

The Temple News

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A house gone green

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Stephen Plourde, a 1996 Temple graduate loved Temple. He remembers his great experiences in Philadelphia and as a student at the university. He had only one complaint: housing.

Fast forward 12 years later, Plourde is now the president of Building Assets, Inc., a company that focuses on building eco-friendly homes.

Building Assets will break ground for the development of houses on Gratz Street, the company's first location near Main Campus Tuesday. The two-unit duplexes will be available for leasing in Spring 2009. Each unit includes six bedrooms.

Energy efficient windows will be installed to lower heating and cooling costs for renters.

Plourde noticed the great potential for housing development near Main Campus while practicing for the Temple crew team. He would jog "through some pretty tough neighborhoods."



Green housing will be available in the spring of 2009 (Courtesy of templehousing.com)

Even when Plourde was an undergraduate, he said there was not enough housing for all students, and he was forced to find off-campus housing. Faced with a decision to find housing on campus or elsewhere, he opted to move near the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Plourde's business partner Chadd Martin said he wanted to bring something neater and nicer to students. Martin, a Penn State University graduate, opened his own contracting business, TMG Homes in 2003. TMG Homes' tagline is "Building a Higher Standard."

Martin and Plourde participate in the ENERGY STAR program, which is a national green building effort. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy developed the program to help Americans save money and protect the efficient products and practices. "We recycle as much material content as possible. All the drywall scraps can be recycled and used for fertilizer," Martin said. He said he uses less wood and more insulation materials when building homes.

One unique perk that Plourde and Martin said they are offering is bundling the cost of rent and utilities. "This is great for students, and more incentive for us to build better homes, because we will be paying the bill," Martin said. The duo is also considering building home audio systems with an iPod dock in the living rooms.

Plourde and Martin are reaching out to as many people as possible to get the word out about their new housing. They are trying to get in contact with the Office of Off-Campus Living.

They will also be reaching out to student organizations over the next few months, to rally support and excitement for the company's latest venture.

Advertisements have been placed on Craigslist. Fliers are also being distributed around campus. "We're taking the 'all over the place' approach," Plourde said.

The company promotes the fact it is just a short walk or bike ride from Main Campus.

"You never know what you're getting into when you lease a house near campus," Martin said. "We are offering students and parents peace of mind."

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