

Teaming Up for Affordable Housing

Walnut Park remodel saved a community asset

In June 2010, REACH Community Development reopened the newly renovated Walnut Park Apartments, in order to preserve and maintain much-needed affordable homes for northeast Portland seniors, located in the heart of the King neighborhood.

REACH teamed up the City of Portland to identify Walnut Park as one of 11 Portland-area properties in danger of being sold and losing their affordable rents. The apartments are available for rent to those earning less than 50 percent of area median family income.

Resident Mazell Rudder couldn't be more thrilled.

"Working with REACH has been wonderful," Rudder said. "This new building has brought so much joy and peace within me to see the project coming together, and the change in the atmosphere."

The kind words underscore the residents' reaction to the dramatic transformation.

The building is located in a neighborhood where long-time residents,



PHOTO BY CARLTON HART ARCHITECTURE

In an effort to preserve affordable housing for longtime senior residents in a predominately African-American neighborhood of northeast Portland, REACH Community Development acquired the Walnut Park apartments. They engaged Carlton Hart Architecture to upgrade the 20-plus-year-old building.

particularly seniors living on fixed incomes, are being displaced from the community. Nearly one third of the residents living at Walnut are over 80 years old.

"As change accelerates in rapidly gentrifying neighborhoods like those surrounding Walnut Park, longtime residents living on fixed incomes are especially at risk of being displaced,"

says REACH's Housing Development Project Manager Jessica Woodruff. "Walnut Park is a perfect example of how community partners came together to save existing af-

fordable housing and create a sustainable asset for the neighborhood."

REACH is teaming up with the Urban League of Portland to provide senior services and referrals to Walnut residents. The completely renovated apartment building features smoke-free units, raised planting beds for gardens, a new computer lab, ADA upgrades and several sustainability updates to improve indoor air quality and water conservation.

Energy improvements are saving an estimated 100,000 kilowatt hours in the first year. LMC Construction and Carleton Hart Architecture donated the new raised planting beds, planters, and pergola flooring.

Funding for the Walnut Park Apartments project was provided by Bank of America, Meyer Memorial Trust, Network for Oregon Affordable Housing, Oregon Housing and Community Services, Portland Housing Bureau, and the U.S. Dept of Housing and Urban Development. The development team included REACH Community Development, LMC Construction, Carleton Hart Architecture, and the Housing Development Center. Walnut Park Apartments are located at 5272 N.E. Sixth Ave. For renting information at REACH properties, call 503-231-0682 or visit reachcdc.org.



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