

Committed to Green
Horizon House a Leader in Sustainability

April 2016

Horizon House has been officially committed to “green” since the Resident Conservation Task Force was formed in 2008. Now known as the Conservation Committee, this group of resourceful residents has consistently suggested ways in which Horizon House can increase its sustainability and make a real difference for the environment. Their efforts spurred the creation of the Staff Green Team, and working together we’ve helped make Horizon House a national conservation leader among Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs), also known as Life Plan Communities.

Horizon House Environmental Sustainability Statement

In 2010, the Conservation Committee presented the following Horizon House Environmental Sustainability Statement to the Board of Trustees for their review. The Board immediately approved it, and it has been the roadmap to success in our sustainability efforts: “As responsible and concerned citizens of the City of Seattle and the State of Washington, Horizon House residents and staff aspire to protect and preserve the environment while promoting cost-effective business and personal sustainability.” The statement also includes adherence to several important principles, among them:

- Support and encourage recycling
- Reduce waste
- Dispose of contaminated waste safely and responsibly
- Limit the use of non-renewable resources
- Purchase products that are recyclable, reusable, or contain recycled materials, and that cause the least environmental impact during manufacturing, use, and disposal
- Encourage alternative methods of transportation
- Conserve water and energy
- Improve daily operations to reduce carbon emissions

Our “Green” History

In 2011 Horizon House upped its green game by contracting with Corey Weathers of sustainability consulting firm Catalyst 2030. Since that time, Corey has acted as our “Sustainability Coach,” facilitating conservation education, planning, and action among residents and staff, creating connections with sustainability resources, and serving as a conduit to the broader community.

That same year Horizon House benchmarked its energy performance a full year ahead of deadline – the City of Seattle has an ordinance requiring such benchmarking of commercial and multifamily buildings of 20,000 sq. ft. or larger. Given that our million-sq.-ft. complex was constructed in four phases over more than 50 years and had more than 160 individual energy and water meters, we felt like this was an extraordinary accomplishment! From that knowledge base, we were able to save our community more than \$50,000 in utility bills in 2012, enabling Horizon House to give each of our residents an \$80 “conservation credit” on their January 2013 monthly bill.

Seattle Business Magazine gave Horizon House its 2012 Washington Green 50 Silver Award, recognizing our sustainability efforts in the nonprofit sector. In 2015, we received LeadingAge Washington's Excellence in Research and Innovation Award for our overall environmental and sustainability program. LeadingAge is a national group of nonprofit organizations involved in aging services, education, and advocacy to which Horizon House and hundreds of other retirement communities belong.

Sustainability Efforts 2015

In 2015 we undertook a number of projects that support our sustainability goals. Our Apartment Efficiency project, in partnership with Seattle City Light's Powerful Neighborhoods program, changed out 4,351 incandescent and aging fluorescent light bulbs in resident apartments to energy-efficient LED bulbs. We installed 148 "smart" power strips that automatically shut off to save power if no movement is detected in an apartment. We also replaced 116 old shower fixtures with low-flow showerheads. These combined moves will bring about savings of 1.6 million total kilowatt hours and \$200,000 over the course of several years. Though it wasn't covered through the residential program, Horizon House decided on its own to change hallway lighting to long-lasting, energy-saving LED bulbs as well. With extensive cooperation from the residents' Conservation Committee, 40 residents were trained to answer the question "What do I do with this?", and all the service rooms received new signage explaining how to recycle and compost waste more effectively. We also opened up a Central Recycling Station in the basement for items like electronics, Styrofoam, clothing, and books which heretofore weren't recyclable.

Also during the past year, Horizon House replaced the exterior of our West Wing with more energy efficient, waterproof cladding, and at the same time replaced all windows and sliding doors with new low-E, energy efficient versions. These changes greatly reduce heat loss while still maintaining a comfortable and safe environment for our residents and staff. Horizon House also celebrated the completion of another major construction project, the newly expanded East Wing Supported Living apartments. We installed the same energy efficient windows and LED lighting there and replaced old electrical baseboard heating with variant refrigerant flow (VRF) heating and cooling units.

Another major energy saving move in 2015 was the conversion from gas to steam heat. Prior to the conversion we depended on two 60+-year-old gas-heated boilers. Now we get energy for all our hot water and most of our heating from Enwave Seattle's central steam plant, which they produce from biofuels. We've upped our efficiency 20-30% and will ultimately reduce our carbon emissions by 30-40%.

The Dining Services department has been another sustainability leader within Horizon House. In 2015, we embraced locally sourced, sustainably produced food whenever possible, as well as free-range chicken and eggs. We also continued to compost thousands of pounds of food waste, according to our partner Cedar Grove Compost. It's gratifying to be part of a virtuous

circle in which that waste is composted and the same compost goes right back into resident gardens. Horizon House has supported Food Lifeline and the Millionaire Club for several years by packaging and freezing leftovers that can be used by local food banks and shelters. In 2015 we donated more than 1,900 pounds to that use.

Environment-Friendly Initiatives 2016

This year, the Environmental Services department started keeping Horizon House clean in a dramatically greener fashion. Our new Tersano ozonated cleaning system uses cold tap water, which is oxygenated with electricity and turned into aqueous ozone. Instead of traditional cleaning products, with all their toxins and chemicals, we're essentially using water to clean and sanitize surfaces. We expect to reduce chemical usage by 75%. Not only does the Tersano system save money, it improves safety for our employees and residents and is much better for the environment. Its byproducts are water and oxygen.

Although we have been using environmental friendly solvents to wash resident cars for a while, we're making significant changes to our service this year in order to reduce water consumption and prevent polluted water from car washing to enter either our waste water treatment system or local waterways.

In the many ways described in this paper, plus more we hope to discover, Horizon House residents and staff are committed to fostering a culture of sustainability here at home and in the larger community. As we embark on 2016, the future looks bright.