



The old Nissly Swiss Chocolate Factory in Mount Joy has been renovated into 28 apartments for senior citizens.

Sunday News/Blaine T. Shahan



Sweet life

Former chocolate factory now houses apartments for seniors.

By Paula Wolf
Sunday New Staff Writer

After retiring, Adelene Dukeman wanted a smaller place, one easy to maintain.

Then the resident of Ridgewood Manor in Rapho Township heard about the apartments for seniors at the former Nissly Swiss Chocolate Factory in Mount Joy.

She attended an open house this summer. "I liked the openness, even in the efficiency units," she said.

Ms. Dukeman moved into an apartment in August, making her one of Nissly's first residents.

"I didn't have any doubts about leaving my old home," she said. "There's plenty of room here for me."

The Nissly Swiss Chocolate Factory building at 951 Wood St. includes 28 one-bedroom apartments for singles and couples 62 years of age and older. There are income limits for tenants.

Built in 1921, the four-story factory was restored and put on the National Register of Historic Places before re-opening its doors as a residential site.

■ Community Action Program of Lancaster County, Union National Bank of Mount Joy, Fulton Bank, and Bank of Lancaster County are partners in the \$2.5 million project.

The Lancaster County Housing and Redevelopment Authority is the lender.

Though the apartments are all one bedroom,

there is a variety of sizes, shapes, and layouts, said Tracy Lin Horst, owner of Progressive Property management, which is managing the building.

"Some have bigger kitchens, others have bigger living rooms. Some are efficiencies."

Each unit has a living room, kitchen, bedroom, and full bath.

The living rooms and bedrooms include wall-to-wall carpeting and the kitchens and bathrooms are covered by linoleum.

The apartments have refrigerators, stoves, gas heat, and central air conditioning.

The windows, which come with blinds, have large storm windows and let in a lot of light, Horst said.

Laundry facilities are on the first floor.

Also on the first floor is a community room with a kitchen that all tenants will have access to. "They can have a family gathering and parties there," Horst said.

The room can be used as well for group activities such as bingo, she said.

In addition, each floor has one apartment that is accessible to and adaptable for people with disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs, Horst said.

They include lower light switches, wheel-in showers, and other modifications.

The building has indoor mail boxes and a new security system.

There is ample parking, and grounds around the building will provide space for tenants to gar-

den, Horst said.

The apartments rent from \$238 to \$409 a month. The landlord pays for water, sewer, heat and trash. Tenants are responsible for electricity, phone, and cable television.

The annual income limits are \$18,186 for a family of one and \$20,784 for a family of two.

There will be an open house from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 10.

The 23,200-square-foot building was constructed by prominent Mount Joy businessman Eli Nissly as a chocolate manufacturing business for one of his sons. But the enterprise, like many others, folded during the Depression.

Since then it has had many owners. In recent years the building was vacant, Horst said.

To be converted into apartments, the former factory had to be gutted and reworked.

Contractors replaced the thousands of windows and put in new drywall and flooring, Horst said.

The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places, allowing the partners in the project to earn federal tax credits.

Horst said inquiries about the apartments are mostly coming from Elizabethtown, Mount Joy, and Lancaster.

Beyond affordability, location is an asset, she said.

"You're a couple of blocks from downtown Mount Joy, but there's not a lot of traffic here. It's nice for seniors."