

Heritage House plans to expand

By HAROLD SCHETZLE

The Heritage House is a unique establishment in Anchorage that opened last September for people needing a semi-supportive living environment. It includes, but is not limited to senior citizens, the partially-sighted and deaf from out of town who are receiving training in Anchorage. The Heritage House also accepts persons that must come to Anchorage for medical reasons and who will need out-patient therapy and a reassuring residence in which to live.

The Heritage House is owned and operated by a Native from Kodiak Island, Robert Christofferson, and his wife, Edith. Formerly they ran a residential care house in California and Edith said, "California is 20 years ahead of Alaska in this area."

As owner/managers of Heritage House, they have not received a salary since the beginning in September. Currently, on an actual cost basis, a person must pay \$19.50 per day to stay there. However, the Heritage House also accepts people from

the Alaska Treatment Center and the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The State does pay for DVR people.

"We're saving and could save the State a hell of a lot of money," Edith said. "It would probably cost the State at least double this to place these people in motels and pay for their food."

The Heritage House is trying to achieve non-profit status and has the support of Senator Sumner in applying for a State grant of \$103,000.

"The State should gladly grant that amount," Edith said.

"Just think of the \$200,000 put into the ice palace for the Fur Rendezvous and it just melts away in a couple of weeks."

"If we get the grant we'll be able to provide a full time night person, full time cook and assistant cook, and a part time counselor," Edith continued. "We'll have a 30-bed house then and ten beds will be used for welfare people, ten beds for those unable to pay and ten full payment people who will supply one-third, in kind, matching money required by the State."

Heritage House plans to move into a six-plex on Ninth and Bragaw, around April of this

year. Currently, seven out of the twelve people staying at the Heritage House are Natives with home towns stretching from Nome to Southeast Alaska.

The residents represent both ends of the economic bracket and range from a man from the Rescue Mission to General Scott's mother. Their ages run from 19 to 76 years old.

"Right now we can't take the low income or no income people out on the street until we get the grant," Edith said.

She summed up the Heritage House program succinctly by saying, "this is too good of a concept to let go."