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LuAnn Wittrock, activities coordinator at Alton Memory Care in St. Paul led a singalong with some of the residents there. Alton Memory Care was awarded the Best New Development in senior housing award because it has in-house health services and community spaces that encourage resident and family interaction.

Blue-ribbon rentals

Each year the Minnesota Multi Housing Association, a trade group that includes owners and managers of rental property, recognizes its members with the MADACS Award – the Multi Housing Achievement in Design, Advertising and Community Support. Judges tour sites and score according to a list of criteria, then choose winners in 55 categories. Here's a look at three that won Best New Development. For a complete list of winners, go to www.mmha.com/MADACS/2008/winners.pdf.



KINGSLEY COMMONS

Category: Affordable housing
Location: 4550 Humboldt Av. N., Minneapolis.
Size: 25 one- and two-bedroom apartments.
Monthly rent: Residents must meet county income requirements and pay rent based on income.
Availability: One- to one-and-half-year waiting list.

About Kingsley Commons: This is the state's first apartment complex designed for people with multiple sclerosis. The 25 units have universal design features, which make living areas more accessible to everyone regardless of abilities. They include accessible showers, wide doorways and hallways, roll-under cabinets and easy-to-grab drawer handles. Residents can use a computer lab or take an exercise class. The complex is built on a quiet wooded site behind Shingle Creek and has a gazebo and walking trails. Kingsley Commons, built through a partnership between nonprofits Minnesota Multiple Sclerosis Society and CommonBond Communities, helps meet the need for low-income housing for people with disabilities.

Website: www.commonbond.org.



HIAWATHA FLATS

Category: Market-rate rentals
Location: 3625 E. 43rd St., Minneapolis
Size: 163 units including studios and two-bedroom townhouses.
Monthly rent: \$915 for a studio to \$1,800 for a townhouse.
Availability: Vacancies.

About Hiawatha Flats: Its location, two blocks from the 46th St. light-rail station and near the Grand Rounds bike trail, encourages transit commuting, walking and biking. Two five-story apartment buildings have upscale condo-style amenities including a fitness center, swimming pool, game and party room and heated parking, but without the association fees of condo ownership. Shopping and restaurants are nearby or across the Ford Parkway bridge. The building's construction also scored some points, said Jay Wolf, property manager for the developer Klodt Inc. The developer limited noise transmission between units by employing double-wall construction techniques.

Website: www.hiawathafats.com.



ALTON MEMORY CARE AND CARE SUITES

Category: Senior housing
Location: 1306 Alton St., St. Paul
Size: 32 memory-care suites and eight care suites (short- and long-term stays for people with more extreme physical needs).
Monthly rent: \$4,550 for memory-care suites, \$250 a day for care suites.
Availability: Taking applications.

About Alton Memory Care Suites: Assisted-living housing for people with memory loss offers specialized memory care programs. Units are arranged in "neighborhoods" with lounge and community areas aimed at creating a homey environment. The suites have bathrooms and showers that are wheelchair-accessible. Daily activities encourage social interaction. The staff includes nurses and home-health aides who provide a variety of health care needs, such as bathing and dressing. The gabled brick building in St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood has landscaped grounds with walking paths. An emergency call system ensures that staff members know where residents are at all times.

Website: www.thealton.com.