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## Planning Office for Urban Affairs shares \$1.2M award to aid trafficking victims

ON: 7/30/2021, BY PILOT STAFF , IN: LOCAL

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BOSTON -- Representatives from the Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA) and Health Imperatives joined Gov. Charlie Baker, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy and Community Development Undersecretary Jennifer Maddox on July 15 for the announcement of a \$1.2 million affordable housing award from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

The DHCD award will support the acquisition and redevelopment of a vacant eight-room residential home into innovative housing with supportive educational programming for survivors of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. This important re-use property will be known as Sanctuary Place.

"The Department of Housing and Community Development's support is critical in developing a safe, stable and supportive environment for women coming out of the trafficking system," says Bill Grogan, president of Planning Office for Urban Affairs.

"Sanctuary Place will provide housing and holistic services for these women to not just survive, but to thrive in a community environment, with the help of our partners at Health Imperatives, who are experienced in working with this vulnerable population. We appreciate the Commonwealth's and DHCD's commitment to providing service-supported resources for targeted housing and services for survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation," Grogan said.

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Julia E. Kehoe, president and CEO of Health Imperatives, said, "We are honored to partner with POUA to provide a safe and welcoming sanctuary where victims

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and survivors have meaningful opportunities to build on their strengths and reclaim their power."

"We applaud the Baker-Polito Administration for investing in innovative housing models for people who too often fall through the cracks of the mainstream health and human services system. Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the United States and a pervasive issue in Massachusetts. Sanctuary Place will provide community and care to victims and survivors who have no other place to call home," she continued.

The development of Sanctuary Place is a unique collaboration between two highly experienced non-profit organizations that are coming together to address a critical need in the Commonwealth -- the development of service-supported housing for survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Sanctuary Place builds on both POUA's experience as the developer of Safe Haven, a residential program for survivors of trafficking completed in 2017 and Health Imperatives' experience operating an emergency domestic violence shelter, a sexual assault counseling center, programs for young parents, and trauma-informed health care for people at greatest risk of poor health outcomes.

Safe Haven was developed in direct response to the recommendations of the Massachusetts Interagency Human Trafficking Policy Task Force. By providing housing and on-site comprehensive and coordinated educational and training services in a supportive manner, Sanctuary Place will assist survivors and other vulnerable and disadvantaged families and individuals in improving their long-term outcomes. Sanctuary Place will work to interrupt generational cycles of poverty and will lead to reductions in homelessness, health disparities, and the incidence of violence and substance misuse. The program will also reduce costs and strain on local health care, child welfare, and criminal justice systems.

With the support of the Commonwealth and DHCD in developing Sanctuary Place, POUA and Health Imperatives will be able to provide up to eight residential units for survivors and their children, at any given time, where families can live and receive critical supportive and educational services and life skills to improve their health, safety and quality of life.

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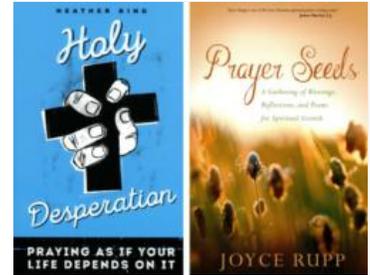
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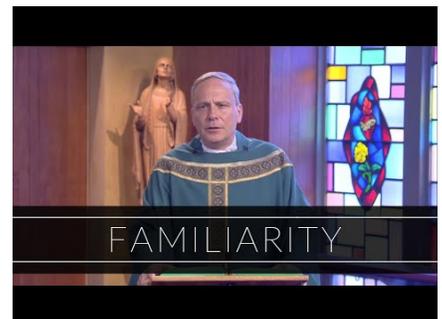
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