

Generations

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Residents have increased need for Resident Connections support

"Once we pay rent, I usually don't have enough money to pay for other things we need – like D'Angelo's diapers or milk," said Melissa Skinaway.

She's a mom doing the best she can to provide for her three-year-old son, trying, as she says, "to make it work."

She's one of numerous Aeon residents who feel the heavy impact of the economic downturn. With her hours cut significantly, Melissa worked only two days in the month of June. D'Angelo's father has been out of work for several months. Even with a quality place to live at an affordable cost, they are forced to make impossible choices between rent and food, or rent and medication.

"It's been really hard. I have to make a lot of difficult choices," Melissa said.

She isn't alone. Aeon's Resident Connections staff has noted an increase in the number of residents seeking help to maintain their stability in their homes. Resident Connections staff connects residents to existing community resources – food shelves, emergency assistance and job programs – to help maintain stability.

And, in cases like Melissa's, Resident Connections establishes a rental payment plan to keep her and D'Angelo in their home.

"I'll have more hours in July," Melissa said optimistically. "I'll do all that I can to keep my home for me & my son."

The cost of Resident Connections

Aeon's Resident Connections program supports successful residency by focusing on resident engagement and access to community support systems. This program is completely funded by private contributions from individual donors and foundations.

- It takes \$1,000 to provide one week of stabilizing resources and Resident Connections services to 124 formerly homeless individuals.
- The cost of having 34 residents, who are teetering on the edge of instability, participate in Aeon's eviction prevention program is \$5,000.



Melissa and three-year-old D'Angelo utilize Aeon's Resident Connections program to help maintain their stability

A Message from the President



About a month ago a homeless man came into our office looking for me. John had heard that I was the guy who could help get him off of the street. He asked if he could get into one of our properties for homeless people. When I told John the wait was at least nine months, he wept.

John's situation is troubling, but it also motivates me. There are too many individuals and families who are homeless, or are forced to make choices between rent and food.

Your support of Aeon is truly a gift to the 3,000 people in Aeon's quality affordable apartment homes. Still, 10,000 Minnesotans have no home and more than 35,000 are precariously housed.

Aeon is poised this year to begin construction on 250 quality affordable apartment homes, including 85 for homeless individuals. Unfortunately, these projects are difficult to move forward. The current economy has thrown us a curveball, and we have a \$5 million funding gap. Our board and staff are working tirelessly to make these homes happen. But it is work we cannot do alone!

Precisely because of economic and community challenges, now is not the time for any of us to be passive...now is not the time to sit and wait. Now is the time for focus, creative engagement and collaboration.

Today, Aeon is more relevant than ever before in our 23 year history. Bottom line: there are just not enough decent, quality, affordable homes for people...that's why your support of our vision that everyone has a home – is so vital to our work.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Arthur', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alan Arthur
Aeon President

Getting the help he needed

Both Tiffany (my girlfriend) and I lived at Alliance Apartments. It offered a sober living environment – and an opportunity to slowly build on my character and find the strength to gain momentum in my sobriety.

I grew up in somewhat of a dysfunctional family. From a young age, I was looking for something and that something turned out to be trouble.

I drank heavily and took my drinking problems with me when I joined the Navy. At one port, the ship set sail without me...but I still didn't believe I had problem.

I left the Navy after four years of service. I was working and doing reasonably well until my 4-year-old daughter died in a car accident.

Eventually, I became addicted to drugs. Shortly after meeting Tiffany, we started selling drugs. It became a vicious cycle. I hated to wake up because I knew I was going to get high, fight with Tiffany and then get high again. I was in a hole, and I didn't know how to get out.

I was in and out of jail for drug charges. Both Tiff and I went in and out of treatment. Then one time, she said, "If you want to be with me, you better get sober." I saw how well she was doing at Alliance Apartments, so I made a choice to take the same path.

My apartment at Alliance was small, but it was mine. It left me with a choice. I could've gone out and got high. But I didn't – and that choice gave me strength.

Now, I have more than three years of sobriety and I'm working full time. This past spring, we moved into our own apartment. I'm blessed that I was afforded the opportunity to live at Alliance and that I was able leave my space for the next person who needs it.



Guests at the Beyond Bricks & Mortar breakfast heard Tiffany Robertson, a former Aeon resident, tell her story. Her boyfriend, Joseph Kloster, wanted to share his story as a way to thank those who support Aeon's mission.

New and Newsworthy

Supporting Aeon's mission at Beyond Bricks & Mortar

The generosity of more than 850 people helped raise nearly \$400,000 at Aeon's Beyond Bricks & Mortar fundraising breakfast!

Thanks to a matching grant from the Frey Family Foundation, Cummins Power Generation and Carval, Aeon welcomed 32 new and 10 renewed Cornerstone Society Members who pledged a minimum of \$1,000 per year for five years. By giving multi-year pledges, Cornerstone Society Members serve as the foundation of Aeon's organizational sustainability.

Thank you to all of the donors for supporting Aeon's mission to create quality affordable homes.

Still, there's more work to do! The event was \$50,000 short of its fundraising goal (that's just a \$25 gift from each person receiving this newsletter!). If you weren't able to attend, but would like to help meet our community's need for affordable homes, please use the giving envelope inside this newsletter.



"My Home"

The band Mighty Fairly debuted its original song "My Home" at Beyond Bricks & Mortar. The lyrics were penned especially for Aeon:

*I made some choices I think I might regret,
I built up some debt. Love my kids, work two
jobs, you hear what I said, can you hear what
I said, can you hear it yet?
I need a place to be.*

*Don't you know that I need a place for my
head, a room for my bed.*

*Want a safe home for us, some new inno-
cence, can you see what I said, can you see
it yet?*

*I need a place to be a father and provide for
my family, my family.*

*Got a place, yeah, it's clean, some commu-
nity, smiling at me.*

*Got a sigh of relief, you know what I mean,
when you've seen what I've seen, can you see
it yet?*

*Don't want a place alone...friends and
neighbors, a life to call my home, my home.
Finally found a place to call my home, my
home, my home.*

Listen to "My Home" – and watch the music video that demonstrates what "my home" means to members of the community – at www.aeonmn.org.

Aeon's newest project draws multiple awards



Since celebrating its grand opening in May, The Wellstone Apartments have received local and national recognition, including "top project" by Finance and Commerce and "Green Building of America Award" from Real Estate & Construction Review. Pictured at the grand opening celebration are: Leah Walls, fiancé of David Wellstone; Mary Keefe, executive director of Hope Community (co-developer on the project); David Wellstone; and Alan Arthur, Aeon President.

Our Vision:

Every person has a home and is interconnected within community

Our mission:

To create and sustain quality affordable homes that strengthen lives and communities

Established in 1986, Aeon has built or renovated 1,705 units of quality affordable homes and serves more than 3,000 people annually.

Learn More:

- Attend Building Dreams, a one hour informational session and tour.
Register today at:
www.aeonmn.org/bd
or email jjohnson@aeonmn.org.
- Download Aeon's Annual Report at www.aeonmn.org/2008



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4 Construction/Development Updates



Har Mar

Har Mar Apartments – Aeon’s second suburban property – will serve as a model for transforming a struggling, outdated apartment building into a vibrant, sustainable community asset. A groundbreaking event on August 6 will celebrate the first phase of development – the preservation of 120 existing one-bedroom apartments built in 1968. The second phase is new construction of approximately 50 two- and three-bedroom apartments to meet the need for affordable homes for families in Roseville.



Renaissance Box

Aeon is continuing to secure funding to transform the historic O’Donnell Shoe Factory into a vibrant residential building offering 70 efficiency, one- and two-bedroom apartments. The property will offer a range of affordability, primarily for artists and individuals working service sector jobs in downtown St. Paul.



Alliance Addition

The Alliance Addition will create 61 units and preserve a vacant, boarded house in the Elliot Park neighborhood of Minneapolis. The development will be adjacent to the Alliance Apartments, an award-winning collaboration between Aeon, RS Eden and Alliance Housing. A groundbreaking event was held in spring, and official construction is expected to start by fall.