

VOICES OF Energy and Housing Affordability



OWNER: National Church Residences

Affordability: Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly, Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Residences: Ravine at Central College | The Woods | Cherry Blossom

ELIZABETH KOAN



“I’d ask him how he’d feel if he were in the same situation. If he lived on a fixed income, wouldn’t he want to make provisions for people?”

— Elizabeth Koan, on what she wants to tell members of Congress.

Elizabeth Koan (left), Ravine resident

President Franklin D. Roosevelt made a promise in 1945 to protect the elderly “against the hazards and vicissitudes of life.” Since then, many of the nation’s elderly have been saved from crushing poverty through federal programs including housing assistance. It’s hard to imagine that the United States would allow the elderly to sleep on the streets or live in substandard housing, but cuts to these programs might mean just that.



The Ravine at Central College

Entitlement benefits like Social Security are not enough to support the housing needs of most seniors, and many of our elderly depend on affordable housing. Brianna Johnson-King and Yuran Chen of NRDC traveled to Westerville, Ohio to interview the residents of Ravine at Central College. When asked why she lived here, one resident, Elizabeth Koan responded,

“If I didn’t have this place, I wouldn’t have anyplace. I mean I’d be out in the streets.”

The Ravine at Central College is owned by the National Church Residences and was developed with the help of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. Tenants also benefit from programs that lower their utility burdens including Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). In the interviews, residents spoke of the importance of low utility bills. As noted by resident Nora Runyon, a resident at Cherry Blossom, a senior supportive housing property another NCR property,

“Once you’re retired, you’re on the fixed income, and that’s what you live by.”

Often seniors are forced to make choices between essentials. “Utilities are getting higher and higher; they’re not getting any cheaper,” Nora continues; “And the fact that my utilities are paid saves me extra money,” so that her quality-of-life is better, and she can afford “things that I need.”

WANDA BETTS

Wanda Betts, a resident at The Woods, also an NCR senior supportive housing residence, further underscored the importance of utility assistance. “The main thing is to buy extra groceries, pay for medications and health insurance, “ she says when asked what affordable housing and utility bill assistance means to her.

It makes “a world of difference to me and people like me.”

