

April 30, 2007

Dear Friends of Minnesota Green Communities,

More than 2.5 million families live in substandard housing in the United States. More than four million children have asthma, and it is estimated that over 40 percent of doctor-diagnosed asthma among children is due to residential exposures. Additionally, 400,000 children have dangerously high blood lead levels. Environmentally attributable childhood diseases, including asthma, lead poisoning, and cancer, cost our nation nearly \$55 billion annually. These numbers—in human and financial terms—are simply unacceptable.

The Family Housing Fund, together with our partners the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund and Enterprise, believe that children and their families should have safe, affordable, and decent places to call home. Through the Minnesota Green Communities initiative we are working to create healthy environments for individuals, families, children, and communities. Our goal is to ensure that all new affordable housing in Minnesota is green by 2010.

The Green Communities Criteria establish building and design standards that provide health benefits through homes with better ventilation and moisture control; less toxic materials, paints, and adhesives; and careful material selection in areas prone to mold. The Criteria also facilitate healthier lifestyles through the physical activity that comes from living in walkable neighborhoods. Children should have sidewalks to ride bikes on, parks to play in, schools to walk to, and open spaces in which to run.

On May 16 and 17, 2007, we are pleased to co-convene the second annual Minnesota Green Communities Green by Design conference at The Depot in downtown Minneapolis.

The conference offers workshops on urban and rural design, green property management, energy efficiency, global warming, and much more. Also included are full-day courses on green building, including “EEBA’s Houses That Work” presented by Mark LaLiberte and “Healthy Homes, Healthy Families” by nationally recognized experts Ellen Tohn and Armand Magnelli.

In addition to previously announced keynote Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. on May 17, I am also excited to announce Xavier Bonnefoy as our keynote speaker on Wednesday, May 16. Bonnefoy has 16 years experience with the World Health Organization and delivers a powerful speech on the connections between housing and public health and the health consequences of global climate change.

I encourage you to register for Green by Design today and join us in supporting efforts to design and build healthy neighborhoods throughout Minnesota and ensure strong futures for Minnesota’s children and families.

Sincerely



Tom Fulton
President, Family Housing Fund

More information available online: www.greencommunitiesonline.org/minnesota/default.asp