



## Catholic Charities Higher Ground Saint Paul

### Helping the homeless while operating efficiently



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Abbie Stone,  
Facilities Director

Since 1982, the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul, owned by Catholic Charities of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, has been serving the homeless and hungry to provide help and hope for a better future. Daytime services connect people with medical and mental health care, hot meals, showers, internet access, laundry and employment counseling.

But the facility was aging and needed a major renovation. A decision was made to upgrade the facility, add to its size and services, and call the new multi-building campus Dorothy Day Place.

#### Bigger, brighter space with improved efficiency

Phase one of the \$100 million dollar, two-phase project is a new five story building called Higher Ground Saint Paul. The building provides dignified men's and women's emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing for long term homelessness, as well as staff offices.

A requirement of getting certain state funding is building energy efficiency into the project. Catholic Charities was all for it.

"Part of Catholic social teaching is stewardship of resources," explains Abbie Stone, Facilities Director. "Lowering our energy costs and other expenses helps us serve more people and provide more services."

Catholic Charities worked with Xcel Energy's Energy Design Assistance program to build as efficiently as possible. The program involves energy modeling to identify various efficiency measures available, potential costs, payback terms and rebates to offset the cost of new energy-efficient equipment.

Some of the measures identified through energy modeling brought them the biggest savings. Things like energy efficient lighting, which is expected to save them 20 percent in lighting costs, variable speed motors and a heat recovery system are projected to save the facility tens of thousands of dollars in energy costs each year.



#### Project highlights

Xcel Energy rebates	\$95,000
Estimated annual energy savings	\$77,000
Estimated annual energy savings over code	40%

"It was really helpful to have the engineers, energy modelers and architect in the room all at once," Stone explains. "We could look at a change and they could tell me what the expected payback would be or how it would affect the people living and working in the building. It's more difficult to implement some of the projects in housing since it's not all lights out at 10:00 pm."

The following measures were the biggest energy savers:

- Energy efficient lighting (20 percent lower than required by code)
- Variable speed electrically commutated motors (ECMs)
- Pump head pressure reset control for heating and cooling
- Total heat recovery
- Increased wall insulation

Xcel Energy rebates totaling almost \$95,000 helped offset the cost of the high efficiency equipment. The combined measures are saving Catholic Charities roughly 40 percent in energy costs over building to code. It is estimated that their annual energy savings will be more than \$77,000.

"This building is very technically advanced," explains Stone. "We have lighting controls, a building automation system, and an access control system. One resident recently called the building 'really cool.' I would agree. It's a complex but very cool building."

### Next steps

Now that the first building is complete, phase two can begin. The first two floors of the second building will be called the Saint Paul Opportunity Center and will house a commercial kitchen, laundry, showers, a drop in center, and clinic. The top three floors, Dorothy Day Residence, will be comprised of additional single occupancy rooms as well as efficiency apartments.

"The community has been so generous," Stone says. "We reached our \$40 million private capital campaign goal, and now the community can see how their dollars are helping those who need it most."



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