During the 2012 fiscal year, PHFA awarded $11.8 million in funding and $28.5 million in tax credits for the construction of affordable rental housing throughout Pennsylvania. An example of these developments is a wonderful, old shoe warehouse in Lancaster that was renovated using PHFA funding to provide welcoming apartments for seniors like Alfred Traini.

If you go to visit Alfred Traini in Lancaster at Park Avenue Apartments, be sure to allow yourself plenty of time. At 84 years of age, Alfred has lived a long and interesting life. It began in 1927 when he was born in Hamburg, Pennsylvania to immigrant parents.

“I come from a family of 14, and I’m the baby of the family. I was raised in a house with no electricity and no running water. But our home was spotless,” Alfred reflected.

In his family, everyone helped with the cleaning chores. Little did he know how valuable those skills would be during his life. As an adult, he and his wife moved to California. It wasn’t too long before the cleaning jobs he found earned him a stellar reputation among the state’s movie stars, well-to-do and even the state’s governor.

While his client list was impressive, the income earned by butlers and housemen in the 1950s and ’60s was modest. Decades later as a senior citizen, Alfred faced the challenge of finding housing that would fit within his budget.

An empty shoe warehouse becomes a housing treasure

After coming back to Pennsylvania, Alfred discovered the Park Avenue Apartments — a housing development of 24 units for seniors on limited incomes. The site of a former shoe company warehouse and outlet store, the building was renovated in 2010 using financing that included low-income housing tax credits provided by PHFA.

“I love the building,” Alfred smiles. “It’s an older building. I was amazed when I first walked into this place. It is very beautiful.”

It’s a home where Alfred plans to happily stay the rest of his life.

“We have an activities coordinator here who has programs for us downstairs in the community room, and I love doing arts and crafts. I knit. I make hats and scarfs and things. The staff is wonderful.

“I sure want to thank you people [at PHFA] for doing what you did to make all this possible, because I could never afford to live in something so beautiful. And to think at my age now to have this. I have never had anything so beautiful.”

ALFRED’S LIFE OF HARD WORK IS REWARDED with housing that promotes his independence

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