

## SANCTUARY PLACE

Developed by Interfaith Housing Development Corporation with financing from Chicago Community Loan Fund



### **Ex-con women to get new home**

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A two-building complex is nearing completion in West Humboldt Park that will house low-income women who have formerly been incarcerated or who have a history of domestic abuse, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS or mental illness.

Many of those tenants are formerly homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The \$8.5 million complex, called Sanctuary Place, is on a formerly vacant, 40,000-square-foot

site at Kedzie and Homan Avenues. Interfaith Housing bought it from a private commercial owner in 2000.

"We develop housing for special needs populations," Gladys Jordan, president of Interfaith Housing Development Chicago, said in a phone interview last week. "Our tenants are those with extremely low incomes, homeless or at risk [to become homeless], or they have some disability such as mental illness. They may suffer from HIV/AIDS or in this case [in West Humboldt Park], many of them may be formerly incarcerated," she said.

"We expect that 60 percent of our tenants [in Sanctuary Place] will be women with histories of incarceration," she added, explaining that awareness of a sizable population of women returning from prison to the neighborhood was what drew Interfaith to build the project in the first place. "There is a lot of need for assistance for this population," she said.

To date, Interfaith has built eight projects in Chicago, including a 25-unit apartment building for people with HIV/AIDS and their families, at 50th Street and Vincennes Avenue in the Grand Boulevard neighborhood; Interfaith House at Franklin Boulevard and St. Louis Avenue on the West Side, a respite center for homeless coming out of hospital; and the Ruth Shriman House for low-income seniors, at 4040 N. Sheridan Rd. in Uptown.

Construction of Sanctuary Place began in September 2002. "We are 90 percent completed [with the two buildings] now, and expect it to be finished [by December]," Jordan said.

A four-story, red brick building at Sanctuary Place will be leased as a single room occupancy apartment building. Each of the 63 units will have 320 square feet of space including private baths and efficiency kitchens.

The second Sanctuary Place structure will consist of a row of six townhouses, each with three bedrooms and 1,300 square feet to be occupied by families headed by women who have been homeless, have drug addictions or mental illness and/or who have been in prison.

Interfaith partnered with the West Humboldt Park Family and Community Development Council, which worked with existing residents in the neighborhood to explain Sanctuary's role in the community.

"All tenants will be 100 percent subsidized," Jordan said. The subsidy comes through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Shelter Plus Care Program. "It is a 5-year grant to Interfaith. But this is permanent housing, so residents can stay as long as they need to. At the end of this current 5-year subsidy agreement with HUD, we will renew it," she added.

Tenants will be obligated under terms of rent subsidies to use the social services that will be provided from the mid-rise building's ground level. "Interfaith Council for the Homeless will provide mental health counseling, substance abuse consultation, individual case management, general therapy and job training," Jordan said. Chicago-based St. Leonard's Ministries' Grace House, a women's transitional service, will provide case management and counseling for Sanctuary Place tenants who have been through its two-year transition program, Jordan said. Grace House provides housing for women who have completed their prison sentences and are returning to their neighborhoods, unlike a halfway house where women stay temporarily as they complete their prison terms, according to Jordan.

Interfaith will market units in the two buildings through referrals that come from homeless shelters and other social service agencies.

The complicated funding came from the Chicago Department of Housing, which provided \$734,000 in tax credits. Interfaith leveraged those tax credits into \$5.5 million by selling the credits to corporate investors through tax credit syndicators. The project also received a \$750,000 grant from the Illinois Housing Development Authority Trust Fund; a \$682,000 grant from San Francisco's Federal Home Loan program. ["Chicago's Federal Home Loan program has a limit of \$500,000 while in San Francisco you can get a grant up to \$1 million," Jordan explained]; an \$86,000 energy efficiency grant and a \$75,000 Renewable Energy Grant, both from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs; a \$35,000 Illinois Clean Energy Foundation grant; and a \$33,000 grant from the Chicago Department of Environment.

Interfaith holds a \$992,000 first mortgage with Citibank.

The buildings are designed by Chicago architect Douglas Farr of Farr & Associates. "I asked Doug if he could provide as much space, light and air as he possibly could, for our small budget," Jordan said. "He responded by doing some unique things: A second secured closet is provided for each unit in the common area hallway near each tenant's door" to limit space taken up in the unit itself. The units were designed at less than 400 square feet to avoid a city requirement to provide parking on units above that figure, Jordan said.

"Entryway walls in each unit are angled so that the units feel bigger, even if they are not bigger in reality," Jordan added. "And each unit has Chicago-style windows with a fixed large pane in the middle and two side panes that open. That also makes each unit feel bigger," she said. All of the units have 10-foot ceilings.



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