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Breaking Ground begins \$100 million Passive House project; Betances Residence designed by COOKFOX Architects

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Rendering of Betances Residence -
South Bronx, NY

South Bronx, NY Breaking Ground, one of New York's largest supportive housing developers, broke ground on Betances Residence, its latest development. Breaking Ground's new building will bring 152 units of affordable and supportive housing to the Mott Haven neighborhood, in addition to a new community facility space, landscaped terrace and courtyard. Betances will be Breaking Ground's first Passive House project, and among only a handful of supportive residences in the city to embrace the energy use standard. The Betances development is part of a commitment by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to identify underutilized land for new affordable homes. The \$100 million project is being designed by COOKFOX Architects. Monadnock Construction, Inc. is the general contractor.

"We are thrilled to break ground on Betances Residence today, and celebrate the creation of 152 new apartments for seniors who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness. Seniors are the fastest growing population in New York, and Betances helps ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors can age-in-place without the constant fear of losing their home," said Brenda Rosen, president and CEO of Breaking Ground. "We are especially grateful to NYCHA and our government partners, whose commitment to expanding affordable housing is unmatched. It is a privilege to continue to invest in the South Bronx and bring this beautiful, sustainable residence – along with programs for children with our partners at DreamYard – to the Mott Haven community."

"Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing can transform the lives of vulnerable populations like low-income seniors, families, and the formerly homeless," said HPD commissioner Louise Carroll. "Thanks to our partners at Breaking Ground and our colleagues at NYCHA and HDC, hundreds of households will soon celebrate a new beginning when this affordable new construction is complete. I want to thank our development partners and local elected officials for their sincere dedication to providing affordable housing opportunities for all New Yorkers."

"NYCHA is pleased to celebrate the groundbreaking for Betances Residence, which will bring 152 new affordable apartments for seniors with onsite supportive resources to the Mott Haven community," said NYCHA senior VP of real estate Jonathan Gouveia. "Thanks to Breaking Ground,

HPD, HDC and our partners, this environmentally friendly development will put to good use underutilized NYCHA land for the community and directly serve formerly homeless and low-income senior households - providing crucial housing and community services for those that need it most.”

“My office is always working to provide innovative new housing opportunities to Bronx residents, which is why I provided \$250,000 in capital funds to help make this project a reality. The Betances Senior Residence will help keep longtime Bronx residents in their borough while also providing high-quality affordable housing units to one of our most vulnerable populations, and I am thrilled to support this project,” said Bronx borough president Ruben Diaz Jr.

“As the council member of district 8, I am incredibly proud to welcome Betances Residence to the South Bronx. This development will bring 152 new units of senior housing to the district, all of which will be affordable and equipped with amenities to maximize the well-being of tenants,” said council member Diana Ayala. “As rates of senior homelessness continue to rise, it is crucial that our city support projects like these. I am delighted to have secured \$500,000 for this residence with speaker Corey Johnson and I thank Breaking Ground, NYCHA, HPD, and HDC for this investment to Mott Haven.”

The 152 apartments at Betances will serve formerly homeless and low-income senior households, including one superintendent unit. Crucially, 26 of the units will have a preference for current residents of NYCHA apartments, allowing senior residents to continue to age-in-place while freeing up much-needed NYCHA apartments for other households. The 120,000 square foot development will feature a 24-hour attended lobby, state of the art security systems, a laundry room, digital library and computer lab, multipurpose room for events and programming, and landscaped courtyard and terrace spaces. The building will also feature 4,700 s/f of community facility space to be occupied by the DreamYard Project, a Bronx-based nonprofit that creates arts and education opportunities for underserved youth.

Betances will be Breaking Ground’s first Passive House development. The Passive House standard is among the most rigorous for reducing the energy footprint of residential and commercial developments. With a tight building envelope and engineered ventilation systems, the Passive House design will ensure a high indoor air quality for Breaking Ground’s senior tenants while achieving optimal energy cost efficiencies. Designed by COOKFOX Architects, the building integrates biophilic design strategies, such as the incorporation of natural materials, patterns, and abundant natural light throughout, to enhance resident well-being. The entry to the building is focused on a framed view of the central organizing feature of the project, a verdant courtyard garden. Visible from both the sidewalk and the corridors of the residential floors, the garden will create connections between residents and the wider community, creating a cohesive pedestrian and residential experience.

Breaking Ground celebrates the occasion with partners at the New York City Council and Bronx Borough President’s Office, HPD, New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC), NYCHA, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance/Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation (OTDA/HHAC), the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the AFL-CIO

Housing Investment Trust, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., the Center for Urban Community Services, and the DreamYard Project.

Betances Residence received capital funding from the New York City Council and borough president's office, HPD, HDC, OTDA/HHAC, and Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. The Corporation for Supportive Housing provided pre-development funds. The AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust purchased tax-exempt bonds to finance the development.

"Betances Residence will bring greater security and wellness to 152 formerly homeless and low-income seniors," said HDC president Eric Enderlin. "Thanks to all our nonprofit, government, and private sector partners, for their dedication to ensuring some of our city's most vulnerable will have the support they need in a safe, affordable, and healthy living environment."

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance commissioner Mike Hein said, "This project clearly reflects the needs of the community, not only providing much-needed housing for formerly homeless senior citizens, but ensuring the availability of supportive services that enhance residents' ability to live independently. We are pleased to once again work with Breaking Ground and our city partners and look forward to the successful completion of this project."

"Betances Residences is a fantastic example of New York City agencies maximizing resources, including land, to tackle the affordable housing and homelessness crisis," said Jennifer Trepinski, director of loan originations at the Corporation for Supportive Housing. "CSH provided a \$500,000 predevelopment loan to ensure this underutilized public land would be used for the creation of new homes affordable to the most vulnerable, extremely low-income and aging New Yorkers. It also provides a beautiful creative space for underserved youth of the DreamYard Project. Breaking Ground's vision for the exceptional environmental standard of passive house construction will benefit the entire neighborhood and lays the groundwork for a thriving residential community."

"The AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust (HIT) has been committed to building and preserving affordable housing in New York City with pension capital for over 35 years. In partnership with the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York City, this 100% affordable project will be constructed using 100% union labor," said Chang Suh, CEO of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust. "When community organizations such as Breaking Ground make a commitment to address the affordability crisis while simultaneously creating quality, family-supporting jobs, the impact of the project reaches far beyond its walls. The HIT is proud to be assisting with the financing of this important development."

Located between Willis and Brook Aves. on a site that spans 142nd to 143rd Streets, the building will feature two eight-story residential towers and provide 22 one-bedroom and 130 studio apartments. Onsite social services will be offered to all residents in the building by the Center for Urban Community Services, Breaking Ground's long-standing partner, marking their 11th residential collaboration in over the past nearly 30 years. Betances will be Breaking Ground's seventh building in the Bronx and increase its total units under management in the borough to more than 1,100.