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# NEWS ON TAP

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*The NEWS ON TAP Newsletter is part of OHCD's Housing and Disability Technical Assistance Program (TAP) concerning issues related to housing for persons with disabilities in the City of Philadelphia.* *May 2002*

## **The Choices to Live Independently**

By Peggy Robertson

Inglis Housing Corporation (Inglis House) has been providing affordable accessible independent living opportunities for adults with physical disabilities since 1975. It maintains a total of 86 rental units in apartment complexes, scattered-site projects and single family dwellings throughout the greater Philadelphia region. Anthony Venuto, Chief Operating Officer for Inglis Housing Corporation commented, "The housing we have developed has been a response to the needs of people with disabilities. We have consistently listened to our customers and responded to what they wanted."

Mr. Venuto continued, "Although Inglis has been developing accessible, affordable housing since 1975, they didn't focus on housing until 1995. That's when they decided to respond to the serious problems faced by people with physical disabilities including those leaving nursing homes. When looking for affordable housing, they kept hitting brick walls. So Inglis House responded to this problem by creating a variety of housing options, including

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scattered-site housing, housing that offers a compromise between single-site and pure scattered site, and homeownership opportunities."

When asked about the affordability of the housing created by Inglis House, Mr. Venuto responded, "Our housing units are truly affordable for people with disabilities. We attempt to attach subsidies to everything. An example of one our developments that accommodates the needs of people with physical disabilities and has provided safe, affordable and accessible housing is Inglis

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Gardens at Eastwick. This is a HUD-funded Section 811 program intended to provide supportive housing for people with disabilities. Inglis House is the owner of the development and subcontracted the management to Friends Rehabilitation, an affordable housing provider. Inglis House's role is to oversee the management as well as to work with different agencies such as Liberty Resources and Freedom Valley to provide the community-based services. The services include attendant care, transportation and meals on wheels. Friends Rehabilitation serves as a landlord, overseeing the maintenance, collecting rents and making sure that things run smoothly."

Inglis Gardens at Eastwick has two phases. Phase I is a development of 24 fully accessible apartments (12 one-bedroom and 12-two-bedroom) which opened in 1998. To be eligible for these apartments, a person must have a need for the features that the apartment provides and his or her income must meet the income requirements set by the federal guidelines.

These units, like all of the projects by Inglis Housing Corporation, exceed accessibility recommendations set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The doorways have a 36 inches clearance, a very low (less than ½ inch) threshold and are fully wheel chair accessible. Innovative design features include bathrooms that use the roll-in

shower space as part of the 5-foot turning radius, sinks with a side faucet for easy access, lowered countertops, thermostat and circuit breaker boxes, and double-door refrigerators and window handles that require minimal fine motor skills. Residents also have badge sensors (proximity readers) that open doors automatically.

The development is located in a neighborhood that has bus service and nearby grocery shopping, medical services, an accessible ATM bank, library, civic center and playground. In recognition of their innovative design for Eastwick I, Inglis Housing Corporation and their architect Cecil Baker and Associates, were awarded the 2001 Alan J. Rothman Housing Accessibility Award by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for excellence in housing accessibility for people with physical disabilities.

Anthony Dyches is a resident at Inglis Gardens at Eastwick I. He has been living in a one-bedroom apartment for about five months. He explained, "I moved here from the Care Pavilion, a nursing home over on 62<sup>nd</sup> and Walnut

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Street. Before living at the nursing home, I used to live at Inglis House and have stayed in contact with them ever since. They let me know about the apartments at Eastwick and moving here has been the best thing that could ever happen to a quadriplegic who uses a wheel chair. Independent living is beautiful. I get up when I want to get up, I go to bed when I want to go to bed and I have my way of doing things. I don't have to go by anyone else's schedule, I don't get attitude from anyone and I don't have to worry about anyone stealing my things."

When asked if he has met any of the other residents he responded, "I have met some of the people that live in the development. We do have an association that is organized by a woman and she collects \$5 dues at each of our monthly meetings. She will organize a variety of activities that dues-paying residents can participate in such as cook outs and day trips to different places like the shore during the summer."

Mr. Dyches commented about the location of Inglis Gardens at Eastwick I. "This is a great area to live in. There is a plaza across the street and I can get over

there in my wheel chair. It is really convenient. The only real disadvantage of living independently is if my nurse doesn't show up. But I want to stay here for as long as possible, maybe for ten years. This is a beautiful place and they should have invented it a long time ago. It gives us the freedom and motivation to do more on our own and to become as independent as possible. And I want to do more for myself. My goal is to eventually buy my own home with some land."

Inglis Gardens at Eastwick II, which opened in February 2002, consists of 10 one- bedroom and 8 two- bedroom fully accessible apartments. An added feature in Eastwick II is a universally designed raised dishwasher. In addition to funding from HUD, this project received support from the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD), the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and the Inglis Foundation.

Inglis House produces other accessible housing models as well. In West Philadelphia They expect to develop 40 more units within the next two years. Some of these are new

construction and some are newly renovated units. More than half of these units are scattered-site or in buildings that are "clustered". Mr. Venuto explained, "The advantage of living in a unit that is part of a clustered apartment complex is that the resident can become fully integrated into the community. In addition, community-based services can be more effective and efficient because an aide or attendant can service more people as part of his/her job. All in all, we believe our units can contribute to improved independence for persons with mobility impairments."

Two other partnerships between Inglis House and Friends Rehabilitation have resulted in the development of four scattered-site units in the Belmont Garden Apartments in West Philadelphia and six scattered-site units in Inglis Apartments at Darrah at 17<sup>th</sup> and Fairmount. They are working on a third project with OHCD financing that will create 11 accessible apartment units in three buildings - another example of housing that is scattered within a large apartment complex.

Inglis House is also involved in an exciting

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project that provides homeownership opportunities for people with disabilities. In fact, this represents the first homeownership initiative for Inglis Housing Corporation. In November 2002, Inglis Housing Corporation entered into a partnership with Merrill Lynch and Habitat for Humanity-West Philadelphia, to begin new construction of two fully accessible homes. Merrill Lynch is sponsoring one unit as part of a \$1 million initiative to build Habitat homes across the nation.

The homes are located in the 4200 block of Stiles Street, which is one block away from Fairmount Park. Each of the three-bedroom homes have a fully accessible bedroom and bathroom on the first floor and are selling for between \$30,000 and \$60,000. Habitat provides a zero percent interest mortgage, making the monthly payment approximately \$150 - \$200. An additional thirteen homes are expected to be developed nearby within the next five years. These homes will not be fully accessible, but because of the design innovation and expertise of Inglis House, they will be involved with Habitat and the architects to help make the homes visitable. A visitable

home promotes three features: at least one zero grade exterior entrance; interior doorways with a minimum of 32 inches clearance and; a bathroom on the first floor with basic accessibility. This allows people who use wheel chairs to visit the home.

Mr. Venuto noted, "We are always looking for new development opportunities and to work with potential partners. We hope the relationships we currently have will continue to grow and prosper and combine to create even more accessible, affordable units for the citizens of Philadelphia. We anticipate that by June 2003, the number of housing opportunities we will have created will double with the successful completion of current initiatives. However, there is still inadequate

housing for the number of persons seeking affordable, accessible housing. We are trying to fill that gap by providing accessible housing at reasonable prices in neighborhoods sought out by the people we serve. It should also be mentioned that for new construction, the added cost of making a unit fully accessible is quite small. It is less than one percent."

Inglis House also provides other services that ultimately expand accessible housing opportunities for people with disabilities. They maintain information that they receive from OHCD about accessible housing units produced and managed by other developers around the city and often refer callers to these other providers. Mr.

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Venuto explained, "We offer long-term visions and ways in which to make existing buildings accessible. We know the intricacies of the ADA and can offer ways to further enhance the requirements of the ADA. We can also educate clients on Universal Design features."

All of Inglis Housing Corporation projects exceed accessibility recommendations set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Inglis Housing Corporation also offers optional service coordination for its tenants and accessibility assessment consulting services for residential and commercial buildings. Inglis Housing Corporation is a not-for-profit subsidiary of Inglis Foundation.

Following is a brief description of accessible housing developed by Inglis Housing Corporation:

**Inglis Gardens at Eastwick Apartments** - Inglis Gardens at Eastwick I and II is located in the Eastwick section of southwest Philadelphia, near the International Airport. It features:

- 12 one- and 12 two-bedroom apartments for

low income individuals with physical disabilities at Eastwick I

- 10 one- and 8 two-bedroom apartments for low income individuals with physical disabilities at Eastwick II
- Nearby accessible shopping, medical, recreational and banking facilities, as well as public transportation
- Apartment appliances, bathroom fixtures, doorways and light switches accessible from a wheelchair
- Fully accessible parking, ramps and other exterior features
- A universally designed raised dishwasher at Eastwick II

**Inglis Cottages at Berks County** - 10 three-bedroom ranch homes at scattered locations in the Reading, PA, area for rental by people with physical disabilities (or families with a member who is disabled).

**Klein & Morris Hall Apartments** - The Esther M. Klein and Morris Hall Apartments are located on the Inglis House campus in Philadelphia.

- The Klein building has 16 studio apartments. Morris Hall has six one-bedroom and two two-

bedroom units.

- The units are completely wheelchair accessible with adjustable height work counters in their kitchens and retractable shower benches in their bathrooms.
- Managed by Inglis Housing Corporation, operating costs are subsidized by the corporation to keep rental rates as low as possible.

Among the other housing opportunities continually explored by Inglis Housing Corporation are:

- Accessible units that are "scattered" among other units and not only available in complexes designed exclusively for people with disabilities.
- Home ownership and rental opportunities through cooperative efforts between Inglis Housing Corporation and several neighborhood and community organizations.
- Financial subsidies and special training programs to equip both tenants and home owners with the basic skills necessary to maintain and support a private residence.

For more information about Inglis Housing Corporation, please contact ...

## RESEARCH CENTER OPEN HOUSE SHOWCASES "AGING IN PLACE" STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION SUBMISSIONS

By Peggy Robertson

On January 4, 2002, the National Center for Seniors' Housing Research hosted an open house to exhibit submissions from its second annual national student design competition, *Urban/Suburban Residential Challenges: A Design Competition for Students*. The event was held at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Research Center in Upper Marlboro, Md., headquarters of the National Center for Seniors' Housing Research. There were a total of 93 entries for the 2001/2002 competition which was up from 63 in the competition's first year. When it was formed in May 2000, one of the goals established by the National Center for Seniors' Housing Research was to introduce the concept of "Aging in Place" design into the curriculum of colleges, universities, and trade schools around the country. The national student design competition is helping to realize that goal.

The competition's goal was to solicit ideas on smart-

aging residential design. One of the major criteria of the competition was to make the housing more accessible to allow people to age in place. Students chose from two design problems. The first focused on renovating a group of six row houses for a city's elderly population. This is relevant to Philadelphia because there are many row homes that are inaccessible to the aging population, who have many of the same housing needs as do people with disabilities.

Deborah Adler, program director of the National Center for Seniors' Housing Research explained, "Research confirms that older Americans want to continue living in their own homes as they age. That, coupled with the rapidly growing older population that will exceed 80 million by 2025, translates into a very real and significant demand for innovative ways to accommodate the lifestyles of today's older homeowners. Older Americans will require new homes, renovations to their existing homes, or age-appropriate assistive devices.

We hope that our design competition provides a forum for addressing that demand and will help to identify innovative and buildable solutions for this expanding and influential consumer group."

The notion of "aging in place" is further supported by Louis S. Tenenbaum, President of Access Remodeling, Universal Design Specialists, who explained "AARP did a study that said older people don't want to move. 84% of the people over 55 years of age want to stay in their own home for as long as possible. There needs to be more appropriate housing to meet the changing needs of the population.

The criteria for the student competition specified the need to design housing that would meet the needs of an aging population. Judging was based on the following main categories:

**Creativity:** Does the design demonstrate an innovative approach to

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housing that meets the needs of aging Americans? While much already may be understood about the residential needs of the aging, this competition encourages new concepts or new approaches to old concepts.

**Buildability:** Is the design practical enough for a builder to construct? It is not expected that creative designs be held strictly to current building practices. Nevertheless, designs should reflect ideas and designs that have a reasonable expectation for buildability. Costs should be considered against the perceived incomes and lifestyles of the housing occupants.

**Livability:** How appropriate is the design for an aging American? The design should reflect representation of user comfort and functional ease. The design should lend itself to low maintenance, easy-to-maintain elements, or maintenance-free choices. The design should pay attention to energy efficiency and make use of technologies to enhance livability and to reduce operations and maintenance requirements and costs. Safety should

be considered in all elements of the design.

Based on these criteria, Nicole Andersen, an architecture student from Kansas State University (KSU), submitted the winning design for the urban multifamily scenario. In her row house modification design, Anderson straightened and lengthened passageways and eliminated walls to suit the residents described in the competition scenario. This winning entry had nine flats sculpted out of five of the six row homes, leaving the last with its three stories intact, and included a glass-enclosed walkway at the rear of the buildings to allow greater exterior accessibility.

Associate Professor O. John Selfridge works in the School of Architecture at KSU and was Ms. Anderson's advisor for the competition. He talked about how the project fit into his curriculum. "I particularly liked that the underlying idea of the competition is to include universal design features. Part of the curriculum for my classes is to teach both universal design and visitability. The students are now working on their final project to design a cabin and one of the requirements is to make it visitable."

Visitability and universal design are important

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features that students are encouraged to incorporate in their design and are fully endorsed by the NAHB. In fact, The National Association of Home Builders, through its Senior Housing Council, is trying to get its membership to voluntarily incorporate visitability standards in new housing.

In an article entitled "Building Visitability" in the Philadelphia Inquirer on Sunday, April 21, 2002, Alan J. Heavens concurred emphatically that as people age they are going to want housing that can be adapted to their needs. He wrote, "Visitability fits into the concept of universal design, behind which is a philosophy that takes two trends into account:

- People 45 and older buying trade-up housing don't plan to move every seven years, which has long been the national average.
- As people age, they will progressively have trouble reaching down to open a kitchen drawer, reaching up to get a book on the top shelf of the bookcase, or stepping over the

raised base of a shower stall without having something to grab onto."

NAHB Research Center president Liza Bowles said, "We are excited about the high-quality design submissions we received this year. We hope that more and more professionals in the home building industry begin to incorporate inventive ideas and designs, like those of these competitors, and put them to use for older adult consumers. This will allow more Americans to continue to age at home, where they are most comfortable, for as long as possible."

For more information about the NAHB Research Center at 400 Prince George's Boulevard, Upper Marlboro, Maryland, 20774, call 301.249.4000 or Toll Free 800.638.8556 and visit their website at <http://www.nahbrc.org/>.

## One Step Closer to VisitAbility in Philadelphia

A new Philadelphia Ordinance, which was introduced by City Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, is proposed to mandate that all newly constructed units receiving public funds are designed to be VisitAble. This will allow people with disabilities the opportunity to visit as many neighbors as possible.

The City of Philadelphia, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development, is currently trying to amend the Philadelphia Building Code to require newly constructed single and multi-family dwellings to be constructed according to the principles of VisitAbility. (This ordinance, known as Bill #010742, proposes to amend Title 4 of "The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code," Subcode B, "The Philadelphia Building Code," and Section B-1101 of Chapter 11.)

This ordinance would apply to projects receiving assistance for construction from the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the Federal Community the Development Block Grant program, the Home Investment Partnership program, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program, the Section 108 Loan Guarantee program, the Supporting Housing program or the Hope VI fund program.

Under current Fair Housing Laws, all new multifamily buildings must meet certain accessibility standards. However, new single family construction is exempt from these requirements. Therefore, disability groups are advocating for new single family homes to be VisitAble. VisitAbility is a design criterion that affords all persons basic access to homes and residential buildings.

Constructing units to be VisitAble includes the creation of a zero step entrance; wider doors and passageways within the dwelling; locating at least one bathroom or powder room on the accessible entry floor and the ability to install grab bars within such restrooms. Advocates are pressing for communities to adopt VisitAbility ordinances, for funders to adopt VisitAbility guidelines, and for builders and developers to incorporate VisitAbility features in new single family home construction.

The proposal will take effect immediately upon final approval. If approved, it will be another step toward improving accessibility in housing in Philadelphia.



## Now Available: A Digest of Pennsylvania Initiatives *Hammering Out Housing Solutions*

The purpose of the Housing Solutions Digest is to further spread information about the many creative and exciting state and local efforts being undertaken to address the housing needs of people with disabilities throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

***Hammering Out Housing Solutions*** is a user-friendly digest that documents current issues and trends in Pennsylvania's attempts to meet the housing needs of people with disabilities.

Descriptions of problems and solutions are supplemented with examples and contact information so that the digest can serve as an excellent resource for organizations and other groups interested in initiating or expanding housing opportunities in their communities.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the digest, call 215-576-1150 ext. 4  
or view it on the following website: [www.harpo-fpa.org](http://www.harpo-fpa.org).

Click on *Housing Options* and scroll down to the bottom of the page.

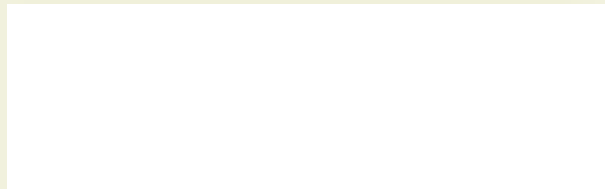
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