

Cardinal Seán's Blog

Cardinal Seán shares his reflections & experiences.
November 6, 2015

New affordable housing for Dorchester and Haverhill

Hello and welcome!

It was a real joy this week that we were able to dedicate two new affordable housing developments of the archdiocese's housing office, the [Planning Office for Urban Affairs](#).

On Thursday I celebrated the ribbon cutting for 80 units of new affordable housing that was developed in Dorchester.



This housing was built on the former St. Kevin's Parish property, when Father Jack Ahern and the Holy Family Parish decided to have POUA use the property to continue the mission of the Church by building affordable housing.

Mayor Walsh and Lisa Alberghini, President of POUA, joined me for this wonderful celebration, along with many state and city officials.



Lisa Alberghini



Named “Uphams Crossing,” the development includes 20 units of permanent housing for homeless families, and 60 units for working families who can’t afford the increasing rent levels in Boston.

Children from St. John Paul II Catholic Academy and The Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Youth Parish Choir entertained the audience with great enthusiasm before the event!



To show how great the need is for this housing, POUA received nearly 3,500 applications for the 80 units.

Mayor Walsh, who has been very supportive of the work of POUA, was presented with stained glass from the St. Kevin's Church during the event.



A very special moment during the celebration was when one of the new residents, Christine Wright, spoke about her journey from homelessness to this wonderful new housing.



She is so excited and grateful to live there with her 8 year old daughter, and told a very moving story.





Supportive services will be provided at the development by St. Mary's Center for Women and Children (SMC), making this a great collaborative effort among three Archdiocesan entities: POUA, Holy Family Parish and SMC.

I am so happy that the Church was able to honor the legacy of the former St. Kevin's Parish and parishioners in this way and that, through POUA's efforts, the archdiocese works hard to address the needs of the housing deprived.

Also on Tuesday I attended another Planning Office ribbon cutting with Lisa in Haverhill.

This time, the housing was created by converting a former school building into 12 apartments in a development called "The Apartments at 165 Winter."



In Haverhill, Lisa and I were joined by Mayor Jim Fiorentini; Governor Baker's Undersecretary for Housing and Community Development, Chrystal Kornegay; Tom Gleason of MassHousing; and Dori Conlon of Bank of America. Unfortunately, Representative Brian Dempsey was unable to be there because the Legislature was in session, but we thanked him for his tremendous support.



With Undersecretary Kornegay and Lisa Alberghini

For this new housing, POUA received 400 applications for only 12 apartments, which, again, just underscores the need for affordable housing in our communities. As Lisa mentioned in her remarks, someone earning minimum wage in Massachusetts would have to work for something like 110 hours a week (nearly three full-time jobs) just to be able to afford a small two bedroom apartment — and that doesn't take into account food or other living expenses.

It's heartbreaking to see so many people who can't find decent, affordable homes. I know Father Murray from St. James and St. John the Baptist Parishes is working hard to bring attention to the need for more affordable housing in the area.

Again, at this dedication we also heard from a young mother who was coming out of homelessness. One of the new residents, Nicole Carter, shared her story with us.



Nicole said that when her daughter was just two days old she moved into the Emmaus Family Shelter, which was just one street away. While she was speaking she pointed out to us where her room was in the shelter.

Every day she walked by this property and watched it being built. She said she remembered stopping and praying for an opportunity to live there. Unfortunately, her husband couldn't stay with them at the shelter, because the curfew rules didn't allow for it as he worked an overnight shift. Thankfully, when she got into the Apartments at Winter Street the family was able to be reunited. So, in a way, having this new apartment did

more than just give them place to live, it allowed them to really be a family once again. It was just such a very moving testimony.

After the ceremony I visited Nicole's apartment and blessed it.



We are so grateful to Lisa and all the Planning Office Staff who worked so hard to make all this possible.



On Friday, I was visited by Father John Cecero, the provincial of the new USA Northeast Province of Jesuits formed out of the New York and New England Provinces.
