

# BRONX TIMES

## BP Carrion cuts ribbon on unique Morrisania housing model

by Jon Minners

The demands for affordable housing in the Bronx continue to be met by developers, but one housing model is meeting those needs with a unique twist.

Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. and the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal commissioner Judith Calogero joined community leaders and residents for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 1363 Franklin Avenue. The new building represents an innovative model that combines affordable housing for working families with supportive housing for formerly homeless adults and psychiatric disabilities.

"The Bronx housing revival continues at full speed," said Carrion. "The ongoing effort by community organizations, and the public and private sectors to make the Bronx a great borough to live in, is thriving. Housing for people in need of special services is a major issue in all of New York and I am proud to say that the Bronx is leading the way in providing large-scale housing alternatives for our community with special needs. I want to thank all who were involved in facilitating the continuation of our effort to transform Bronx communities into vibrant neighborhoods."

The 55,000 square-foot building brings 66 new units of housing to the Morrisania community in a joint venture between Community Access, Inc., a non-profit housing and service provider and Dunn Development Corp., a developer of affordable and supportive housing. The new development, an integration of supportive housing into a mainstream setting, represents a new model for serving special needs populations in a way that benefits both the residents of the building along with the surrounding community.

"Dunn Development and Community Access deserve the highest praise for serving the housing needs of working



Borough President Adolfo Carrion, Jr. and NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal Commissioner Judith Calogero (third from right) gather with community leaders and residents for a ribbon cutting ceremony officially opening up the Franklin Avenue Apartments to the Morrisania community. - PHOTO BY WALTER POPELDTJAM

families and people with psychiatric disabilities," said NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal commissioner Judith Calogero. "Franklin Avenue Apartments shows again that high quality design and construction are achievable in affordable housing. This building is an asset to the neighborhood and an example of Governor Pataki's commitment to supportive housing."

Martin Dunn, president of Dunn Development Corp. was appreciative of Calogero's comments, adding, "Commissioner Calogero should be commended for her leadership and commitment to providing the highest quality affordable housing to all New Yorkers, including those with disabilities. This project could not have happened without her."

Built by HLS Builders Corp. and designed by SLCE Architects, the \$11.5 million building rises eight floors and includes a mix of studios and two-bedroom

apartments. In addition to its unique population mix, Franklin Avenue Apartments offers residents a combination of amenities, which include 24-hour front desk coverage, a 14,000 square foot rear garden with children's play area, a community room and a library/computer room. The apartments feature energy efficient design, high-quality finishes and wireless broadband Internet access. Community Access will provide on-site support for tenants with special needs.

"We need innovative solutions like Franklin Avenue Apartment if we are going to crack the nut of affordable housing in the city," said Bill Traylor, president of Richman Housing Resources. "And such solutions will increasingly require strong partnerships among the private and public sectors and between for-profit and non-profit developers."

Financing sources for the project included \$9.5 million in equity from the

sale of Low Income Housing Tax Credits syndicated by Richman Housing Resources. Other funding came from a \$2 million construction loan from the Community Preservation Corporation and a \$2 million permanent loan from the New York State Housing Trust Fund. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York City Department of Homeless Services provide rental subsidies and supportive services funding for the special needs tenants.

"This project is further proof of what we've been saying all along - The Bronx is back," exclaimed Carrion. "A beautiful building like this helps restore dignity to the tenants, the neighborhood and the Bronx as a whole. These beautiful apartments will provide more than just much needed housing for Bronxites; they will further strengthen the economic base and quality of life for the borough."

This project marks the second successful collaboration between Community Access, Inc. and Dunn Development Corp. The two companies first partnered up in Brooklyn and will partner up yet again for a 74-unit Davidson Avenue apartment complex that is slated to break ground this month.

"We're delighted to participate in the development of this important new housing model with Dunn Development, Community Access and our funding partners," said Michael D. Lappin, president and CEO of the Community Preservation Corporation. "We look forward to further opportunities to provide creative solutions to meeting a range of neighborhood housing needs."

Marion K., a resident of Franklin Avenue Apartment is thankful to the companies for their vision. "This is a wonderful place," he said. "I have a home and I have my freedom again. Thank you for helping me start a new life."