



Preservation of Affordable Housing NEWSLETTER

Building Healthy Homes

Julie Klump, Manager of Design and Technical Services

The 3 goals of creating healthy housing, energy efficient housing and affordable housing have not always aligned. Not long ago there were perceptions that you would pay a premium to build healthy housing and therefore undermine affordability. Those perceptions carried over to the presumption of higher costs to build an energy-efficient home. The calculation failed to take into account the financial, social and health-related costs of not building healthy and energy-efficient affordable housing. POAH has committed to incorporating green healthy housing measures throughout its portfolio, knowing that the goals of energy efficiency and healthy affordable housing not only overlap but complement each other.



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Lead paint exposure was one of the first chronic health issues to be identified as having a direct correlation to how the housing was designed, built and maintained. The rate of asthma in children (another housing related illness) continues to increase and can also be addressed by the way we produce and maintain affordable housing.

In the last eight years there has been great interest in incorporating healthy housing measures into voluntary green building programs. Initially the goals of the green programs were to save energy and protect the environment. Today the guidelines also address the indoor environment and its impact on resident health. The selection of building materials, air tight building envelopes and proper ventilation can accomplish all three goals.

POAH's efforts to green our portfolio at our projects in Chicago and other areas address both sustainability and indoor environmental quality. In our rehab projects, new construction, and in our daily maintenance we specify products that contain little or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs), we avoid materials that are not durable or are hard to clean and we strive to create air-tight, well-insulated building envelopes. We also continue to upgrade or install new ventilation systems that efficiently supply fresh air, remove stale air, and control humidity. These are standard protocols for our buildings regardless of whether we are following one of the voluntary green rating systems.

The recently completed Woodlawn Center South project, the first new construction project at the Grove Park development, was designed and built to meet the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Homes and Enterprise for Homes Guidelines. This has set the standard for sustainability and occupant health for the development. The Woodlawn Center North project will follow the same design and construction guidelines and be certified under the LEED for Homes program.

Resident engagement and education are key components to helping residents take advantage of the features of a healthy home or community. Most of the Green Building programs include criteria for implementing an education program. Enterprise has developed resources for property owners, property managers and resident service staff to help educate residents on how to live in a green community, building and maintain a healthy home. POAH received a Sustainability Training grant from Enterprise Communities to develop and implement a Living in a Green Healthy Home education program for the residents at Woodlawn Center South.