



REACH

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NEWS RELEASE

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REACH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRESERVES A DOWNTOWN PORTLAND TREASURE ALONG WITH 37 HOMES

PORTLAND, OR – On Thursday, July 8, 2010, REACH Community Development will celebrate the grand Re-Opening of the Admiral Apartments, a 37-unit historic apartment building located in the heart of downtown Portland. Home to elderly and disabled citizens living on fixed incomes, the City identified the Admiral as one of 11 Portland area properties in danger of losing their affordable HUD Section 8 rents. In order to preserve and maintain much-needed affordable homes for downtown seniors, REACH purchased the building and oversaw a substantial renovation in 2009.

One of the Admiral's long-time residents, Mike Mulvey, knows just how wonderful it's been to move back into a completely renovated apartment. Mulvey was one of the residents REACH temporarily relocated while performing a substantial renovation on the building. "I knew this was home," Mulvey says. "It took being away from it. I kept imaging being back here, and trying to remember all the little nooks and crannies." For Mulvey, his new apartment features much more light, an important feature as he is blind. He says he gets "a real sense of strong energy" from the natural light of his new apartment. "Light is more than just seeing it," Mulvey says. "When it hits your skin, it makes you feel better." Other new features Mulvey appreciates are the raised Braille markings throughout, new intercom and elevator systems, and easier-to-navigate hallways. The building is located within three blocks of MAX light rail service, the Portland Streetcar, the Park Blocks, and the Central Library. It also features several new green features.

The Admiral, placed on the historic registry in 1990, was originally built in 1909 as a five story, brick Tudor revival apartment building, operating as either a hotel or apartment building since it was built. In 1981, it was renovated into 37 affordable

apartments under the Oregon Housing and Community Services' Elderly and Disabled Bond Program and given a 30 year Section 8 rental subsidy contract. By 2008, the Admiral was at risk of losing its affordability due to the expiring Section 8 subsidies. REACH purchased the building to preserve the housing for the residents, several of whom have lived in the building for over 20 years.

The relocation of residents at the Admiral was temporary, with the expectation that residents would move back in once the repairs were completed. Admiral residents are fortunate, as many relocations have been a one-way trip, as downtown Portland has gentrified. "In the past, people haven't been able to move back," says Riad Sahli, Housing Development Project Manager. "We wanted to continue providing affordable housing for the Admiral's residents, some of whom have lived there for many years. If the building had been sold for re-development, it would have displaced the residents from their homes, further reducing affordable apartments in an area with high rents."

The building has been carefully renovated with modern comforts, while retaining and restoring its elegant, historic character. Inside, REACH has dedicated the community room to Lee Bradford Lacey, a long-time Portland civic activist who lived in the Admiral for 27 years. Lee suffered from the debilitating genetic disease epidermolysis bullosa. Despite the herculean challenges in his life, Lee lived with dignity, grace, and a strong sense of giving back.

Funding for the Admiral Apartments project was provided by the Portland Housing Bureau, Oregon Housing & Community Services, U S Bancorp Community Development Corporation, Wells Fargo Bank, Network for Oregon Affordable Housing, and the U S Dept of Housing & Urban Development. The development team included Walsh Construction, SERA Architects, and the Housing Development Center.

REACH has been developing and managing affordable housing and providing supportive services to our residents since 1982. REACH also sponsors the Community Builders Program, a free home repair program available to low income senior homeowners. Our portfolio of over 1,318 units includes single family homes, apartment buildings and mixed-use developments located throughout northeast, southeast, and downtown Portland. Visit www.reachcdc.org for more information.