

Tenants Network News

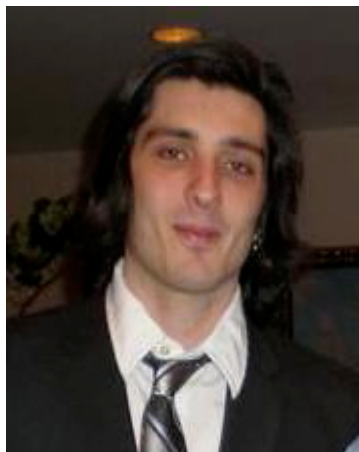
May 2009

New Tenant Organizer Joins Greater Syracuse Tenants Network

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The Greater Syracuse Tenants Network is happy to welcome a new Tenant Organizer, Charlie Frisch.



He is a Tenants Rights Advocate, part-time student and city resident. In his four years here, he has found a new home in Syracuse and has worked for a number of charities and non-profit organizations. He is also very proud of playing a part in coordinating a local event both funding a scholarship at Syracuse University and benefitting another Syracuse-area family.

Since coming on board early this year, he has worked with tenant leaders and members at Summit Apartments, McCarthy Manor, Clinton Plaza, as well as others and

their property management to improve the conditions at various properties in Syracuse.

Shortly after beginning his work, he attended a lengthy training and planning conference in Washington, D.C. with other Tenant Organizers and board members from the National Alliance of HUD Tenants. Since then, he works to share that experience and education with those living in HUD, Section 8, and other subsidized housing here in Central New York.

In the coming months he will be strengthening the relationships already made as well as looking to form new ones. If you are interested in becoming a member or creating a Tenant Association where you live, please call the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network.

Charlie can be reached during his office hours Monday thru Thursday, from 3-8pm at 315-475-8092. He is also available thru email at SyracuseTenant@aol.com

The mission of the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network is to organize inform and empower primarily low income tenants to improve the quality of live in their communities and to preserve affordable housing.

Home Makeover: Rehabilitation of complex welcome, but a better model is needed

Posted by [Post-Standard Editorial Board](#) April 12, 2009 5:02AM

Categories: [Editorial](#)



Dave Lassman/The Post-Standard PARKSIDE COMMONS, formerly Rolling Green Estates, at 2005 E. Fayette St. in Syracuse.

Parkside Commons is poised to get a makeover when its new owners receive more than \$23 million in federal stimulus funds set aside for affordable housing projects.

The stimulus money will provide Related Management, which now manages the complex, with a \$15 million low-cost loan and \$8 million from the Tax Assistance Program -- enabling it to buy the property from Rolling Greens Associates.

Plans include renovating every apartment in the 388-unit complex on East Fayette Street in Syracuse -- providing new lighting, floors, energy-efficient appliances, sinks, tubs and vanities

Each building will have new energy-efficient windows and heating units. A community room will be added. And no tenant will be displaced during the renovation.

In 1988, city inspectors found 107 code violations while taxpayers were footing 70 percent of the rent bill for the subsidized apartments. With each new manager, hopes were raised that conditions would improve. Some efforts seemed to work -- for a while.

In 1993, after Interstate Realty Management had been overseeing the apartments for several years and was completing a \$4 million renovation program, residents said they were thrilled about living at the complex. That same year, the FBI began investigating the company for collecting rents on empty apartments. The property manager was convicted.

A decade later, drug dealing at the complex and the shooting death of 14-year-old Alejandro Rodriguez prompted then-Attorney General Eliot Spitzer to launch his Clean Sweep campaign, which pressured landlords to address drug-dealing on their properties.

There is no question that low-income units are needed locally, but the Parkside model -- packing large numbers of people into a condensed complex -- doesn't seem to work very well. The design invites the kinds of problems the apartments have dealt with for decades.

Related Management is to be commended for trying to improve conditions at the complex -- tenants deserve decent housing. For now, its efforts are needed.

But planners and government leaders need to think carefully about the logic of continuing to pour money into places like Parkside, which seems inevitably to encounter the same problems over and over—regardless of how many times it changes its name.

BUILDING UPDATES

Parkside Commons

Tenant Leaders and members have once again begun to hold Association meetings for the spring and summer seasons. In the coming weeks the board will be rebuilt and new officers will be elected. Currently, Related Management Company, L.P serves as the management for Parkside Commons (formerly known as Rolling Green Estates). Recently, Related Management has received \$23 million from a federal stimulus package for energy related improvements. Both the Tenant Organizer and T.A. President informed management they wish to be consulted before improvements begin. Management is hopeful the money will begin to be put to use in early June.

McCarthy Manor

Association members have been actively participating in both Tenant Association and Executive Board meetings for the past few months. Tenant Leaders at McCarthy have also started to attend TNT (Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today) meetings on the Eastside and regularly coordinate lunches and other events for all tenants at the building. One tenant leader plans to travel with the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network to attend the National Alliance of HUD Tenants Conference held in Washington, D.C. this June. Once there, they plan on raising awareness regarding issues surrounding HUD properties in the Syracuse area.

Clinton Plaza

The Tenant Organizer has been working with Tenant Leaders at Clinton Plaza on rebuilding and organizing an active Tenant Association. Meetings will begin to be held on a regular basis throughout the summer, all concerned tenants looking to improve the conditions at Clinton Plaza are strongly encouraged to attend. Association members remain dissatisfied with management as issues like security, criminal activity, facade damage, and especially the elevators remain at the forefront of the tenants' minds.

Harrison-Townsend Towers

The Tenants Network has been in contact with Condren Realty, Syracuse Housing Authority, as well as the Department of Housing and Community Renewal in New York regarding the closing of Harrison and Townsend Towers. We encourage everyone at these properties to wait until the transfer has been finalized so that they can receive financial assistance. Once the closing is finalized the Tenants Network is prepared to assist both the Syracuse Housing Authority and tenants in making further arrangements. Consensus at a recent meeting showed that tenants felt current conditions were adequate.

Become a Member

Membership in the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network is \$5.00 for each individual tenant or supporter.

Tenant Associations are encouraged to join the New York State Tenants & Neighbors Coalition (\$25) and the National Alliance of HUD Tenants. (Information is available through the Greater Syracuse Tenants Network on these organizations).

We need your membership and donation! It helps pay for our website and mailings.

An additional donation would be greatly appreciated.

Greater Syracuse Tenants Network Membership Form

Name _____

Building or organization name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Membership \$5.00 Additional Donation _____

Make check/money order payable to:

Greater Syracuse Tenants Network
P.O. Box 6908
Syracuse, New York 13217

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Greater Syracuse Tenants Network Annual Meeting

The Greater Syracuse Tenants Network will be holding its annual meeting for members on Tuesday, June 2nd, 2009 at 6 PM at Park Central Presbyterian Church (504 East Fayette St, the corner of Townsend and E. Fayette). The purpose of the meeting is to elect members of the board and report on the activities of the organization this past year. Special guest, Maggie Russell-Ciardi, Executive Director of Tenants & Neighbors will also be on hand for a presentation. If you plan to attend please respond by e-mail to SyracuseTenant@aol.com or call Charlie Frisch in the Tenants Network office at 475-8092.