



Mercy Housing

# News from our Neighborhoods

Spring 2007

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## Mercy Housing Colorado breaks ground on third affordable housing development in Durango

Mercy Housing Colorado, along with leaders from the City of Durango and La Plata County and affordable housing advocates, gathered in January at the future site of Piñon Terrace to break ground on the organization's third affordable housing development in Durango.

Piñon Terrace, to be located northwest of Durango's Mercy Regional Medical Center, will be home to 66 families and people with special needs who need quality, safe affordable housing. The development will include garden units and two- and three-bedroom town homes.

Other representatives who spoke at the event included Sidney Zink, Durango Mayor; Pat Vaughn, President of GF Properties Group; Joanne Spina, Chair of the Mercy Regional Medical Center; and Linda McMahon, Senior Vice

President of JPMorgan Chase. JPMorgan Chase is helping with the development of Piñon Terrace and sponsored the groundbreaking celebration.

The development is expected to be complete by February 2008.



Mercy Housing staff and leaders from the Durango area "break snow" at the future site of Piñon Terrace. From left: Pat Vaughn, President of GF Properties Group; Frances Dance, Durango resident; Mayor Sidney Zink, City of Durango; Stephen Weiss, Vice President of JPMorgan Chase Community Development Corp.; Linda McMahon, Senior Vice President of JPMorgan Chase; Joanne Spina, Chair, Board of Directors, Mercy Regional Medical Center; Dick Banks, President/COO, Mercy Housing.

Working class families will have the opportunity to live near new schools, parks and stores, and health care workers and patients will be within walking distance of Mercy Regional Medical Center's new \$82 million, 212,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility.

Other organizations that have had a role in making Piñon Terrace possible include the Boettcher Foundation, the City of Durango, the Colorado Division of Housing, the Colorado Housing Finance Authority, the Durango Area Association of Realtors, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago and JP Morgan Capital Corporation.

## SmileMobile cares for kids' teeth at Appian Way

This year, Presidents Day week didn't only mean a day off from school for about 50 children who live at Appian Way in Seattle. It also meant it was time for a visit from the SmileMobile dentist.

On Feb. 20 and Feb. 21, the Washington Dental Service Foundation's SmileMobile, a 40-foot-long, brightly colored mobile clinic pulled into Appian Way's parking lot. The SmileMobile, a modern dental office on wheels, brings oral health services year-round to children from limited-income families who



The SmileMobile travels across Washington to provide care for children from limited-income families.

would not otherwise have access to much-needed dentistry. Teams of volunteer dental

professionals, including Spanish-speaking hygienists, support and staff the clinic.

At Appian Way, children ages 2 to 17 received dental examinations, preventative care and sealants on a sliding-scale fee basis. Resident Services Coordinator CC Scott said most residents are eligible for a 90 percent discount on services – a tremendous boon, especially for larger families. Those unable to pay at the time of service are allowed to pay over a period of time.

"We're so excited to have this. Many kids have huge dental issues, and it's great to have care here on the property," she said.

Learn more about the SmileMobile at [www.smilemobilewa.org](http://www.smilemobilewa.org).



An Appian Way resident receives care from the SmileMobile's dentist.

# Mercy Housing debuts new web site and e-newsletter

If you visit Mercy Housing's web site at [www.mercyhousing.org](http://www.mercyhousing.org) regularly, you'll see an entirely new site this spring. And if you don't visit our web site regularly, we hope you now will.

Mercy Housing launched a new web site and an e-newsletter in April. The new site still includes information about who we are, what we do and how to give to Mercy Housing. With the completely new look, we've also added a way to subscribe to our e-newsletter and search for our properties throughout the nation. Our regional offices also have their own sites where you'll find the latest news on what is happening in your area.

Within the next few months, we'll be improving our online donation system and providing you with more information about the Mercy Loan Fund and Strategic Initiatives, Mercy Housing's consulting division.

We've also partnered with some organizations to find creative ways to give to Mercy Housing.

## New Regional Web Sites

- Intercommunity Mercy Housing:**  
[www.intercommunitymercyhousing.org](http://www.intercommunitymercyhousing.org)
- Mercy Housing California:**  
[www.mercyhousingcalifornia.org](http://www.mercyhousingcalifornia.org)
- Mercy Housing Colorado:**  
[www.mercyhousingcolorado.org](http://www.mercyhousingcolorado.org)
- Mercy Housing Idaho:**  
[www.mercyhousingidaho.org](http://www.mercyhousingidaho.org)
- Mercy Housing Lakefront:**  
[www.mercyhousinglakefront.org](http://www.mercyhousinglakefront.org)
- Mercy Housing Midwest:**  
[www.mercyhousingmidwest.org](http://www.mercyhousingmidwest.org)
- Mercy Housing SouthEast:**  
[www.mercyhousingsoutheast.org](http://www.mercyhousingsoutheast.org)
- Mercy Housing Southwest:**  
[www.mercyhousingsouthwest.org](http://www.mercyhousingsouthwest.org)



For instance, you can go to: [www.changingthepresent.org](http://www.changingthepresent.org) to buy unique donation gifts that go to Mercy Housing, such as one month of after-school programming for a Mercy Housing child, a life skills course for a Mercy Housing parent or one month of housing for a Mercy Housing family.

If you use a search engine, such as Yahoo!, on a regular basis, give [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) a try. Fill in Mercy Housing under "Who do you GoodSearch for?" A penny will be donated to Mercy Housing each time you use GoodSearch.

Please take a look at our new web site and remember to sign up for the e-newsletter. If you have any comments or questions about our new site, contact the Communications Department at [info@mercyhousing.org](mailto:info@mercyhousing.org) or call (303) 830-3323. We'd love to hear what you think!

# Eden House teen lands once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in D.C.

When 16-year-old Soreya Moody of Eden House Apartments in San Leandro, Calif., gave a presentation to local officials late last year, she had no idea it would take her to our nation's Capitol to serve as a Congressional Page.

This past October, Soreya, a California native and member of Eden House's Youth Leadership Council, took part in a presentation to the Ashland/Cherryland Violence Prevention Committee, which serves the unincorporated part of Alameda County, Calif., where she lives. Two months later, Eden House's Resident Services Coordinator Hilary Sohcot received a call regarding a request from U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

"Congresswoman Barbara Lee had heard about our leadership council's presentation and was looking for someone to nominate as a Congressional Page," Ms. Sohcot said. "I immediately knew who to nominate."

Ms. Sohcot was referring to Soreya, a motivated young woman and phenomenal student who Ms. Sohcot said goes above and beyond.

"She's one of those rare young people who doesn't allow typical teenage distractions to get in the way of her goals," Ms. Sohcot said.

Within days, Ms. Sohcot and Soreya had completed all the necessary paperwork and dropped it off at


Congresswoman Lee's office. Despite fierce competition for these positions, Soreya was selected as one of 72 Pages at the House of Representatives.

Congressional Pages are essentially messengers – or assistants – who perform a variety of administrative tasks when Congress is in session. All are high school juniors from around the country. From her dorm room on Capitol Hill in February, Soreya said she's getting a better feel for politics and what's going on around the world.

For her, the excitement began before she even arrived in Washington. "It was the first time I'd ever been on a plane or even been outside of California," she said.

Soreya, who has one younger brother, said her family was thrilled that she had been awarded this opportunity. "My parents didn't have the opportunity to finish college, so I will be the first in our family to finish," she said.

With marine biology as her career goal, Soreya hopes this experience will help her land a scholarship and has decided to save her Page salary to help make it possible. Meantime, her days will be full. School starts at 6:45 a.m. and concludes before the House convenes each day.

Soreya left for Washington, D.C., at the end of January and will return home the second week of June. 

# Mercy Housing welcomes MHCO and MHSE Presidents

Mercy Housing is pleased to announce the appointments of two new regional presidents. Eugene P. “Pete” Walker Jr. joined Mercy Housing SouthEast as President in January, and Jennifer Erixon joined



Jennifer Erixon

Mercy Housing Colorado as President in March. Both are responsible for leading regional operations including the oversight of affordable housing development, fund raising and resident services.

“We are very excited to welcome Pete and Jennifer to our staff,” said Sister Lillian Murphy, RSM, Mercy Housing Chief Executive Officer.

“Pete’s leadership and extensive knowledge of affordable housing in the southeast will greatly help Mercy Housing SouthEast expand its mission of providing quality, affordable housing for families and seniors with limited incomes. Jennifer has a great understanding of real estate development. She has the talents and skills to strengthen Mercy Housing Colorado’s place in the affordable housing industry.”

Mr. Walker, a Georgia native, comes to Mercy Housing with significant experience in all areas of affordable housing development and finance. During the past 17 years, Mr. Walker has produced and preserved thousands of units of affordable housing. He has coordinated and participated in more than 60 transactions totaling more


than \$1 billion in financing.

Before coming to Mercy Housing SouthEast, Mr. Walker started Millennium Development Partners, LLC, in 2003. There, as Managing Member, he and his staff specialized in structuring and coordinating affordable mixed-income housing development projects for housing finance agencies, housing authorities and developers.



Pete Walker

“I am very pleased to join the Mercy Housing family,” Mr. Walker said. “Here in the Southeast, we plan to build upon Mercy Housing’s excellent national reputation and numerous regional accomplishments by aggressively expanding affordable housing opportunities and enhancing the requisite services we provide. We have an opportunity to make a significant difference throughout the region and are determined to do so by fulfilling our mission of ‘creating and strengthening healthy communities.’”

Ms. Erixon comes to MHCO with 10 years of experience structuring complex real estate transactions, evaluating markets, creating sophisticated financial models, directing risk analysis and partnering with developers and large institutional investors. Ms. Erixon’s career in affordable housing began at Mercy Housing in 1997, when she worked as a project assistant in the multi-family housing division of Mercy Housing Colorado. 

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## CHRISTUS Health joins Strategic Healthcare Partnership

CHRISTUS Health joined Mercy Housing’s Strategic Healthcare Partnership in February, making the Irving, Texas-based Catholic health system the ninth member of an important collaboration to increase access to health care and affordable housing in the United States.

With CHRISTUS Health’s commitment to the Strategic Healthcare Partnership, Mercy Housing will be able to help many of the communities that were affected by the 2005 hurricanes. Many of the communities that CHRISTUS Health serves in Louisiana and Texas were in the paths of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. CHRISTUS facilities also received an influx of evacuees who needed to relocate to the area.


Through the partnership, Mercy Housing, in collaboration with CHRISTUS Health, is in the process of hiring a senior level staff member to be based in Houston. This person will assist hospitals and other developers in creating quality, affordable housing for seniors in the CHRISTUS Health communities most affected by the 2005 storms.

“The destructive impact that Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had on many of the communities that CHRISTUS Health serves only created a greater need for collaboration,” said Joseph Gonzales, Director of the CHRISTUS Community Direct Investment Program. “Working with

Mercy Housing’s Strategic Healthcare Partnership will allow CHRISTUS to bridge the gap between the needs of seniors and the short supply of affordable housing that remains in the hurricane-damaged communities.”

The Strategic Healthcare Partnership began in 1998 as an effort between Mercy Housing and seven other health systems. As of July 2006, this powerful alliance had resulted in the completion of 188 properties with 8,540 rental homes worth more than \$867 million.

The CHRISTUS Health system is comprised of more than 40 hospitals, inpatient and long-term care facilities, as well as dozens of clinics and other health care services. Christus facilities can be found in more than 60 cities in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Utah, Missouri, Georgia and Mexico. Among the nation’s Top 100 Integrated Health Care Networks and with assets of more than \$3.4 billion, CHRISTUS Health was recently ranked among the top 10 Catholic health systems in the United States.

“We look forward to working with CHRISTUS Health and developers in Louisiana and Texas to create affordable homes for seniors and help seniors access the health care they need,” said Melinda Pollack, Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Mercy Housing’s consulting division. 



# Mercy Housing

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## Volunteers help new Near North Apartments residents feel at home

Residents of the Near North Apartments will start out life in their new homes with linens, toiletries and more, thanks to the generous support of Mercy Housing Lakefront volunteers. The organization held a volunteer day on Jan. 27 to create "Welcome Kits" for the new community's 96 units. The property opened on March 1.

Because many of the residents were homeless, living in shelters or in substandard housing, many didn't have the basics needed to equip a new home. At the Near North Apartments, a single-room occupancy property in a Chicago neighborhood formerly dominated by the Cabrini Green housing project, residents sign a lease and take pride in having a clean, well-built, new home.

Mercy Housing Lakefront invited donors to actually buy items and assemble Welcome Kits or donate money. More than 85 people gathered to organize items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper, pillows, bed sheets, blankets, towels and cleaning supplies in



*Volunteers pack the Near North Apartments elevator in January with linens and supplies to prepare homes for new residents.*

laundry baskets for each unit. Volunteers even hung shower curtains and put the linens on the beds so that there was one less thing for residents to take care of on their first night in their new home.

Volunteers included board members who represented Walgreen's, Dykema and Christopher Burke Engineering, as well as Alderman Walter Burnett Jr., who represents the city's 27th Ward. Donors also brought co-workers, family members and friends who all participated in the successful event.

Mercy Housing Lakefront hopes to give volunteers an experience that will introduce them to residents in a hands-on way. Future volunteer opportunities include a school supply

drive this summer to equip resident children with everything they will need to start the school year off on the right foot and a gardening day to replace plantings at the Wentworth Commons. †