



For Immediate Release

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Greater Philadelphia honors the past with new health center

Greater Philadelphia introduces brand new Woodland Avenue Health Center on the grounds of what was once, Mercy-Douglass Hospital

PHILADELPHIA, PA – On Thursday, November 18, 2004, from 11 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Greater Philadelphia Health Action, Inc. celebrated the grand opening of its Woodland Avenue Health Center, at its new address, 5000 Woodland Avenue in Southwest Philadelphia. Significantly, the health center’s new state of the art, three-story home occupies the location that is famous for being the former site of the historic Mercy-Douglass Hospital.

Over 200 guests attended the grand opening celebration including participants from Greater Philadelphia Health Action staff and board of directors, local political officials, residents and community organizations. Journalist, Glenn Ellis paid homage to Mercy-Douglass Hospital and Nursing School with a special 10-minute presentation. Special invited guests from the hospital and nursing school were in attendance. Among other highlights were the ribbon cutting ceremony, site tours and health screenings held all day.

Woodland Avenue Health Center first opened at 5501 Woodland Avenue in 1986 and has remained a vital resource in the Southwest community over the last 18 years. According to Mr. Ronald E. Heigler, CEO/Executive Director of GPHA, the move to 50th and Woodland served as both a “necessary upgrade in physical plant” and “a major historical statement.” “To build this new center, which we hope will trigger a rebirth and revitalization of Woodland Avenue, on the grounds of what was once the health home for generations of African Americans before us is a dream realized” said Mr. Heigler. “We will strive to carry on the tradition and excellence of care of our forefathers.”

Mercy-Douglass hospital was formed in 1948 as the result of a merger between Frederick Douglass Hospital and Mercy Hospital. From the inception of both hospitals in 1895 and 1907 respectively, they shared the distinction as the only two hospitals in Philadelphia where African-American physicians could practice. In 1956, a new building was erected and Mercy-Douglass hospital served the African American community until 1973 when it closed for good. The building was torn down in December of 1975.

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