

Carrfour Determined to End Homelessness in Miami

By Jennifer LeClaire



MIAMI—When it comes to affordable housing in Miami, developers have made great strides over the past 20 years. But there’s much more work to do.

Carrfour Supportive Housing has providing housing for more than 10,000 Miami-Dade County residents over the past 20 years but has a greater goal in mind: ending homelessness. That means acquiring more land, developing more affordable housing, and offering more supportive services.

Leadership, community and national partners of Carrfour, a nonprofit organization created in 1993 by the Greater Miami-Dade County Chamber of Commerce, came together last weekend to celebrate the developer’s 20th anniversary. Miami-Dade County Deputy Mayor Russell Benford proclaimed Oct. 19 “Carrfour Supportive Housing 20th Anniversary Day” during Wizard of Oz-themed dinner by Chef Bernie Metz held at Carrfour’s Verde Gardens affordable housing community in Homestead, FL, which houses 145 formerly homeless families.

“Since Carrfour was established, it has remained the leading provider of supportive housing in Florida, as it has assembled more than \$200 million in financing, tax credit, and subsidies, which has been essential in the development of thousands of units of affordable housing, hence now, as this remarkable association commemorates its 20th anniversary, it is fitting and proper that official recognition be given by this County,” Benford said.

Built on the site of the former Homestead Air Force Base, Verde Gardens, like many of Carrfour’s communities throughout Miami-Dade County, has become a national model for ending homelessness that has touched the lives of more than 10,000 men, women, and children over the last two decades. At the event, Verde Gardens resident Alma Santos thanked the group for Carrfour’s contribution to her family’s life. “Thank you, thank you, thank you,” Santos said tearfully, standing beside her 14-year-old son. “You have forever changed our lives and made it possible for us to now help others.”

While stressing that every success the organization has experienced over the years involved dozens of vital contributors, Carrfour president and CEO Stephanie Berman specifically acknowledged JPMorgan Chase and Citi Community Development with “There’s No Place Like Home” awards in appreciation for their extraordinary contributions in helping Carrfour confront and end homelessness for thousands of individuals and families.

Board Chair Carol Fine thanked the organization’s local and national partners, while stressing that although Carrfour’s efforts have shown that the challenges of ending homelessness can be overcome, achieving that goal requires increased resources to continue building on successful models.