

Wentworth Commons

Mercy Housing Lakefront developed Wentworth Commons as one of the first multi-family sustainable architecture buildings in Chicago to address the severe affordable housing shortage in the Roseland community. Wentworth serves both homeless families and individuals with supportive, affordable housing.



The 2000 US Census shows that more than 17 percent of Roseland residents were below the federal poverty line. Wentworth Commons now provides affordable housing for people who previously endured unstable housing situations.

Using its nationally replicated “blended management” approach to housing that combines property management with onsite support services, the project provides opportunities for residents to reach their full potential. Family-focused programs strengthen and build parenting skills. After-school

activities for youth foster growth and success in life.

The Wentworth Commons emphasizes socially responsible architecture. Wentworth is the first multi-unit residential building to receive LEED certification in the Midwest for incorporating sustainable, green design that promotes a healthier living and breathing environment both within the building and outside the building. This is important for very-low income residents who statistically have higher levels of breathing diseases such as asthma.

Wentworth Commons is a nurturing environment where individuals and families feel safe, form new friendships and build community, and have the highest level of support needed to prosper and become self-sufficient.

The project was financed by utilizing cross-subsidization of low-income housing tax credits, community development block grants, rental subsidies from both federal and city sources, and support from public and private donors to ensure that the community’s hardest to house could find a home.

Financing also came from new market tax credits, tax increment financing, and federal TANF funds to bring more affordable housing to the community.

MERCY HOUSING

LAKEFRONT

Chicago, Illinois

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

In 1981, the Sisters of Mercy of Omaha found that a lack of adequate housing was the root cause of many of the health and education problems they saw in their community. With an initial investment of \$500,000, they founded Mercy Housing, Inc., a nonprofit, public-benefit corporation in Nebraska

FUNDING FOR WENTWORTH COMMONS

- Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago/ Pullman
- City of Chicago Community Development Block Grants
- Chicago Department of Housing
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO SERVICE DELIVERY

- Providing on-site support services that lead to self-sufficiency
- Offering “tenant leadership” that engages the residents in taking action on public policy and neighborhood issues that impact homelessness
- Offering an employment, training, and education program that helps tenants acquire necessary skills.



BOARD LEADERSHIP

Board Chairman: Rick Fumo

Vice Chair: Michael Borders and Charlie Hoch

Treasurer: Rhonda Hopps

STAFF LEADERSHIP

President: Cindy Holler

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mercy Housing Lakefront
247 South State St
Chicago, IL 60604
312.447.4500 (p)
312.447.4750 (f)
www.mercyhousinglakefront.org

IN 1988, TO COMMEMORATE FANNIE MAE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY, the Fannie Mae Foundation announced the Awards of Excellence Program, which seeks to encourage and recognize nonprofit organizations working to develop and maintain housing for low-income Americans. The program also is intended to encourage more corporations and foundations to be involved as funding and investment partners. The Awards were renamed in honor of David O. Maxwell, who retired in 1991 after 10 years of service as chairman and chief executive officer of Fannie Mae and chairman, Fannie Mae Foundation.

FOR THE 17TH MAXWELL AWARDS PROGRAM, the Foundation, in collaboration with the Partnership to End Long Term Homelessness is awarding up to \$75,000 to each selected nonprofit organization.

THE FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION creates affordable homeownership and housing opportunities through innovative partnerships and initiatives that build healthy, vibrant communities across the United States.

THE PARTNERSHIP TO END LONG TERM HOMELESSNESS was created to galvanize the philanthropic leadership and dollars needed to end long-term homelessness in America. Serving as an open knowledge network for funders, the Partnership shares strategic thinking, wide-ranging experience, and expertise to prevent and address

