



HOUSING *Special Edition*

Home Buying Help Offered Free workshops at Reflections

Buying a home just got a little less intimidating.

A free workshop sponsored by broker Loretta Chandler and John L. Scott Real Estate is offered to prospective home buyers on Thursday, March 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Reflections Coffee and Books located at 455 N.E. Killingsworth St.

A home buyers presentation will cover financing qualifications, FHA and VA financing, title and escrow procedure, fixers, investment property, and more.

An array of property currently on the market in select Portland neighborhoods and surrounding communities will be on display.

A mortgage broker will be available to discuss financing and to start the home loan pre-qualification process.

For more information, call 503-435-7280.

Land Trust Program Keeps Homes Affordable

Brings down the cost of a purchase

Harmonia Murray won't sugarcoat her experience of looking for a house.

"It was depressing," she said. "There is a lot of anticipation in home buying."

The homes Murray could afford on the open market were "fixer-uppers," houses that would take a lot of money and time to make livable for her and her three teenage daughters.

While taking a Home Buying class at Portland Housing Center, Murray learned about the Portland Community Land Trust (PCLT).

PCLT is a nonprofit, community organization that safeguards land in the Portland community to provide affordable homeownership opportunities. PCLT creates permanent affordability by bringing the land under the house into trust, thus the purchase price and mortgage payments are 30 to 40 percent below market value. When a family decides to sell a Portland Commu-



Harmonia Murray (center) found a home for her family through Portland Community Land Trust.

nity Last Trust, the home is resold to another family with limited income, thus keeping the house affordable for future generations.

Using her personal savings and PCLT funds, Murray closed on a home that met all of her priorities: a Concordia bungalow with a base-

ment and fireplace, access to bus stops, and close to work, schools and affordable grocery stores. It also met her need for affordability.

After all of her hard work, Murray said that she "likes the feeling of independence when she comes home," and that "this home means freedom."

Sales prices are set at levels that give income qualified buyers a reasonable monthly mortgage payment. Homes currently for sale in north and northeast Portland through PCLT include newly constructed two bedroom town homes for \$109,900, a duplex that is being built on the Interstate Max line, and a newly renovated four bedroom older home in the Kenton neighborhood.

Portland Community Land Trust is committed to increasing the opportunities for low and moderate income residents to achieve the freedom of homeownership. Free orientations are held regularly to introduce interested home buyers to the program and the homes that are currently available. The next one is Wednesday, March 23 from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the PCLT office, 3109 B N.E. Broadway. If you would like to learn more about PCLT's homes for sale, please contact 503-493-0293 or check out www.pclt.org

New Columbia: Fresh start for an old neighborhood



Siblings Brenda and Gordo Prestegui were residents of Columbia Villa before the reconstruction.

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already gentrified Alberta Street, it makes one wonder where the "diversity" of the neighborhoods come in.

"If it happens slowly nobody pays attention," Wilhelm said. "It's got to be tough for people who have lived there for generations."

Arbutnot said that hopefully with New Columbia, this won't happen and residents will begin their new lives with the old sense of community.

"We would like to see the residents be empowered to have a say in how the formation of their community goes," she said. "To also be mindful of what was there before, what were the strengths, the safety of the children, of people looking out for each other?"

Appeal of new homes

The hurdles seem somewhat fragile at times, but thankfully the Housing Authority of Portland has made a conscious effort to stay in touch with all the former residents during their displacement.

"They've continued to offer the services and help to keep them readjusted so that it doesn't feel that these people are abandoned so that this isn't a big land grab," Arbutnot said. "I do think that systems are putting put in place. It feels like it has a pretty good chance."

While the neighborhood was greatly affected by a temporary move, many are looking forward to coming back.

"There are some people who have never lived in a brand new home," Arbutnot said.

"From the moment we began talking with people, they said it's going to be



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The New Columbia site will feature 850 units, including public housing, affordable rental housing, elderly housing and homes for sale.

great," Wilhelm added. "We're going to have parks, we're going to have open space. We're going to have our neighbors around us again. I think there are enough people that are going to come back to find if not their old neighbors, they'll find similarities in their new neighbors. It's the people's will to make this work."

Arbutnot credited the Housing Authority for listening to the residents.

"They are empowering the residents," Arbutnot said. "There is a great sense of hope that a lot of people are expressing."

Wilhelm hopes that with the documentary, a project sponsored by the Oregon Film and Video Foundation, the old

residents of Columbia Villa can come to understand themselves better and be aware of the changes coming.

"There's a theory out there in physics. Every time you observe something it changes that thing. I think by us observing (the people impacted by the relocation) there may have been some positive change," Wilhelm said.

"We're interviewed more than 75 people," he said. "We've been able to help out a little bit, a small way to maybe push for a higher rate of success for this."

For more information on New Columbia, visit www.hapdx.org. For more information on the documentary, call 503-287-3731.

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Portland Community Land Trust offers:

- Quality homes at affordable prices (income qualifications apply)
- Shared appreciation that ensures affordability for the next buyer
- Support through the home buying process



Want to learn more?

Attend a free
PCLT Homeownership Orientation:
Wednesday, March 23rd, 6:30-7:30 pm
Thursday, April 7th, 6:30-7:30 pm
Tuesday, April 19th, 6:30-7:30 pm

Call for more information: 503-493-0293 or visit our website at www.pclt.org

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