



Lions GM Brad Holmes has no regrets trading 3rd rounder for Isaac TeSlaa

SPORTS, 1B

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It was the home nobody wanted

Michigan couple turned it into unique Airbnb

Natalie Davies
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

A red, heart-shaped bathtub. Stairs covered in cheetah print carpet. A heart window in a kitchen with heart-shaped tiles. A blue Valentine-themed room with cupids on display.

These are the hand-picked details that make up the Sweetheart Hideaway, a dream home in St. Joseph designed and renovated by Margaret and Corey Bienert.

Margaret Bienert started a photography project with a TikTok and Instagram page A Pretty Cool Hotel Tour, documenting kitschy and themed hotels in 2018. She and her husband bought a house in St. Joseph in 2021, and in fall 2025, they finished what they hope is only the first round of renovations on the house now open for stays on Airbnb.

About the house

The four-bedroom, three-bathroom home includes a living room with a stage, an outdoor hot tub surrounded by the woods, a spacious kitchen and more.

The Bienerts lived in Los Angeles when they bought the house in St. Joseph. They are from the Midwest and wanted to build their dream home in a place where they would vacation. They ended up finding the perfect house in St. Joseph, though it was double the size they were looking for, Margaret Bienert said.

"I actually told our realtor, are there any houses that everyone else says, 'This is weird, and we don't like it?' Because we usually like what people don't like," she said. "And immediately she was like, yeah, there's been a house sitting on the market. You want to see it?"

With the balcony and high wood ceilings, "it feels like a summer camp building," she said.

The house they created is inspired by



Margaret and Corey Bienert sit on the bed of the Honeymoon Suite of their Sweetheart Hideaway in St. Joseph. PROVIDED BY JENN GOZ

different places they've stayed. Along with taking photos, they would often speak with the owners to learn more. In 2023, they published a book called "Hotel Kitsch: A Pretty Cool Tour of America's Fantasy Getaways."

Revival of fun hotels

After World War II, the United States began constructing more high-

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Which towns will see new housing and businesses?

Janis Reeser
AI-assisted reporter
USA TODAY NETWORK

Five Michigan redevelopment projects will receive support from the state's Revitalization and Placemaking program, creating new housing and commercial space in Cheboygan, Ionia, Marshall, Morenci and Port Sanilac.

The projects are expected to generate more than \$8.7 million in total capital investment, according to a community announcement from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Each project will receive a grant from the Revitalization and Placemaking program, which provides funding for place-based infrastructure development and real estate rehabilitation.

Cheboygan project to revitalize downtown building

In Cheboygan, a long-vacant downtown building will be transformed into a mixed-use development with two upper-floor apartments and 1,589 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. The project is expected to receive a \$335,000 RAP grant and bring a total capital investment of \$863,383.

Developer Susan Blum, who has more than 50 years of real estate development experience, is leading the project with a team of consultants, including Bruce Johnston of Revitalize LLC, Dave Van Haaren of Triterra and Brian Fleming of First Contracting.

"I am so pleased and grateful to receive this award from MEDC to make a positive difference in our little town of Cheboygan, Michigan," Blum said in the announcement.

Ionia project to create apartments and commercial space

In Ionia, a functionally obsolete property will be redeveloped to create four second-floor apartments and

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Youth empowerment breakfast highlights MLK legacy

Andy Jeffrey
Port Huron Times Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Youth and young adults from across St. Clair County are invited to kick off Martin Luther King Jr. Day weekend at the MLK Day Youth Empowerment Breakfast, returning Saturday after a several-year pause.

The free event will take place at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, at Kingdom Authority Ministries, located at 1302 Lapeer Ave., Port Huron. It is open to youth and young adults ages 13-24.

The 2026 theme, "Dreams in Motion: Turning Purpose into Power," centers on youth leadership, advocacy and community engagement in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

The breakfast is sponsored by Black

Lives Matter Port Huron, Impact Youth Services, TIDES, Amos Consulting Group, Kingdom Authority Ministries and Unity for Youth.

Alphonzo Amos, co-lead of Black Lives Matter Port Huron, said about 50 people are already registered. "I'm expecting about 50 to 60 young people," Amos said.

The MLK Day Youth Empowerment Breakfast was previously held in 2017, 2018 and 2019 before being paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. Amos said organizers decided to bring the event back this year after continued interest from young people in the community.

Organizers describe the breakfast as a high-energy, inspirational gathering designed to uplift young people and amplify youth voice.

The morning will include live music,

an interactive photo booth and a hot breakfast, followed by Youth Voice and Advocacy Training focused on helping participants learn how to speak up and organize around issues that matter to them.

Amos said the event is intentionally designed to give young people practical tools for civic engagement, particularly during a weekend that honors King's legacy of service and leadership.

"This event is about giving young people a space to discover their voice, their power and their purpose, especially during a weekend that honors Dr. King and his legacy encouraging service and leadership," Amos said.

The program will also include a fire-side-style conversation with Port Huron Mayor Anita Ashford, moderated by a youth participant, along with advoca-

cy training focused on navigating public spaces such as school board, City Council and county commission meetings.

The MLK Day Youth Empowerment Breakfast is free to attend, but space is limited and advance registration is required through Eventbrite.

If you go:

- **What:** MLK Day Youth Empowerment Breakfast 2026
 - **When:** Saturday, Jan. 17, 11 a.m.
 - **Where:** Kingdom Authority Ministries, 1302 Lapeer Ave., Port Huron
 - **Who:** Youth and young adults ages 13-24
 - **Cost:** Free, registration required
- Contact reporter Andy Jeffrey at ajeffrey@usatodayco.com.

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