

New Housing Community in Minneapolis Provides Hope for Military Veterans Struggling with Homelessness

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- *Veterans East, a 100-unit apartment community, provides onsite support services to help ensure veterans have greater access to health, education and job-training programs*
- *Funding received from many public-private partners, including \$5.2 million from UnitedHealth Group and \$7.7 million in deferred loan funds from Minnesota Housing*

An important milestone was reached today in helping end homelessness among military veterans in Minnesota with the opening of Veterans East, a new 100-unit apartment community adjacent to the Veterans Hospital near Fort Snelling.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here:

<http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20170920006390/en/>



Congressman Erik Paulsen and Patty Horoho, CEO of OptumServe, UnitedHealth Group's military health services business, present a "Welcome Home Basket" donated by UnitedHealth Group employees to newly moved-in resident Arthur Williams at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Veterans East, a new 100-unit apartment community for veterans struggling with homelessness (Photo: Greg Page).

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony, newly moved-in veterans, many of whom have struggled with homelessness, thanked community leaders and development partners for helping to bring Veterans East to the city, and providing new hope for struggling veterans through greater access to affordable housing, health services, education and job training programs.

"It's hard to believe that I finally have a place of my own," said Nathaniel Green, a veteran who served in the U.S. Navy for six years. "I appreciate all who have made this possible and for caring about veterans like me. This is a new start that has taken a heavy burden off my shoulders, helping bring stability and hope into my life."

The five-story apartment community features a lobby with security, community room with gas fireplace, kitchenette, computer stations, laundry facility and on-site parking. BDC Management Company will work with an on-site service coordinator to assist with health care, life skills, financial management, benefits assistance, education and employment resources.

Congressman Erik Paulsen (MN-3) said: "Minnesota's veterans and heroes have sacrificed for our nation, and we have a responsibility to ensure that they have the support and resources needed when they come home. A large part of that support includes safe, affordable housing, and Veterans East will mean a better life for these residents."

Developed by the Community Housing Development Corporation (CHDC), funding for the \$14.3 million community was secured through a collaboration of public- and private-sector partners.

Minnetonka-based UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH) was the largest private investor, providing \$5.2 million in equity through a partnership with Minnesota Equity Fund and Cinnaire, using Low Income Housing Tax Credits approved by the state. Minnesota Housing provided \$7.7 million in deferred loan funds for the new development. The Veterans Administration is providing a 50-year lease to the project for the land.

Additional partners and funding sources include \$500,000 from Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) of Des Moines; \$350,000 from Hennepin County; \$260,000 from CHDC affiliates; and \$290,000 in energy and sales tax rebates. Watson-Forsberg is the general contractor, and LHB is the architect.

“Supporting the health and well-being of our nation’s veterans, service members and their families is critically important to our national security,” said Patty Horoho, CEO of OptumServe, UnitedHealth Group’s military health services business, and former Army Surgeon General and retired Army Lt. General. “We are grateful for the opportunity to be a partner in Veterans East, whose vision now is met with the ability to provide stable, affordable housing and access to care and services to help veterans live healthier lives.”

Minnesota Housing Commissioner Mary Tingerthal, who co-chairs the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness, said: “This new community is a model for providing permanent housing and services for military veterans and brings us much closer to ending homelessness among military veterans in our state. This wouldn’t be possible were it not for the public and private partners coming together to make a tremendous impact.”

According to the latest available figures, efforts to reduce homelessness in Minnesota are making a positive impact. Since 2014, homelessness has been reduced by 8 percent statewide and 20 percent for families with children. The state has also strengthened efforts to end veteran homelessness. Since 2010, homelessness among Minnesota’s veteran population has been reduced by 61 percent.

“Veterans East is a testament to the power of public-private partnerships in Minnesota,” said Elizabeth Flannery, CEO of CHDC. “There are steps we can take to ensure that no veteran in this state goes without a roof over their head – and this is one of them. We are proud to join together with so many partners to help end veteran and chronic homelessness.”

“The men and women who will live at Veterans East have made many sacrifices while serving our nation, and Veterans East will provide housing and support services to help lift them up,” said Kurt Thielen, associate director, Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

During the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Veterans East was renamed “Richard A. Brustad Homes” in honor of CHDC founder Dick Brustad, who passed away earlier this year. His thoughtful leadership and guidance to policymakers, lenders, neighborhoods and government entities have been instrumental in making the Twin Cities and greater Minnesota a national leader in affordable housing. Brustad helped develop the CHDC-owned Veteran’s Community Housing Apartments, built in 2006, and was essential to the creation of Veterans East.

Military veterans who are employees of UnitedHealthcare and Optum joined MEF and Cinnaire to deliver 100 welcome baskets filled with household goods, personal hygiene items and healthy food for each of the new residents.

“MEF and Cinnaire are proud to work together with UnitedHealth Group in supporting our veterans,” said Warren Hanson, MEF president and CEO. “Our partnership will help meet a critical need to provide struggling military veterans with quality, permanent housing with supportive services.”

Since 2011, UnitedHealth Group has provided more than \$350 million in financing for 56 affordable housing communities in 14 states, helping create more than 1,300 homes for individuals and families. This includes investing nearly \$62 million in partnership with MEF and Cinnaire to build 10 new affordable-housing communities and 500 affordable homes in Minnesota and the Great Lakes region.

“Veterans East is a welcome addition to Hennepin County and the greater Minneapolis area,” said Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin. “Today’s opening represents a model public-private partnership that will make a significant difference in the lives of so many veterans.”

More information about Veterans East and other affordable-housing communities built and managed by CHDC in Minnesota, as well as applications for residents, is available at www.chdcmn.org.

Read more at <http://www.stockhouse.com/news/press-releases/2017/09/20/new-housing-community-in-minneapolis-provides-hope-for-military-veterans#Kb3Mp1Q6ssH5J4Cl.99>