Farnsworth House
Jamaica Plain, Mass., Rogerson Communities

Margaret (a pseudonym) lived alone in a crowded public housing development. With no on-site support services or social programs, the 60-year-old developmentally-disabled woman was isolated. The high-crime neighborhood discouraged family and friends from visiting. A lack of accessible public transportation kept her homebound. A stroke she suffered exacerbated the problem.

That was 25 years ago, before Margaret moved and became an active, contributing member of the Farnsworth House community. She volunteered as a receptionist, served on the resident association steering committee, joined the senior club and played a mean game of bingo on Thursday afternoons.

Today at 85, Margaret continues her many activities and participates in the adult day health program, which provides daily care and supervision so she can remain in her home. Thanks to the pet-friendly policy, she has enjoyed having feline family members spend many happy, loving years with her at Farnsworth House.

At-a-Glance

**Project type:** 76 affordable units in a seven-story building

**Key funding sources:** HUD Section 202, HUD Green Retrofit Program for Multifamily Housing

**Resident profile:** 62 and older plus adults with disabilities earning up to 50 percent of area media income; current age range is 35-93 with 95 percent of the residents 55 years of age or older

**Green features include:** High-efficiency boiler, cool “white” roof, Energy Star appliances and thermostats, water-saving showerheads and toilets, green cleaning product system, resident and staff education, low-VOC paints, GREEN recycled carpeting, native vegetation landscaping

**Services and activities include:** Case management, resident services coordinator, healthy food lunch, healthy foods community garden, health education and screening programs, Healthy Rogerson to promote healthier lifestyles, senior club, dance club, current events programs, computer learning center, transportation to medical services, Rogerson Fitness First exercise and strengthening program

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A Welcoming and Engaging Community
An open and supportive environment at Farnsworth House encourages residents like Margaret to leave their apartments, participate in activities and contribute to the building's lively social atmosphere.

Living at Farnsworth House brought about significant and welcomed change for residents Katherine and Arthur. “We met at Farnsworth House at the Sunday night dance and we have been married for 23 years. We will stay at Farnsworth House as long as we live. We love it here!”

A Stronger, Healthier Future
Farnsworth House encourages residents to embrace healthy lifestyles. Health education teaches proper nutrition to promote healthy weight and to manage diseases like diabetes. The greenhouse and yard allows residents to grow healthy foods in a community garden.

Rogerson Fitness First provides professionally-administered exercise and strength training using equipment that includes five Nautilus machines designed for seniors. Offered in a bright, specially-designed center with views overlooking the neighborhood, the exercise program helps residents gain a steadier balance, lose weight and promote recovery after surgery.

As one 84-year-old resident, who has lived at Farnsworth House for 10 years, puts it, “After exercising I always feel full of life. I see myself getting stronger, and I feel so encouraged and supported.”

In addition to a rich array of social and health support services that bring about better social and health outcomes for residents, Farnsworth Housing recently completed a rehabilitation to make a healthier building. They used a HUD Green Retrofit grant to install a high-efficiency boiler, cool “white” roof, Energy Star appliances and thermostats, water-saving showerheads and toilets, and implement thoughtful resident and staff education to encourage system-wide green habits and practices.

Rogerson Communities
Rogerson Communities was founded in 1860 in Boston as the “Home for Aged Men,” the first privately-supported home in the area for “respectable aged and indigent men.” Since 1978, Rogerson has evolved to become a premier provider of affordable housing, adult day health and fitness programs, and resources for families affected by Alzheimer’s disease and memory loss. Today, Rogerson serves about 1,500 families in the greater Boston area through 26 facilities and programs.

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to continue MetLife’s longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation’s commitment to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide is reflected in its dedication to empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has provided more than $530 million in grants and $70 million in Program-Related Investments to nonprofit organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.

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