



Homes for Generations



Generations

December 2010

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Building a foundation and fulfilling dreams

The beautiful exterior of Alliance Addition was radiant in the sunlight, but standing less than 50 yards from its entrance, Hennepin County Commissioner Gail Dorfman was inspired more by what lay beyond the bricks and mortar of Aeon's newest development. "The great thing about this," Dorfman said at the October 18 Grand Opening celebration, "is that when these doors open, they will do so for a whole lot of people who have dreams for themselves and dreams for their future that have been hard to realize. Yet, coming through these doors, finally their dreams are going to come true."

Featuring 61 new and sustainable affordable apartment homes, Alliance Addition will support individuals in their transition out of long-term homelessness based on the award-winning, sober living environment of Alliance Apartments and service provider RS Eden.

Artiste Mayfield has been an Alliance resident for nearly three years, and has seen this model give life to her own dreams.

"I'm looking at people that have built on my foundation," Artiste said as she surveyed the Grand Opening crowd of nearly 200 people. "I've been looking at this house over here as they were building it, and I saw them put the foundation down. I remember coming into this house and stepping onto my foundation."

Speaking with a hero's determination and a wide smile, Artiste continued, "I keep myself going forward, knowing that somebody is building on me like they built on that house over there. My husband is part of my dream, and we're part of going forward, not backwards. I want to thank everyone for building on my foundation."



Alliance resident Artiste Mayfield with her husband, Ronnie Mayfield.

Beginning in November, Alliance Addition will be a home to those who have been without. It will provide the opportunity for individuals to turn their own key, step onto their foundation and begin to build their dreams.



A Message from the President/CEO



Season's Greetings! This is a salutation often heard at this time of year, and for good reason. When I hear that phrase, Aeon's vision comes into even sharper focus. The holidays are all about home and being interconnected within community.

Many of our most treasured holiday traditions occur at home. Without home, there would be nowhere to gather around a Thanksgiving meal. Without home, there would be nowhere to decorate, nowhere to warmly rest, nowhere to welcome loved ones.

Holidays are a time of community, of coming together with friends and family to rejoice with, and for, each other. Without the personal relationships that bond us within community, there would be no gathering around tables, no celebrations, and no warm embraces given or received.

Without home and without community, there are no holidays — there is only a string of shorter days and longer nights, of deep cold and deeper loneliness. For 13,000 homeless Minnesotans, this is reality.

Aeon's vision is that everyone has a home and is interconnected within community. In this newsletter are stories of new homes, new partnerships, and the power of community. This holiday season I invite you to give a gift that will allow us to share another story — one in which every Minnesotan can give thanks and spread cheer.

Wishing you a warm, safe holiday season, home, and life,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Arthur'.

Alan Arthur, President/CEO

The “complete joy” of home

When the key turned and the door opened, the space within was instantly transformed. Prior to this November 1 morning, the efficiency unit was first a vision, then an architectural design, then a construction site, then a finished product. With his first step inside, this apartment at Alliance Addition became Steven Simon's home.

“Wow,” was all Steven could muster as he looked around his home for the first time. As he passed by the kitchen: “a microwave!” And again, while moving from window to closet to bathroom and back, “wow.”

For Steven, home is both an end and a beginning. It is an end to a journey of homelessness that has taken him from a shelter in Las Vegas to Minneapolis' Salvation Army in April. Home is also his beginning — a foundation of stability and, hopefully, health. Debilitating migraines and sleep apnea began Steven's descent into homelessness, but now in Minnesota, he will have access to the medical attention he needs.

“I can't even describe this feeling,” Steven said while leaning against his very own door frame. “Just complete joy. So much joy.”



Steven Simon at Alliance Addition.



The simplicity of generosity

When Tashia Weisenburger, Aeon's Volunteer Program Manager, first received a call to pick up a donation of cleaning supplies, she figured the space available in her car would be sufficient. However, Tashia would soon be coordinating a fork lift and delivery truck to procure an estimated \$15,000 worth of donated supplies, including enough garbage bags to keep all 33 Aeon properties clean through 2011.

The genesis of this generosity can be traced to Connect — a group of young professionals in the Twin Cities looking to further Aeon's vision. While organizing an early-fall donation drive, Lynette Dumalag, a member of Connect, contacted her friend Brad Thompson at Diversified Distribution Systems, Inc. Following a couple of quick internal phone calls and a check of unused stock, Brad was phoning Tashia with the news.

"Once everything came together, it was actually pretty simple," Brad commented. "In just a few minutes of people's time and with a generous donation by our owner (Ila Courtney), we were able to produce something fairly substantial."

Brad credits Lynette for his inspiration. "Lynette's enthusiasm is wonderful, and she is very passionate about Aeon. Knowing what I know about her, if Aeon was that important to her, it was easy for me to follow through because I knew these materials were going to be utilized properly and for a good cause."

Thanks to a handful of phone calls and some big hearts, sustaining the beauty and cleanliness of Aeon properties will be that much easier.

Help give Aeon residents a strong start in their new home. View our wish list at: www.aeonmn.org/wish_list



East Village caretaker Michael Miller with donated supplies.

Aeon Becomes a Charter Member of NeighborWorks America

October 18 was a day of celebration for Aeon. Not only did we commemorate the Grand Opening of Alliance Addition, but Aeon also took a major step towards ensuring the completion of future developments. As part of the festivities, Aeon was officially awarded its charter membership into NeighborWorks America.

Aeon joins more than 230 organizations in NeighborWorks America, a national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts.

Presenting Aeon with its charter certificate and an initial funding check in the amount of \$85,000 was John Santner, NeighborWorks' North Central District Director.

"Aeon started the process of becoming a member a year and a half ago, and I'm proud to say that it has completed all of the requirements and is now a charter member of the NeighborWorks America family," Santner said. "We're very proud of the work Aeon is doing."

Both organizations share a desire to create homes for generations, and to do so while strengthening lives and communities.

"Quality affordable rental housing has to be sustainable, it has to be green, and it has to have resident services," Santner commented. "Aeon fits the bill marvelously. It came in at the highest level of rating as an exemplary group."

The process of becoming a charter member is not easy.

According to Santner, almost 200 groups apply annually, and of those, approximately 15 are accepted.

"Aeon is honored to become a charter member of NeighborWorks America," said Alan Arthur, Aeon President and CEO. "We are excited for this partnership, as we jointly pursue the vision that every person has a home and is interconnected within community."



(L to R): Katie Topinka (office of U.S. Sen. Al Franken), U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, John Santner (NeighborWorks America), Beth Widstrom-Anderson (Aeon Board Chairperson), Alan Arthur (Aeon President/CEO).

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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 quality affordable homes and serves more than 3,000 people annually. The nonprofit's inspiration to create community assets that last for generations is illustrated in its name "Aeon," which means "forever."

Learn More:

Attend Building Dreams, a one hour informational session and tour. Register today at:
www.aeonmn.org/bd
or email jjohnson@aeonmn.org.



Find us on Facebook



Support Aeon's mission

At the left is a picture of Demetrius Matthews' kitchen when his building was under different management and known as Har Mar Apartments. Below left is a present-day picture of Demetrius in his kitchen, after Aeon rehabilitated and renovated his building, and renamed it Sienna Green.

On Page 2 of this newsletter, you read the story of Steven Simon moving into his new home at Alliance Addition.

At press time, we are \$15,000 short of reaching our 2010 fundraising needs

Without our fundraising dollars, Demetrius would cook his meals in a dilapidated, hazardous kitchen. Without our fundraising dollars, Steven would be fighting for space in a shelter. Help us close our gap, and support us in providing high-quality, affordable homes for all.

Donate Today!

Bricks & Mortar Updates

Aeon identifies partners and collaborates with multiple funding sources to pay for the construction of the following three projects, which invest millions of dollars in our community. Aeon continually seeks partners who support our vision that every person has a home.



Renaissance Box

Continuing to be a community leader in historic preservation, Aeon is transforming the vacant O'Donnell Shoe Factory into a vibrant residential building. The property will offer 70 efficiency, one- and two-bedroom apartments with a range of affordability, primarily for persons who work lower wage jobs in downtown St. Paul. Construction began in August, with Grand Opening expected in summer, 2011!



Sienna Green

The redevelopment of Sienna Green is serving as a model for transforming a struggling, outdated apartment building into a sustainable community asset. The first phase, preservation of five buildings and 120 existing one-bedroom apartments built in the mid 1960's, was completed mid-November. The second phase includes 50 newly constructed one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments to help meet the need for affordable homes for Roseville families, and will begin construction in mid-2011.



Gateway IV

The fourth phase of the Franklin-Portland Gateway represents a landmark opportunity in sustainability. Aeon, in partnership with Hope Community, joined with the U of M's Center for Sustainable Building Research to host a cross-section of technical experts, community members, governmental staff, transit experts and health industry representatives for an exercise that explored utilizing the forward-thinking Living Building Challenge™ as a framework for this effort. Gateway IV has since been featured at the Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute and the Rethinking Housing Design Event.