



WHEDCo Celebrates Intervale Green

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The Women's Housing and Economic Development Corporation (WHEDCo), a community based non-profit organization in the Bronx, recently hosted an open house event 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 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."

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.”

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