

# AT HOME IN HANOVER

## BETHANY APARTMENTS A COMMUNITY FOR ALL

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

When Ugonna Onyekwu and his wife, Traci, were about to welcome their little girl into the world, they knew it was time to find a space that would meet the needs of their growing family of four.

They found that in the Bethany Apartments in Hanover, which neighbors Cushing. The apartment complex was built to be a place where people with and without disabilities live, learn, work and socialize together. It is managed by Peabody Properties and, as the one-year anniversary of its opening approaches, is completely occupied, with a wait list for applicants.

The project is a result of years of planning, collaboration and hard work. Cushing partnered with the Planning Office for Urban Affairs – the nonprofit housing developer affiliated with the Archdiocese of Boston – to convert the former administrative building into 37 rental units of affordable workforce housing. Several hundred applications were submitted, and residents were selected via lottery. The first residents moved in last June, and the Onyekwus made their move in July. They moved from East Weymouth, where they had been living for about five years before starting the search for extra square footage. At Bethany, they live in a two-bedroom apartment with their daughter, Logan, who was born in October, and son, Terrance Jr. (TJ) — Traci’s son and Ugonna’s stepson — who is 11 and divides his time between Boston and Hanover.

“It’s the perfect space for us,” said Onyekwu.

Onyekwu has enjoyed living so close to Cushing, and using the facilities from time to time. He’s taken some runs on the track and along the trails, and has had great interactions with his neighbors, as well as the students and residents of Cushing. He also feels immersed in the Hanover community at large.

“Even from our first visit, the area seemed quaint and really friendly,” said Onyekwu. “It’s been an easy transition for myself and my family.”

Onyekwu works in compliance at Delta Dental of Massachusetts’ headquarters in Charlestown. He drives an hour to Quincy, parks and takes the train to Charlestown.

“I tell my friends in the city to come down to the South Shore,” said Onyekwu, who grew up in Dorchester, while Traci is from Roxbury. “It was a great decision.”



Top, Ugonna Onyekwu holds up his daughter, Logan.

Far left, Onyekwu and his wife, Traci, walk down the hallways of the Bethany Apartments with their daughter.

The Bethany Apartments, above, have been occupied since the summer.

Near left, older brother TJ enjoys some quality time with Logan.

PHOTOS: SEAN BROWNE