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CHA FAMILIES MOVE TO NEW UNITS WHERE OLD HIGH-RISES STOOD

Mayor Richard M. Daley and Chicago Housing Authority officials today welcomed the first families into brand new units at Westhaven Park, a mixed-income community on the site of the old Henry Horner Homes development on the city's West Side.

While several CHA families have moved into new units at off-site locations, this is the first time families have moved into new units on CHA land where dilapidated public housing once stood.

The opening of the new units represents a dramatic turnaround for the Horner site, which captured national attention as the subject of the book, *There Are No Children Here* by Alex Kotlowitz, a chronicle of the hardships facing Chicago's public housing residents.

The conversion of decaying, high-rise public housing developments into vibrant, mixed-income communities is a centerpiece of the CHA's 10-year, \$1.6 billion Plan for Transformation.

"It took a lot of hard work, cooperation and trust on the part of the residents, the community and the CHA to reach this point," Daley said. "It's the beginning of a new era for families in public housing."

Westhaven Park, when completed, will have 764 new units, with approximately one-third public housing, one-third affordable and one-third market rate. It is one of at least nine planned mixed-income developments under the Plan for Transformation.

"These families are the very first to come back to the site of dangerous, unsafe high-rises and find new homes where they can raise children and enjoy a good quality of life," said CHA Executive Director Terry Peterson. "That was our commitment and, as we near the halfway point in the Plan, we're very happy it's now taking shape."

The families are the first to exercise their guaranteed right of return. For those who moved on Monday, it was a day they never thought would happen.

"I've been working hard to make changes in my life, and then this good news came," said Walnetta Long, a mother of two who moved into a new unit on Monday. "I dropped to my knees and said, 'Thank God.' I was overjoyed."

Westhaven Park is slated to become a powerful symbol of what is possible through public and private partnerships geared toward offering residents every opportunity for positive change.

Construction is also underway at Lake Park Crescent (Southeast Side), Raymond Hilliard Homes (South Side), Bridgeport Homes (Southwest Side) Lowden (South Side) and at various scattered

(more)

sites and senior buildings throughout the city. To date, more than 10,000 public housing units have been constructed or fully rehabbed, with thousands more slated for completion next year.

Joining Daley and Peterson at the news conference were Aldermen Madeline Haithcock (2nd) and Walter Burnett, (27th); Joe Galvan, Midwest Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; CHA Chairman Sharon Gist Gilliam; Valerie Jarrett, Executive Vice President of Habitat; Kelly King Dibble, Executive Director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority; and Mamie Bone, CHA Local Advisory Council President.

For more information on the CHA's Plan for Transformation, please visit www.cha.org.

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