



Barrier Free Living Breaks Ground on First Supportive Housing Development

Barrier Free Living (BFL) celebrated the start of construction yesterday on its first permanent supportive housing development that, when complete, will provide 120 apartments with a preference for the disabled and survivors of domestic abuse. Barrier Free Living Apartments, on East 139th Street in the Bronx, is being developed by BFL with collaboration and support from variety of City and State agencies, as well as Alembic Development, Foxy Management, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Citi Community Capital, and Richman Housing Resources.

"This is a tremendously exciting day for us at BFL," BFL President/CEO Paul Feuerstein said. "It represents an important continuation of our mission to enable people with disabilities to live independently and productively. With these beautiful apartments, residents at our transitional and emergency facilities will now have the option for permanent housing with the level of service and security they need to thrive and provide for their families."

"Living in a safe, secure and accessible environment is a critical first step toward regaining stability and independence. The Barrier Free Living Apartments offer a safe haven with a supportive environment necessary for people gain the confidence to move on to the next phase of their lives," said NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Mathew M. Wambua. "HPD is very proud to be a part of this development."

"Every unit in this building represents a fresh start for a fellow New Yorker who has seen more than enough hardship," said NYC Housing Development Corporation President Marc Jahr.

Barrier Free Living Apartments will consist of two structures. One building, on East



An artist's rendering of the new Barrier Free Living Apartments.

138th Street, will provide 51 apartments for families with a head of household who is a survivor of domestic violence. The second building, on East 139th Street, will comprise 70 apartments for individuals with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence, severely disabled women who are in a nursing home diversion program and women who are disabled veterans. Barrier Free Living will be providing social services for both of these buildings as well as 24/7 security and surveillance. These new buildings will replace an abandoned incomplete construction site which has been an eyesore to the community for many years.

"As with many affordable and supportive housing developments, Barrier Free Living Apartments required many financing partners and a creative financing structure," said Benjamin Warnke, principal with Alembic Community Development. "I am delighted to see it break ground, and appreciative of our many development and financing partners – the City and State, CSH, Citi Community Capital, The Richman Group and others – who helped us make this happen."

The total development cost will be \$42.5 million. HDC provided \$24.8 million in construction financing and two mortgages toward permanent financing the amounts of \$3.96 million and \$7.86 million. HPD provided \$1.5 million

in Neighborhood Stabilization Plan funds. The New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation provided \$7 million in funds through its Homeless Housing and Assistance Program. Richman Housing Resources provided \$16.9 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Citi Community Capital will act as the Letter of Credit provider on this development.

“We welcome Barrier Free Living and Alembic’s new Bronx project,” Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. The development will serve families and individuals earning at or be-

low 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) which is equivalent to an annual income of no more than \$36,120 for an individual or \$51,540 for a family of four. Units will be filled through referrals by Freedom House, DHS, Family Justice Centers and other community based domestic violence programs. The development will receive Project-Based Section 8 from HPD to help subsidize the cost of rent on 77 of the 121 total units.

“These apartments will fill a vital need, providing much-needed permanent supportive housing for in-

dividuals and families not only facing homelessness, but also dealing with issues related to a physical disability and, in some cases, domestic violence,” said Kristin M. Proud, Acting Commissioner, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. “Supportive housing is an essential step in assisting families and individuals facing these issues to build foundations for a better future. Those living here will receive the supportive services they need to maintain housing stability and increase their ability to live independently.”