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Haven House Opens Its Doors Apartments With Support Services Help End Homelessness

(METROPOLIS, IL, November 13, 2008) The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Illinois Department of Human Services, and State and community leaders are celebrating the opening of Haven House Apartments, supportive housing designed to provide long-term stability and independence for people coming out of homelessness.

“The Corporation for Supportive Housing congratulates Light the Way, Inc. and Massac County Mental Health on completing the construction of Haven House Apartments,” said Katrina Van Valkenburgh, Director of CSH Illinois and Indiana Program. “These apartments are a critically needed resource in Massac County and will provide community members with affordable homes and supportive services.”

Haven House Apartments, sponsored by Light the Way, Inc and Massac County Mental Health, are located in Metropolis near the Superman statue (DC Comics has designated Metropolis the official home of Superman). There are 14 units for people who have struggled with homelessness and the challenges of disabilities. The apartments are adjacent to a local grocery store and within walking distance to a pharmacy, downtown shopping, a mental health center, and public parks.

“The Illinois Division of Mental Health and the Corporation for Supportive Housing have been working closely together to promote the development of units of permanent supportive housing for persons with serious mental illness,” said Brenda Hampton of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health. “We are pleased to support Massac County Mental Health Center’s involvement in this important effort. We look forward to working with CSH to continue developing units of permanent supportive housing throughout the state of Illinois.”

Haven House complements the Illinois Division of Mental Health Permanent Supportive Housing Policy, which CSH has been a partner in crafting and implementing.

Haven House is the first ever supportive housing in Metropolis and Massac County, accommodating both individuals and families with its one, two and three bedroom apartments. Several of the units will be adaptable and accessible for persons with physical disabilities. The apartments were completed in 5 months with construction beginning in July 2008.

"On behalf of Governor Rod R. Blagojevich, the Illinois Housing Development Authority is proud to have invested more than \$2 million for the development of Haven House Apartments in Metropolis, providing a safe and supportive home for persons with special needs," said DeShana L. Forney, executive director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority. "Additional IHDA funding for technical assistance under the Supportive Housing Institute provides the necessary training for service providers and developers to create supportive housing partnerships, like Haven House, around the state."

According to CSH and IHDA, monthly rents will range from \$309 to \$462, depending on the size of the unit and the tenant's income. Eligible tenants must earn at or below 50 percent of the area median income. In Massac County, the income limit is \$18,250 for a single household, or \$26,100 for a family of four.

Massac County Mental Health will provide residents with important supportive services that will include case management, crisis intervention, and life-skills education.

"With the help of CSH staff, a concept and then working plans were developed to get the project off the ground," said Phyllis Thistlewood of Light the Way. "CSH has remained accessible throughout and with much assistance from IHDA, funding was made available. Our dreams of helping mentally ill persons thrive independently in housing with supportive services in the county where they have lived is finally a reality."

Haven House is a direct outgrowth of the Illinois Supportive Housing Institute, a technical assistance and training program developed by CSH and funded by IHDA.

When launched in late 2006, both CSH and IHDA said the Institute's emphasis on technical assistance, pre-development funds, and how to build and manage supportive housing would create homes for homeless families and individuals throughout Illinois. IHDA awarded a \$750,000 grant from the State's Affordable Housing Trust Fund to CSH to set up the Institute and to train 16 to 20 non-profit organizations to become supportive housing developers. Two classes of the Institute have graduated thus far with a third session scheduled to begin in January 2009. Light the Way and Massac County Mental Health were among the first groups that finished Institute training.

According to CSH and IHDA, Haven House enjoys tremendous support within the community and is grounded in a partnership between the two non-profits - Light the Way and Massac County Mental Health - and Don Yost Development Company, a for-profit housing developer in Southern Illinois. Light the Way is the official owner.

Sponsors estimated the overall cost to build Haven House at approximately \$2.5 million.

IHDA was the conduit for financing, having provided a \$1.47 million interest-free loan from the Illinois Affordable Housing Trust Fund and another \$1 million interest-free loan using federal HOME funds.

CSH provided technical assistance, a capacity-building grant and a \$50,000, zero-percent interest project initiation loan to assist the sponsor in developing this project. CSH is a nonprofit with a national reach and presence and offices in Illinois and throughout the rest of the United States. For more information on CSH and supportive housing, visit www.csh.org.

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