

NEW HOPE HOUSING’S BRAYS CROSSING RECEIVES URBAN LAND INSTITUTE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE AMERICAS

Houston, TX – The Urban Land Institute (ULI) has awarded New Hope Housing at Brays Crossing with its annual ULI Award for Excellence: The Americas. The award recognizes and promotes best practices in the real estate industry judging projects on all aspects of development including construction, economic viability, marketing, design and management.

“We are extremely honored to receive this prestigious international award,” stated Joy Horak-Brown, Executive Director of New Hope Housing. “Brays Crossing as well as other New Hope properties prove that affordable housing can be high quality and a vibrant community asset that helps lift up a neighborhood,” she concluded.

As one of 10 winning developments chosen from among 160 entries, Brays Crossing is the vision of Houston architect Ernesto L. Maldonado, AIA, of Glassman Shoemaker Maldonado Architects. Brays Crossing integrates a public art display into the building design, turning a former eyesore into a community canvas. To capitalize on its prominent freeway exposure and make the project a “face for affordable, supportive housing” Chicana artist Carmen Lomas Garza was commissioned to design four exterior steel murals. The whimsical murals turn what would have been a blank, utilitarian 500-foot sound wall, a HUD requirement, into an important community amenity. Adding to Brays Crossing’s artistic sensibility, Houston stained glass artist Kim Clark Renteria designed four window panels that punctuate the building entry. Camden Builders, Inc. was the contractor.

Brays Crossing was originally built in 1963 to house NASA contractors. Over time, it deteriorated into a crime ridden hotel and was a certified public nuisance property. Now transformed, Brays Crossing’s supportive single room occupancy (SRO) efficiency apartment community prevents homelessness by offering permanent housing for 149 adults living singly on limited incomes. The development includes private efficiency units for veterans, the elderly, the working poor, the disabled, those in recovery, and some were formerly homeless. Among the amenities are a large public meeting room, library, a business center, community kitchen, social service spaces, and other common areas. Funding for Brays Crossing was provided by HUD monies granted by the City of Houston and gifts from private foundations and corporations, as well as Low Income Housing Tax Credits allocated by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

Since inception, New Hope Housing has been recognized as the model for safe, affordable, debt-free single room occupancy (SRO) housing in the state of Texas. New Hope’s goal is to build and operate high-quality affordable housing in a supportive environment and to be a permanent institution in Houston. Parishioners of Houston’s Christ Church Cathedral-Episcopal gave the seed money in 1993 for New Hope’s first building – Hamilton Street Residence. The People of the Cathedral wanted to help offer housing to the growing number of disadvantaged and homeless in the downtown Cathedral’s vicinity.

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