



Breaking Ground opens its first passive house supportive project

July 12, 2022 - Owners Developers & Managers



Bronx, NY Breaking Ground, one of New York's largest supportive housing developers, celebrated the opening of Betances Residence, its latest development. Breaking Ground's new building brings

152 units of affordable and supportive housing to the Mott Haven neighborhood, in addition to a new community facility space and landscaped courtyard. Betances is Breaking Ground's first Passive House certified project, and among only a handful of supportive residences in the city to embrace such a rigorous energy use standard. The Betances development is part of a commitment by the NYC Housing Authority (NYCHA) and NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to identify underutilized land for new affordable homes.

Betances is 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 ensures a high indoor air quality for Breaking Ground's senior tenants while achieving optimal energy efficiencies. Designed by COOKFOX Architects, the building integrates biophilic design strategies, such as the incorporation of natural materials, movement 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 creates connections between residents and the wider community, creating a cohesive pedestrian and residential experience.

"We are thrilled to cut the ribbon and officially open Betances Residence today, celebrating the creation of 152 new apartments for seniors who have experienced or are at risk of homelessness. Older adults are the fastest growing population in New York, and Betances helps ensure that our most vulnerable seniors can age-in-place without 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 youth—to the Mott Haven community."

"It brings me great joy to celebrate the development of the Betances Residence. This project, to which I was able to secure \$500,000 for, brings a total of 152 units of Passive House-certified senior housing for older adults who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing homelessness to the South Bronx," said Deputy Speaker Diana Ayala. "With this development, we are ensuring that some of our city's most vulnerable will have the support they need in a safe, affordable, healthy living environment, and more importantly will be able to age in place."

"Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing can transform people's lives, whether they are low-income seniors, families, or experiencing homelessness. As we laid out in our newly-released Housing Blueprint, the City is committed to streamlining services to get New Yorkers into homes faster and more efficiently," said HPD commissioner Adolfo Carrión Jr. "Thanks to our partners at Breaking Ground and our colleagues at NYCHA and HDC, hundreds of households are now celebrating a new beginning. Congratulations! Great work!"

"The Betances Residence showcases our commitment to leverage existing NYCHA land to provide our communities with high-quality, affordable housing. Current NYCHA residents and low-income

seniors will now have access to permanently affordable and supportive housing, a critical lifeline for our city's seniors as they age," said Jonathan Gouveia, executive vice president of real estate development of NYCHA. "We congratulate Breaking Ground on the completion of this energy-efficient and thoughtfully designed building and look forward to continued partnership across city and state agencies."

"Betances Residence demonstrates the comprehensive measures the City is taking to address housing instability and provide our low-income and formerly homeless seniors with the supportive services they need and deserve," said HDC president Eric Enderlin. "I want to acknowledge the team at Breaking Ground for all they do to serve our most vulnerable communities and thank all our partners for their ongoing commitment to fostering a more fair and equitable city."

The 152 apartments at Betances are home to formerly homeless and low-income older adult households, including one superintendent unit. Crucially, 26 of the units have a preference for current residents of NYCHA apartments, allowing senior residents to continue to age in place in the community while freeing up much-needed NYCHA apartments for other households. The 120,000 square foot development features a 24-hour attended lobby, state-of-the-art security systems, a laundry room, library and computer lab, multipurpose room for events and programming, and landscaped courtyard and roof spaces. The building also features 4,700 square feet of community facility space to create educational opportunities for underserved youth.

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., and the Center for Urban Community Services.

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Daniel W. Tietz said, "Betances Residence will provide safe, affordable housing along with supportive services for formerly homeless older adults in the South Bronx's Mott Haven neighborhood. This project underscores Governor Hochul's continued commitment to funding additional supportive housing units as part of her five-year housing plan. Congratulations to Breaking Ground and our New York City government partners on this worthy and much-needed development."

"CSH congratulates Breaking Ground on opening the beautiful, innovative, and energy-efficient Betances Residences. We are proud of our longstanding partnership with Breaking Ground and, in particular, this project that will accommodate a vibrant and thriving community of our most revered New Yorkers," said Jen Trepinski, Director of Loan Originations at CSH.

Betances Residence received capital funding from the New York City Council and Bronx 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.

Located between Willis and Brook Avenues on a site that spans 142nd to 143rd Streets, the building is composed of two eight-story residential towers and provides 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 over the past three decades. 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.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540