

AN OPEN LETTER TO MILWAUKEE

FROM JOE BERRADA
OWNER OF BERRADA PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT, INC

My Fellow Milwaukeeans

For decades I have enjoyed my privacy. But that is no longer the case with false statements about myself and my business, Berrada Properties Management, Inc., ("BPM") making the rounds. I started this company with one eight-unit residential building in 1994, which I still own today. I had no master plan. I was just an average Joe trying to make it like everyone else.

I left my home in Casablanca, Morocco to come to the U.S. in 1986 on an exchange program. At 16, I packed my bag and left behind everything I knew. I arrived in Milwaukee and was placed with a wonderful family. I attended South Milwaukee High School and went on to study Engineering at Marquette University. I grew to love the City of Milwaukee so much that I never returned to live in my home country.

I started working and living like most people do after college. I got married and started a family. But, I had a drive to do more which started with the simple idea of buying a property, and that is what I did. My first building was in the middle of the city, off of 76th street. I figured out how to do all of the repair work myself, just my hands and a little toolbox.

From that humble beginning I grew my business, building by building. In addition to creating quality, affordable housing, as my business grew, I was also able to create employment opportunities in the same communities. I felt like I was helping create meaningful improvements in these neighborhoods and I loved it. I still love it.

I created this business model when I noticed the low level of investment in the inner city when compared to surrounding areas in Greater Milwaukee. I understood the struggles of these inner-city communities - I knew what it was like to have nothing because that is where I started. I understood how lack of investment and care can impact underserved communities because I came from one. Many developers choose to gentrify neighborhoods by moving out the current residents in order to move new, higher-paying tenants in. That is not what I wanted my business to do. I wanted to repair and rehabilitate buildings to provide quality housing for the people who currently live there.

That idea has now grown into a successful company. The mission to foster change by investing in underserved areas is still the focus of who I am, and who we are as a company. We work hard to provide people in the community with nice homes, but at affordable rents. My goal was and still is to maintain and improve existing neighborhoods, not create entirely new ones.

TESTIMONIALS

"They moved me into a new unit while my unit was being updated. I ended up staying in my new unit because it was just so nice. My kids love our new place."

Byron H.

"I personally like where I live at Timmerman Terrace Apts. They keep it nice - just installed new bright lights outside, new windows and doors, a new roof. They keep the landscaping nice and the hallways locked and clean."

Michelle I.

"I've been with them for 15 years. They took over my old building and at first I was worried and thought I should move. I didn't know what a new owner would be like. I'm happy I stayed and never left. Never had an issue living here."

Sharice W.

"I grew to love the City of Milwaukee so much that I never returned to live in my home country."



If you take a drive through the city, you will see that no one is doing what we do. The majority of the buildings we acquire are occupied but dated and poorly maintained. With each acquisition, BPM's crews, which provide employment opportunities for Milwaukee residents, many of whom are minorities, repair and replace everything. We provide new parking lots, walkways, roofing, exterior lighting, interior lighting, custom kitchen and bathroom cabinetry, carpet, paint, electrical, and plumbing. It's a complete transformation. We are dedicated and we work hard to ease the burden of these renovations on tenants. Efficiency is key. We can rehabilitate and improve an entire four-unit building in two weeks. We also take measures to help tenants when their building is renovated like assisting with relocation to another BPM property, providing financial assistance for moving costs or providing temporary housing - all at our expense.

Unfortunately, there are times when we are forced to evict non-paying tenants. I do not like filing evictions. It is a process that is very expensive and adversely impacts our company and our tenants. In fact, our company created a unique eviction diversion program to assist distressed tenants specifically to avoid evictions as often as possible. However, when tenants are unresponsive to our efforts to find solutions, our options are limited. Before filing an eviction, we reach out to tenants multiple times, asking them to contact us so we can work toward a solution to avoid eviction. We work cooperatively with local housing authorities to provide financial assistance to our tenants, when possible. Unfortunately, some tenants ignore our offers of help leaving us with no choice but to exercise our legal right to regain possession of our property. Even after evictions are started, we offer our tenants meaningful ways to minimize the disruption to their lives, the financial impacts and to avoid adverse impacts that an eviction may have on our tenants' ability to find alternative housing.

The eviction moratorium challenged the apartment rental business, like it did many other businesses. We had tenants who did not pay rent for well over a year. They did not respond to attempts to contact them and did not seek available rental assistance. Yet, mortgages, taxes, utilities and maintenance expenses were still due. Property owners cannot provide free housing. Our improved units are in high demand, but we have units occupied by non-paying tenants, so potential tenants are forced to wait. It is impossible to run a business without payment for services rendered.

I built this company to build a better Milwaukee for underserved communities and that remains my mission today. We strive to make decisions that benefit our tenants. From the beginning, I've tried to make changes that improve the lives of our tenants. I will continue to do my part and foster beneficial change in the city that I call home. If you want additional information, please visit our website berradaproperties.com or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BerradaPropertiesWI.

THE FACTS ARE

**WE TAKE INITIATIVE WHEN NO ONE ELSE WILL.
WE DO NOT TALK ABOUT CHANGE, WE ACT.
WE UPGRADE NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT GENTRIFYING THEM.
WE HOUSE TENANTS IN NEW UNITS, WHILE KEEPING RENT AFFORDABLE. WE DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID EVICTION.
SOME EVICTIONS ARE UNAVOIDABLE, BUT OUR EVICTION RATE REMAINS WELL BELOW NATIONAL EVICTION AVERAGES.**

THIS IS WHAT WE AT BERRADA PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT DO, AND IT IS WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO.

