

Toolworks Affordable Housing Partnership

Toolworks, Inc., a producing affiliate of the AbilityOne® Program, works with Affordable Housing Associates (AHA) to deliver specialized services to California's Bay Area residents. Through client driven services, Toolworks' goals are to increase economic and social opportunities for people with disabilities as well as educate the community to value the abilities and strengths of every individual. One of Toolworks' most recent social projects has been the establishment of services for people with disabilities in affordable housing units.

Toolworks has initiated services at the newly renovated Fairmount Apartments, located in Oakland, Calif. Owned by AHA, Fairmount Apartments was the first housing project in the state to use Mental Health Services Act funding for construction and services. With 35 units on the property, five units are set aside for individuals with pervasive mental health needs, as well as two units for people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, AHA and Toolworks make a commitment to supply housing for homeless citizens. The remaining Fairmount's units are reserved for low-income individuals and persons with disabilities. Before the building's renovation, the apartment complex was an unmanaged and neglected apartment property.

Opened in May 2011, Fairmount Apartments is now a green certified building with various amenities that not only make the building green and eco-friendly, but also accessible for different patrons. The units have solar water heating, granite countertops made from sustainable materials, energy efficient appliances and AHA recycled all building materials when constructing the rehabilitation project. To be more sustainable, cost-efficient and support a safer environment, AHA also converted the pool in the courtyard to a grassy area.

Toolworks also provides services at AHA's Madison at 14th Apartments in Oakland, Calif. Madison at 14th has 79 units, 20 of which are reserved for youth aging out of foster care. With a large community center room, Madison at 14th holds community meetings and also lends the room to other local organizations of the surrounding neighborhood. Kristy Feck, Toolworks vice president, asserts, "The community room is used very frequently by the community for community events, which are really important to us as we think about ways to make sure that our residents here are not only have a strong residential community but are also connected to the community at large." Moreover, the community center room also serves multiple functions, such as

Anna Hake, Toolworks' resident services coordinator and Madison at 14th Apartment tenant discuss a concern.



a space for exercise classes, tax assistance during tax season and community building events like volunteering for a political campaign to save the city of Oakland's libraries. With both on-site property managers and on-site service coordinators in all properties, Toolworks aims to make people live in their homes and community as independently as possible. Anna Hake, Toolworks' resident services coordinator states, "Toolworks provides health advocacy and community building by assessing clients through outreach, office hours and regularly meeting with property managers to refer clients and bring social services."

Toolworks offers various forms of residential assistance services, including application and informational assistance, referrals and social and legal support. These assistance services range from food giveaways; application filing (section 8, jobs, fee waivers, and food stamps); legal and domestic violence protection and assistance with housing authority and social security issues. Toolworks also provides referrals for employment and training agencies, childcare, food bank or for free or low-cost health care programs. It also offers support groups for substance/domestic abuse in addition to counseling, family needs or motivation for job seekers.

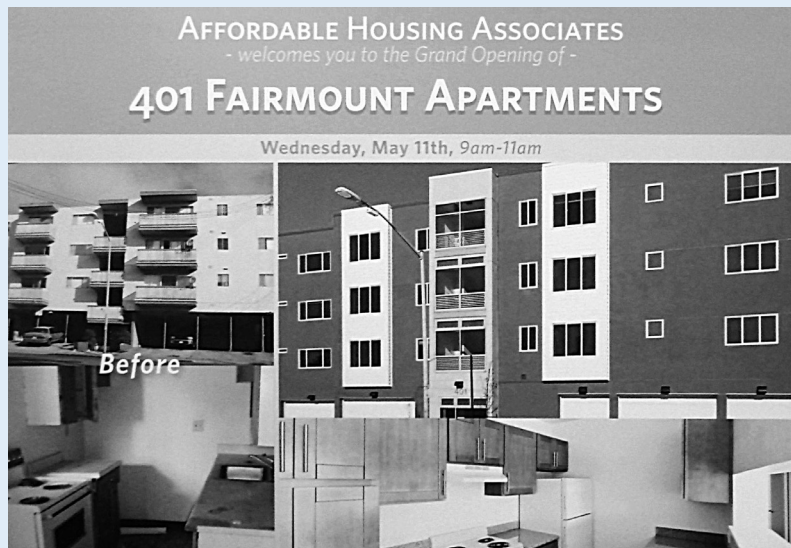
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Toolworks continues on page 12



Top right: Large community room in Madison at 14th Apartments where Toolworks provides and hosts many events and services.

Middle right: Wheelchair accessible kitchens in all Fairmount Apartments.

Bottom right: Fairmount Apartments' courtyard and repurposed pool.



Top: Fairmount Apartments' grand opening poster with a before and after picture of rehabilitation project.

Bottom: Kristy Feck, Toolworks' vice president, and Anna Hake at the Madison at 14th Apartments sitting area.

Toolworks continued from page 11

Because these affordable housing projects have such a diverse community, in turns of age range and ability, Toolworks provides a wide range of services, facilities and support for tenants to enjoy an inclusive environment and maintain stable housing. One of the reasons why Toolworks' partnership with AHA is such a successful match between organizations is that the AHA complexes contain units specifically designed for wheelchair accessibility. Apartments feature wheelchair-accessible open kitchen sinks as well as accessible appliances. Both the Madison at 14th and Fairmount properties also include small residential computer labs for tenants who need Internet and technology access.

Toolworks also offers affordable, disability accessible housing solutions in the Richmond district of San Francisco. The organization looks forward to expanding its service offerings and ventures in social enterprises.

For more information on Toolworks, Inc., please visit: <http://www.toolworks.org/>. For more information about Affordable Housing Associates properties, please visit: <http://www.ahainc.org/>.