

## **Good Livin' at Evangelical Manor**

**By Tom Waring  
Times Staff Writer**

Eleanor Schol and the rest of the residents of Evangelical Manor are looking forward to what they see as an improved living experience.

Wesley Enhanced Living, the parent company of the retirement community at 8401 Roosevelt Blvd., is putting \$23.1 million into renovations to the place. The upgrades will include larger apartments and a new entrance, dining area, lounge, fitness center, gift shop, bank, chapel, library and bistro.

The project should be completed by early 2010.

"We are all so very excited with the revitalization," said Schol, president of the resident council. Last week, Schol was among those who wielded a sledgehammer during a celebratory wall-breaking ceremony.

Wesley Enhanced Living has secured private financing, thanks to Citizens Bank, and is working with the state for additional funding. The Wesley Enhanced Living Foundation has raised \$2.1 million for the project and needs \$1 million more to fulfill the capital campaign's goal of \$3.1 million.

Jeff Petty, president and CEO of Southampton-based Wesley, said the board of directors believes it is important for the home to grow in Philadelphia and not move outside the city. He urged supporters to "give early, give often" to the capital campaign.

"No gift is too small. And certainly no gift is too big," he said.

Evangelical Manor, nestled on the edge of Pennypack Park, is one of five Wesley Enhanced Living communities. Among the others are Pilgrim Gardens, located on Rising Sun Avenue in Burholme.

Wesley also manages two senior citizen housing facilities that are subsidized by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Those are Manor Glen, located next door to Evangelical Manor, and Meadow House, in Frankford.

At Evangelical Manor, there are 280 residents in independent and assisted-living apartments and a nursing facility. The home employs more than 250 people, most of whom live in the area.

The facility opened in 1888 as the German Home for the Aged when rent was \$11 a month. It was located in several North Philadelphia neighborhoods before moving to Roosevelt Boulevard in 1930.

Jim Tallman, a former executive director of the home, attended the Oct. 22 ceremony. Operations will be disrupted, he said, but he expects residents to be patient because the new-look facility needs an overhaul.

"It's time that renovations begin again," he said.

State Rep. John Perzel (R-172nd dist.) described Evangelical Manor as a "crown jewel in the Northeast." Often, he explained, people ask him if he knows any good retirement communities.

"I always recommend Evangelical Manor," he said.

Joyce Lenhardt, a principal with Lenhardt Rogers Architects, praised Wesley for having a clear vision and high standards.

"The best projects have the best clients," she said.

Lenhardt said one of the highlights of the project will be knocking down walls and converting studios and small rooms into larger one- and two-bedroom apartments. Work is under way.

"It's going to be worth the wait," Lenhardt said. ••

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