

# Youth exodus, slum landlords, the township, low-interest loans

The Bethlehem Gadfly Arts, the, Fun Stuff, Neighborhoods, Touchstone Theater October 20, 2019

 60th in a series of posts on Touchstone Theatre 

Gadfly's video ran out, but Jennie Gilrain's comments at the "Poets, Troubadours, and Troublemakers" event that we just posted spurred a thoughtful five minutes of related comment from four audience members that he was able to capture on audio.

AUDIO FILES NOT AVAILABLE IN THIS ARCHIVE

**"We need to keep our young people here"**

Interesting question. How many of us have children over 20? And how many of those children are still living in Bethlehem?

**"We have a whole bunch of landlords who live in New Jersey  
who are slum lords"**

We have people living in poverty situations in apartments that cost a fortune, so they can't save enough to buy a house, forcing them to live in multi-family situations. Part of that is the result of being a college town. We've made it unaffordable for people to live here and live a decent life.

**"But people in my age bracket, they've already committed to  
the notion of a starter home and a next home, and the next  
home isn't in Bethlehem"**

It was never a question when I got married that we would live in Bethlehem. My parents never had to leave their house. But there is a

push to keep up with the Joneses and move further away in the younger age-bracket.

**“[Low-interest, down payment loans] that’s the sort of thing  
that could be arranged”**

See the example of Chicago partnering with Loyola University. Some people are trying to do this, like TD Bank on the Southside. We must find ways for people to buy homes and not rent from the landlords from New Jersey.

**Festival UnBound**

*Closed but never forgotten*