Mike Deradourian grew up in Detroit, Michigan. He went to elementary school close to Highland Park, and then eventually moved to Cass Tech High School in downtown Detroit. After graduating high school, Mike joined the army and under the GI Bill was able to go to Walsh College to study accounting when his duty was over. After graduating college, Mike’s goal was to join the FBI – but he was turned away. Not letting the rejection get him down, Mike continued his career in accounting. However, Mike wasn’t satisfied. He left the accounting field and went into business on his own, starting a chain of diary stores, a furniture business and building up a portfolio of 22 homes.

Unfortunately, when the housing market crashed in 2008, Mike crashed with it. His tenants were unable to pay rent, he couldn’t pay the costs to maintain his real estate, and his furniture business was also struggling as customers weren’t paying their loans. He was forced to sell it all to ensure he didn’t lose everything to his name.

But it wasn’t just Mike that had lost everything in the recession. Mike shares that he saw the housing crisis affect the whole community. Many senior residents didn’t expect to have to struggle so much in their older age and many didn’t prepare for it.

With limited places to turn to, Mike now counts himself a lucky as resident of Heritage Park Senior Center in Taylor, Michigan. He’s lived in the building since 2018. Living in affordable housing has ensured Mike can keep his head above water, something he’s seen many neighbors and friends struggle to do in the downturn of the market, and its lingering impact.

Today, Mike is in good health and thanks to the work of the Veterans Affairs department to help him ensure he has a roof over his head. Living in the senior resident community of Heritage Park, Mike says he enjoys that there are other people in his community about the same age that he can talk to, that’s the company is easy-going and that he can afford it.

“We have a diverse population here, but we all get along real good, and we like each other. We have a lot of activities here... a lot of things that keep you active.”