

## Going Green

For many organizations, going green is a philosophical expression of concern for the planet – a sense that every one of us is responsible for leaving the world a better place for our children and grandchildren. For others, the concept of going green is a faith commitment that implies a moral and spiritual accountability for everything we have received from our creator. I subscribe to both approaches as the foundation of our stewardship responsibility as an organization. But I also have a very practical nature that is impatient when a well reasoned philosophy is not translated into tangible results.

Putting a personal philosophy into action is similar to the discussion of faith and works in the Book of James. James affirms the reality that faith is essential for salvation. But he further states that faith without the evidence of works is dead. He cites this example – “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to him “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving him the things needed for the body, what good is that?” Doing good works without understanding the reason why is futile, but understanding the reasons for good works without taking action is useless. So the question is – how are we at PSL turning our philosophy (faith) of stewardship into action (works)? Here are a few examples:

**Construction of new buildings** – All new buildings being constructed by PSL have focused on energy saving design and mechanical systems. By spring 2013 geothermal HVAC systems will be utilized



in 372 living units. Preliminary studies of several of these buildings have shown a 30 to 40 percent savings vs conventional heating and air conditioning systems.



**Improving existing buildings** – A ministry like PSL with over 85 years of service requires attention to older buildings which were constructed in a time of cheaper energy and less efficient technology. In the past year, Presbyterian Apartments, Geneva House, and The Easton Home have had more efficient mechanical systems installed, plus other improvements such as more energy efficient windows and insulation. We have received a \$1 million low interest loan commitment from Enterprise Community Investments to make further energy improvements in operations where we provide a significant amount of charity care. Gilliland Manor at Green Ridge Village will utilize about half of these funds, with the balance being applied to other locations.



## Going Solar -

Agreements have been executed to install a solar array at Glen Meadows which will supply 70% of the manor house electric needs for the next 30 years at current rates. Some land approvals are still required to assure the system can be installed, but we are well on the way to making this a reality.



## Design for the future –

PSL was selected for a presentation and project review at the Enterprise Institute on affordable housing in New York City and an Enterprise Green Design charette in Pittsburgh. Both of these educational experiences focused on innovative design and green building techniques and materials. What we are learning is shaping the buildings that are slated for construction in the next two years – buildings that will serve future generations of seniors within the PSL network.



## Let There Be Light!

Westminster Village Dover is saving energy and money on utility bills by purchasing and installing LED lighting as part of its ongoing energy reduction program. Replacement opportunities were identified for hallways and other 24 hour public areas. After sampling a variety of solutions, replacement lights were carefully matched to the color of the former lighting so that the change in the type of lighting would be imperceptible. The newly installed LED lights exceed the prior light

levels while consuming 75% less energy. As the new lighting was installed in some parts of the campus, residents immediately noticed the improvement and began to request when LED lighting would be made available for their living areas.

Since installing the initial lights in March of 2012, the energy and maintenance savings will have returned the cost of approximately \$36,000 by fall of next year. Also, the lifespan of 50,000 hours means they will last for 5 years, reducing the time spent on replacement bulbs and allow maintenance personnel to attend to other important work. Both staff and residents have recognized the benefits of this ongoing program to save energy and expenses while providing a better living experience to our residents.



Like the Biblical command to do good works, there is never a time when we can claim that we have reached the goal of stewardship. The focus on stewardship will always be ongoing. We can cite progress, but the opportunities to improve are endless.

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