



Generations

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A new lease on life

“Mommy, I want to live with you, but you don’t have a home.”

The words of her 7-year-old son pierced Billie Sue Pruitt’s heart – and changed her life forever.

“I knew right then I had to turn my life around,” Pruitt said. “I needed to quit taking drugs and find a stable home. I needed to take a stand for myself and my two children.”

Pruitt had become homeless when she and her husband separated six years ago. She was forced to leave the house that her mother-in-law had purchased as their wedding gift – and bounced between family, friends, shelters and hotels.

Without safe, stable housing, it was difficult for her children to visit Pruitt. The only time her son and daughter could stay overnight with her was when she could scrape together enough money to stay in a hotel.

“The more I couldn’t find a place to live, the more I turned to drugs to cope. It was dreadful,” she said. “I didn’t want my kids coming to visit me at hotels anymore.”

“When I signed my lease, I became a different person”

Even after going through treatment and becoming sober, Pruitt had difficulty finding a home because of her history of homelessness and drug addiction.

She was denied housing five times and was beginning to lose hope, until she learned about Clover Field Marketplace, Aeon’s first suburban development, which opened in Chaska this fall.

“When I first saw Clover Field Marketplace, I thought there was no way I was ever going to get in,” Pruitt said. “It was so nice. Why would I get into a beautiful place like this?”

Then she learned that six apartment homes were designated to help formerly homeless individuals, like her, get back on their feet. To help these individuals maintain stability and prevent a relapse into homelessness, Aeon partners with a social services provider to offer support.

Today, Pruitt is looking forward to celebrating the holidays in her new home. Pruitt says she can see the difference in her children’s eyes and in their spirits when they visit. “They are happy. When they are here on weekends, we can go to bed and not have to worry about having enough money to stay at the hotel the next night.”

“When I signed my lease, I became a different person. I feel like I’ve been given a brand new life and a chance to start over.”



After being homeless for six years, Billie Sue Pruitt is grateful for the stability that Clover Field Marketplace provides her and her children.



Nearly 80 guests attended the grand opening of Clover Field Marketplace to help Aeon celebrate its first suburban development. Clover Field Marketplace offers 117 apartment homes and commercial space.

Investing in our neighborhoods and neighbors

Brian Woolsey is one of 32,000 drivers that cross the intersection of Franklin and Portland Avenues every day – which means he has a “front seat view” of the Franklin Portland Gateway construction.

Woolsey watched as the finishing touches were completed on the third phase of the Gateway last month, bringing even more quality apartment homes and commercial space to an intersection that was once ridden with crime.

“It’s good to see investment in an area of our community that was blighted and vacant,” said Woolsey, who volunteers with Aeon and financially supports its mission.

“I drive Park Avenue on my way into work and Portland on my way out – and I see Aeon properties on both avenues,” explained Woolsey. “I see the positive impact Aeon has on my community. It goes further than housing – the organization is improving my neighborhood.”

Woolsey first became involved with Aeon five years ago when a business associate introduced him to Aeon. He quickly became an advocate of affordable housing and organized two volunteer opportunities for his friends to learn about Aeon’s impact in the Twin Cities.

Most recently, Woolsey organized two Building Dreams informational sessions and property tours for co-workers and friends to gain a better understanding about the need for affordable apartment homes.

Woolsey is committed to Aeon’s mission not only because it invests in the community, but also because it makes a difference in the lives of many families and individuals.

“Aeon’s work has a profound effect on our community – and our neighbors. The pride and ownership of the residents I meet is always noticeable. They are always grateful for a place to call home,” he said.



By organizing volunteer opportunities and informational Building Dreams sessions, Brian Woolsey (back row, second from right) helped his friends and colleagues learn more about Aeon’s investment in the community.

Third phase of the Franklin Portland Gateway complete

The Wellstone opened this month and welcomed its first residents just in time for the holiday season!

The Wellstone – providing 49 apartment homes and 7,000 square feet of commercial and community space – is the third phase of the Franklin Portland Gateway development. The Gateway, a partnership between Aeon and Hope Community, transforms a formerly blighted and vacant urban intersection into a vibrant place to live and work.

Look for a “Home for the Holidays” story highlighting the Wellstone in the homes section of the Star Tribune on December 20 – and stay tuned for the Wellstone’s grand opening celebration in 2009!



The Wellstone welcomed its first residents this month.

New and Newsworthy

Home for the holidays

The holiday season often inspires us to reflect upon the things for which we are grateful.

At Aeon, we are grateful for individuals like you, who support our mission to create and sustain quality affordable homes that strengthen lives and communities.

To remind you of the impact you have on the 2,700 people you helped serve this year, we asked several residents: How does home impact your life?

We hope you find their responses as inspiring as we do:

“My home is very peaceful. On my fixed income, I’m very grateful and blessed to be part of Aeon’s family.”

-Shar

“Home life affects the way you feel at work, in school and in the community - as well as in personal relationships. If you are not comfortable at home, you can’t be fully functional in the world.”

-Kantrell

“I have a roof over my head. Thank you! I am blessed that I am not homeless. I have a job and...I thank Aeon for everything.”

-Shirley

“Living here is wonderful. My home is safe and I’m doing okay.”

-Curt



Frey family foundation supports Aeon through challenge grant

The Frey Family Foundation has supported Aeon through a challenge grant to help create quality, affordable apartment homes.

The Frey Foundation is matching – dollar for dollar – any new or renewed Cornerstone Society gifts (up to a combined total of \$50,000) To date, four individuals have doubled the impact of their gift by giving through this matching grant.

Members of the Cornerstone Society support Aeon’s mission through a pledge of \$1,000 a year for five years. The Cornerstone Society forms the foundation of Aeon’s long-term fundraising success and organizational sustainability. Aeon has nearly 120 Cornerstone Society members who help make it possible for Aeon to serve 2,700 people each year.

For more information on the matching grant, contact Joanne Kosciolik at 612-341-3148 ext. 207 or jkosciolik@aeonmn.org

Aeon inducted into local hall of fame

Aeon’s East Village development and President Alan Arthur were two of 16 inaugural inductees into the new Twin Cities Community Development Hall of Fame.

Last Month East Village was honored as “one of the area’s first mixed-income, mixed-use projects that established a new, higher standard of design for projects throughout the Twin Cities.”

Arthur was commended for “creating innovative projects that have redefined the nature of affordable housing in the Twin Cities.”

The Community Development Hall of Fame was created by Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) to honor outstanding accomplishments in the field of community development.



Pictured left to right: Wilt Berger of Miller Hanson; Dale Forsberg of Watson Forsberg; Carletta Sweet, Aeon Board Chair; Alan Arthur; Andriana Abariotes of Twin Cities LISC; and Jim Roth of MCCD during the awards ceremony recognizing East Village as an innovative development. Photo credit: Chris Scott Photography.

Construction/Development Updates



Har Mar

Located in Roseville, Har Mar is Aeon's second suburban property. Aeon plans to rehabilitate the site's existing 120 apartments and construct an additional 50 two- and three-bedroom apartment homes. The development will transition older multi-housing stock into desirable, sustainable workforce homes. Rehabilitation is expected to start in fall 2009.



Renaissance Box

Aeon plans to preserve the historic Renaissance Box building, a former shoe factory, to offer affordability to St. Paul's downtown workforce. The historic and sustainable preservation of the vacant building will create 65-70 efficiency, one- and two-bedroom apartment homes. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2009.



Alliance Addition

Building off the success of the Alliance Apartments, Alliance Addition will create 61 apartments for formerly homeless adults and preserve a vacant, boarded house in Minneapolis. The new development will be adjacent to Alliance Apartments, which currently has a 300-person waitlist. Construction will begin early 2009.

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 1,669 units of quality affordable homes and serves more than 2,700 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.



Homes for Generations

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