



FOR RELEASE:

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Long troubled Chicago south side neighborhood will be revitalized

‘Wall-Raising’ honors the contributions of the late Bishop Arthur M. Brazier and marks the first phase of Woodlawn Park development

Chicago, IL – Chicago community leaders and elected officials joined the leadership of the national nonprofit, Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH,) to ‘raise-a-wall’ marking the construction of the first phase of Woodlawn Park, a development that will revitalize a long troubled neighborhood on the south side.

The project represents an innovative approach to urban revitalization that will create attractive housing for all income levels, a walkable streetscape, urban recreation opportunities for children and support services for residents including job training summer youth nutrition and safety programs.

Woodlawn Park also aligns with HUD Choice Neighborhoods initiative by linking housing improvements to appropriate services, schools, transit, stores and access to jobs.

One block of the 504-unit Grove Parc Plaza development at 63rd and Cottage Grove Avenue has been demolished and construction has begun that will create 67 market rate and affordable transit oriented apartments along Cottage Grove Avenue. When complete, Woodlawn Park will include 420 residential units on the Grove Parc site and 65,000 square feet of retail and commercial space. The project will provide more than 100 full-time construction-related jobs during the four-year development period, as well as creating permanent jobs in the neighborhood.

In addition, POAH will purchase and rehab approximately 300 existing apartments in the community as it reconfigures Grove Parc’s affordable housing, shifting the existing Section 8 subsidy in healthier configurations both on and off the current Grove Parc footprint. About 210 property based Section 8 units will be preserved on-site in addition to market rate and affordable units.

“Today’s wall raising is a symbolic step towards the progress of this redevelopment,” said Amy Anthony, President of POAH. “There will be more phases to celebrate over the next few years which will ultimately produce a bustling community that embraces social and economic diversity for the entire neighborhood.”

There was a moment of reflection during the ceremony to honor the contributions of Bishop Arthur M. Brazier, who was critical to the planning and implementation of the project. Congressman Bobby L. Rush (1st CD), an ordained minister, delivered an invocation in memory of Bishop Brazier.

“There is no way that we can replace the gentle heart and boundless determination that Bishop Brazier brought to some of the most pressing challenges facing Chicago,” said Anthony. “With the passing of Bishop Brazier, this celebration takes on even greater meaning for us as he was an early and consistent supporter of POAH’s efforts to revitalize Grove Parc Plaza Apartments.

“Our investment in Woodlawn Park is intended to create an environment that surrounds residents with the resources and support they need to maintain stable housing and to achieve their goals and aspirations,” said Anthony.

This neighborhood revitalization effort is made possible through key contributions from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), and the City of Chicago.

Highlights of the first phase of Woodlawn Center South:

- 67 new affordable and market rental units in Phase 1 with an eventual total of 420 mixed-income units and 80,000 square feet of retail, youth center and community space
- All phases will be green and LEED-certified; Phase 1 will be LEED Gold and will include solar thermal hot water system, extensive stormwater retention and landscaping to replace paved lots
- Innovative urban revitalization approach, deconcentrating poverty on-site while achieving full preservation of affordable units through reinvestment in distressed housing stock in surrounding neighborhood;
- Community benefits include local hiring commitments, community and youth recreation spaces, new retail amenities, and new resources for community-wide investments

POAH is an Illinois-incorporated, mission-driven housing nonprofit with offices in Chicago and Boston that specializes in the preservation of at-risk subsidized multifamily housing. POAH owns and operates more than 6,600 affordable housing units in nine states and the District of Columbia. More information at www.poah.org (see Portfolio section for Illinois)