

What's Up at Humboldt Gardens



Bob Walsh, Walsh Construction (center); James Faison, Faison Construction (left); and C.J. Jackson, C.J. Jackson Construction (right) address noontime guests and then join the other event speakers to raise a ceremonial wall to mark the start of construction at Humboldt Gardens.

Community celebrates partnerships and revitalization at wall raising

“Each one, teach one” is a saying Lee Moore’s mother used to pass along to her son. And the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) Commissioner believes this adage aptly describes the work at Humboldt Gardens. “Relationships are the catalyst to be successful in a community,” Moore said. “Humboldt Gardens has joint ventures, community partners, mentors, and job opportunities in which each person is learning from or helping another.”

Under sunny skies on a beautiful Friday afternoon in July, Moore joined more than 140 neighbors, former Iris Court residents, and community leaders to celebrate the much anticipated start of construction at Humboldt Gardens.

A ceremonial wall was raised giving concrete evidence that Humboldt Gardens is only one year away, bringing new homes and new opportunity to this part of North/Northeast Portland.

Jeff Bachrach, chair of HAP’s board, thanked HAP’s community partners for “helping us get to the finish line.” He introduced Portland City Commissioner Erik Sten, who said, “This area has struggled, but it is a warm and wonderful place to live.” Sten’s message focused on the need for quality, mixed-income housing for families that helps strengthen neighborhoods and neighborhood schools.

Other speakers included Bob Walsh and CJ Jackson, principals of the general contracting team of Walsh Construction/CJ Jackson Construction, as well as minority contractor James Faison of Faison Construction.

Moore noted that Humboldt Gardens is a model for creating opportunity for the people who live there. He introduced Pete Luca, a former Humboldt Gardens resident, and Leslie Esinga, a former public housing resident who is set to

purchase a home through the homeownership program that grew out of the redevelopment. Luca praised the self-sufficiency plans at Humboldt Gardens. “It boosts people’s morale to be self-sufficient and independent. This will be the light bulb of this community.”

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Esinga believes Humboldt Gardens will offer other families the same opportunities that helped her finish college, make a life for her daughters, and become a homeowner.

“Our hope is that Humboldt Gardens can tie together the rich array of strengths already here, and collectively, we’ll be the spark to ignite further positive reinvestment in the neighborhood,” said Steve Rudman, HAP’s executive director.

New home construction in full swing

It's official — the old Iris Court cluster is gone.

Buildings are demolished and tons of building material — carpets, railings, flooring and more — have been reused or recycled. More than 10,000 bricks from the old exterior were ground up and reused as fill on the site. Contractors are readying the site for the new Humboldt Gardens to emerge.

“Right now, all you can see is that the curbs are in,” said John Manson, project manager in HAP’S department of Development and Community Revitalization. “What you can’t see is that the underground utilities — water and sewer lines — are also complete. Streets are in, and the housing contractors are preparing the site for building construction.”

Foundations will be poured in August with framing of the two and three story family housing in September. “Neighbors will see a dramatic change in the fall as the

buildings take shape,” Manson continued. “By late spring 2008, these units will be finished and ready to go. The mixed-use building — our signature building — will be finished in mid-summer 2008.”

“Humboldt Gardens is a story about opportunity and revitalization,” said Mike Andrews, HAP’s director of Development and Community Revitalization. “And the construction component is one in which we can share economic opportunity with businesses in the area.”

At HAP’s New Columbia development, 25 percent of construction contracts were awarded to minority, women-owned and emerging businesses. HAP set an even more ambitious goal at Humboldt Gardens: 35 percent target participation.

“We’ve now awarded construction contracts that meet this goal of 35 percent target participation,” said Andrews. “While the work still needs to be completed, 35 percent of the construction budget — \$8.2 million — will go to target businesses.” ♦



James Faison speaks at the wall raising event

Opportunity knocks for Faison Construction

Large construction projects are a great learning laboratory for younger companies to gain new experience and build capacity for bigger jobs. One of HAP’s goals is to find companies that want to move to the next level and help them get there.

James Faison, a local concrete contractor, is getting just such an opportunity. While Faison is experienced in the work world, he’s relatively new to the concrete construction business. A native of New York, he spent a long tenure doing airport maintenance at the Port of Portland which gave him plenty of on-the-job training for concrete work and the basics of construction. But Faison Construction is just seven years old — James knows there is a lot more to learn if he wants his business to grow.

The Walsh-CJ Jackson general contracting team will serve as Faison’s mentor, helping him learn the complex details of contracting that he needs to take on larger jobs. In addition to his concrete work at Humboldt Gardens, he’ll work side by side with the veteran contractors to build one of the family housing duplexes.

“Someday I’d like to build my own apartment complex,” said Faison. “This is the training I need to help me get there.” ♦



◀ Jeff Bachrach, chair, HAP Board of Commissioners

Wall raising guests enjoy lunch, program ▶

Humboldt Gardens Wall Raising Friday, July 27, 2007



Erik Sten, Commissioner, City of Portland ▶

Plans for affordable homes for sale take shape

It is a thrilling moment to become a first time homebuyer. For 21 families in NE Portland, that moment isn't far away thanks to HAP's innovative homeownership program.

Folks living in Humboldt, Woodlawn, Piedmont, Overlook and Vernon neighborhoods can look forward to sharing the block with a new set of homebuyers. "Our goal is to help low-income families find their way off housing assistance and into homeownership. These homes will increase the supply of affordable homes for sale," said Mary Bradshaw, policy and program manager in HAP's Department of Development and Community Revitalization.

HAP owns a portfolio of scattered site single family homes located throughout the city. Twenty-one of these homes, located within one mile of the new Humboldt Gardens, are being sold. Of the 21, HAP sold four on the open real estate market. Proceeds from the sale are to be applied to the redevelopment. Three more are being purchased by the HAP resident currently living in the home. The remaining properties are being sold to two local, nonprofit

For information on these homes for sale, contact:

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Katie Ullrich

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Matina Kauffman

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"Our goal is to help low-income families find their way off housing assistance and into homeownership."

—Mary Bradshaw, HAP

PCLT are being renovated to a 15 year major maintenance free standard. The net result? Eighteen new or renovated affordable homes ready for new owners.

Asking prices for these homes will range from \$120,000 to \$150,000 — well below the median home price in the Portland area. These homes are for first-time homebuyers earning 80 percent of the median family income and below. HAP clients who are ready to move to homeownership will get first priority for consideration.

"We look forward to seeing these houses become home to families eager to plant roots in the neighborhood." ♦

developers deeply experienced in helping low-income families become homeowners — Portland Habitat for Humanity and Portland Community Land Trust (PCLT).

The five houses purchased by Habitat for Humanity will be replaced with one or two homes on each lot for a total of nine new homes. Nine more houses sold to

Gonzalez family reaches goal of owning a home

After years of living in public housing, Angelica Gonzalez and her children are making the leap from renters to homeowners. The family is purchasing their tidy home in the Woodlawn neighborhood from HAP as part of its homeownership program.

As a participant in HAP's GOALS Self-Sufficiency program, Angelica was ready to think about moving off public assistance when HAP offered the chance to purchase their rental home. Gonzalez and her adult daughter, Angelica Dominguez, felt they were earning enough to support monthly mortgage payments, but they needed help with financing.

Several partners, including HAP, came together with a lender to aid the first-time homebuyers. Both mother and daughter received grants from the Latino Home Initiative, which

raises funds to help low-income families purchase homes. And the Portland Housing Center provided education on the process, counseling and financial services.

Now that the Gonzalez family has done the hard work of readying themselves to be home-

owners, their next challenge may be their biggest:

agreeing on what color to paint their new living room. ♦



Angelica Gonzalez, second from left, and family



About the Housing Authority of Portland

HAP provides housing and housing-related services to those who face barriers due to income or disability. HAP's housing and rent assistance programs serve 33,000 residents throughout Multnomah County. HAP is a public corporation governed by a citizen commission selected by the jurisdictions it serves and appointed by the Mayor of Portland.

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- Catherine Such, *Treasurer*
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For more information about the Humboldt Gardens redevelopment, contact the community relations office at 503-802-8508 or visit www.hapdx.org



A mixed-use building will enliven the Alberta-Vancouver intersection and house the Humboldt Gardens Opportunity Center.

OHI pilot project launches at Humboldt Gardens

For the 130 households planning to live at Humboldt Gardens, it is a chance for a new home, fresh start, and a helping hand to make positive change.

To HAP, this is an environment ripe for an Opportunity Housing Initiative (OHI) pilot project, a new program that seeks to help families move off public assistance and achieve self-sufficiency.

"Residents are encouraged to plan for their lives in the long-term and develop the skills they need to make those plans a reality. We'll ask residents to make strides in three key areas: financial literacy, employment readiness and housing stability," said Veronica King, HAP's director of Resident Services.

An underpinning of the OHI pilot is that participation is a lease requirement for the working-able families at Humboldt Gardens. While most self-sufficiency programs are voluntary, this one requires a commitment for residency. Approximately 48 households are expected to participate.

Residents will have five years to work towards leaving public housing or Section 8 subsidy. HAP and its community partners will provide classes, assessments, training, and resources to aid residents. After five years, households that are successful at

reaching self-sufficiency may elect to stay at Humboldt Gardens in affordable housing units or leave for other housing of their choice. Households that aren't successful — but want to keep their public housing subsidy — will have to relocate into other public housing.

"We're asking people to do hard work and make a commitment to accomplish positive change," continued King. "But we're not asking them to do that hard work on their own. We are here to provide support and help them create possibilities for themselves."

Opportunity Center brings residents, community together

A welcome boost to the revitalization of the Humboldt neighborhood will be the Humboldt Gardens Opportunity Center. This will be the physical space dedicated to workshops, community events and forums that support the Opportunity Housing Initiative (OHI), provide community space for residents and be a resource for the neighbors in the greater Humboldt community. The 3,000 square foot center will contain a multi-use conference room, an open-access computer center, a community involvement office with room for community policing, and more. It will open in August 2008.

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