

HIGH PROFILE

with Britney Porter

Plano Community Homes (PCH) is a nonprofit organization that offers affordable housing to seniors 62 and older and persons over 18 who are physically disabled. Its newest campus, Pioneer Place off Avenue K in Plano, opened last year.

“We’re really proud of what we’ve got,” said PCH Executive Director Lee Ann Hubanks giving *Plano Profile* a tour of the community room. “Everything here has been donated – the pool table, the television, the books and bookcases, the drapes, and all the furniture.”

Down the hall, a one-bedroom unit is 520 square feet. Inside, the kitchen and living room form one large room. “When we were designing this building, we took suggestions from the residents in the original building, and they said to open the kitchen up more, so we did,” said Hubanks. “The units aren’t huge, but they’re very functional.”

And affordable. “Rent is 30 percent of the residents’ income. So if they’re living on SSI at \$623 a month, their rent is probably going to be \$150 a month. If they have a lot of medical expenses, their rent is significantly less than that,” said Hubanks. “We have some residents whose rent is \$20 a month because their medical expenses offset their income.”

PCH is different than a nursing home in that there is no medical staff. However, bedrooms are equipped with an Emergency Pull Cord System, where if a resident suddenly has chest pains, for example, he or she pulls the chord to alert PCH staff, and help is on its way. Said Hubanks, “We’ve got paramedics across the street so we call 911, and then we contact the family. We’re here as a safety net for residents.”

PCH staff is on call 24 hours a day. Part-time staff covers the 5 - 10 p.m. shift as well as weekends and holidays. A resident manager covers the overnight shift beginning at 10 p.m.

Comfortable means affordable at Plano Community Homes

Profile photos



Roqué Christensen, East Campus Administrator, sits next to resident Aileen Geary in a newly built gazebo on the campus. “We’re like family here,” said Geary.

Outside of Pioneer Place, residents can grow their own fruits and vegetables in a 29-bed community garden. Shelby Jones, Service Coordinator, has been working closely with Collin County Master Gardener's Association to see that the garden comes to fruition. "Healthy food can be very costly," said Jones, "so residents have a way to grow their own produce as well as be outside, exercise, and gain a sense of community."

Volunteers and businesses like Home Depot have contributed to the project. "We work solely on a donation basis," said Jones. "We're working with the Boy Scouts, with the Junior League, with churches, and all types of community organizations to make this happen."

PCH accommodates 550 residents in all. Pioneer Place is one of three campuses in Plano. The West Campus opened in 1996 on American Dr. off of Coit Road. The East Campus, the original campus, opened in July of 1986 and is currently undergoing a \$1.3 million face-lift.

Aileen Geary has lived on the East Campus for almost three years. "Everybody seems to be content here," she said. "I love it. You don't feel lonely."

Geary lived in an efficiency before moving into a one-bedroom on the floor that she preferred. "I've lived in apartments all my life and I find that



"This trenched out area is going to be a dry-creek area lined with drought-resistant plants that retain moisture and feed it back into the ground. We're making the most of the natural resources," said Shelby Jones, Service Coordinator for Pioneer Place.

PCH is just as nice," Geary said. "What amazes me though more than anything

serve as translators (verbal and written). "Our residents are big volunteers," said

Roqué Christensen, East Campus Administrator. "We don't have the money to furnish the building, but our Beautification Committee has held fundraisers, given themselves, and have asked their families to give."

Another way PCH is raising funds is by having a Casino Night on Thursday, June 28 from 7 - 11 p.m. The event will be held at Fairview Farms and include a raffle

and silent and live auctions.

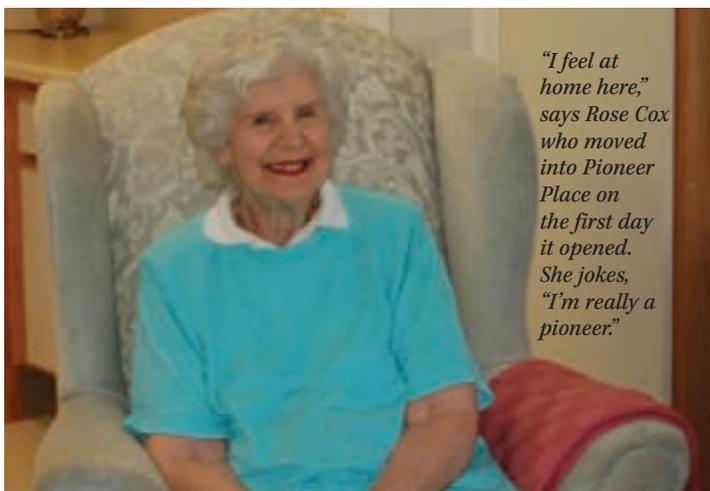
For information, call Lee Hubanks at 972-422-0012, ext. 105, or e-mail her at lahubanks@planocommunityhome.org.



From left: Shelby Jones, Service Coordinator for Pioneer Place; Lee Ann Hubanks, PCH Executive Director; and Marilyn Ackerman, PCH board member and fundraising chair for the Casino Night.

is the volunteerism here."

At PCH, volunteers can serve in exercise groups, health and educational programs, music programs, and they can



"I feel at home here," says Rose Cox who moved into Pioneer Place on the first day it opened. She jokes, "I'm really a pioneer."

Eligibility for Residency

Age: Eligible residents must be at least 62 years old or a person 18 years or older with a physical disability that affects mobility. Currently the West Campus waiting list is closed.

Finances: The gross income limit for a single person is \$23,300 and for a two-person household, \$26,600. For assets totaling \$5,000 or more, a portion of the asset amount is counted as income.

Rent: Rent is based on 30 percent of adjusted gross income and is subsidized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Residents are responsible for electricity, cable, Internet, and telephone services.

Applications for residency are available at the East Campus (1612 Ave. L) and at Pioneer Place (1928 Ave. K) in Plano. To request an application be mailed to you, call 972-423-6058.