



\$6 million Gerard Place Community Center project in Buffalo completed

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Buffalo, NY According to governor Andrew Cuomo, the \$6 million transformation of a former parish hall into the new Gerard Place Community Center on the city's East Side has been completed. Gerard Place works to eliminate barriers which prevent people from escaping poverty. Gerard Place has expanded its Bailey Ave. services, providing opportunities for local residents to complete their education, develop job skills and provide childcare for families, as well as bridge the food desert gaps in the high need Bailey-Delevan community. These support services are designed to eliminate barriers to employment, positioning families to become economically stable, while transforming the neighborhood into a thriving community. The project received more than \$1.75 million in state funding including from the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council for construction and workforce development initiatives at the center.

"As opportunities in Buffalo continue to grow there is an increased demand for a strong and skilled workforce," governor Cuomo said. "Gerard Place is opening doors, creating opportunities, and providing services - like daycare and continuing education - to the Bailey-Delevan neighborhood that will give everyone the support they need to boost employment and access careers with tangible growth."

Gerard Place partnered with several Buffalo schools, including Erie 1 BOCES and Buffalo Public Schools, to provide job training in nursing, home health aides, child care, and culinary arts. In addition to their education partnerships, a daycare managed by Edu-Kids, the Buffalo Promise Neighborhood Children's Academy at Gerard Place, is open for children aged 6 weeks to 4.5 years old.

Gerard Place first opened their doors in 2000 as the result of twelve congregations of Women Religious in the Diocese of Buffalo creating and sponsoring Gerard Place on the grounds of the former St. Gerard's Parish. Gerard Place's 90% success rate, representing 300 families, illustrates their dedication to improving the lives of people striving to break the cycle of poverty in their lives by providing housing for homeless single parents and their families, empowering them through education, employment, life skills classes, and counseling.

On the same campus, Gerard Place also has the Junior League of Buffalo and the Buffalo News Community Education Building, which opened in 2009. The Education building is open to the entire community, providing literacy and high school equivalency programs.

Gerard Place president and CEO David Zapfel said, “We are grateful to governor Cuomo and Empire State Development for their support in making this building happen. We are changing lives and strengthening this community.”

Mayor Byron Brown said, “As we continue to build an inclusive and equitable city of opportunity, the completion of the Gerard Place Community Center renovation project marks a new era for many of our city’s children and families, putting them on a positive path to prosperity. We recognize that people need access to support services like education, training, childcare and transportation in order to lead healthy and secure lives. The Gerard Place Community Center provides our residents with critical services right in their own neighborhood.”

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