



INSIDE

**PART 8 OF HEALTH SERIES**



SPORTS

**EAGLES HAVE HISTORY ON THEIR SIDE AGAINST JETS**

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Karima Wooden, 43, a new tenant of Inglis Methodist Gardens, said she feels blessed to be in a new two-bedroom apartment with her 17-year-old daughter Kamya. —SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Nonprofits unveil \$16M complex Housing development caters to disabled

**Stephen Williams**  
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

It is difficult to build affordable housing and equally difficult to build housing accessible for people with disabilities, industry experts say. So it follows that it is even more challenging to do both.

Inglis Methodist Gardens is a \$16.8-million development that recently opened in the Wynnefield Heights section of West Philadelphia. About half of the 47 units, which sit on a 22-acre campus of Methodist Services, are specially made to be accessible for people with disabilities.

The development was funded by low-income housing tax credits from

the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), a \$4 million grant from Aetna Better Health of Pennsylvania and \$700,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh.

Inglis Methodist Gardens is a joint venture of Philadelphia-based nonprofits, Methodist Services and Inglis, which provides housing and other services for people with disabilities. Both have been around for more than 100 years.

Since the 1800s, Methodist Services has provided early childhood education, housing and mental health counseling to families facing poverty, homelessness and disabilities. The organization was formed to help children who lost their parents or became impoverished during the Civil War.

Inglis has been building housing for people with disabilities for about 50 years.

Dyann M. Roth, Inglis president, acknowledged that putting this deal together was not easy and took about five years to complete. "It's like the longest pregnancy ever," she said.

The first step was getting the tax credits from PHFA. The Inglis Methodist Gardens development was helped by a \$4 million grant from Aetna Better Health.

"It's such a competitive process with limited funds available," Roth said. "We were able to bring some private resources to the table."

INGLIS - 4A

INGLIS - 1A

According to Roth, when it comes to accessibility for people with disabilities, "we want to do more than the minimum."

"We want people who use wheelchairs to live as independently as possible," Roth said. "We do it because it is our mission."

For example, Karima Wooden, 43, a new tenant of Inglis Methodist Gardens, said she feels blessed to be in a new two-bedroom apartment with her 17-year-old daughter Kamya.

Wooden, who uses a wheelchair, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at an early age.

Before moving in Nov. 17, she was living with a relative in West Oak Lane in a home that was not accessible to people with wheelchairs, Wooden said. She had difficulty going up or down even



Inglis Methodist Gardens is a \$16.8 million development that recently opened in the Wynnefield Heights section of West Philadelphia. —SUBMITTED PHOTO

a few stairs, or doing small chores like taking out trash or washing clothes.

Now she has a washer and dryer in her unit with automatic doors and the same technology in the trash room.

"We wave our arms to open or close them," Wooden said. There is also a remote control for the windows and doors.

"It is very convenient," she said. "This is my forever home."

Anne Rice-Burgess, president of Methodist Services, said the new development is necessary.

"It's the type of housing that every single person should have," she said. "The

level of emotion for tenants when they realize this is their new home is tremendous."

And the fact that the complex is located on its campus means that the tenants have access to all of its other services. Including Inglis Methodist Gardens, more than 200 people are in various stages of housing, including emergency or shelters and transitional. Some tenants moving into the new development are coming from transitional housing on the campus and now are in permanent housing.

"The benefits of working with people in transitional housing is we get to understand their needs, work with them and prepare them for permanent housing, so they can be a success," Rice-Burgess said.

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