



Helping people help themselves

news, views and success stories

Helping Families Achieve Their Goals



With the merging of PPL and Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Centers this past January, our education programs and services now reach a wide range of ages, from pre-school to high school and adults. *For more on the merger see page 4.*

PPL continues to create more options for people seeking quality affordable housing in the metro area.

PPL wrapped up a number of long-term development projects in 2007. Some were begun as far back as 2004 and involved community meetings and a variety of partnerships to ensure their success. A concentrated effort in north Minneapolis enhanced the quality and community aspects of the area; in south Minneapolis, substantial capital improvements were made to several older apartment buildings. At many Twin Cities locations, much-needed, permanent supportive housing was created, serving chronically homeless families, custodial fathers, and those living with mental illness.

A recently launched project marks PPL's largest to date, transforming an historic grain elevator and surrounding industrial site into mixed-income housing, including supportive units. This and other developments add to the housing options for everyone throughout the metro area. See what's in the pipeline on page 3.

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Time to think about investment in a stronger community

How many times have you heard someone quote the reputed Chinese proverb/curse, “May you live in interesting times” — usually accompanied by a nervous laugh?

I’m hearing that phrase — and nervous laugh — more and more lately, prompted by our troubled and uncertain economy, political change in the wind nationally, and growing global tensions.

I’m not sure how much more “interesting” the times can get!

When times are bad, the time is right for organizations and individuals who can to “step-up” and do as much as possible.

The times we are in cause more than conversations about future direction. They also compel consideration of how to respond financially, both on a personal level and within organizations of all types.

Those considerations and responses, whether by non-profits like PPL, government agencies, foundations or individual givers, are important for our community and people experiencing the most distress.

Just as many individuals and families act with caution over new commitments in times such as these (e.g., I guess the car can make it for another year after all), its tempting for organizations and donors to do the same. But for those with resources to sustain or even increase their work in response to undeniably growing hardship, is that really the right response? Hunkering down may seem prudent, but is it wise?

I would argue, no. While it’s never smart to be reckless, it’s equally wrong to be cautious out of a self-preservation instinct at the expense of work that could be done to help those in greater need. This is especially true for agencies and institutions. I’ll include PPL here; we must perpetuate over time to fulfill our missions, but remember always mission comes first, not organizational comfort and balance sheet strength.

Community development work, including combating intractable problems like poverty, joblessness and inadequate education demands what economists would call “counter-cyclical” investment. In other words, when times are bad, the time is right for organizations and individuals who can to “step-up” and do as much as possible.

So an examination of conscience is in order for all who could act boldly in these times, at a greater than usual degree of risk that such actions may not “pay-off” from a financial or organizational stability standpoint. If they pay off instead in a stronger community during this period of significant challenge, the right decision has been made. An auditor or personal banker may not be happy, but then that really shouldn’t be the point anyway.

Thanks for your support which allows PPL to do our part addressing community needs during these “interesting” times.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Cramer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Steve Cramer
PPL Executive Director

In the pipeline: Creating more options for affordable living

Van Cleve Development: (Pictured right.) PPL's largest development to date involves 236 units on a four-acre former grain elevator site near 13th Avenue Southeast and Como Avenue in Minneapolis. PPL has broken ground on this supportive rental housing and ownership project. Phase one entails building 35 units of supportive housing, with services provided by our development partner Cabrini Partnership to residents of eight of those units. Completion is slated for this summer. Habitat for Humanity will begin construction of five townhomes this spring. Subsequent phases include more rental units and 151 for-sale condominiums/townhomes/lofts.

Delancey Apartments: Thirteen units in PPL-owned apartment buildings in Saint Paul will serve as supportive housing for individuals who have experienced homelessness. Mental health services will be provided by Guild, Inc.

Hawthorne Eco-Village: This four-block redevelopment cluster in north Minneapolis features environmentally friendly housing for a variety of families, lifestyles and incomes. Green enhancements under consideration include such options as native plantings, skylights, energy recovery ventilation, storm water retention, recycled carpet or bamboo flooring, geo-thermal heating/cooling, and green roofs. Home Depot Foundation is a major funder for this \$20 million initiative. When complete, the project will include 83 newly constructed for-sale housing units, 36 new rental units, and moderate or substantial renovations to 25 existing single-family homes.



Completed in 2007:

Southside Renovation Significant interior and exterior renovation on 48 units in seven buildings of existing PPL housing in south Minneapolis. (See photos on back page.)

Lowell Curve: Newly constructed single-family homes, most with three and four bedrooms, built on a two-block radius and throughout north Minneapolis, some in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity and one with Builders Outreach.

Camden Apartments: Newly built supportive housing in north Minneapolis, with 23 two-, three-, and four-bedroom units. Services are provided by our development partner Emerge.

Midtown Exchange Condos on the Greenway
A two-story building developed as part of the multi-use Midtown Exchange project. Sixteen of the 57 units were made affordable to very low households and sold quickly.

Redeemer Center for Life Housing: Two three-bedroom, fully accessible twin homes, built on a vacant lot in north Minneapolis in conjunction with Redeemer Lutheran Church. They are for sale to lower-income buyers.

Linden Place Apartments and Linden Park Condominiums: (Pictured left.) Construction of two buildings on an empty site on Boone Avenue in New Hope. One, with 35 rental units, is managed by PPL. The other features 41 for-sale condominium units.

New Hope Homes: PPL collaborated with Northwest Community Revitalization Corporation, providing development expertise and assistance for six twin home units.



Learn more about all PPL for-sale units online at www.ppl-inc.org



By joining forces, PPL and Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Centers have broadened the continuum of services in both education and job training.

The coming together of PPL and Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem Community Centers (LNB) has generated a great deal of enthusiasm among staff and the community. At the start, we believed the two organizations shared a common history and mission of helping people help themselves. Since January, as we've traded more stories in meeting and gatherings, it's clear that's true.

With LNB, PPL gained high quality educational and employment services in partnership with the community. Three schools operate within these centers — a preschool and two alternative high schools — as well as an all-year, out-of-school program that helps elementary-aged children with their academic advancement. The agencies' combined youth and volunteer programs have already made progress finding similarities and complementary differences in the programs.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs offered by LNB provide assessment and placement, and youth and adults can access employment counseling. Some services will enhance offerings at PPL's Learning Center; others broaden our range. Program staff have begun to explore how this comprehensive set of services can be managed in a way to create a continuum of services for adults facing a range of employment-related barriers.

What's more, the community centers are located near a large cluster of PPL housing, offering resident proximity to a gymnasium, community meeting spaces and programs designed to bring people together to better their lives.

About LNB: The 54-year-old organization traces its roots to the Loring Nicollet Center and the Bethlehem Center, each begun in the 1950s by churches in the local community. Plymouth Congregational Church was founded by the Loring Nicollet Center; the Bethlehem Center, by Bethlehem Presbyterian Church. The two merged in 1972. Programs operate out of the Bethlehem Community Center, 2539 Pleasant Avenue in the Whittier neighborhood, and the Loring Nicollet Community Center, 1925 Nicollet Avenue, in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood. PPL intends to keep programs intact at these important community center locations.



Preschool



Early Learning Center is a full-day, year-round licensed and accredited preschool program that provides both childhood education and childcare. It is one of 12 centers designated as a “Strong Beginnings” site by Hennepin County, which requires the majority of children to test solidly on track for literacy. To achieve this, children learn rhyming, picture vocabulary, alliteration, concepts of printing, letter naming, sound recognition and oral comprehension. Twenty-seven children, aged two years, nine months to five years attend the school, located in the Bethlehem Community Center. PPL hopes to extend the school’s expertise to families living in PPL building by adding Early Childhood Learning components to resident programs.



Elementary school age

Elementary Enrichment is now in its 20th year of offering year-round out-of-school programs for children in grades two through six. Bethlehem Community Center has a gym and large community room; Homework ‘n’ Hoops takes advantage of both during the school year by pairing an adult or high school-aged tutor with a young student once a week to work on the child’s academic advancement and social development. In the summer, SEED Camp runs Monday through Thursday, from June to August. This free, eight-week program engages 40 children in structured activities within a supervised environment. Participants complete hands-on science projects and take field trips to learn, explore, and just go swimming.

High School



Loring Nicollet Alternative School (LNAS) and Minneapolis Employment Readiness Curriculum (MERC) are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Both sites are members of the Metropolitan Federation of Alternative Schools and hold contracts as Alternative High School programs with the Minneapolis Public Schools.

A recurring insight offered about the schools' 100-plus students is that they wouldn't be in school at all if they weren't in the school they are now. Many of these young people between the ages of 15 and 19 had dropped out, or were at high risk for doing so. But in this personal environment, with small class sizes and individual learning plans, they thrive. About thirty students graduate every year.

There is a long waiting list to get into the alternative school programs. Some students are referred by school counselors, juvenile justice and other intervention specialists; most learn about it through word of mouth from friends and family members. The success rate is very high among students that stay; those that go still take with them a stronger commitment to learning. Teachers often hear from them years later, with news they have eventually finished school.

Watch for news in upcoming issues about the employment services and other programs offered at the Loring Nicollet and Bethlehem community centers.

Activities success stories

New on-line tools link homebuyers to homeownership opportunities.

The Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) has launched a Website — www.ownahomemn.org — featuring quality single-family houses, condominium and town homes built by community developers dedicated to the vitality and stability of the neighborhoods in which they work. MCCD helps prospective homebuyers with incomes up to \$89,500 find homes they can afford.

The City of Minneapolis has also developed a new Website that includes a listing of development partners who have worked with the City on recently completed projects and currently have homes for sale.

Go to: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/seeking_home_ownership.asp

Builders Outreach Foundation donates building cost of home in north Minneapolis

Builders Outreach Foundation helped complete one of the 14 homes in the Lowell Curve development in north Minneapolis. (Pictured below.) The charitable sector of the Builders Association of the Twin Cities uses its resources to build quality, affordable homes for people with unfavorable financial conditions. Outreach member Cary Shaich was a primary catalyst in the project, enlisting the services of Lake Country Homes, which built the home on Outreach's behalf. This considerably defrayed costs and helped make the overall Lowell Curve project feasible. See more about this concentrated impact in north Minneapolis on page 3.



Builders Association of the Twin Cities defrays the cost of building a home. Pictured: Matt Soucek and Rick Dallmeyer of PPL; Cary Shaich and Jason Bever, from Builders Outreach; Gary Aulik, Board Chair for Builders Outreach and Lake Country Homes, and Patrick Jacobsen of Lake Country Homes.

Activities success stories

Two PPL developments chosen as semifinalists for Maxwell Awards of Excellence

The Fannie Mae Foundation Maxwell Awards of Excellence are given to outstanding affordable housing projects nationwide. Two PPL projects were among 22 semifinalists in 2007. They were Collaborative Village, with our partner Emerge, and Crestview Apartments, with our partner New Foundations.

PPL receives support for promoting technology access and technology literacy.

PPL received one of nine initial gifts from the Minneapolis Digital Inclusion Fund, which supports efforts to bridge the digital divide in Minneapolis. The grant is for technology access and training at PPL's Emma B. Howe Learning Center. The fund is administered by The Minneapolis Foundation and came about as a result of the Community Benefits Agreement between the City and U.S. Internet Wireless, the vendor responsible for establishing a wireless network in the City of Minneapolis.

Children at the Early Learning Center hold Annual Art Sale

The children at PPL's Early Learning Center (housed in Bethlehem Community Center) have been busy painting and gluing, creating vases, banks, small desktop containers, packs of greeting cards, gift bags and key chains for a fund raiser for

their program. The children decide how to spend the proceeds; past choices have included a pizza party, a field trip to a park, and toys for the classroom. The event is scheduled for 10 AM- noon, Friday, April 25th at PPL Service Center, 1035 East Franklin. Minneapolis. For more information, call Sheila at 612- 872-2764.

Residents offered a variety of support services

The Self-Sufficiency Program has begun several new initiatives in Saint Paul, Minneapolis, New Hope and St. Louis Park. Some are designed as in-home services such as Early Childhood Development coaching and work-readiness training, others as support groups, including a Job Club and a Women's Group.



Activities success stories

MISSION MOMENT: A change in attitude sparks the desire to succeed

From an AmeriCorps Member with the Youth Programs:

At the beginning of the school year, Triel was reluctant to do any academic work at all. He threw tantrums, talked back, and flat out refused to even try. A first grader, his reading ability was far below that of his peers. He had difficulty with letter recognition and sound combinations. Despite the efforts of his tutors, peers and group leaders, the solution was not readily apparent.

After spending eight months in the Scholars group and working closely with the same volunteer tutor the entire time, Triel's attitude toward reading began to change. He became less agitated when asked to do his homework. Near the end of the year, he started insisting he read more than was asked of him; by the end of the year, he proudly informed the group leaders that he had read six books in one night.

Triel is still behind in his reading comprehension, but he has made great progress. More than anything, his attitude changed, and this is the best sign his performance in school will improve.

VOLUNTEERS IN 2007

734 committed volunteers contributed 34,703 hours of time valued at \$626,389.

MISSION MOMENT: A former Access Lab participant graduates from Dunwoody

From an instructor at the PPL Learning Center :

A former Community Access Lab participant recently stopped by the Learning Center to tell the staff he was graduating from the Dunwoody Electronic Technology. We knew he had been taking classes. He had been at the Lab almost daily in 2006. After losing his job, he used the computers to search for employment, but he also wanted to improve his job prospects. The Lab counselors helped him settle on Dunwoody College for training and get financial aid. It's great he came by to tell us about his success and show us, first hand, that the resources and direction we provide offer life-changing possibilities for participants ready to use them.

2007 YEAR END RESULTS

Affordable Housing & Community

Development served 2,756 people through the 764 units of affordable rental housing owned or managed by PPL that offer on-site human services, and by renovating and creating new homes in the metro areas.

Employment and Job Training served 4,158 through businesses and classroom instruction for adults dealing with multiple barriers to successful employment.

Human Services served 3,137 adults and youth on a flexible, individualized basis in setting goals, finding resources and building skills necessary to be self-sufficient.

PPL directly served

10,051 individuals in 2007



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Before and After

Seven PPL-owned buildings in south Minneapolis underwent significant interior and exterior renovation.



PPL completed substantial interior and exterior renovation work on 48 units of housing in seven buildings in south Minneapolis. Improvements include new kitchens and baths, flooring, doors and windows, ventilation, heating, and plumbing. Four units were reconfigured into two units to house larger families. The major improvements should extend the buildings another 30 years. Exterior renovations, including façade improvements, dramatically changed the face of the two pictured above.



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