



Selfhelp and Briarwood complete \$20 million affordable housing development; Project part of Governor Cuomo's five-year housing plan

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Brooklyn, NY According to governor Andrew Cuomo, a \$20 million affordable and supportive housing development in the Lefferts Gardens neighborhood has been completed. The new development at 333 Lenox Rd. provides 58 affordable apartments for seniors in a building designed to meet the special needs of aging residents. The development team is a joint venture between Selfhelp Community Services and The Briarwood Organization.

The project at 333 Lenox Rd. is part of the governor's commitment to provide all New Yorkers with access to safe, affordable housing through his unprecedented \$20 billion, five-year housing plan. The plan is a comprehensive approach to statewide housing issues and includes multifamily and single-family housing, as well as community development initiatives to make housing accessible and combat homelessness by building or preserving 100,000 affordable homes and 6,000 homes with supportive services.

Since 2011, NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) has invested more than \$10 billion in the NYC region that has created or preserved affordable housing for more than 100,000 residents, including over 15,300 apartments for over 41,000 people in Brooklyn.

The 13-story building is home to 24 studios and 33 one-bedroom apartments. All apartments are occupied by seniors with incomes at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income. Nine households will receive rental assistance through the Governor's Empire State Supportive Housing Initiative, and eight households will receive Project Based Section 8 rental assistance.

The building has a senior-friendly design with each apartment featuring emergency pull cords, grab bars in the bathroom, roll-in showers and motion sensor activated lights. Social work services are provided through the Selfhelp Active Services for Aging Model (SHASAM). Activities organized by an onsite social worker provide recreational, educational and wellness services for residents.

Additional amenities include community spaces, a recreational rooftop garden, a computer lab, energy-efficient appliances, modern kitchens, storage and laundry facilities, as well as closed circuit TV surveillance in common areas throughout the building. The building is served by two nearby subway stations and is also near SUNY Downstate Medical facility.

Selfhelp was founded in 1936 to assist people fleeing Nazi Germany. 333 Lenox Rd. will be named

“The Joseph and Pauline Charatan Residence” in honor of the late parents of Selfhelp Community Services Foundation vice-chair, Debrah Lee Charatan. Joseph and Pauline Charatan were Holocaust survivors.

State financing for 333 Lenox Rd. includes federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits that generated \$14.5 million in equity from HCR. The New York State Department of Health is providing rental subsidies for the ESSHI units. Additional financing was provided by Bank of America Merrill Lynch and the Federal Home Loan Bank.

“In New York, we are committed to caring for our senior community and ensuring that they can age in their own homes and their own neighborhoods,” Cuomo said. “This new development offers an affordable and age-friendly environment that will allow older New Yorkers to live independently and comfortably for years to come.”

“The opening of this new housing development in Brooklyn is one of several investments in affordable and supportive housing in the area,” said lieutenant governor Kathy Hochul. “This apartment building adds 58 affordable units with amenities including community spaces and a rooftop garden, and design details in each apartment to ensure the safety of our older residents. The progress we are seeing here in Brooklyn is being replicated in communities throughout NYC and across the state as part of our \$20 billion housing plan to add and preserve affordable homes, enhance quality of life, and help to combat homelessness.”

HCR commissioner RuthAnne Visnauskas said, “Too often, older New Yorkers on fixed incomes are burdened by rising costs of housing and health care. With 333 Lenox Road, we are helping 58 senior households achieve security and independence with apartments and services designed to meet their needs. Under governor Cuomo’s leadership, we are increasing affordable and supportive housing opportunities for seniors across every region of the state.”

New York State Department of health commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, “Affordable housing and the ability to remain in the community are key components of healthy living and aging for senior citizens. With easy access to public transportation and medical services and a short walk to Prospect Park, 333 Lenox Rd. offers residents a variety of opportunities and helps keep New York an Age-Friendly State.”

Senator Zellnor Myrie said, “Every day, seniors come to my office for help finding or holding onto affordable housing. No senior should face housing insecurity, yet we know that in Central Brooklyn, all too many do. I am heartened to see this addition of affordable housing that is tailored to the needs of seniors and sorely needed in our community.”

Assembly member Diana Richardson said, “It is encouraging that we are prioritizing safe and affordable housing for our seniors. Many want to age in place but are struggling to find housing in our city. 333 Lenox Road is a welcome addition toward our efforts to create truly affordable senior housing in Brooklyn”

Borough president Eric Adams said, “Brooklyn is home to a growing aging population, and one of the key challenges this demographic faces is access to affordable housing. The new development at 333 Lenox Rd. should serve as a model for senior housing in the borough, providing a comprehensive suite of services that cater to the needs of aging residents. I thank HCR for their partnership on this vital project.”

City council member Mathieu Eugene said, “I want to commend Selfhelp Community Services, the Briarwood Org., New York State Homes and Community Renewal, the New York State Department of Health, and institutions from the private sector who collaborated on this affordable and supportive housing development for our seniors. As a city, it is extremely important that we provide all the resources available to help the aging community maintain a comfortable quality of life. They have spent their lifetimes working hard to create a foundation for the next generation to succeed, and it is imperative that we support them in every way possible. I believe that by expanding our collaborative efforts, we will be able to create more housing to ease the burden on our senior citizens and those who care for them.”

Selfhelp Community Services CEO Stuart Kaplan, “Selfhelp is thrilled to be opening 333 Lenox Rd., The Joseph and Pauline Charatan Residence. Selfhelp is committed to helping all New Yorkers age independently and with dignity, with affordable housing at the forefront of our services. I would like to thank Debrah Lee Charatan for her generous support of Selfhelp, The Briarwood Org., our partner in this development, and New York State Homes and Community Renewal, New York State Department of Health, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and the Federal Home Loan Bank for financing the project.”

The Briarwood Org. principals Vincent Riso and Ira Brown said “We are very proud to have had the opportunity to partner as co-developer and general contractor, with Selfhelp, HCR and Bank of America to bring this great project from an idea to a reality for 58 families. Since the late 1980’s Briarwood has developed and built as the general contractor thousands of units like those at the Joseph and Pauline Charatan Residence. The Briarwood Organization is a Queens based fifth generation company that has been at the forefront of building affordable and workforce housing in NYC since 1912.”

Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Community Development Banking Group senior vice president Todd Gomez said, “Bank of America Merrill Lynch is delighted to assist Selfhelp Community Services and The Briarwood Organization make their vision for 333 Lenox Road a reality. Creating 58 units of affordable housing in Brooklyn is an important step towards satisfying the critical demand for housing options for qualified seniors in New York City. We are committed to helping our clients provide safe, affordable housing in neighborhoods like Lefferts Gardens and similar communities across the U.S.”