new occupant or shine up your new home for a fresh, clean start for the next chapter of your life.

While saving time and sweat by hiring helping hands for these kinds of jobs, the benefits of using moving helpers are considerable:

- Hiring outside helpers to handle the heavy lifting and physical labor can make the moving process less stressful.
- Allowing professionals to help in labor reduces the risk of injury.
- Professional movers are trained to handle items safely, reducing the risk of personal injury or damage to belongings.
- Many moving helpers are small business owners or independent contractors, so you're supporting the local economy.
- You can customize the services you need and pay only for what you use.

Things to consider when hiring moving helpers:

- Compare rates and reviews. Check Better Business Bureau for ratings and for any complaints.
- Clearly communicate your moving needs, such as the size of your home, the number of items, and any specialty items that require extra attention.
- Confirm the date you will need help and make sure the moving helpers are available on your preferred moving date.
- Understand the terms of service. Read the terms and conditions of the moving help service provider to understand their policies on cancellation, rescheduling, and payment.

By considering these factors, you can find reliable and affordable moving helpers to make your move a success—or simply to help with those extra needs around your home.

Portage Glass & Mirror

GLASS • MIRRORS • SCREENS
RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL

REFLECTS

- Window Glass
- Custom Shower Enclosures
- Custom Mirrors
- Tabletop Glass
- Screen Repairs

269-532-1630

www.portageglassandmirror.com

9920 Oakland Drive Portage, MI 49024
(Fully licensed and insured)

LUXX NAILS & SPA

Contact
(269) 440-3699
6800 S Westnedge Ave, Ste J
luxxnailsandspa.com

Business Hours
Mon - Sat: 09:30 AM - 07:30 PM
Sunday: 11:00 AM - 04:00 PM

Whether your home is in need of a refresh, a complete overhaul, or you're seeking inspiration, the experts are on hand at the Kalamazoo Home & Garden Expo. Talk with local businesses specializing in outdoor living, landscaping, home automation, security, remodeling, design, and more. Don't miss the latest in home improvement, there's something for everyone at the Expo!

Interested in showcasing your products or services? Become an exhibitor!
The exhibitor contract and live floor map are available on our website at kalamazoohomeexpo.com

Advance tickets $8.
Door tickets $10.
(kids 12 and under are FREE)

SCAN ME

HBA
HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

VISIT OUR NEW SHOWROOM

Sales • Installation • Service • Repairs • FREE Estimates
Residential & Commercial • Over the Counter Parts Sales

The Genuine. The Original.

OVERHEAD DOOR®

OVERHEAD DOOR COMPANY OF KALAMAZOO ™
5291 Wynn Rd.
Kalamazoo
FAMILY OWNED SINCE 1973
381-9570

©2020 Overhead Door Corporation. Overhead Door™ is a trademark and the Ribbon Logo is a registered trademark of Overhead Door Corporation.

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

ADIDA, LLC	18
Cork Lane Decorating	12
DeHaan Remodeling Specialists	8
Flair Interiors	11
The Furnace Guy	8
Great Lakes Window Film Solutions	14
Hannapel	3
Harold Marie Cabinet Company	6
Home Builders Association	29
J&J Glass	6
JB Printing	12, 26, 30
Linda Hoard Photography	5
Metzger's Heating & Cooling	14
Migala Carpet One	2
Modderman Builders, LLC	26
Overhead Door Co. of Kalamazoo	30
Pelvic Floor Momma	6
Pennings & Sons	12
Portage Glass & Mirror	28
Pro Water Treatment	22
Sackett Flooring	15
Sandstone Creation	8
Spartan Insulation	26
TMR Builders	31, 32
Wenke Flooring & Design	23

TMR BUILDERS. INC.

Generations of Building Quality Homes

TMRBUILDERS.COM

BUILDER
Todd Roberts

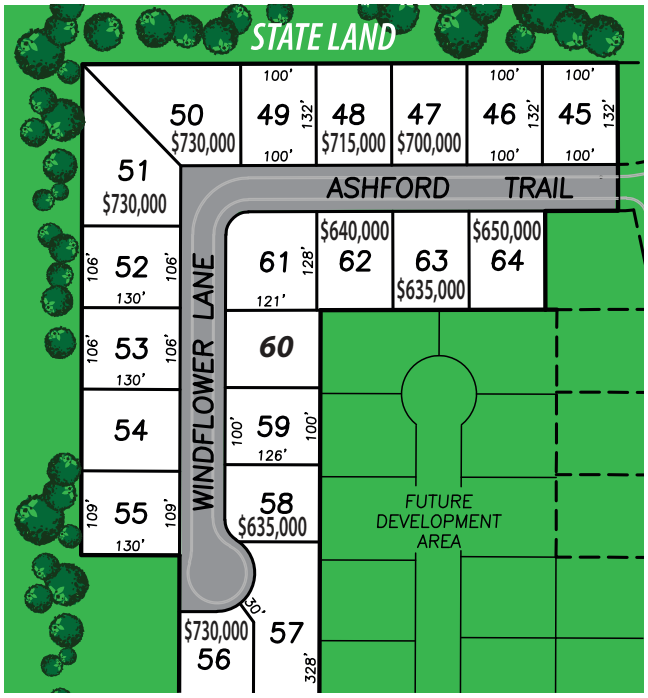
CLOSING WITH TMR BUILDERS IS A BREEZE

DEVON TITLE
A DIVISION OF STEWART TITLE

HIGH END CUSTOM HOMES & CONDOS IN PORTAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT. SEVERAL STARTING FROM $400,000 AND UP.

Streamsong

Oakland Farms No 2



SOLD **AVAILABLE SPEC HOMES**

TMR BUILDERS, INC.

NEW CONSTRUCTION HOMES & CONDOS
PRIVATE WOODED LOTS
2/3 CAR GARAGES
WALKOUT/DAYLIGHT LOTS

TODD ROBERTS, BUILDER | 269-217-2096 | TMRBUILDERS.COM

CUSTOM HOMEBUILDING IN KALAMAZOO, PORTAGE, VANBUREN, AND SURROUNDING AREAS - NOW INCLUDING HUDSONVILLE