Welcome Home to Gray’s Landing

We’re thrilled to announce the Grand Opening of Gray’s Landing! On December 14th, REACH and the City of Portland celebrated with hundreds of guests as we added 209 new affordable homes to Portland’s South Waterfront neighborhood. The guest list was a veritable “who’s who” in community development, including keynote speaker Senator Jeff Merkley, Master of Ceremonies Commissioner Nick Fish, Governor Barbara Roberts, Mayor Bud Clark, and City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury.

We were also joined by a host of other Oregon luminaries, including federal, state, and local officials. Guests, volunteers, and residents reveled as the Royal Blues Choir of Grant High School treated the crowd to a wonderful selection of holiday music; the U S Army presented the colors; and Tim Birr’s patriotic bagpipe tribute to John Gray, a veteran for whom the building was named, provided an emotional closing to the festivities.

Gray’s Landing is a collaborative development between REACH, City Commissioner Nick Fish, and the Portland Housing Bureau, which made a significant investment of public funds in the project. It is named in honor of Oregon philanthropist and developer John Gray (see related article on page 4). After only 18 months of construction, the building is complete and leased up. Over half of the residents have moved into their new homes, and we expect the move-in process to continue on page 2.

“Gray’s Landing... will provide homes and a strong foundation for working families and our veterans... It is only fitting that this new development is named after an unsung Oregon hero, John Gray... a longstanding supporter of affordable housing.”

– Senator Jeff Merkley
from the President

I’m sitting in the catbird seat, literally and figuratively. My office is perched on Marquam Hill, in the Portland VA Medical Center, and from here I can see REACH’s newest development, Gray’s Landing, where 42 of the 209 affordable housing units are for veterans. Having worked for the VA for three decades, and having served on the REACH board for seven years, it’s extremely satisfying to see these two passions of mine come together. There’s synchronicity in my life these days.

The view of REACH from here is spectacular. I continue to enjoy serving with a dedicated group of volunteers on the Board of Directors, and I couldn’t be more proud of the work our staff and volunteers do to provide equity, affordable housing for individuals, families and communities to thrive.

These are very exciting times for REACH.

- We just celebrated the Grand Opening of Gray’s Landing, as well as moving our offices. I’m also immensely proud of the fact that Gray’s has earned a LEED Platinum rating, furthering our efforts to provide housing that’s not just affordable, but healthy for our residents and environmentally responsible.

- REACH is on track to meet our ambitious 5-year strategic goals and build or acquire 1,000 more affordable housing units throughout the Portland metropolitan region by 2015.

- We recently received a $500,000 Meyer Memorial Trust grant to support the development of The Orchards at Oreco in Hillsboro. When complete, it will be the nation’s first multi-family affordable housing using Passive House standards. These standards reduce heating and cooling requirements, while simultaneously creating excellent indoor air quality. These standards support REACH’s efforts to incorporate green, sustainable building measures that create healthy living environments and provide residents with long-term cost savings.

- REACH is among sixteen organizations nationally to receive the NeighborWorks America® Green Organization designation for our comprehensive commitment to sustainable operations.

- We’re in process of recruiting our next CEO. We’re taking our time to make sure we find just the right person – a visionary, charismatic leader who will build on Dee Walsh’s legacy.

- We’d like to offer our sincerest thanks to the many partners who turned this dream into reality. Project partners include the City of Portland, Oregon Housing and Community Services, U S Bank, Enterprise Community Investment, Home Forward, and the U S Department of Veterans Affairs. The development team included REACH, the Housing Development Center, Williams & Dame Development, Walsh Construction Co., and Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects.

P.S. If you or someone you know is interested to get an up-close look at REACH’s work, I highly recommend our Life within REACH tours, which take place at Gray’s Landing. They’re informal and provide a great opportunity to ask questions and see our work first-hand. You can sign up for tours on our website http://reachcdc.org/news-events/life-within-reach/

The event was outstanding and the building is spectacular,” said Bill Van Vliet, Executive Director, NOAH. “I was stunned by the REACH offices, they’re beautiful… I’ll always have a soft spot for REACH -- great people and a great program. The community, and NOAH, is lucky to have such a strong and capable partner.”

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To all who live at Gray’s Landing, welcome home.
Building Creative Partnerships

REACH is lucky to have many community connections which help supplement our services. This past quarter, we partnered with two local arts organizations who provided amazing opportunities for our residents: Well Arts Institute and Oregon Humanities.

Well Arts Institute is an 11 year-old arts-in-healthcare nonprofit theatre that facilitates writing for theatre workshops for people living with physical and/or mental illness, or other life-changing situations. They pair participants with professional actors. Through the “Voices of Our Elders” program, REACH partnered with Well Arts and residents at Twelfth Avenue Terrace for four performances, Life’s Pop Quizzes.

Residents wrote both personal and imagined stories based on life experiences and saw them performed on stage at the Portland Actor Conservancy. The seniors who participate are the playwrights in the process, engaging in creative discussion with the theatre director and actors, making adjustments in the stories, and developing new ones in ensemble fashion. Said one participant, ‘In 1939, there was a hurricane in Massachusetts. The roof of the chicken coop flew off. I grabbed the chicken and my father grabbed my ankles. He was 5’ 10”. He said, ‘Now you hold her because she (the chicken) is afraid.’ He wasn’t afraid, so I wasn’t.” On behalf of REACH residents, we thank Wells Arts for providing this meaningful experience not just for residents, but for audience members, as well.

What role do prisons serve in our country? Is it possible to envision a world where people are safe and secure without them? These were some of the questions we explored on January 29th as REACH partnered, for the second year in a row, with Oregon Humanities and the Conversation Project to present Beyond Bars: Re-envisioning the Prison System with writer and activist Walidah Imarisha. Walidah is the founder of the Human Rights Coalition, a prisoners’ family organization in Pennsylvania that now has three chapters. She facilitates writing work-shops in correctional facilities and public schools.

Did you know … the national prison rate has risen by 370% since 1970? In Oregon, it’s risen by 170%. The total US state spending on prisons was $52 billion in 2008. In Oregon, we spent $763 million, or a little over 10% of our state spending on prisons. And that 95% of people in prisons will be released back into the community? These were some of the issues we explored in a lively discussion at Station Place Tower. We left wanting more. REACH is grateful to Oregon Humanities and looks forward to continuing this unique partnership.

 Resident Profile: Dee Shular

This Is by Far the Best Housing Ever

“..."At Gray’s I don’t feel isolated like I used to... this is my home and I love it!...

It’s fun to see residents, like Dee and Abigail at Gray’s Landing, walking around the neighborhood, getting to know their new community. REACH is pleased to welcome home Dee Shular and her service dog Abigail to their new home at Gray’s Landing. They moved in on December 1st and couldn’t be happier.

Dee previously served in the Air Force, working in crisis communications in Denver, Colorado. She’s also been a boilermaker and a welder. She’s new to Portland, having lived previously in Vancouver. And she loves exploring Portland and her new neighborhood. She enjoys the fact that Gray’s is on the streetcar line as she’s a frequent public transportation user.

And what does she think about living here? “It’s a beautiful building! At Gray’s, I don’t feel isolated like I used to.” She’s met some new friends and is looking forward to all of the activities REACH has planned for Gray’s Landing, including cooking classes, guest speakers, and the computer lab. “This is by far the best housing...this is my home and I love it!” Welcome home to Dee, Abigail, and all of the new residents of Gray’s Landing.
John Gray: A Life Well Lived

As you can tell from this newsletter, REACH is thrilled to celebrate the recent grand opening of Gray’s Landing. Not only are we providing 209 safe and affordable homes, but REACH staff is now “living” in our new headquarters. It’s a wonderful building in a growing community. What you may not know is why the building is named Gray’s Landing.

REACH has been lucky to be one of the beneficiaries of the late John Gray, a developer, philanthropist, and veteran who passed away at age 93 in October 2012. Our building is named in honor of him. Gray was known for developing some of Oregon’s most prominent resorts, including Salishan, Sun River, and Skamania Lodge, all featuring the natural environment, something Gray cared about immensely. Gray also had a profound effect on the built environment, playing an active role in the passage of Senate Bill 100, which laid the foundation for Oregon’s urban growth boundary system.

Later in life, he became known for his philanthropic efforts, providing gifts to OMSI, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Habitat for Humanity, Oregon Health and Science University, Portland State University and The Lands Trust Alliance, among others. He and his late wife Betty were also major donors to Reed College, providing gifts intended to help lighten up a student body that he thought was “too serious.” His service as a trustee was perhaps more important. Gray sat on the board at Reed for 45 years. His stewardship, according to many, is the reason Reed is now considered one of the premier liberal arts institutions in the country.

Gray was born in Ontario Oregon and raised in Monroe. His modest upbringing in a rural community left him with a respect for land. Gray served in World War II in the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division, earning the rank of lieutenant colonel and a Bronze Star Medal. Gray’s Landing pays tribute to his military service, as 42 of the 209 units have been set aside for veterans.

In 1948, Gray joined the Oregon Saw Chain Manufacturing Corp, becoming president within five years and helping to grow the woodcutting machinery manufacturer into the multimillion-dollar company Omark Industries. Gray amassed a fortune, but he did not keep it to himself. He and his late wife Betty believed in giving back, and they ‘walked their talk’ by donating millions of dollars to many charities. Gray also served on countless boards of directors including the Boys Scouts of America, Reed College, the Oregon Progress Board, and the Oregon Community Foundation. His awards are too numerous to list, but include the Glenn L. Jackson Memorial Award for Leadership and Contributions to Oregon, the Architectural Foundation’s ‘Honored Citizens’ award, and the Vollum Lifetime Philanthropic Achievement Award.

“What always impressed me about John and his philanthropy was that he cared about future generations like no one else I know.”

Greg Chaillé, former president, Oregon Community Foundation
You’re On Your Way!

On January 22nd, we celebrated as over 44 residents graduated from REACH’s economic stability programs, including ‘Budget Buy and Save,’ STARTS (Support, Training and Assistance to Realize Tomorrow’s Success), the Jobs Team program, and the IDA program (Individual Development Account). The programs support a wide range of goals, including leadership development, enhancing employment skills, increasing personal finances and knowledge, and building long-term financial assets. All of the graduates dedicated their personal time towards completing their goals by attending workshops, completing assignments, and leading volunteer activities.

Our IDA Program is an asset building program built on collaboration with CASA of Oregon and Neighborhood Partnerships. Participants worked towards one of three goals: homeownership, pursuing a secondary education, or starting/expanding a small business. The goal of this program is to not only build personal assets, but strengthen financial habits. Participants were required to make monthly deposits towards their savings goal. Each participant also attended Budget, Buy, and Save, which focuses on the fundamentals of managing financial resources, credit, and budgeting. At the end of the program, the money they’ve deposited is matched 3:1 by REACH!

The work achieved by the students was amazing. Said Zoe Barba, a resident of REACH since 2007 who participated in the STARTS leadership program, “It’s like Vitamin C. It’s another activity to add to my list of activities, it really cheers me up, and I feel good about it. It’s been helpful.” And Samm McCrary, a REACH resident for the past 2 years, joined the STARTS program to increase her leadership skills. Samm runs a women’s leadership group in her building and gained valuable facilitation skills through the program. Congratulations to all of the graduates!
New Year, New Location, Same Mission

In 1982, REACH began revitalizing neighborhoods in southeast Portland. Fast forward 30 years and today REACH owns over 1,600 units of affordable, safe housing and has changed thousands of lives. And you’ve been a part of it – thank you! REACH is excited to begin 2013 well settled into our new offices at Gray’s Landing.

REACH has made a lot of changes recently, but one thing remains the same — our mission to provide quality, affordable housing for individuals, families and communities to thrive. We want you to learn more about how REACH is building community and help us spread the word.

You’re invited to a free, one-hour informational get together called Life Within REACH. You’ll learn about the need for affordable housing in our community and how REACH is working to provide high-quality, safe, and stable homes for families and individuals. We’ve limited each session to 10 people so you can meet and talk with REACH leadership and get to know other community members who care about housing. We’re also very excited to show off our newest development, so the tour includes a walk-around of Gray’s Landing. You’ll see the largest eco-roof in the Portland metropolitan region, learn about the many green features at Gray’s, and tour one of the apartments (as available).

This is not a fundraising event. You will not be asked to make a contribution to REACH. It’s simply an opportunity to learn more about us. If you love what you learn, we’ll ask if you’re interested in inviting others. You can sign up for tours on our website http://reachcdc.org/news-events/life-within-reach/. Join us!

Santa Baby

Ho ho ho could be heard echoing down the hallways as residents, staff, board, and volunteers joined to celebrate at the Annual REACH Holiday Party, held on December 7th at St. Andrews Church. Guests were treated to sumptuous delights from NAYA Catering (Native American Youth Association) and even Santa rocked out to the joyful sounds of the SupaDupa Marimba Band.

To our wonderful volunteers who decorated the room, hosted games, served delicious food, and greeted guests – thank you! The festive spirit was everywhere, along with Santa, who brought gift bags and holiday cheer.

A special shout out to staff from REACH’s Property Management Department who provided extra volunteer help! A big thanks to Orrick, Herrington, & Sutcliffe and LMC Construction for their generous donations.

Finally, what would the holidays be without REACH’s own Duane Jordan playing Santa and his helpers providing holiday cheer? Merry, merry to you all and thanks from your friends at REACH!
AWARDS & GRANTS
REACH is among sixteen organizations nationally to receive the NeighborWorks Green Organization designation for our comprehensive commitment to sustainable operations from NeighborWorks America®. The designation is based on adherence to a set of green business practices across REACH’s affordable housing portfolio and business operations.

AWARDS & GRANTS

Gray’s Landing has received a LEED Platinum (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating from the US Green Building Council. LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based, market-driven program that provides third-party verification of green buildings. Participation in the voluntary LEED process demonstrates leadership, innovation, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility.

REACH received a $500,000 grant from the Meyer Memorial Trust to build phase one of The Orchards at Orenco, a 57-unit affordable apartment community in Hillsboro, Oregon. The apartments, located near the Orenco MAX station, will be built using Passive House energy efficient standards, a method of construction that reduces energy usage and heating bills up to 90%. Thanks to our supporters at MMT.

RESIDENT SERVICES
2012 was another busy year for the Resident Services staff. Our staff responded to 5,965 requests for information and referral from 1,752 residents – wow!

Highlights from the year included a wonderful art show at Station Place hosted by the resident artists; a fabulous summer youth program; the formation of the Rose Resident Advisory Council; and the Healthy Homes program being offered in both English and Russian at various REACH properties.

We’re also pleased to announce the addition of Guy Rabe, Dawason Brooks, and Angela Schneider to the staff. And finally, congratulations to Kelly Bosworth and Joe Wickstrom who’ve been accepted into the 2013 Oregon Opportunity LEAD ON program (Leadership-Excellence-Achievement and Development).

COMMUNITY BUILDERS PROGRAM (CBP)

In 2012, REACH completed 1,550 repairs through the CBP, an increase of 23% from 2011. Wow again! We expanded our services from basic repairs to ‘healthy homes’ upgrades to include a greater emphasis on families experiencing issues related to the health of their home (for example, radon exposure, mold, and air quality affecting children with asthma). During the last quarter, REACH also joined NAWIC (National Association of Women in Construction) in our efforts to support our current five-year goal of increasing the number of sub-contractors we use in the CBP to at least 50% being a minority- or women-owned business.

STAFF UPDATES
Welcome to John Breitenbucher, Maintenance Technician; Dawason Brooks, Resident Services Coordinator; Carmen Fodor, Assistant Community Manager; Amanda Gresen, Property Management Coordinator; Felicia Jones, Building Monitor; Beckett Royce, Maintenance Technician; Angela Schneider, Resident Services Coordinator; Michele Torland, Building Monitor; and William Wetzel, Building Monitor. We’re sad to say good-bye Rene Davidson, Asset Development Coordinator. Rene and her family are off to new adventures in her home state of Colorado, where she’ll be pursuing opportunities in the nonprofit sector.
REACH Mission: A healthy community begins at home. REACH provides quality affordable housing and opportunities for individuals, families, and communities to thrive.

Interim Executive Director: Kathy Kniep

Board Members: Ruth Ann Tsukuda, President, Veterans Administration Medical Center; Robert Koury, Vice President, Lane Powell PC; Larry Conrad, Secretary-Treasurer, Clackamas County

Nancy Bond, Portland Public Schools; Loren Clark, US Bank; Betsy Ferguson, OHSU; Paul W. Ip, HSBC Bank; Bhavna Kumar, Walsh Construction Co; Marc Tedesco, Castelnuovo Design

Committee Members: Kurt Bruun, Susie Cunningham, Juaqutter Jones, Jim Lodwick, Rebbecca Maese, Brett Sheehan, Greg Soergel, Michele Torland

Photography: Heather Curry, Julie Keefe, Victor Sutan, Al Stern and REACH archives

“This building is more than bricks and mortar. It’s a reflection of our shared values...We believe everyone should have a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home.”

– Commissioner Nick Fish, comments from Gray’s Landing Grand Opening