



Press Releases

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Rep. English, County Executive DiVecchio, HANDS Dedicate New Low-income Housing: Edinboro Family Homes Opens

EDINBORO, PA, November 5, 2007 – U.S. Rep. Phil English (PA-3), Erie County Executive Mark DiVecchio and Edinboro University President Jeremy Brown joined a group of families in Erie County today as they cut the ribbon to open Edinboro Family Homes, a new scattered site neighborhood of 29 single-family homes available under a lease-to-purchase program.

The three local leaders united with more than a dozen current residents, project funders and project sponsors HANDS (Housing and Neighborhood Development Service, of Erie) and PIRHL (Partnership for Income Restricted Housing Leadership, of Cleveland) to mark the formal opening of the complex, which will create new pathways to prosperity for lower-income families.

“Ensuring affordable housing for working families with limited means is an integral part of improving the quality of life for all members of the community,” said Congressman English. “This innovative program will open the door to first-time homeownership for dozens of local residents who would not otherwise have a house to call home. I am proud to be a part of this initiative which will further encourage local families to save and build their assets through sustainable homeownership.”

Families living in the 13-acre neighborhood rent for 15 years. During that time they build equity and save for a down payment to purchase their home in the sixteenth year.

Of the 29 three- and four-bedroom, one- and two-story units at Edinboro Family Homes, located on Scots Glen Drive, six will serve family members with physical disabilities, sensory or mobility impairments or mental illness and also serve families in transition, such as those headed by single parents. Each energy efficient home has its own attached garage and a spacious yard.

Edinboro Family Homes is situated in an established community that includes grocery stores and restaurants and is located off State Route 99, one of the borough’s two main transportation arteries. The general contractor is an affiliate of PIRHL.

Financing for Edinboro Family Homes comes from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA), which provided a \$1.8 million interest-free deferred payment permanent loan through its PennHOMES Program; PNC Bank, which provided a bridge construction loan and letters of credit totaling \$4.6 million; PNC MultiFamily Capital, which purchased federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits from PHFA to generate private investment capital totaling \$3.8 million; and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh (FHLBank), which awarded a \$394,000 Affordable Housing Program grant in a competitive funding round through FHLBank member PNC Bank, which coordinated the grant application on behalf of HANDS.

Nearly two dozen of the 29 units at Edinboro Family Homes are now occupied. To date, more than 140 applications from prospective occupants have been received.

“We have won over so many hearts with the high quality of construction and attractiveness of this project,” said Charles G. Scalise, president of HANDS, the nonprofit headquartered in Downtown Erie that is serving as property manager. “This has been a true partnership involving federal, state, local, private and nonprofit resources. Each partner has made a wonderful commitment to this important endeavor.”

HANDS, an established nonprofit, provides rental housing and homeownership opportunities for lower-income and special needs individuals and the elderly. It also networks with local organizations to provide critical social services to residents of its projects. HANDS is one of the City of Erie’s partners in the city’s Homeownership Initiative and oversees housing communities in six counties of western Pennsylvania. For more information on HANDS, call 814-459-1047.

PIRHL is a developer, owner and general contractor of affordable housing with properties under development in Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana. The principals of PIRHL, David Uram and David Burg, have a combined 22 years of experience in affordable housing construction and development.