



ELH Mgmt., Kretchmer Cos., JASA, and Xenolith begins Casa Celina

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Bronx, NY The development team led by ELH Mgmt. LLC; The Kretchmer Companies; Xenolith Partners LLC, a NYC-SBS certified Women-owned Business Enterprise (WBE); and JASA, an agency serving older New Yorkers; along with HPD; HDC; and NYCHA; celebrated the groundbreaking of a new senior housing development, Casa Celina. Located on NYCHA's Justice Sonia Sotomayor campus in the Soundview neighborhood, the 100% affordable project, named after Justice Sotomayor's mother, Celina Báez, will provide 204 units for seniors, plus one superintendent's apartment.

The 204 senior-led households consist of 46 one-bedrooms and 158 studios; NYCHA's Leased Housing Department provided the project-based vouchers for all 204 units. The apartments are reserved for individuals and families making up to 50% AMI, or \$47,750 for a family of two. The building will set aside 62 of the units, or 30%, for formerly homeless older adults and one superintendent's unit.

Designed by Magnusson Architecture and Planning, the building will also offer a range of amenities, including a 1,725 s/f community senior space staffed by JASA with support from DFTA, a fitness room, laundry room, lounge spaces on each floor for residents, and a landscaped roof terrace where yoga classes and gardening will be available.

"Our team is excited to celebrate today with NYCHA, HPD and HDC. This construction start is the beginning of an impactful project that demonstrates the vision of the agencies' 'Seniors First' program and their ongoing commitment to providing high-quality, sustainable and elegant affordable housing for seniors," said Andrea Kretchmer, principal of Xenolith Partners. "Our joint venture team of veteran developers, ELH Mgmt. LLC, The Kretchmer Cos. and WBE developer Xenolith Partners, is excited to continue our work with the resident and community leadership at Sotomayor Houses as construction gets underway. Crucial services for seniors provided by our partner JASA will be complemented by new landscaping, improved drainage, and playground upgrades, features that will benefit all Sotomayor residents."

"Today's groundbreaking at Casa Celina marks an important milestone in our goal to provide more safe and affordable housing to seniors in New York City," said Kathryn Haslanger, CEO of JASA. "We hope to honor Justice Sotomayor's family through this development, and alongside Xenolith

Partners, ELH Mgmt. LLC, the Kretchmer Cos., and NYCHA, support our city's most vulnerable residents with the necessary resources, supportive services, and a caring community.”

“This is an incredible project that shows New York City's commitment to providing Seniors with safe, affordable, and quality housing,” said deputy mayor for housing and economic development Vicki Been. “The Casa Celina honors the legacy of Justice Sotomayor's family, all while prioritizing the health and wellness of our city's most vulnerable populations. I congratulate all of the leaders who stepped up to the plate on this critical achievement and thank them for continuing to work for a strong Recovery for All.”

“This project demonstrates NYCHA's commitment to address the urgent need for affordable senior housing for NYC residents to age in place,” said NYCHA executive vice president of real estate development Jonathan Gouveia. “We are proud to work with all of the partners who have helped advance the quality and resiliency of affordable housing design while providing community programming and services to NYCHA residents and the surrounding neighborhood.”

JASA, the largest nonprofit manager of senior housing in New York City, will manage the property and provide supportive services and programming for older adults.

“Through the mayor's housing plan we've been working aggressively to put our public land to use for affordable housing, and to make good on the city's commitment to house our seniors,” said HPD commissioner Louise Carroll. “By leveraging NYCHA land, Casa Celina will give rise to 200 affordable senior homes that also provide an abundant mix of amenities and social support. We are proud to work with this development team which includes nonprofit JASA, women-owned business Xenolith Partners, ELH Mgmt, and the Kretchmer Companies for partnering with HPD, HDC, and NYCHA to put Seniors First with today's groundbreaking.”

“Upon its completion, Casa Celina will offer security and peace of mind to more than 200 low-income and formerly homeless senior households, in addition to much-needed onsite supportive services,” said HDC president Eric Enderlin. “The pandemic has underscored the importance of a safe and affordable home, particularly for our seniors in need. I would like to extend my gratitude to all of our partners for all their contributions that helped to advance this project during such a challenging time for our city.”

“I would like to commend Xenolith Partners, ELH Mgmt. LLC, the Kretchmer Companies, JASA, HPD, HDC, and NYCHA for their collaborative work in accomplishing the addition of affordable housing units at Casa Celina,” said State Senator Luis Sepulveda. “Affordable and supportive housing for elderly New Yorkers is urgently needed to stem the economic hardships brought by life circumstances and exacerbated by the pandemic.”

“Today's groundbreaking of Casa Celina is a great addition to our Bronx community,” said State Assemblyman Kenny Burgos. “Our seniors deserve a safe and affordable place to live, and this is a great step towards providing a more healthy and supportive environment.”

“All senior New Yorkers deserve a home that is safe, stable, and affordable,” said HRA Administrator Gary Jenkins. “Casa Celina exemplifies this Administration’s commitment to realizing those values through action, with the development of high-quality housing for our neighbors in need through all stages of life. We at DSS-HRA are proud to support this important project and look forward to continued collaboration with our fellow City agencies and private partners as we develop affordable and supportive housing for New Yorkers across the five boroughs.”

“There is a great need for senior housing in our district and our Community Board is very excited to have this project underway,” said William Rivera, Bronx Community Board 9 District Manager. “Casa Celina will bring 205 affordable units and we want to thank all who made this possible. “

Designed by Magnusson Architecture and Planning, Casa Celina is built to support mental health with expansive windows throughout the apartments and common areas to offer abundant natural light. Additionally, bright resident lounges on each floor create a vertical network of social spaces, conducive for social interaction and helping to prevent isolation for residents living alone.

“We are so excited to be working with a wonderful team on this amazing project! From program space to sustainability, this development, like acupuncture, will radiate impact in the neighborhood. The all-electric building will eliminate local fossil fuel emissions and lead to carbon neutral energy consumption in the future,” said Fernando Villa from Magnusson Architecture and Planning. “It’s a great example of how we can elevate the design of affordable senior housing and reimagine public housing properties to support resident health and community engagement.”

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