

Granholm lauds senior living plan

Sunday, June 12, 2005

(734) 953-2115

By Matt Jachman

Staff Writer

Gov. Jennifer Granholm visited The Village of Redford Friday to get acquainted with a project that executives there say will improve the lives of Michigan's frail elderly.

The residential complex for senior citizens, formerly Presbyterian Village, plans to break ground Tuesday for two Green Houses, large, family-style homes that will offer more privacy and a greater sense of community than traditional assisted-living institutions.

Each Green House will be a 7,000-square-foot ranch with 10 private bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, and a shared kitchen and dining room. Residents, with help from on-site assistants, will set their own schedules, prepare meals and snacks, socialize and entertain guests as they would in their own homes.

Granholm, who chatted with residents and employees during a brief visit, lauded the concept. It's something she wants to spread in the state.

"I want to be able to show other parts of the state an example," said Granholm after looking at floor plans and a model of a Green House.

Granholm, whose focus has been job-creation and economic growth, was especially happy with the jobs the Green Houses construction will bring. It's the kind of project that's needed to "jump-start" the state's economy, she said.

"You improve the ... curb appeal, you allow people to live in dignity, and you actually put people to work," she said.

The Green Houses at The Village of Redford will be the first in Michigan, and only the second such project in the country. Executives from the Redford campus visited the first Green Houses in Tupelo, Miss., during their study of the concept.

Roger Myers, president of Presbyterian Villages of Michigan, which is made up of more than a dozen senior communities, seems confident the Green House philosophy will spread.

"We've already been talking with our colleagues (in senior care), and there's a high level of interest," Myers said.

Mariellen Davis, executive director at The Village, said the quality of life improves for seniors who live in Green Houses, and staff turnover is greatly reduced. Families feel more comfortable visiting their elderly relatives in the deinstitutionalized setting, she said.

"The sense of community and the sense of family remain intact," Davis told Granholm.

As Davis went over some of the improvements that Green House residents show, including weight gain, Granholm interjected, "And weight gain's a good thing, right?" The crowd laughed. "Just want

to make sure," Granholm said.

The privacy offered by a Green House appeals to retired teacher Adeans Henley, who shares a room in The Village's skilled nursing facility. She was among the residents who met with the governor.

"You can be in your own room and enjoy your company," said Henley, who hopes to move to a Green House once they are completed.

The day was special for nursing assistant Linda Johnson, who presented Granholm with a book, *What Are Old People For? How Elders Will Save the World*, by William H. Thomas, who developed the Green House philosophy.

"It was a pleasure to meet her," said Johnson, who also shared a hug and posed for a picture with Granholm.

"I got something for my cabinet," she said of the photograph.

The Green Houses are being paid for through a \$1.5 million capital campaign by the Presbyterian Village of Michigan Foundation. The fund drive is already halfway to its goal, said foundation president Melinda Callahan. There is also another drive, for a \$1 million endowment to help sustain the Green Houses.

mjachman@oe.homecomm.net

[About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#)

All Contents Copyright © 2005 The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

Site Developed by **HomeTown Digital** and its partners **Online Technologies Corporation** and Mastermind Software Engineering