

Work has started on Apple Blossom Apartments on DePaul site

By **Jim Herr** - April 2, 2019



Workers prepare the land for the Apple Blossom Apartment complex on Old Union Road. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

CHEEKTOWAGA – Work has begun on Old Union Road to erect the Apple Blossom Apartments, an integrated housing complex which will serve seniors, persons who are deaf, and those with a mental health diagnosis and need supportive services.

The project is being developed by DePaul Properties of 2244 Old Union Road. They will construct two new buildings on their current campus.

“We wanted to expand it and have the opportunity to build 110 new units, and we’re thrilled that our state funders agreed with us,” said Mark Fuller of DePaul Properties. “The Town of Cheektowaga through planning and zoning worked with us diligently to make this a wonderful project.”



The \$37 million project received \$19.2 million in tax-exempt bonds, federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits that will generate \$9.7 million in equity and nearly \$12.8 million in Supportive Housing Opportunity Program subsidy. Additional financing includes \$13 million of Capital funds from the New York State Office of Mental Health as well as a \$120,000 Project Development Grant. The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority supplied \$86,000.



A rendering of the Apple Blossom Apartment complex on Old Union Road. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

“We serve the community best when we invest in developments like Apple Blossom, and that meet specific local affordable housing needs in tandem with

addressing homelessness for those at risk,” said Leonard Skrill of New York State Homes and Community Renewal.”

Apple Blossom Apartments will feature three buildings named after apples grown in New York State—Honeycrisp, Empire, and Cortland. Two of the buildings are currently under construction, and a third existing building is being renovated and expanded to include additional apartments. The apartments will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 60 percent of the Area Median Income with monthly rents that range from \$350 to \$800.

Supportive housing gives individuals with mental illness an affordable housing option with on-site services that help them maintain independence, master life skills, and succeed in recovery. Research shows that supportive housing improves health outcomes for people with mental illness through housing stability and appropriate supports. Supportive housing can help prevent homelessness, while also reducing the use of costly, publicly-funded services, emergency room visits and inpatient hospital stays.

“The focus is on helping people become more independent and assist them in integrating them into the community with a goal of increases their self-sufficiency,” said Erie County Department of Mental Health Commissioner Michael Ranney.

Erie County Legislator Timothy Meyers says this is another example of how state and local governments work together to address the needs of our community.

“This project not only offers opportunity to those who are struggling to make ends meet but also takes the important step of providing tenants onsite access to important social, medical, and mental health services. I commend DePaul Properties for the dedication they’ve shown to the success of this property, and thank them for their commitment to the shared responsibility of providing affordable, supportive housing,” said Mr. Meyers.



DePaul and civic leaders officials break ground for the new Apple Blossom Apartments on Old Union Road. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

Forty-eight units will be reserved for individuals with mental illness who will have access to supportive services onsite. Cheektowaga Supervisor Diane Benczkowski says this project is well needed in Cheektowaga and she holds it near and dear to her heart.

“My daughter was diagnosed ten years ago with mental illness. Unfortunately, at the age of 27, in 2017, she committed suicide. If a project like this would have been available to her to be independent and still get the mental health services that she needed, I truly believe that she would be here today,” said Ms. Benczkowski.

Copyright 2019 Crabapple Media, LLC. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed without prior permission.

— **Click here to send a News Tip to Cheektowaga Chronicle**

— Scammed, ripped off, or need help with an issue with the government? **Let us know and Chronicle Connects** will try to help bring a resolution to your issue.

— **Subscribe to our mailing list below** and read the latest news from Cheektowaga Chronicle in your email every morning at 9 am.