

# PHG Plymouth Housing Group

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BEGINNING

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FALL 2001

## Farewell, dear friend

*When Rev. David Colwell declared in 1980 that "one homeless person is one too many," he inspired members of Plymouth Congregational Church to help Seattle's growing homeless population. Plymouth Housing Group was founded as a direct result. In this issue, we honor the life of this inspiring leader, who did so much for so many.*



*Rev. David Colwell*

Family and friends gathered together at Plymouth Congregational Church in late September to celebrate the life of the Rev. David Colwell, who died September 22 at the age of 84.

"He was a man of incredible dignity and moral presence," recalled Richard Wilson, past president of Plymouth Housing Group's board of trustees. "He was a great, thunderous preacher when he needed to be, but he was the soul of kindness and gentleness and courtesy. He took his life as a committed Christian very seriously."

"Even after his retirement, he was looked to as someone who cared deeply about Seattle, his community," he added. "He walked the walk."

"The people of the state of Washington... have been incredibly blessed by the fruits of his life's work," said Governor Gary Locke.

"He inspired us through his example of

living out the values of his Christian faith, particularly in serving the poor among us," Locke continued. "It is not possible to measure just how many people benefited from his generosity and kindness throughout the years."

David Colwell was born December 19, 1916, in St. Louis, Mo. He grew up in Colorado, attended Yale University as an undergraduate, earned his master's degree in business administration from Harvard, and then, deciding against a promising career in business, returned to Yale's divinity school. He later served as an Army chaplain in Europe during World War II, where his life was spared more than once under extraordinary circumstances. His family believes God saved him for a greater purpose.

Upon his return from the war, the Rev. Colwell embarked on a distinguished career of service. He ministered at churches in Denver and Washington, D.C., where he was a coordinator for the 1963 March on Washington. He then moved to Seattle and served at Plymouth Congregational Church from 1967 until his retirement as senior minister in 1982. During his career, he worked passionately to promote civil rights and end homelessness. He also restructured the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

Plymouth Housing Group has received many gifts in Rev. Colwell's memory. ■



*In the early 1980s, Rev. Colwell took an active role in maintaining PHG buildings.*



## Speak up to preserve needed funding



**Paul Lambros,**  
Executive  
Director

There is a lot of discussion about the future of two public funding sources, which PHG has relied on to support our work developing low-income housing that is affordable to the homeless and very poorest people in our community.

PHG's two newest projects profiled in this newsletter—the Lewiston rehabilitation and the construction of a new project at First and Denny—have both received funding from these resources: the **Seattle Housing Levy** and the **Washington State Housing Trust Fund**.

We need your help to keep these resources available for future low-income housing development and supportive services.

### Seattle Housing Levy

The city of Seattle has a track record of funding housing through voter-approved levies. Since 1981, there have been three such levies, which by the end of 2001 will have produced more than 5,500 units of housing for low-income people. Every dollar the City spends on affordable housing leverages another \$2 from other sources.

One of the missions of the Levy is to serve households making less than 30 percent of the median income. As of September 2001, that is around \$1,250 per month: many of PHG's tenants have incomes of half that amount. PHG's last five projects have received Levy funding.

Renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy will be on the ballot in 2002. We encourage your advocacy to:

- **Increase the Levy amount to \$100 million, to keep pace with inflation and sharp increases in housing costs.** With rising costs, we find it harder and harder to simply keep up with the costs of operating housing. Without support from sources such as the Levy, we can't continue to develop more housing, even though it is badly needed.
- **Include funds for housing preservation in the Levy.** It's not enough to keep developing new housing if existing housing is lost because owners opt not to participate in subsidy programs. Levy funds can help ensure that these projects remain affordable.
- **Include funds for social services and operating costs in the Levy.** PHG tenants simply can't pay

enough rent for us to operate safe, decent, service-enriched housing. To pay the bills and provide services, we need other sources of operating funding. Levy funds can help ensure that operating needs are met.

### Washington State Housing Trust Fund

For 12 years, the Washington State Housing Trust Fund (HTF) has created, preserved or repaired more than 44,000 units of low-income housing. It is a highly successful program: every dollar from the Housing Trust Fund leverages more than \$4 from other sources.

The State Office of Community Development (OCD) has launched a process to develop formal rules for the HTF program. However, OCD is considering some policy shifts that could hurt our ability to develop housing for very-low-income and homeless people. These include:

- **Funding fewer projects.** This could significantly slow low-income housing development.
- **Loss of focus on local priorities and more emphasis on central state preferences.** Local and legislative support for the HTF could be undermined.
- **Fewer opportunities for private banks to participate in low-income housing finance.** This could jeopardize private sector investment in low-income housing.
- **Tighter rent requirements for non-profit housing providers.** Projects serving the lowest-income people could suffer—or even no longer be feasible—because revenues are less certain.
- **Converting more of the HTF into a revolving loan fund.** This could make it far more difficult for the HTF to successfully serve households with the lowest incomes.

We need your help to encourage the government to keep the basic structure and purposes of the Housing Trust Fund intact. Improvements should not disrupt the program or in any way result in a reduction in its budget.

  
Paul Lambros  
Executive Director

## Q. Why should you support PHG?

A. Because homelessness in Seattle is a continuing problem, and you can be part of the solution!

Whether you are a legislator, business owner or resident of Seattle, you have an interest in ending homelessness in this community. And, as government funds are cut and we enter a recession, our community will need to play a greater part in our continuing effort to end homelessness and restore dignity and hope to thousands seeking shelter in Seattle each night.

Please consider carefully how you can contribute. We need your time, money and voice on behalf of Seattle's homeless and very poor. We have a solution that works—to provide housing and services to the homeless and self-sufficiency to those who have struggled. ■

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David Colwell Building



## PHG plans new project at First and Denny

With nearly \$9 million in funds from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission, National Equity Fund, the City of Seattle Housing Levy, the state of Washington, Seattle Housing Authority, Washington Mutual, Federal Home Loan Bank, Impact Capital and a variety of other sources, Plymouth Housing Group is planning to construct and manage a new, 73-unit mixed-use building at the Ivar's site downtown adjacent to Lower Queen Anne (3101 First Avenue).

The six-story apartment building will include 70 studio apartments for formerly homeless tenants, three units for the building's live-in management staff, and street-level commercial space. Some apartments will be set aside for people with AIDS and people with mental illness.

"We are really excited to be undertaking yet another new construction project that will serve Seattle's homeless and very poor,"



*PHG's new construction project, downtown adjacent to Lower Queen Anne, will offer 73 units for formerly homeless men and women.*

said PHG's Executive Director Paul Lambros. "And it's due in large part to a huge commitment from the city of Seattle."

PHG's new construction project was one of 10 affordable housing projects throughout the city that received \$9.6 million in funding from Seattle's Office of Housing. PHG itself received \$2.6 million, the largest share of the funding.

The construction phase of the project, scheduled to begin in November, should be complete in one year. ■

## Lewiston renovations completed!

The year-long renovation of The Lewiston, a building PHG has managed since 1982 and purchased in 1999, is complete. All units in the 1910 building have been updated with new cabinets for storage, a larger sink, space to prepare and cook meals, a small refrigerator and microwave oven, new floor coverings, window blinds and new furniture. Throughout the building, contractors also have upgraded the electrical, heating and plumbing systems; installed new flooring; renovated the bathrooms; and restored damaged masonry.

"These extensive renovations will help preserve the building and provide additional comfort for our tenants," explains Paul Lambros. "It's a major investment in the long-term preservation of low-income housing in Seattle."

The \$5 million purchase and

Join us for our  
**Open House Celebration  
at The Lewiston**  
Wednesday,  
November 28, 4-6 pm

renovation project was made possible with funding from: City of Seattle Offices of Housing and Economic Development; Washington State Housing Trust Fund; Washington State Housing Finance Commission; Enterprise Social Investment Corporation; Key Bank; Washington Mutual Bank; Impact Capital; and Washington Mutual Foundation.

The Lewiston, located at First Avenue and Blanchard Street in Belltown, has 50 single room occupancy units on its second and third floors, all affordable to tenants

with incomes below 30 percent of median, and all for formerly homeless people. The first floor is home to retail tenants, including Queen City Grill and Belltown Billiards. ■



*The recently renovated units at The Lewiston feature new furnishings and space to prepare and cook meals.*

## Welcome, new board members

Plymouth Housing Group recently welcomed new members to its board of trustees. Volunteer board members contribute valuable expertise as well as time, energy, resources and dedication to PHG's mission.

**CHRISTOPHER BROWN** attended law school at the University of Washington and after several years away, returned with his wife to call Ravenna home. Having worked with several local housing groups as a tax and business attorney, Brown comes to PHG's board of trustees looking for a way to get "involved in something beyond work and doing some good in the community." Impressed with PHG's long history and success, Brown looks forward to being involved in the important part that PHG plays in the housing market.

**JULIE WADE** has been involved in Seattle's low-income housing market since she moved here from Texas 20 years ago. Wade shows her admiration and enthusiasm for the work PHG does by saying, "Plymouth is truly a bright light in this city when it comes to providing housing for those among us with few material resources. I am honored to be part of an organization that makes such a meaningful and measurable contribution to our community." Wade has served on the boards of Environmental Works and HomeSight, has practiced private law for 10 years and worked at the Seattle Housing Authority another 10. Wade works in the Starbucks Law and Corporate Affairs Department and lives in Seattle with her two teenage boys.

**KEN CARTER** wants to use his 15 years of experience as a stockbroker to help those in need. He sees serving on PHG's board as a good place to start. Carter, who is a member of Plymouth Congregational Church, lives in South Seattle with his wife and their two little girls. After growing up in Japan, Carter found his way to the Northwest for college and then back again to start his career as a stockbroker. In light of recent happenings, Carter has taken a look at what's really important in life and believes that his financial experience is a way that he can give back to the community.

**LYN KRIZANICH** brings 17 years of experience in development, management and commercial real estate to PHG's board of trustees. She strongly believes in creating a healthy downtown that is accessible to all kinds of households, income levels and individuals, as well as families. Throughout the years, PHG has captured Krizanich's interest, as her work with developing and managing real estate intersected with PHG's. After five and a half years living on a sailboat with her husband, Krizanich now resides downtown near the Pike Place Market and is thrilled to be a part of PHG.

**MARY STEVENS** has been a member of Plymouth Congregational Church since 1994 and has long been familiar with PHG's work. Stevens recently chaired the Community Service and Social Action Board of Plymouth Church. She is also a member of the Plymouth Planned Giving Committee as well as this year's Stewardship Committee. In the wider community, Stevens is currently co-president of the Bryant Elementary PTSA and a member of the nominating committee for Town Hall. She worked as a development officer for 13 years, from 1986 until 1999, including responsibilities as development director at A Contemporary Theatre and annual fund and alumni relations manager at University Preparatory Academy. ■



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## Inside:

- Remembering Rev. David Colwell
- PHG Properties Update
- Welcome, new board members

### PLYMOUTH HOUSING GROUP

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## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR PHG'S TENANTS



In September, PHG received an \$18,615 grant from the City of Seattle's Department of Information Technology, through its partnership with Digital Promise, to increase technology literacy and access. Over the past year, PHG has worked with Digital Promise, a Seattle non-profit whose mission is to help bridge the digital divide in low-income housing communities, for the City's "Transitioning with Technology" project. Digital Promise will match the City's grant with labor and donations of cash, materials and services. This grant will be used to increase technology literacy and access for PHG's tenants.

Installation of newer hardware, shared network architecture and high-speed Internet access will be made in Gatewood and Pacific computer labs. Specialized training curriculum will meet the needs of people transitioning out of homelessness. Computer classes ranging from basic computer skills to tapping into the Internet and communicating through e-mail will be taught on a weekly basis. Tenants and community volunteers will participate in a "train-the-trainer" program, which will support the upgraded equipment and help tenants learn to use the new resources to find work or

improve their work situations.

PHG is very grateful for the opportunity to partner with Digital Promise and for the City of Seattle's continued commitment to the low-income community. The City of Seattle's partnership with local non-profits has allowed great strides to be made in increasing technology access and bridging the digital divide for those in need. PHG is honored and excited to launch this new endeavor, providing new opportunities for tenants to improve their lives. ■



## Please help PHG celebrate the holidays

Plymouth Housing Group will help its tenants celebrate the holidays this year with a Thanksgiving dinner on November 22 and a winter luncheon on Saturday, December 15.

Your food donations will help make these celebrations a success. For Thanksgiving, we need traditional fare — from turkey and potatoes to cranberries and pie. For the winter luncheon, we need meat and cheese trays, breads, condiments and desserts.

Hot or cold, your donated dishes will warm the hearts of our tenants. To learn more about how you can help PHG celebrate the holidays, please contact Jan O'Malley, volunteer coordinator, at (206) 381-1320.

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