



Mutual Housing Expands to Serve LGBT Community

Mutual Housing California – the local developer planning an affordable LGBT-welcoming, senior housing community in downtown Sacramento – is on an expansion kick.

Following its strategic plan, Mutual Housing is expanding its sustainable housing development and property management programs.



In 2015, Mutual Housing California purchased a vacant parcel at the corner of 16th and F Streets in Sacramento for Lavender Courtyard by Mutual Housing, with the intention of making it home to 53 households whose occupants are age 62 and older.

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.

In 1988, Sacramento's Mutual Housing was created to provide high-quality housing at affordable rents to residents throughout the county.

Today, 3,200 residents live in mutual housing in Sacramento and Yolo counties.

Planned as a zero net energy property for the corner of 16th and F streets, Lavender Courtyard by Mutual Housing, helps fulfill a critical growth strategy laid out in the organization's strategic plan because it welcomes LGBT seniors.

“Our plan calls for expanding our mission through specific paths. One is building more green-rated housing, says Rachel Iskow, Mutual Housing's chief executive officer and a lesbian herself. “Another is reaching out to serve special populations that have significant challenges finding safe and affordable housing.”

Low-income seniors, many disabled, fit this definition. LGBT seniors face even greater obstacles in the rental housing market because of prevalent homophobic attitudes among staff and residents of senior housing communities.

But growth requires new funding.

“Planning and implementing new growth initiatives requires upfront charitable investment from individuals, businesses and foundations who want to see us succeed,” says Mutual Housing's recently hired director of resource development Jay Cohen.

“Mutual Housing has a strong track record of exceptional service. Their outcomes are visible – stable families housed in well-designed, supportive communities built for sustainability.”

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Michael Farnham, Trendsetters Hair Design owner in midtown, donates to Mutual Housing. “It is exciting that Mutual Housing has turned its attention to LGBT issues. With our community’s support they can help address our significant housing needs in a culturally sensitive manner.”

Mutual Housing staff also hopes to grow programs to serve former foster youth because college enrollment for youth from low-income families has decreased 10 percent since 2008.

They expect youth to be inspired by the nonprofit’s new Culture of College.

“We’ve expanded our programs for youth by creating obvious pathways to college,” said Iskow. “Mutual Housing is in a unique position to inspire a culture of college in every family we house and to let youth feel that college is accessible.”

LGBT youth in particular often lack family support both financially and emotionally. Because of this, Iskow is convinced that community institutions like Mutual Housing and LGBT organizations have a vital role to play in encouraging LGBT youth to pursue college.

The congressionally chartered NeighborWorks America shows its belief in Mutual Housing’s growth plan by recently awarding Mutual Housing a grant to support the expansion of its property management division, which will benefit other nonprofits that own residential properties.

With growth also comes the need for skilled nonprofit professionals with entrepreneurial drive and commitment to mission to join their exceptional staff. Cohen was one such addition.

Mutual Housing currently is seeking candidates to fill two key positions – director of resident programs and housing development project manager. View the position descriptions and apply at www.mutualhousing.com.