



By Julia Freeland

Residents Matter at Logan Park

Partnership of property management and social services turns around problem property

It was not long ago that Logan Park Apartments was one of the most dangerous places in Sacramento. Not even the police would enter the grounds without several patrol cars as backup. The community was plagued by violence, drugs and prostitution.

Located in the Foothill Farms neighborhood near I-80 and Madison, Logan Park is an affordable housing community about the size of a small city, with 661 units and over 2,000 residents. Before Wasatch Property Management took over management, some viewed the property as an insurmountable challenge. At the time, however, newly transferred Wasatch Regional Manager Warren Smith saw it as an opportunity for positive change.

With the support of the property owners, Smith was determined to tackle the problems head-on with innovative strategies that put the

residents first. Some of the steps taken involved the property itself, while others involved the residents and the surrounding community.

The first order of business was to mitigate the crime on the property. Smith worked closely with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department and District Attorney's Office and processed evictions as needed to remove the problem residents. To reduce mail theft and vandalism, he improved the lighting, relocated all mailboxes to space directly behind the office, and implemented a night service team to patrol the property.

Smith then realized that he needed the help of local businesses to change the overall community. He petitioned the area liquor stores to stop selling individual cans of beer and single-serve alcohol as it appeared to encourage loitering and public drunkenness. He convinced all the stores to comply with his

request and in exchange, he promoted their businesses to his residents.

Wasatch wanted to improve Logan Park Apartments from the inside out. With the financial backing of the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), Western Community Housing and several lenders, all the units at Logan Park were remodeled to include new appliances, flooring, cabinets and fixtures. The exterior siding of all buildings were replaced with durable cement board siding designed to last many years, and new energy-efficient windows were installed. To promote the use of the outdoor amenities, tennis courts were re-striped and lines were added for soccer. A community garden was planted, and a coveted KaBOOM! Playground was built with funds awarded by this nationally recognized organization.

The exteriors of the buildings were renovated to improve not only the appearance, but also the overall construction. To promote the use of the outdoor amenities, tennis courts were re-striped and lines were added for soccer. A community garden was planted, and a coveted KaBOOM! playground was built...



While improving the look and feel of the property was important, Smith and the new owners realized that the residents themselves also needed some attention. They decided to collaborate with Dr. Joy Johnson to create Life Matters, Inc. (LMI), a non-profit social services organization based at the Logan Park property. LMI offers programs designed to promote the health and well-being of children and families through a variety of services and programs.

According to Smith, LMI had the biggest overall impact on Logan Park. LMI helped to transform Logan Park from merely apartments to a true community. Currently LMI is housed in the newly constructed Logan Park Life Center, which includes 1,600 SF of indoor and 700 SF of outdoor space. CEO Dr. Johnson and COO Penelope Larry run the program with the help of many volunteers.

Dr. Johnson and her team offer outreach services to Logan Park residents of all ages, including the over 1,200 children living in the community. Services provided by LMI include classes on English, cooking, creative arts, career life skills and after school programs. In addition, LMI hosts a Homework Club three days per week and school readiness programs for children. LMI also runs a charter school, Community Collaborative Charter School, for the 5th through 12th grades.

LMI does not stop at education. It also offers one-on-one assistance for residents who need help obtaining Social Security, unemployment

or disability benefits. Often people become overwhelmed or confused by the paperwork and processes of these government services. LMI staff and volunteers are available onsite to help people navigate these programs.

During these tough economic times, Logan Park residents have trouble scrapping together money to purchase basic necessities, such as food and clothing. The income of residents range between 50% and 60% of the median family income for Sacramento County. These families can easily find themselves unable to provide food for their children.

LMI has combated this issue by implementing a food bank and a free afterschool snack program. These services have helped hundreds of families over the years, including Carlos Gonzalez's family. Gonzales feels blessed to have the opportunity to get food for his family in these hard times.

"I lost my job," he explained. "Without the Life Center, I don't know what we would do?"


Logan Park offers dozens of services that are far beyond the amenities typically offered at other apartment communities. Soccer teams and coaching, free swim lessons, free internet access in The Life Center, community activities and social events, community swap meets, the list goes on and on.

On a recent sunny afternoon at Logan Park, it is easy to see the positive changes Smith, as well as The Life Center and LMI, have

made to this community. The playground was packed with over 100 children. Logan Park does not limit their services to its residents, so children from the surrounding neighborhood find a safe place to gather and play soccer or other games.

While touring the property with Smith, it was apparent that the residents of Logan Park did not view him as the property manager. Rather, he is mayor of their community. He knows the residents and their children by name, and he promotes the spirit of community with everyone he meets.

The litter-free grounds and graffiti-free buildings are evidence that the residents take pride in their community now. No longer are vandalism or crime serious concerns for the residents of Logan Park.

The staffs of both Wasatch and LMI were eager to share their success stories. They feel that improving a property by improving the quality of life of its residents is a successful business model. It has saved Wasatch Property Management thousands of dollars in resident retention and vandalism repairs. It also has improved the lives of thousands of families over the past several years. 

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