

My name is Michele Oberholtzer. I'm an activist. I'm a singer. I'm a writer. I'm a housing advocate and I've always been all of those things... but I never had a chance to become them until I came to Detroit.

When I came to Detroit, I was in a heavy transition period of my life and I was trying to figure out where I belonged geographically and in all kinds of other ways as well. I sort of fell backwards into the housing crisis in Detroit... and I think that is what was unique about it for me is that I found myself very surprisingly in a position of being able to make a massive positive impact on people's lives. Even though I was a non-expert, you know, I just happened to have the right information and interweave the data that I had with the physical space and to know how to connect people to... and so it sort of evangelize me... and I, I went door to door, literally, and I raised funds and I was serving, but I was being served too, because I just wanted to have a purpose and be of use... and it felt really good to know that I was making a difference. And I still appreciate that so much.

When I think about the future, I shuttle back and forth between sense of fear and a sense of hope. Detroit in particular has a lot of unhealed wounds. I think that we have tried to allow time or, you know, we try to rebuild and paper over some things, but I don't know that we have truly healed. And I think that's the work of our time in our generation. And that's something I'm really hopeful for us engaging in, in the future. You know, we've lost this collective wisdom of how to heal, I think, and that can be an excuse for only so long...