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Volunteers Beautify Historic Southwest Side Building with Live Wall Planting on May 15

Former Masonic Lodge Finds New Life as a Showcase for Health and Sustainability

(INDIANAPOLIS) - On Saturday, May 15, more than 50 patients, board members, friends and family members of HealthNet, West Indianapolis Development Corporation and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will plant trees and other native landscaping around a 103-year-old former Masonic Lodge on the near southwest side that in June becomes the new home for two community health centers.

The highlight of the 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. event will be the planting a 350-foot “live” wall that will beautify the health center’s parking lot, which stretches down Harding Street near I-70. More than 1,800 sedum plants will be used to fill the wall. Each planter block weighs about 100 pounds.

HealthNet’s Southwest Health Center and Southwest OB/GYN Annex, located a few blocks away, are at capacity and have no room for expansion. Each year the centers provide care for 7,700 patients, many living below the federal poverty level. The new Southwest Health Center will more than double the size of the two facilities combined and add a dental center, enabling HealthNet to serve an additional 8,300 patients.

HealthNet purchased the Masonic Lodge in 2007 and began a capital campaign to renovate and expand the building with an emphasis on green construction materials and techniques. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful recently awarded HealthNet an IPL Project GreenSpace grant to help implement a sustainable landscape at the new center.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to help HealthNet become an even greater asset in its neighborhood. KIB is proud to work to create an environmental demonstration project that will not only beautify the block but will truly contribute to the health of local residents. Patients attending the center will feel better just walking in the doors,” said KIB President David Forsell.

As vertical gardens, live walls provide numerous environmental benefits. They filter the air and improve air quality, capture rain run-off, reduce urban heat island effect, provide sound insulation, contribute to carbon dioxide/oxygen exchange, and create a more visually appealing environment.

(more)

Barrington Health Center
Better Indy Babies/ Healthy Families
Care Center at the Tower
Homeless Initiative Program
Martindale-Brightwood Health &
Dental Center
Pediatric & Adolescent Care Center

People’s Health & Dental Center
People’s Teen Health Center &
Family Planning Services
School-Based Services
Southeast Health & Dental Center
Southwest Health Center
Southwest OB/GYN Annex



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The live wall is part of state-of-the-art storm water management system that will be one of the first of its kind in the city. Other elements include a pervious paver parking lot, a live roof, and a rain garden. The new health center will be a demonstration project for the city's Office of Sustainability in its use of green building techniques and materials, many of which have not been tested in this climate area before.

Green rehabilitation of the century-old building preserves the exterior of the stately neighborhood landmark at the corner of Harding and West Morris streets, while making the facility more environmentally friendly and efficient.

"HealthNet believes that improving the quality of life in Indianapolis goes beyond the health care services and outreach programs we provide. By utilizing 'green' technology to improve the environment, we are providing an even greater benefit to the community," said Booker Thomas, president and CEO.

Since the 1940s, the southwest side has been the industrial hub of Indianapolis. Today, more 50 industrial facilities are still located in Southwest Health Center's service area. In 2001, the EPA reported that three-fourths of all air pollution reported in Marion County, including ozone-producing compounds, were emitted by 19 companies within a two-mile radius of the low-income area around Morris Street. The area will soon be home to one of the city's greenest buildings.

About Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc.:

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIB) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit engaging neighborhoods in environmental and community improvement projects throughout the city. Last year, KIB engaged over 40,000 volunteers on projects around the city. The mission of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. is to unite people to build community and transform public spaces through aesthetic and environmental improvement. To learn more, visit www.kibi.org.

About HealthNet, Inc.:

For more than 40 years, HealthNet has been a mainstay in the Indianapolis community. Through its network of five community-based health centers, an OB/GYN care center, a pediatric and adolescent care center and eight school-based health centers, HealthNet annually serves over 50,000 individuals and families. Many are uninsured or underinsured and live below the federal poverty level.

HealthNet services include: primary and preventive health care; OB-GYN support and coaching for expectant mothers; Healthy Families and Better Indy Babies; dental services; Homeless Initiative Program; counseling, outreach and social service programs.

HealthNet's health centers include Barrington Health Center, Behavioral Pediatrics Center, Care Center at the Tower, Maternal-Fetal Medicine Center, Martindale-Brightwood Health & Dental Center, Pediatric & Adolescent Care Center, People's Health & Dental Center, Southeast Health & Dental Center, Southwest Health Center, and Southwest OB/GYN Annex. To learn more, visit www.indyhealthnet.org.

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