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NORTHWEST news

ON THE HOUSE

Equity Foundation establishes Paul Higgins Endowment Fund
by Pat Young

Equity Foundation recently established a \$100,000 endowment fund to provide housing support for people with HIV or AIDS.

The fund is named after its benefactor, Paul D. Higgins, who in 1996 deeded his North Portland home to Equity with the understanding that his son, Christopher, could live there for the final years of his life. Christopher died of AIDS last year. Equity then took on the task of preparing the house for sale. It was an extremely generous gift, and Equity was proud to carry out Higgins' wishes by establishing this new endowment fund.

Kraus was the project manager who put in more than 175 hours getting the house ready. He brought in contractors for some tasks such as painting the inside and outside, removing bars from the windows, taking down part of the back deck and fixing the floors and countertops. But he also did a lot of work himself—replacing light fixtures and towel racks with higher-quality items. He invested time in the little touches that can make a house look significantly better, as well as increase the sale price.

It was easy for him to join the project, especially after his partner, Steve Dotterrer, who happens to be co-chairman of the Equity board,



The proceeds from the sale of this North Portland bungalow will be the seed money for an endowment fund that will provide housing assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS

But the organization couldn't have done it without the help and expertise of Kathy MacNaughton, Kevin Kraus and Donna Meyer.

When Equity asked MacNaughton to help them value the property and ultimately list it, she didn't hesitate to join the project by donating her time and services. She was, at one time, a board member for the organization and has a great deal of respect for the dedication and professionalism of the volunteers and staff.

"It's such a wonderful way for me to have an impact on the Equity Foundation," says MacNaughton, owner of MacNaughton Group Realty Trust. "I am able to give them services that are expensive, and it's just a win-win situation. It allows me to provide them with assistance in an area in which I am an expert, and I can make a large donation this way."

What really made this project fun for MacNaughton was seeing everybody roll up their sleeves and get involved, especially Kraus. "Talk about dedication and work," she says of his effort to prepare the house for sale. "When it came time for the property to go on the market, it was a dream come true. So the volunteers and the organization are the ones who really made it happen, not me. I was there as one piece in a really wonderful effort by everyone."

told him that there was this "opportunity" for him if he wanted to "volunteer," explains Kraus with a laugh.

"I knew I was getting into a lot of work, but it was so up my alley," says Kraus, who works for Reach Community Development, a nonprofit housing corporation in Portland. "It was a fun job and a way for me to make a big difference money-wise for Equity."

Another person who made this project a success was Meyer, partner at the law firm of Fitzwater and Meyer. The Equity newsletter reports that she "and her team led by Phil Hingson resolved an issue with a lien and cleared the title for sale. Their work eliminated a \$17,000 debt that had been carried on the property."

MacNaughton and Kraus acknowledge another important aspect of the project. Not only did the improvements to the house increase the property value, but their work also improved the neighborhood.

"It was really neat to walk away knowing that not only did the Equity Foundation raise money for a terrific cause and lived up to the wishes of the donor, but we also left the community better," says MacNaughton. □

PAT YOUNG is a Portland free-lance writer and gay and lesbian historian.