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## Ebenezer Square project opens

by JENNIFER WATERS  
Editor



Vice President of DePaul Properties Inc. Gillian Conde, left, joins Assistant Commissioner Buffalo Regional Office of New York State Homes and Community Renewal Leonard Skrill, New York State Assemblyman Michael Kearns, Associate Commissioner for Adult Community Care Division of Adult Services New York State Office of Mental Health Moira Tashjian, DePaul President Mark Fuller, Town of West Seneca Supervisor Sheila Meegan, Town of West Seneca Councilman Gene Hart and Michael Ranney, Erie County commissioner of Mental Health, at the grand opening of DePaul's Ebenezer Square Apartments.

After more than one year, a grand opening for the \$24.4 million Ebenezer Square Apartments in West Seneca was held Nov. 17. The mixed-use development replaces a long-vacant and blighted big-box store and offers 25 affordable apartments integrated with a 75-unit licensed residential program serving individuals with behavioral health concerns.

Proactive work yields positive results. This is how Supervisor Sheila Meegan views the opening of the Ebenezer Square Apartments, located at 2400 Seneca St.

"This project clearly demonstrates that housing can bring a positive impact to communities like West Seneca," Meegan said. "Ebenezer Square demonstrates that balancing resources will bring us closer to ensuring the opportunity of housing to those who may not have a place to call home. DePaul's investment in our community will provide such a great impact for many."

Assemblyman Michael Kearns, who was integral in the approval and support of the project, said DePaul Properties' Ebenezer Square Apartments has had a major impact on the

community even before the completion of the project.

"With the demolition of a former big-box store that had been vacant for years, we are now witnessing a revitalization of this parcel," Kearns said.

"As most of the residents who live over there know, it's been a real eyesore. It's been a problem for the town, our police enforcement, and just a disastrous mess," said Eugene Hart, councilman of West Seneca.

"Now, we have a beautiful \$25 million building, with 100 apartments. It is a marvelous accomplishment and it wouldn't have happened without the assistance of Assemblyman Mickey Kearns," Hart said.

"Today we have services and support progress for our neighbors. Additionally, DePaul is bringing quality affordable apartments to West Seneca and a building using renewable energy," Kearns added.

Operated by Living Opportunities of DePaul, the three-story, 124,000-square-foot building features one- and two-bedroom apartments, according to a press release from the organization.

In addition to offering modern, well-appointed apartments, the release said Ebenezer Square offers stable housing in a service-enriched, recovery-oriented setting to adult individuals with a psychiatric disability.

Licensed by the state Office of Mental Health, residents will have round-the-clock access to care and can receive living skills training, medication management, linkages to medical and dental care, health education, and educational and vocational services.

Residents will also have access to off-street parking, lounge areas on each floor, outdoor picnic areas and a community room. Staff and security are onsite 24 hours a day.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the project brings together affordable housing alongside supportive residential programs, creating an integrated community that will foster recovery and independence.

"These strategic investments help support some of our most vulnerable New Yorkers by ensuring they have access to a safe and decent place to call home," Cuomo said.

Erie County mid-market housing income eligibility income limits will apply. For one person that limit is \$28,440, for two people the limit is \$32,520 and for three people it is \$36,600. There are no requirements for moving out if that income cap is exceeded.

The project was completed with \$16.5 million of interest free construction financing from the Office of Mental Health.

Ann Sullivan, commissioner of the state Office of Mental Health, said Ebenezer Square is successfully integrating a licensed residential program with affordable housing.

"Residential programs such as Ebenezer have been shown to help their clients find lasting recovery and a better connection with their surrounding communities. Under Gov. Cuomo's leadership, New York State continues to expand the opportunities and options which enable individuals with disabilities to live fully integrated lives in their home communities," she said.

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