

Ribbon Cutting Held for Redeveloped Apartment Complex in Columbia Heights

In less than one year, a once dilapidated housing apartment complex in Columbia Heights that was the sight of crime and substandard living conditions was transformed into a safe, attractive and affordable place for residents.

The HFA, Eagle Point Enterprises, Somerset Development Company, LLC and the Faircliff Plaza West Tenant Association partnered to complete a \$16.7 million redevelopment of Faircliff Plaza West, which is a 112-unit apartment complex located blocks away from the busy 14th Street Corridor in Ward 1. The 40-year old apartment complex has four buildings and sits on a 2.5-acre site. Thanks to the public-private partnership, the apartment buildings were renovated, the grounds were improved, a community center and playground were built and the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development extended the apartment complex's Section 8 contract for 20 years.

"Faircliff Plaza West is very special, because it is a wonderful example of what tenants can do to empower themselves and have their voices heard during the redevelopment process," said Thomas Redmond, Acting Executive Director of the D.C. Housing Finance Agency "Faircliff Plaza West is demonstrates what can happen when committed government agencies work with committed developers and tenants who wish to transform a small part of the city."

The developers worked with the tenant association to complete an "in-place renovation," which eliminated the need to relocate tenants during the redevelopment process. With the patience and commitment of everyone involved, the apartment complex is now one of the newest and most eye-catching housing developments in Ward 1. As part owners of the development, the tenants association played an active role in the development process and will continue to play a critical role in the activities within the newly built community center. The community center houses a computer lab and library, and other services will be available to residents within the center, including tutoring, summer camp and after-school programs.

The HFA also partnered Eagle Point Enterprises and Somerset Development Company to finance two other affordable housing



Resident LaSonya Olden receives the honor of cutting the ribbon to the community center.

complexes in Ward 1. The HFA provided \$6.3 million in tax-exempt bonds for the acquisition and redevelopment of Urban Village, which is a 72-unit apartment complex located in the 1500 block of Newton Street, NW, and the HFA also provided \$7 million for the acquisition and renovation of Faircliff Plaza East, which is a 80-unit apartment complex located at 14th and Fairmount Streets, NW.

Residents interested in purchasing their apartment complexes can tap into the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Tenant Purchase Technical Assistance Program. According to the department's web site, the program "provides technical assistance to nonprofit organizations that provide legal counseling, loan packaging, and other services to low and moderate-income tenant groups that try to purchase their existing housing units and convert the units into tenant-owned cooperatives and condominiums. The program also provides housing management assistance to recently formed low and moderate-income cooperatives and condominium associations." For more information, residents should call DHCD at (202) 442-7200 or log onto the department's web site at www.dhcd.dc.gov.

To learn more about the HFA's multifamily housing financing programs, call (202) 777-1655 or log onto www.dchfa.org.