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BAY VISTA
COMMONS
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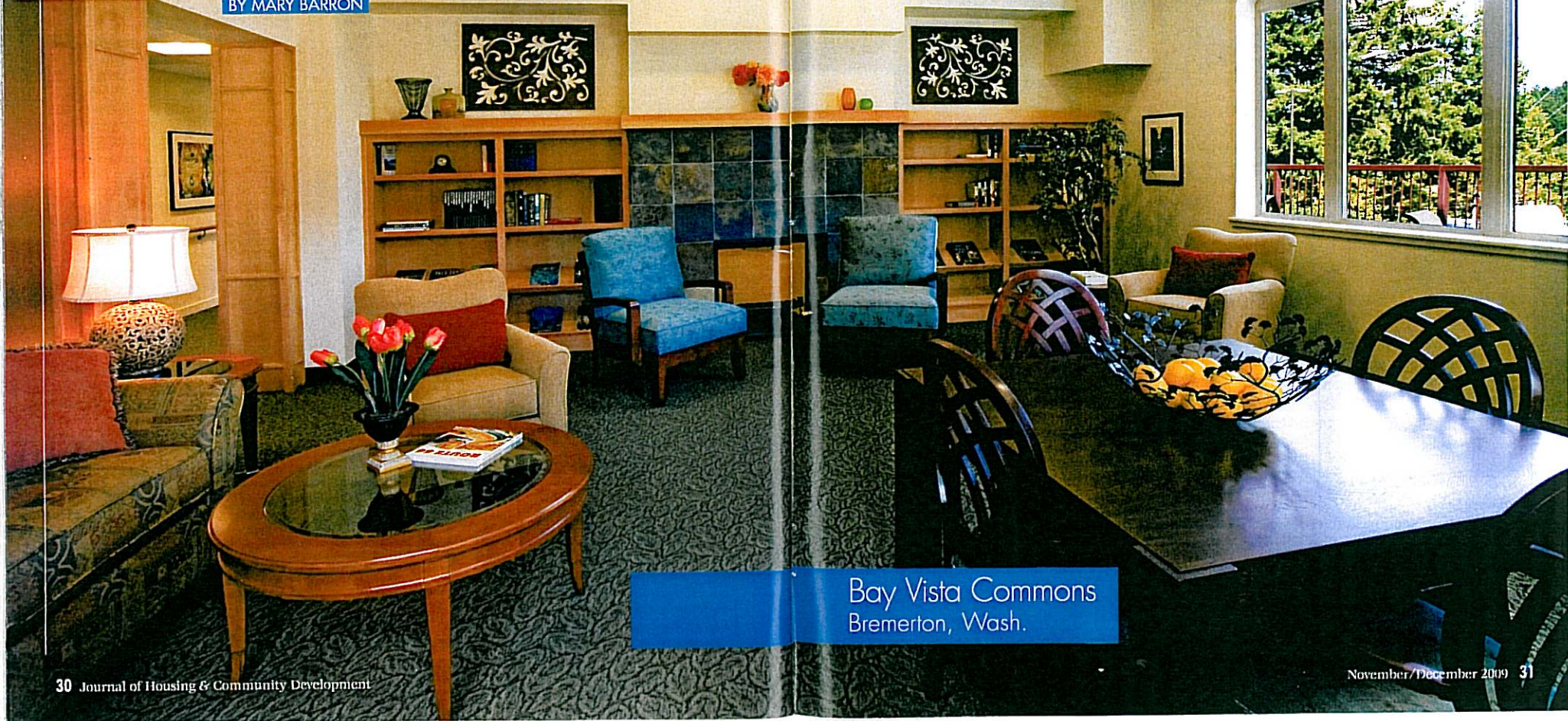
AN UNCOMMON COMMONS

NAHRO'S AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
IN PROGRAM INNOVATION:
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

AN UNCOMMON COMMONS:

NAHRO's Awards of Excellence in
Program Innovation: Affordable Housing

BY MARY BARRON



Bay Vista Commons
Bremerton, Wash.



IN 2002, WHEN staff from the Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA) attended a workshop led by the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, the BHA already had a subsidized senior complex called the Firs Apartments. Still, the workshop showed that there was a great need for an assisted living project

in the Bremerton area. In order to expand its services to seniors and to provide a place for seniors to "age in place," the BHA began construction of Bay Vista Commons, an affordable assisted living facility for seniors, in 2006.


Bay Vista Commons is a 72-unit assisted living facility, with 12 units designated for dementia care. It was built on a large public housing site slated for redevelopment, which was also conveniently located next door to Firs Apartments. All of the spacious units have handicapped-accessible bathrooms and wall-to-wall carpeting; the development also has common activity spaces, resident storage, jetted therapy tubs, and a private vehicle used to provide transportation to off-site activities. To ensure safety and prompt responses to emergencies, all residents are outfitted with nurse call safety bracelets or necklaces.

Senior Services of America, a company specializing in elderly care facilities, provides on-site services for the residents. Case management activities include three meals per day, housekeeping, group activities, field trips, personal care, transportation to medical appointments, and a Wellness Program that monitors health, manages medications, and assists with other activities of daily living. By entering into an agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services, the BHA can accept up to 66 Medicaid-

eligible residents in Bay Vista Commons; 54 project-based vouchers were also obtained in order to guarantee affordability. Funding for Bay Vista Commons came from tax exempt bonds underwritten by Bank of America LLC, BHA funds, and a BHA contribution of land.

Bay Vista Commons is almost fully leased, and it is seen as a success that market-rate, private-pay assisted living facilities in the area reach out to the BHA when a low-income tenant may not be able to afford their property. As the only HUD-subsidized, Medicaid-funded assisted living and memory care facility in the state of Washington, Bay Vista Commons is providing low-income seniors with the accommodation and care they need, without the financial strain. ■






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