

HOUSING
IS
JUST
THE
BEGINNING

Board of Trustees

President

Adrienne Quinn

Vice President

Robin Appleford

Treasurer

Margaret Yung

Secretary

V. James (Jim) Vinson

Yvonne Blumenthal

Allan Boyce

Christopher Brown

Ken A. Carter

Marlys Erickson

Alan Grainger

Susan Delanty Jones

Reed Keeney

Lyn Krizanich

Mollie Means

Sarah Meyer

James M. (Jim) Saylor

George Smith

Nancy Smith

Mary Stevens

Julie Wade

Paul Lambros

Executive Director

Plymouth Housing Group

2209 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121

Tel: (206) 374-9409

Fax: (206) 374-0602

email@plymouthhousing.org
www.plymouthhousing.org

SPRING 2002

New project expands affordable housing options in Seattle



The newest PHG development is made possible by the Seattle Housing Levy.

Because we still believe that “one homeless person is one too many,” Plymouth Housing Group has started construction of its newest affordable housing community. Located in downtown Seattle at the corner of First Avenue and Denny Way, this project will provide safe, affordable housing to 70 formerly homeless individuals.

Board of Trustees President Adrienne Quinn is excited about this new facility. “This new project, now PHG’s 11th building, continues the work we began

22 years ago—providing safe, decent, affordable housing to very low-income people,” says Quinn. “The people we serve, often those with chronic mental illness, frequently lack family supports and fall through the gaps in the government safety net. By providing housing and services to stabilize its tenants, PHG will be creating a safety net for 70 more people with this new building.”

Construction begins as recent reports indicate a rise in homelessness and a shortfall of affordable housing in Seattle. The annual One Night Homeless Count 2001 showed a 16 percent increase over 2000 in the number of people living on city streets. Another report from the Housing Development Consortium notes that the city lacks housing that is affordable to households living below 30 percent of Seattle’s median income (SMI).

The new housing development will serve people moving from the streets, shelters and other temporary housing. Because this transition is often difficult, PHG will not simply provide housing alone. A team of Residential Stabilization Specialists will offer

Continued on page 2

It doesn’t get any better than this



Colwell tenant Thomas Johnson beams with happiness.

Thomas Johnson feels like a new man. Hard to believe, since he’s about to celebrate his 70th birthday. Even harder to believe when just four years ago he was debilitated by rheumatoid arthritis.

What gave this man a new lease on life?

Johnson credits Plymouth Housing Group.

When Johnson first came to Seattle, he quickly found a job, but was unable to secure housing. He spent many years sleeping on a

damp shelter floor. Before he moved into PHG’s Gatewood Hotel, Johnson was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, an

autoimmune disease that causes chronic inflammation and deformity of the joints. While its causes are unknown, infectious bacteria, viruses and environmental factors have long been suspected. Through the Coming Home Program, Johnson was linked to medical care to seek relief for his sore joints.

Johnson’s doctor prescribed strong drugs to battle his arthritis. They only helped a little; Johnson got worse. He was referred to Harborview Medical Center’s rheumatology division for specialized treatment. Sitting in the waiting room, Johnson saw people struggling with canes and crutches all around him and realized he had to do something.

An avid reader, Johnson hit the books, combing through the medical and diet sections of local libraries and bookstores. He

Continued on page 2

PHG says goodbye to one of its finest



Paul Lambros,
*Executive
Director*

Dear Readers,

This month I say goodbye to one of PHG's most respected employees, Housing Manager **Darlene Redmond**. After eight years of service, Darlene will be leaving us to return to her hometown of St. Louis, Mo. to care for her aging mother.

It's Darlene's work ethic and dedication that prompted me to write this letter. She came a long way with Plymouth Housing Group. In 1994, Darlene joined us at the Gatewood Hotel as assistant manager. In 1995, she moved up the ranks to building manager at the Cal Anderson House and, by 2000, Darlene was promoted to housing manager. As housing manager for Plymouth Housing Group, she supervised the operations of 10 buildings with more than 650 units of housing. All told, more than 35 building and maintenance staff members were under her management.

Her rise through the ranks is marked by her unwavering

commitment to do the best—and then do it better. We've made it a policy at PHG to provide ongoing training and to invest in our employees. Darlene took full advantage of this. She attended PHG-sponsored trainings and then put the knowledge into practice. She used her management skills to work with staff and tenants to set priorities and improve our community.

Darlene exemplifies the care and commitment set forth by our founders some 20-plus years ago. Her work ethic and dedication pushed her to do more, try harder and help those in need with compassion and understanding. She's become a model for all employees.

There is no doubt; everyone in the PHG community will miss Darlene.

Warmest wishes, Darlene.


Paul Lambros
Executive Director

First & Denny project

Continued from page 1

support to new tenants getting settled into their apartments.

"Most people who move into our buildings have very few possessions. We'll help them with the basic necessities like pots and pans, linens, and other household supplies that make a home," says Tara Connor, director of social services for PHG. "A staff team will provide much needed supportive services on-site—assisting tenants in connecting with medical services, food programs or occupational guidance. We're also planning to have Employment Services on-site. A state-of-the-art tenant computer lab to enable people to develop resumes and conduct educational and employment-related searches in a manner that is considered the 'norm' in the 21st century."

PHG prides itself on revitalizing the Seattle community, too. The new building will replace a dilapidated, vacant building with one that is in line with the architecture of the neighborhood. Stickney Murphy Romine is the architect on the project and MarPac Construction is the general contractor. ■

Pioneer Square Medical Clinic brings healthcare to PHG

Like Thomas Johnson, many of PHG's tenants have barriers to accessing medical services. Because of this, PHG nurtured a working partnership with Pioneer Square Medical Clinic to bring healthcare services to our tenants. This collaboration was recognized in December when it was awarded the 2001 Leadership Grant from the Seattle Foundation. As a result, Pioneer Square Medical Clinic, a program of Harborview Medical Center, will receive \$100,000 to conduct an innovative "Podiatry Project" to benefit PHG tenants.

Many PHG tenants were previously homeless and have unmet medical needs. Oftentimes, they do not or cannot obtain medical care for a variety of reasons. Foot care provides a non-threatening point of contact to engage individuals, assess their medical needs and facilitate appropriate care. Pioneer Square Medical Clinic has been providing podiatry services for several years and has found it to be the most effective way of bringing homeless people into the healthcare system.

Pioneer Square Medical Clinic will bring its Podiatry Project and nursing services to PHG tenants on a monthly basis. Through these efforts, clinic workers will be able to track chronic and acute medical issues, document services provided and then follow-up with medical referrals. ■

Thomas Johnson's new lease on life

Continued from page 1

discovered he had a very acidic pH level and, after consulting his doctor, he changed his diet and feels better now than ever.

Today, Johnson beams with happiness. He transferred into the David Colwell Building when it opened in May 2000, and was surprised with a one-bedroom apartment. Expecting a small studio, Johnson was moved beyond words. "I sat on the bed and started crying. My counselors, social workers, doctors—everyone's helped so much."

Johnson, a retired AARP employee, continues to visit area libraries regularly and studies ancient Egyptian history along with nutrition. "My joints don't work. Up here does," he says, gesturing to his head with a smile.

This summer, as Johnson celebrates his 70th birthday, he does so with a heart overflowing with gratitude. "It doesn't get any better than this." ■

A publication of:

PLYMOUTH HOUSING GROUP
2209 First Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98121
Tel: (206) 374-9409
Fax: (206) 374-0602

Published twice per year.
Volume 6, Issue 1

Editor:
Paul Lambros

Writers:
Kristin Adams, Mindi Plank,
Caroline Woodward

Editorial Assistance:
Gretchen Reade

Graphic Design:
Kimberley Lambert, Desktop Creations

PHG PROPERTIES

St. Charles
Scargo
William Tell
Lewiston
Gatewood
Pacific
Haddon Hall
Ponderosa
Cal Anderson House
David Colwell Building

Board spotlight on Sarah Meyer

Since joining PHG's board of trustees four years ago, Sarah Meyer's commitment to housing the homeless has been inspiring. It serves as a reminder to both board and staff members of just how important PHG's work is to the Seattle community.

"Having a roof over one's head is a basic human need," says Meyer, "and in a country as wealthy as the United States, housing should be a basic human right. Without housing, it's very hard for anyone to stay employed or to otherwise care for themselves."

She spreads that message whenever she has the chance. "I certainly take the opportunity to tell people about PHG and its important work," she adds. "I tell people about its mission and how the agency provides housing and support to some of the most difficult to serve individuals in the community. I am very impressed by the PHG staff and the incredible energy and creativity they apply to their work; PHG is one of the best run nonprofit organizations in Seattle, in my opinion."

Meyer is currently employed as senior program manager in Microsoft's Community Affairs Department. When asked about the increase in workplace gifts from Microsoft employees that are directed to PHG, Meyer humbly denies credit for the trend.

"I'm not sure if my actions alone account for a 'trend.' Perhaps it's just word of mouth... I tell someone



*"Having a roof over one's head is a basic human need, and in a country as wealthy as the United States, housing should be a basic human right."
—Board Member Sarah Meyer*

per year, per employee."

Last year, Microsoft made matching grants totaling \$17 million. The company's contribution to PHG was the highest among private workplace campaigns directed to the agency.

Meyer has a notable background working with nonprofit organizations. She previously worked for the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and was the managing director of the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses in New York City. In addition to her service to PHG's board of trustees and its Resource Development Committee, she also serves on the boards of the National Technology Enterprise Network and Town Hall Seattle, and is a commissioner on the Washington State Arts Commission. ■

and they in turn tell someone else." She adds, "The culture of giving is very much a part of Microsoft. Since 1986, the company has had a very generous matching gift program. The company will match an employee's gift to an eligible nonprofit, dollar for dollar up to \$12,000

Employment Services expands

Each day, people come to our Rental Office looking for housing. For varied reasons, they lost their jobs, lost their homes and are in crisis. But they aren't just looking for a roof over their heads. They aren't just looking for a handout. They are looking for a chance to make something positive happen in their lives.

For this reason, PHG offers Employment Services. Started in 1999 to help tenants secure and maintain employment, this service was expanded in 2001 to serve individuals on the waiting list as well.

"The program was expanded to serve our waiting list because people who are homeless often find themselves caught in a Catch 22," says Bob Almquist, employment services manager. "They need a job to earn an income to pay for housing, but if they don't have a place to call home, potential employers can't even contact them to set up an interview. Now we can help them do that."

Now, tenants and housing applicants alike are eligible to set up free voice mail and e-mail accounts to communicate with potential employers. They can also use our fax machines and computers to send out résumés and applications.

Employment Services provides assistance in career targeting, job searches and job placement as well. Working with employment specialists, individuals learn how to acquire soft skills such as problem solving, communication and teamwork, while developing a good work ethic.

By inviting housing applicants to benefit from Employment Services, PHG is hoping to reduce its waiting list and prevent long-term homelessness. ■

Looking to fill that vacant position?

Did you know that PHG Employment Services can help your company find qualified workers?

Just ask our own human resources manager, Moselle Horiuchi, who often hires tenants who have gone through the program. "We've been thrilled with the quality of applicants referred by Employment Services. Their stamp of approval makes my job a lot easier."

That's because Employment Services also benefits the employer by preparing applicants for work. Many of PHG's desk staff, assistant managers and maintenance positions have been filled by tenants and housing applicants. Oftentimes, these applicants have an edge over other job seekers because they have learned valuable workplace skills like conflict resolution and time management through Employment Services.

Even more training options are becoming available now that Employment Services is developing computer classes to teach job seekers the basics of commonly used software programs like MS Outlook and MS Word.

PHG Employment Services is also planning to expand job preparation services to include an on-the-job training component. This job-shadowing program will help individuals learn building maintenance skills while working in PHG properties.

"I couldn't be happier," says Horiuchi. "We try very hard to hire and promote from within the PHG community. This new training program will give tenants the edge over other applicants." ■

Workers give to help the homeless

Workplace campaigns make it easy and convenient for employees to give through payroll deductions, cash pledges or stock donations. Companies frequently provide education to employees about making informed giving decisions, and often reinforce their commitment to the community by matching employees' gifts.

A great example is the Microsoft Employee Giving Program. Microsoft matches its employees' gifts dollar for dollar. The company also encourages volunteerism and donations of other resources, such as knowledge and expertise. Microsoft received the KCTS 2002 Good Works Corporate Citizen Award for its commitment to the local community and its matching gift program.

Ask your employer about workplace giving and designate PHG for your gift! ■

To learn more about PHG or starting a workplace campaign, call PHG's resource development director, Caroline Woodward, at (206) 374-9409, ext. 120.

Are you looking for qualified, pre-screened applicants?

Call Employment Services at (206) 381-1321 to learn more!

At Microsoft, you can simply designate Plymouth Housing Group as listed on the Microsoft Employee Website.

For other workplace campaigns, use these designation numbers so you can make sure PHG benefits from your generosity at work:

United Way of King County #11536

Housing Development Consortium Campaign (HDC) #17007

Inside:

- New housing project at First & Denny
- Employment Services expands
- Board spotlight on Sarah Meyer

PLYMOUTH HOUSING GROUP

2209 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98121

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT #22



THE FUTURE BEFORE US

An end to homelessness—it's why we work so hard every day. It's why so many people volunteer their time to PHG's mission. It's also why the board of trustees and PHG's senior management team gather every year in January for a weekend retreat to review our responsiveness to the crisis of homelessness.

This year, we focused on the opportunities ahead of us and our abilities to do more for our neighbors in need. Led by management consultant, Judy Clegg, of *Clegg and Associates*, the board and staff laid a plan for expansion aimed to increase affordable housing production and comple-

mentary supportive services.

The analysis included looking at the demographics of our tenant population and determining what it takes to offer the highest quality housing and services. One directive that came out of the retreat is to address the needs of PHG tenants who are aging in place. This means focusing our energies to develop more appropriate housing, services and updated accommodations to meet the changing needs of seniors.

Another directive focuses on expanding our expertise to help other housing providers to end homelessness. We may consider entrepreneurial services in tax

credit compliance or building maintenance.

Yet another directive is to market ourselves and get our name out. As one PHG trustee said, "We are the best kept secret in Seattle. It's time to change that!" To do so, we will implement a community education project in concert with a branding campaign. Plans are underway to develop relationships with the businesses and residents in our neighborhoods and to become better stewards in our community. ■

Please support PHG's efforts

- **Donate funds (cash, credit, stock, planned gifts)** to PHG so that we may better serve the needs of Seattle's homeless and very-low-income residents. Consider a gift to our **Tenant Endowment Fund** and **remember PHG in your will**. Send your contribution in the enclosed envelope, or contact Caroline Woodward at (206) 374-9409, ext. 120, or cwoodward@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Provide household items** for the Tenant Supply Closet, such as bedding, towels, toiletries, kitchenware, books, pens, paper, board games and videos. Please contact Jan Chapman at (206) 381-1320, or jchapman@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Serve as a volunteer** in a PHG building. PHG is now seeking volunteers to serve as Tenant Supply Closet Attendants and Coffee Hour Attendants. For details, contact Jan Chapman at (206) 381-1320, or jchapman@plymouthhousing.org.
- **Serve as an advocate** for the homeless in your neighborhood. Share information with others who are interested in learning about housing, homelessness and poverty in Seattle. Then acquaint them with PHG and our mission.
- **Leave a legacy** to PHG! Check out www.leavelegacy.org.