

LGBT Friendly Housing Planned for Sacramento

A 50 unit apartment complex being planned near downtown Sacramento has been tentatively dubbed Lavender Court and will cater to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender seniors.

Mutual Housing California, which has built 19 low-income projects since 1989, is used to partnering with and serving neighborhoods where its projects are built. Often they are in ethnic communities. The non-profit is narrowing its focus for its latest project.

“We want to serve the aging population, and then we want to go make sure that it’s sensitive to LGBT, and have that serve that niche,” said Rachel Iskow, executive director of Mutual Housing California.

While the complex will be open to everyone, even anti-gay tenants, the staff and volunteers at the complex will be given extra training so they can address LGBT issues.

There is a growing need as the baby boomers retire. It’s a concern for Cathy Perry, an LGBT activist.

Perry says older LGBT members often don’t have children or have been abandoned by traditional support networks for the elderly.

“They were ... ostracized and kicked out of faith-based communities and their own biological families because they were gay,” Perry said.

Now some fear that caregivers or senior housing neighbors of their generation will retain old prejudices.

The project is near the Lavender Heights neighborhood in midtown where gays have a comfort level. But Perry says location is secondary.

“It’s having a community, it’s having a place to gather, it’s about not being isolated, and that would be one of our top priorities with the village,” Perry said.

The Mutual Housing project is farther along and hopes to take advantage of federal, state and local funds that are available for senior housing with a transportation component. It currently serves 3,000 low-income renters.

There only a handful of housing complexes that cater to LGBT members and some of them higher income projects. Mutual Housing is one of the first to concentrate on the lower income segment of that community.

Mutual Housing California develops housing that is affordable to a diversity of households. Our housing builds strong and stable communities through resident participation and leadership development. For more information, call (916) 453-8400 or visit our website at mutualhousing.com.

