



Breaking Ground celebrates Edwin's Place grand opening with AAPCI

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Brooklyn, NY Breaking Ground celebrated the completion of Edwin's Place, a new affordable housing development. Co-developed with the African American Planning Commission Inc. (AAPCI), the new residence brings 125 units of affordable and supportive housing to the Brownsville neighborhood in addition to a community space, new retail, and a landscaped courtyard. Breaking Ground and AAPCI celebrate the occasion with partners at New York State Homes & Community Renewal, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance/Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, and Wells Fargo.

Located on Livonia Ave. between Howard and Grafton Sts., the building features 69 one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments, as well as 56 studios. Onsite social services are offered to all residents in the building, funded by a contract between the AAPCI and NYC's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Edwin's Place is Breaking Ground's seventh building in the borough.

88 units at Edwin's Place are home to formerly homeless individuals and families, including veterans, and 37 serve low-income community residents. The eight-story, 115,500 s/f building features a 24-hour attended lobby, security systems, a laundry room, fitness room, and a multipurpose room for tenant and community events. There is also 3,000 s/f of retail space along Livonia Ave. occupied by the locally-based nonprofit Power of Two, which works with young parents to nurture the inherent potential of every child and family.

The \$74.7 million project received financing from New York State Homes and Community Renewal, New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation, and Wells Fargo, N.A. The Corporation for Supportive Housing provided pre-development financing. Additional support was provided by the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's Affordable Housing Program, along with a grant from National Grid. Breaking Ground provides onsite property management, and AAPCI provides onsite social and supportive services through a contract funded by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Edwin's Place was designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects. The project was constructed to meet Enterprise Green Standards. The general contractor was Mega Contracting Group, Inc.

Upon move in, each Edwin's Place resident received an original work of art from a renowned American artist. Inspired by a New York Times story of Breaking Ground resident Buddy Jones who lived in the Prince George building, the artist, who requested to remain anonymous, created 125 unique paintings for incoming Edwin's Place residents to adorn their new permanent home.

"The current pandemic has made clear that now more than ever, housing is health," said Brenda Rosen, president and CEO of Breaking Ground. "Edwin's Place represents our commitment to developing safe and dignified homes to help vulnerable New Yorkers escape and avoid homeless. Though this project has been many years in the making, it could not have been completed at a more crucial moment. We are proud to bring this beautiful new residence to the Brownsville community, and join our state and city partners in building a New York where people can lead stable, secure lives in thriving neighborhoods."

"Edwin's Place is an important milestone in AAPCI's development of affordable and supportive housing. The project has allowed us to transition homeless individuals and families out of temporary homeless shelters into quality affordable and supportive housing with continued onsite support services. Tenants will live in an environment with mixed income families where they can resume normal, meaningful, productive lives. We too are proud to join our City, State and development partners in being able to bring this beautiful new residence to the Brownsville community," said Matthew Okebiyi, founder and CEO of African American Planning Commission, Inc., the project's co-developer.

"New York is in a state of emergency when it comes to affordable housing and permanent affordable housing is exactly what we need," said New York State assemblywoman Latrice Walker. "I look

forward with great anticipation to working with Edwin's Place and their community partners which will provide resources and services that are greatly needed to stabilize this community."

"Several years ago, I wrote that Brownsville's pain is nothing compared to its promise. Despite the decades of disinvestment and myriad challenges the neighborhood has weathered, there is still so much in Brownsville that makes me optimistic about its future for true community-driven revitalization. Projects like Edwin's Place are a case in point; this beautiful new development will provide state-of-the-art housing and amenities to a diverse community, with a particular and much-needed focus on serving formerly homeless individuals and families. This project will also help advance our shared mission of providing quality early childhood development resources to underserved areas of our borough. I thank Breaking Ground and the African American Planning Commission Inc. for investing in this community, and I look forward to working with them in the future to lift up the vulnerable and marginalized in our city by providing safe, affordable housing and good services for all our communities," said Brooklyn borough president Eric Adams.

"Through the mayor's Your Home NYC housing plan, we are working aggressively with all our partners to ensure more of the city's most vulnerable residents have the security of an affordable home, and all our neighborhoods have the assets they need to thrive," said HPD commissioner Louise Carroll. "Edwin's Place represents a key milestone in the Brownsville Plan, bringing 125 affordable homes with supportive services for formerly homeless and low-income New Yorkers in addition to a dynamic community facility space in a beautifully- and sustainably-designed development that will add to the vibrancy of the Livonia Avenue retail corridor and the entire Brownsville neighborhood. I would like to thank Breaking Ground, the African American Planning Commission Inc., our partners at the State, and all those who share our commitment to creating a more affordable, equitable New York City."

"CSH congratulates Breaking Ground and African American Planning Commission, Inc. (AAPCI) on the opening of Edwin's Place, a stunning residential complex providing permanent supportive and affordable housing for the Brownsville community," said Jen Trepinski, director of loan originations at the Corporation for Supportive Housing. "We are thrilled that the community-based Black-led nonprofit and service provider, AAPCI, developed the project with critical community input. CSH is proud to have been able to support these partners with early-stage predevelopment capital to help get this project off the ground."

"At the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, we know the importance of building affordable and supportive housing, which creates that stable foundation from which we all grow as individuals, families and communities," said José González, president and CEO of the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. "In 2018, we proudly joined with Sterling National Bank to award a \$1 million Affordable Housing Program grant to Breaking Ground, and today we are thrilled that Edwin's Place has become a reality that will help so many across Brooklyn. The AHP works because it supports the strong partnerships that exist between committed community organizations, locally focused lenders, dedicated developers and our elected officials at the city, state and federal levels, all working together to build affordable housing for all who need it. We are honored to be part of such a vital partnership."

“National Grid is proud to support Edwin’s Place which provides environmentally responsible and sustainable space for the local community,” said Rudy Wynter, president, National Grid New York. “Our Cinderella program has a 50-year track record of working with non-profit organizations to support projects that provide assistance and housing where needed in our Brooklyn communities. National Grid’s support in partnership with Breaking Ground helped make the redevelopment of this long vacant property, into a vibrant hub bringing investments and jobs to Brownsville.”

“Our design approach for providing a backdrop for living is universal,” said Grant Marani, partner at Robert A.M. Stern Architects. “When designing Edwin’s Place, as with all of our apartment buildings, we listened to our client’s aspirations and looked to the neighborhood for inspiration. Brooklyn’s rich heritage of well-detailed brick apartment buildings provided the context to create permanent, comfortable, dignified, and welcoming ‘homes’ for the Edwin’s Place residential community. We are grateful Breaking Ground and AAPCI entrusted us with this vital and important project. As we look to the future of affordable and supportive housing, we are confident Edwin’s Place will stand as a model for creating opportunity and wellbeing for its residents through sustainable and equitable design.”

Designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects, Edwin’s Place’s entrance is set back from the street to accommodate the curve of the adjacent elevated New York City Subway tracks. A metal and glass window wall above the entry provides a street scale focal point to the south facade and provides daylight to the elevator lobbies. An accessory community facility space is incorporated into the ground floor to contribute to the developing Livonia Ave. retail corridor. The L-shaped building cradles a sunken garden courtyard that provides access to various outdoor amenities as well as natural lighting to lower level offices for building management and social service staff, a fitness center, a computer lab, and meeting rooms.

Edwin’s Place continues Breaking Ground’s dedication to sustainable and affordable development. The design features a robust yet economical structural system of precast hollow-core floor planks and reinforced concrete block walls; continuously insulated walls; triple-glazed windows; a green roof; and a roof-top photovoltaic solar array – importantly all contributing to reduced energy use.

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