



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 16, 2008

CONTACT: Jo Ann Dollard
847/390-1446

LSSI Dedicates Prairie Style-Inspired Spring Ridge Senior Housing

On Thursday, June 12, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) dedicated Spring Ridge Senior Housing, a new, affordable senior housing facility located on the east side of Rockford, at 6645 Fincham Drive.

Approximately 250 individuals were present at the dedication, including representatives of the Rockford Chamber of Commerce who assisted with the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The Rev. Dr. Frederick Aigner, LSSI president, and Joseph Galvan, regional director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), took part in the dedication ceremony. Rockford Alderman Joe Sosnowski and Reid Montgomery, director of community and economic development for the City of Rockford, were also in attendance.

“I don’t like being here – I love being here,” said Linda Wilson, a Spring Ridge resident who spoke at the dedication. “I feel like I have another family, and the staff people are tremendous.”

Betty Washington, another Spring Ridge resident, commented, “I’m in seventh heaven. It’s a beautiful place. I feel at home already.”

Spring Ridge features 60 one-bedroom apartments that include a full kitchen with appliances, a visitor entry system and other amenities. The residential community, which cost \$7.7 million to build, is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Spring Ridge obtained its certificate of occupancy from HUD on May 2, and on May 5 the first 20 residents visited the building to pick out their apartments, including the first resident who moved in on the same day. LSSI received 150 applications for the 60 units available at Spring Ridge, confirming the results of a marketing study that showed the need for this type of housing in the area. All of the apartments have been leased. In order to qualify for an apartment at Spring Ridge, the head of household must be at least 62 years old and meet HUD’s income limits.

Spring Ridge does not fit the image of what some might imagine when hearing the term “subsidized housing.” Far from being a generic, box-like structure, the unique building’s quality and craftsmanship is evident. Designed by Tyson and Billy Architects and constructed by John Frihd & Sons, the building reflects the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Prairie School of Architecture.

“The Prairie School style lent itself ideally to the site, which is long and narrow, and located between commercial properties on one side and residential on the other. For us, Spring Ridge was a ‘dare to dream’ situation — how we could make this style of building affordable,” explained Kevin Hagemann, who, with Lisa Ingalls, oversees LSSI’s Affordable Housing program.

-more-

“At Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, we tailor-make each building design to fit each site. We do not use a ‘cookie-cutter’ approach,” Hagemann continued. In August 2006, LSSI opened Victorian Woods, another senior building in Danville, also designed by Tyson and Billy, which utilized a Victorian theme. Altogether, LSSI owns and manages 19 affordable housing sites for seniors and adults with disabilities statewide.

Ron Billy, the architect with Tyson and Billy who worked with LSSI on the project, said, “It was an exciting project for us. We adapted details that Frank Lloyd Wright used in different homes into the design, such as a front door that is set on the side of the building,” he explained, noting that he’d made a trip to Pennsylvania last year to see Wright’s Fallingwater in search of inspiration for the project.

“Spring Ridge is truly a gem. This is the best project we’ve ever done for LSSI, if you look at what was accomplished on the budget and the recognition that the project is receiving,” Billy said, adding that for him, the greatest compliment was from a resident whose comment had been included in the dedication program: “At this stage of life, this is like living in a mansion.”

Hagemann commented that while it was exciting to see the project come to completion, the most satisfying part of it was realizing that Spring Ridge will become home for many people. “That’s the most important thing to me,” he said. “And partnering with HUD has been a wonderful experience. They’re tremendously supportive of providing affordable housing for older adults and people with disabilities.”

Founded in 1867, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois is a statewide, not-for-profit social service agency of the three Illinois synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). LSSI serves people through an array of services at more than 89 program sites across Illinois. In the Rockford area, LSSI offers adoption and foster care services, pregnancy counseling, nursing and housing for seniors, home care services, and services for prisoners and their families.

For more information about Spring Ridge, call 815/397-4210, or visit www.LSSI.org/Service/SpringRidge.aspx.

###