

New complex to provide homes for elderly, poor and homeless

Written by BRANDYSS HOWARD

MIAMI — A \$28 million complex built on Liberty City’s busy Northwest 54th Street corridor opened Tuesday amidst high hopes for a better deal for the area’s low-income and homeless residents.

About 300 people will eventually live in the Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler Manor complex built by Carrfour Supportive Housing and named for a former Miami-Dade County Commission chairwoman.

The tenants will get supportive and employment placement services at the building which will also house 16,000 square feet of office space on the first floor.

The developer is reserving 50 low-rent units for formerly homeless families and individuals and another 50 for what a company spokeswoman described as “extremely low-income families and the elderly.”

Carey-Shuler cut the ribbon to officially declare the project open in the presence of elected officials, Carrfour personnel and residents.

The mixed-used complex was built with \$21 million in stimulus funds, \$3 million in Miami-Dade County Documentary Surtax funds and \$2.5 million in a State Apartment Incentive Loan, with additional funding from the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

Carrfour bought the land in 2008 and the project was initially awarded funds through tax credits to begin construction. But the collapse of the financial market delayed the project and Carrfour broke ground in June 2010.

“This celebration is what’s possible when the community rallies together to support the vision that everyone deserves affordable and dignified housing,” Carrfour president/CEO Stephanie Berman-Eisenberg said. “Like all supportive housing developments, we have had a very long and difficult history but we are very grateful to all of our supporters for helping us to move this project forward.”

The project is the realization of a dream for Carey-Shuler, a former counselor, college professor and public school administrator and who became the county commissioner for District 3 which includes Liberty City. She also became the first African-American woman to serve as the commission chairwoman, serving from 2002-04.

The project is a physical depiction of her initiative while serving on the commission to pass an infill housing ordinance to provide “clean title” lots to non-profits for low income housing.

“I am so proud of this project and I am very grateful to Carrfour for the wonderful work they have done,” Carey-Shuler said. “We have been working to negate the negative perception of housing for low income

residents. I started working with

Carrfour and other developers to provide housing solutions for our community.”

Audrey Edmonson, who succeeded Carey-Shuler as commissioner, thanked Carrfour and the community for realizing the vision of her “mentor” and providing homes for residents in her community.

“If it wasn’t for Barbara Carey-Shuler, I wouldn’t be standing here today and I’m proud to say that she had a vision and her vision has come through,” Edmonson said. “I would like to thank Carrfour because they have truly come through. My motto is if you’re going to start something in District 3, you are going to finish it. This is what Carrfour has done and this is what I always like to see occur in my community. The development right here speaks for itself and this building is not just here for the residents, but it is here for the community.”

Edmonson said Carey-Shuler Manor will provide direct services to its residents, as well as to the overall community through first-time homebuyer seminars, welfare-to-work programs, job and literacy training, health and wellness classes, financial assistance and specialized job opportunities for military veterans through a partnership with South Florida Workforce.

Greg Dean, one of the building’s residents, welcomed the additional safe haven for people like him. The veteran and admitted former drug addict had lived in the streets and drug houses and at Camillus House. He pledged to be an advocate for the building and its tenants.

“I am so grateful because there are people here who, without them, I would not be here today,” Dean said. “I had become a full-fledged alcohol and drug addict; I had lost everything I had but fortunately a higher power directed me to my mission. Now I can put my feet up and stand out on my balcony and I love this feeling.”

Carrfour Supportive Housing, a non-profit organization founded in 1993 by the Homeless Committee of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, has the mission of providing permanent housing and supportive services for formerly homeless individuals and families in Miami and other Florida cities through joint ventures with nonprofits.