

FROM BROWNFIELD TO GREEN HOMES

In the Bradhurst section of Harlem, a former Brownfield site has been reborn as a state-of-the-art, green-designed housing development that will provide 65 homes for low-income seniors.

On November 30, 2011, New York's housing leaders gathered on West 146th Street to celebrate the ribbon-cutting for Dr. Muriel Petioni Plaza, a building that reflects the power of partnership between public, private and non-profit affordable housing advocates. The development is a joint effort among the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, New York City Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development, New York State Homes and Community Renewal, Jonathan Rose Companies and Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement ("HCCI").

Dr. Petioni Plaza was created under the New Housing Marketplace Plan, an initiative developed by the administration of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The plan, launched in 2003, is a multi-billion dollar initiative to finance 165,000 units of affordable housing for 500,000 New Yorkers by the close of the 2014 fiscal year. Thus far, the plan has funded the creation or preservation of more than 125,700 units of affordable housing across the five boroughs, including more than 43,200 units in Manhattan.

Dr. Petioni Plaza makes use of an abandoned film storage warehouse formerly known as the Erbograph Building. High levels of asbestos and other contaminants were found at the site, leading to its designation as a Brownfield location. The site, which had been owned by the city prior to its sale – for \$1 from the New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development to HCCI – has gone through extension remediation in partnership with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

The eight-story building was designed to accommodate aging-in-place seniors, earning no more than 50 percent of the area median income. Dr. Petioni Plaza has many green features, and is Harlem's first LEED-Silver affordable housing development for low-income seniors. In addition, HCCI will offer health and wellness services to building residents.



Supporters cut the ribbon at Dr. Muriel Petioni Plaza, once a Brownfield site and now a state-of-the-art, green-designed housing development that will provide 65 homes for low-income seniors.

In 2008, the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York partnered with its member, Carver Federal Savings, to provide HCCI Improvement with a \$1.28 million Affordable Housing Program grant to help fund the construction costs of Dr. Petioni Plaza. Carver Federal Savings has partnered with the Home Loan Bank 11 times to provide nearly \$9 million in grants through the Affordable Housing Program. With these grants, Carver has helped build more than 700 affordable homes across New York City.

Dr. Petioni Plaza is named in honor of Dr. Muriel Petioni, an active member of HCCI's Board who has served as a doctor in Harlem for more than 60 years. Dr. Petioni received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for significant contributions to the nation in recognition of her work in the medical community.

"This project fulfills and emphasizes the need for housing devoted to seniors and increased services for seniors," Dr. Petioni stated in a press release on the ribbon-cutting event.

The transformation that Dr. Petioni Plaza underwent – from an abandoned Brownfield site to Harlem's first LEED-Silver designed housing development – is an example of what is possible when organizations and individuals focused on creating high-quality affordable housing in New York come together.

"We are proud to join so many of New York's housing visionaries in working together to create this much-needed housing for Harlem's seniors," said Al DelliBovi, president of the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York. ■