



NEWS RELEASE

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Trailblazing Housing for People with Developmental Disabilities Dedicated in Emerson

(Emerson, New Jersey)—New Concepts, a Bergen County based non-profit organization, dedicated New Concepts Plaza West Community, a trailblazing style of permanent housing for people with developmental disabilities located at Emerson Plaza West.

In New Jersey, nearly 8,000 people with developmental disabilities are on waiting lists for placement in supportive housing. According to the Disabled Children's Foundation, 62% of caregivers surveyed wanted their loved ones to be able to live in a group home or supervised apartment when they were no longer able to care for them.

"Projects like this make me proud to be Mayor of Emerson. A dire need exists for housing for people with disabilities in New Jersey. Through New Concepts' efforts, Emerson will be home to 10 of these individuals, whom I welcome to our fine community. I urge other communities to follow our model of helping people with disabilities to find a place to live, while fulfilling their fair housing obligations to the state. It is a win-win situation for Emerson, our new residents, and the state," said Emerson Mayor Steve Setteducati.

Dedication Ceremony

A May 23 morning ceremony featured the presentation of a flag and a tour of a model apartment. The Reverend Gerard J. Graziano, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Hackensack, offered the invocation. Gina Diorio, District Director from U.S. Congressman Scott Garrett's office, presented to Homer J. Cudia, New Concepts Chairman, a flag that flew over the U.S. Capitol Building. The project's supporters, funders, public officials, representatives, and the families of people of developmental disabilities watched as the flag was raised over the complex.

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"New Concepts provides the developmentally disabled and their families with the tools needed for individual growth and achievement in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. I applaud them for their mission and their dedication," said U.S. Congressman Scott Garrett.

Freeholder Chairwoman Bernadette P. McPherson presented a certificate of commendation from the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. "It is important that our communities realize the importance of affordable housing. The Freeholder Board along with County Executive Dennis McNerney, through Community Development, are proud to have been part of this remarkable project by helping with the funding," she said.

"We are extremely pleased with the turn out for the dedication of the New Concepts Plaza West Community. We are very grateful to Emerson's residents for their generous and warm reception. This effort could not have been accomplished without the support of Mayor Setteducati and Emerson's Council, administration and staff. With so many people and families waiting for this kind of housing, it is heartwarming that the Borough of Emerson and the County of Bergen have extended themselves in such a gracious fashion," said Cudia.

Trailblazing Design

The complex's trailblazing design solves a common problem for group home residents: the difficulty of finding new housing if they become physically unable to live in conventional group homes as they age. The complex, a cluster of three single-story homes, with each home containing a pair of two-bedroom apartments, will accommodate 10 individuals with developmental disabilities in five of the apartments. On-site staff will provide daily 24-hour supervision and use the sixth apartment. The single-floor, barrier-free homes will offer people with developmental disabilities a place to live out the rest of their lives, while creating a sense of community among the residents and their families.

Support for the project came from various sectors. The Borough of Emerson donated the land for the homes. The Bergen County Community Development Program, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development HOME Program, and the Louis P. Berkowitz Family Foundation provided grants. Several businesses also contributed to the effort, including Boiling Springs Savings Bank, D.S. Meyer Enterprises, Inc., Fred Schrader & Sons, Inc., Inserra Supermarkets, Inc., Kuiken Brothers Lumber, Longo Associates, Oakland Shop-Rite, and Reiner Heating & Cooling.

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About New Concepts

Twenty years ago, New Concepts was founded by a small group of parents concerned about the future of their sons and daughters with developmental disabilities. New Concepts is a community non-profit organization committed to people with disabilities and their families. Inspired by the vision of families and people with developmental disabilities, New Concepts enables them to realize their dreams and achieve their individual potential through quality community programs and services that include housing in group homes, vocational and day program training, recreation, advocacy, and family education and support.

For further information about New Concepts, call 201-843-3427 or visit the organization's web site at www.ncfl.net.

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