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[A Safe Place opens supportive-housing facility](#)

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ZION — Tucked off 17th Street on what was once farmland, a long, narrow, three-story residential structure sits near collections of trees that include a modest stand of pines.

This quiet corner of the community is where women and children can come when they need something more than emergency shelter from domestic violence — and, as of late July, the new northern wing of the building offers them a truly long-term housing solution.

“We have 20 apartments, and 18 are now occupied,” said Noelle Moore, director of development for A Safe Place. “We filled up very quickly, and I think that speaks to the need for affordable housing, especially for victims of domestic violence.”

On Thursday from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., officials will welcome the public to an open house at the \$7.5 million supportive-housing facility, which broke ground last December on the 2700 block of 17th following some two years of planning and fund-raising.

The new facility adjoins One Safe Place, a \$5 million transitional-living center that opened in April 2006 on the 11.5-acre property. Each wing has 20 units with one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, but they differ slightly in their mission: One Safe Place can accommodate women and families for up to two years, while residents can stay in the new wing indefinitely, provided their income qualifies them for low-income housing.

“The whole project started in 1999, when the (Safe Place) board expanded our mission to provide affordable housing for our clients,” Moore said during a tour of the two new units that remain vacant. “We attended seminars with the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and then we worked with the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) on getting low-income housing tax credits.”

The IHDA funding included federal stimulus dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. A Safe Place worked on the project in a partnership with Brinshore Development, LLC of Northbrook, and additional construction funding sources included Lake County, Federal Home Loan Bank and First Midwest Bank.

Each unit in the supportive-housing wing comes with such basic amenities as an electric oven and dishwasher, along with furnishings that include a small couch, mattresses with wooden bed frames, nightstands, and a dining table with four chairs.

Moore noted that there are waiting lists for both the transitional and supportive housing wings. “The families that come here are self-referred or they’re from another social-service agency, and they’re

approved by the Lake County Housing Authority,” she said, adding that the rent for each unit is based on the tenant’s ability to pay.

While A Safe Place continues to operate a 35-bed emergency shelter at a location that is undisclosed for security reasons, Moore said the Zion facility — which includes the nonprofit agency’s offices as well as meeting rooms for counseling services — is meant “to be our public face.”

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