

# Chaucer Court

## Portland

Chaucer Court is home to a tight-knit community of seniors and people with disabilities. These residents' modest homes were recently protected for the foreseeable future when the property's new owner signed a long-term agreement with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). That agreement allows the owners to continue to provide homes to tenants at very affordable rents – just 30% of their incomes under HUD's project-based Section 8 program.

For several years now the City of Portland and State of Oregon have made preserving critical properties with federal rental assistance contracts one of their highest priorities. Funding provided by the city and state helped ensure Chaucer Court would be preserved by attracting more than \$11 million in private capital needed to acquire and renovate the property. But the property's preservation was far from guaranteed.

An iconic 1924 building located in downtown Portland, Chaucer Court began life as the Odd Fellows Lodge. Since converting to 84 apartments in 1980, Chaucer has provided affordable homes for seniors and people with disabilities with low incomes who want to live downtown and be able to walk to the grocery store, the library, a doctor's office, and public transportation. When the rental assistance neared its expiration, Chaucer Court's central location made it a likely candidate to

convert to condominiums, a boutique hotel, or luxury apartments, like the Roosevelt Hotel (located one block to the east) did a number of years ago.

One in four current residents have called Chaucer Court home for over twenty years. Many more have lived in the building for more than ten years. That's because Chaucer Court provides a safe, centrally located home for seniors like Hamid Abuadas, who came to the United States in 1991 from Lebanon. Mr. Abuadas and his family came to settle in Portland to begin a new life after fleeing



***“I feel better living here.  
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I can get around easily.”***

– Hamid Abuadas, resident

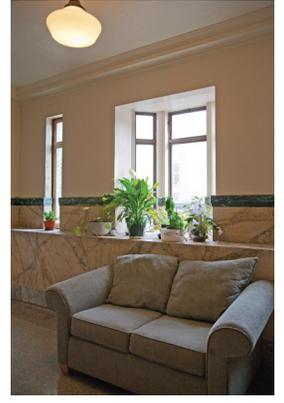


*Chaucer Court began life as the Odd Fellows Lodge. Since converting to 84 apartments in 1980, Chaucer has provided affordable homes for seniors with low incomes.*

the war-torn Middle East. “We were Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon,” he says. “Life was dangerous. Our homes were destroyed.” Mr. Abuadas worked at the nearby Safeway store for 12 years and when it came time to retire he needed an affordable place to call home. Now Mr. Abuadas lives at Chaucer Court, where he can walk to the grocery store or ride transit to visit his son and daughter who live in the metro area. “I feel better living here,” he says. “I like being downtown. I can get around easily.” After being relocated for nearly six months during construction, Mr. Abuadas was very happy to return to his newly renovated apartment.

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***“It’s convenient for me. I don’t drive a car. I can go to the store. My bank is on the same street and my church is just a few blocks away.”***

*– Dolores Sheppard, resident*



Dolores Sheppard is one of Mr. Abuadas’ long-time neighbors. Last year, when the renovations began at Chaucer Court, Ms. Sheppard was undergoing chemotherapy. The construction and temporary relocation required she move twice during a six-month period, an extremely stressful situation for anyone, let alone someone in treatment for cancer. Ms. Sheppard says she is very grateful for the help she received from the staff packing and moving and she is quick to thank former owner Craig Rhea who personally took her to her chemotherapy appointments on several occasions. “I was pleased and so was my family,” she says. “I was very happy to come back to this apartment. It’s convenient for me. I don’t drive a car. I can go to the store. My bank is on the same street and my church is just a few blocks away.” Like Mr. Abuadas, Ms. Sheppard also appreciates the renovations, particularly the new emergency call system that provides reassurance that help is close by if it’s needed.

With the renovations now completed and a long-term HUD contract in place, Chaucer Court will provide safe, stable and affordable homes to seniors and people with disabilities for many years to come.

**P**reserving properties like Chaucer Court is the primary focus of the Oregon Housing Preservation Project (OHPP). As Oregonians with the lowest incomes continue to have trouble finding a safe, decent, and affordable place to call home, properties with project-based rent assistance contracts provide an invaluable, irreplaceable resource. In many communities around the state, these properties may represent

the only safe, stable home for a senior living on a fixed income or a family struggling with unemployment. Federal project-based rent assistance also helps fuel the local economy, providing the property a steady stream of income that can attract private capital and investment.

In 2007, a partnership of state and local stakeholders, both public and private, established the OHPP in

response to an impending wave of long-term federal project-based rent assistance contracts that would soon reach their expiration dates. Without contract renewals, that assistance is lost forever. OHPP works to provide outreach, technical expertise, and short- and long-term financing to preservation-minded buyers and owners of at-risk properties, with an ultimate goal of preserving 6,000 homes across Oregon.

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