

## Former Elementary School Now Serves as a Community Center *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) awarded a \$350,000 subgrant from the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program with grant funding provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for an asbestos abatement inside the former Garden Oaks Elementary School.

The school was built in 1954 and served as an elementary school for the Oklahoma City Public Schools for almost 50 years!

In 2002, the school closed its doors. In 2003, the abandoned building was leased to a local community organization. In 2021, the Alpha Community Foundation of Oklahoma, a non-profit organization, purchased the building and its surrounding property (approximately 7 plus acres).



In 2022, the asbestos was cleaned up using a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund subgrant. In 2024, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to showcase the new Garden Oaks Community Center and the first phase (north-south wing) of the renovations being complete. The Center includes space for summer camps, after school tutoring, martial arts and a library.



The second phase will renovate the east-west wing geared for adults with job placement skills training and a mobile health lab. The third phase will be adding a new building to the property to serve as a gym.

According to the Alpha Community Foundation of Oklahoma: "...\$1 million dollars has been invested..." and "...it all started with the asbestos grant..."

DEQ anticipates the use of additional Brownfields Revolving Fund funding for the lead-based paint removal from the exterior of the building within the next year or two, dependent upon funding and/or approval. Date: May 13, 2024.