



Open House at Intervale Green to Showcase the Future of Affordable Housing: Beautiful, Green, Wired

WHEDCo celebrates the completion of the largest affordable ENERGY STAR certified building in the country

Bronx, NY – (January 14, 2009) - The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo), a community based non-profit organization dedicated to building a more beautiful and prosperous Bronx, will host an open house event today to celebrate the completion of the largest affordable ENERGY STAR certified building in the country, Intervale Green, proving that healthy, sustainable building techniques and beautiful design can be achieved in affordable housing.

ENERGY STAR is a national government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. Buildings must achieve annual energy savings of at least 20% greater than a standard building in order to be classified in the ENERGY STAR program. The fourth and largest affordable high-rise building in the country to achieve this status, WHEDCo's Intervale Green is the only building with this distinction developed and owned by a nonprofit organization.

"NYSERDA is pleased to partner with WHEDCo on the Intervale Green project. This will not only be the largest high-rise affordable housing development to earn the ENERGY STAR label, but it will provide a comfortable living environment for its residents," said NYSERDA's New York City Director of Energy Programs Michael Colgrove. "Thirty-three percent more energy-efficient than a standard building, WHEDCo's Intervale Green demonstrates that large scale affordable housing can be built to high energy and environmental standards without sacrificing performance."

Intervale Green was the first building in New York to participate in the Enterprise Green Communities program, the first national green building program developed for affordable housing. Tenants are predicted to save up to 30% annually on utility bills, easing the burden on low income families already struggling during difficult economic times.

"Environmentally friendly housing like Intervale Green is vital for low-income residents who suffer disproportionately from high energy costs," said Abby Sigal, vice president of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. and director of the New York office. "Enterprise places tremendous resources behind our Green Communities program, which helps to finance green affordable housing nationwide, because building green reduces families' monthly energy bills, saving them money that can be spent elsewhere, on food or healthcare for example. It also helps reduce environment-related health problems such as asthma, which can cut down on medical bills from trips to the doctor or emergency room, not to mention the overall benefits to the environment as a whole."

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Intervale Green was built on an abandoned lot in the South Bronx where President Carter's historic 1977 visit shed light on the urban blight and devastation of the borough. Today, the complex brings over ½ acre of vegetation to the community, including three green roofs for vegetable and flowering gardens, two lush courtyards, a public park and sculptor garden, and over 40 new street trees. Offering 128 family apartments for low-income and formerly homeless families, the complex was built with environmentally friendly, healthy materials and boasts energy-efficient appliances to help keep utility bills low for the new residents. Three new ground level commercial storefronts will continue to help spur economic growth in the community.

“We hope that Intervale Green sets a new standard for affordable housing developers everywhere, proving not only that green, healthy building can be done affordably and supported by very low rents, but that the same attention to beautiful design and respect for the community must resonate in both high and low-income communities,” said Nancy Biberman, WHEDCo founder and president. “In a neighborhood as systematically devastated as the South Bronx, living somewhere beautiful, like Intervale Green, can have a profound effect on a family's and a community's mental and physical health.”

Unlike most affordable housing, Intervale Green was designed with as much emphasis on aesthetics as affordability. Respecting the architectural legacy of the borough, the building is designed to reflect traditional Bronx building features such as red brick, decorative cornices, stone and ironwork, and multiple courtyards. The common areas display carefully chosen, high quality tile, wood, and marble, while the apartments boast sconces, pendant lighting, and imported high-end ceramic tile kitchen backsplashes.

WHEDCo is working to bridge the digital divide in the Bronx, where thousands of families lack access to computer technology, by providing every family at Intervale Green with a computer and low-cost, high-speed internet access. Additionally, WHEDCo recently launched www.movingday.org, an interactive website to help furnish each apartment, and will provide on-going services to help families settle into their new community.

Intervale Green, located on 1330 Intervale Avenue, will open to nearly 400 tenants later this winter.

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About WHEDCo

The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo) is a community based non-profit organization that has been working for more than 16 years to build a more beautiful and prosperous Bronx . WHEDCo offers interconnected, innovative, and high quality solutions – including the building of healthy, affordable homes, early childhood and youth education and enrichment programs, business microenterprise opportunities and comprehensive social services – and because of this, the Bronx is a more beautiful, more equitable, and more economically vibrant place to live and raise a family.

www.whedco.org and www.movingday.org