



For Immediate Release

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**HPD & HDC JOIN BARRIER FREE LIVING AND ALEMBIC TO BREAK
GROUND ON NEW SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN THE BRONX**

*\$42-Million Two Building Apartment Complex will include 120 New Apartments and
Intensive On-Site Services for Domestic Abuse Survivors*

This will be Barrier Free Living's First Development



Bronx, NY –New York City's Housing Development Corporation (HDC),the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and the Mayor's Office for

People with Disabilities (MOPD), along with the New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation (HHAC) joined Barrier Free Living (BFL), Alembic Development and Foxy Management on East 139th Street in the Bronx today to celebrate the start of construction on Barrier Free Living Apartments, BFL's first permanent supportive housing development that, when complete, will provide 120 apartments with a preference for the disabled and survivors of domestic abuse. Also in attendance were project partners and supporters including the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Citi Community Capital, Richman Housing Resources and local elected officials.

Barrier Free Living Apartments is being developed under Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's New Housing Marketplace Plan (NHMP). The NHMP is a multi-billion dollar initiative to finance 165,000 units of affordable housing for half a million New Yorkers by the close of Fiscal Year 2014. For every dollar invested by the City, the NHMP has leveraged \$3.43 in private funding, amounting to a total commitment to date of more than \$21 billion to fund the creation or preservation of over 147,800 units of affordable housing across the five boroughs to date. A total of 45,186 units have been financed in the Bronx, with 7,946 units in Bronx Community Board 1 where Barrier Free Living Apartments will be located.

"Living in a safe, secure and accessible environment is a critical first step toward regaining stability and independence. The Barrier Free Living Apartments offer a safe haven with a supportive environment necessary for people gain the confidence to move on to the next phase of their lives," said **HPD Commissioner Mathew M. Wambua**. "HPD is very proud to be a part of this development. I want to thank our colleagues at HDC, MOPD and HHAC for their hard work on this project and our partners at Barrier Free Living, Alembic and CSH for their vision in creating this project. Thanks also to Citi and Richman for their commitment to the creation of safe, supportive and affordable housing for New Yorkers."

HDC President Marc Jahr said: "Every unit in this building represents a fresh start for a fellow New Yorker who has seen more than enough hardship. It means a great deal to me and to HDC's staff to be able to play an increasingly active role in financing such an important role in financing projects such as Barrier Free Living Apartments. Developers of supportive housing tend to have more and greater hurdles to leap than those who undertake other types of affordable projects. We are proud to make the process a little bit easier. On behalf of HDC and all of the people who will call this building home, I thank Alembic and our remarkable partners for their passion and drive to make this a reality."

"This is a tremendously exciting day for us at BFL," **BFL President/CEO Paul Feuerstein** said. "It represents an important continuation of our mission to enable people with disabilities to live independently and productively. With these beautiful apartments, residents at our transitional and emergency facilities will now have the option for

permanent housing with the level of service and security they need to thrive and provide for their families.”

“As with many affordable and supportive housing developments, Barrier Free Living Apartments required many financing partners and a creative financing structure,” said **Benjamin Warnke, principal with Alembic Community Development**. “I am delighted to see it break ground, and appreciative of our many development and financing partners – the City and State, CSH, Citi Community Capital, The Richman Group and others – who helped us make this happen.”

Barrier Free Living Apartments is BFL’s first permanent supportive housing development. One building, on East 138th Street, will provide 51 apartments for families with a head of household who is a survivor of domestic violence. The second building, on East 139th Street, will comprise 70 apartments for individuals with disabilities who are survivors of domestic violence, severely disabled women who are in a nursing home diversion program and women who are disabled veterans. Barrier Free Living will be providing social services for both of these buildings as well as 24/7 security and surveillance. These new buildings will replace an abandoned incomplete construction site which has been an eyesore to the community for many years.

“We welcome Barrier Free Living and Alembic’s new Bronx project,” **Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.**, said. “We are particularly appreciative of the development’s focus on providing affordable housing for individuals and families that have been victims of domestic violence. We warmly embrace the mission of helping these families and look forward to seeing them in these new homes.”

The development will serve families and individuals earning at or below 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI) which is equivalent to an annual income of no more than \$36,120 for an individual or \$51,540 for a family of four. Units will be filled through referrals by Freedom House, DHS, Family Justice Centers and other community based domestic violence programs. The development will receive Project-Based Section 8 from HPD to help subsidize the cost of rent on 77 of the 121 total units.

“Survivors of domestic violence and people with disabilities are two vulnerable populations, and having access to supportive housing developments is essential to meeting their living needs,” said **New York City Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) Commissioner Victor Calise**. “Today’s groundbreaking demonstrates that by working together, developers, non-profit and for-profit organizations and city government can help disabled New Yorkers affected by domestic violence have a place to live that is accessible, safe and one that they can call home. We applaud Barrier Free Living for its continued success in assisting people with disabilities affected by domestic violence and look forward to seeing the development and success of this supportive housing project.”

“I’m thrilled to be here today to witness the beginning of this exciting new development,” **New York City Councilmember Maria del Carmen Arroyo** said. “Not only will Barrier Free Living Apartments create quality and accessible affordable housing options for individuals with disabilities and those leaving abusive situations, but it also restores a vacant and blighted site to productive use.”

“These apartments will fill a vital need, providing much-needed permanent supportive housing for individuals and families not only facing homelessness, but also dealing with issues related to a physical disability and, in some cases, domestic violence,” said **Kristin M. Proud, Acting Commissioner, New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance**. “Supportive housing is an essential step in assisting families and individuals facing these issues to build foundations for a better future. Those living here will receive the supportive services they need to maintain housing stability and increase their ability to live independently.”

“CSH is honored to be a part of such a creative and proactive response to the needs of survivors of interpersonal violence, homelessness and severe disability,” said **Diane Louard-Michel, Senior Loan Officer, CSH**. “We know the positive difference affordable supportive housing makes in the lives of residents and we laud the work of Barrier-Free Living, its development team and the many funders who have come together to bring this project to fruition. CSH is proud to have contributed \$3.05 million in predevelopment and acquisition funding and we look forward to the day when residents will enjoy safe, decent and accessible housing and quality support services.”

The total development cost will be \$42.5 million. HDC provided \$24.8 million in construction financing and two mortgages toward permanent financing the amounts of \$3.96 million and \$7.86 million. HPD provided \$1.5 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Plan funds. The New York State Homeless Housing and Assistance Corporation provided \$7 million in funds through its Homeless Housing and Assistance Program. Richman Housing Resources provided \$16.9 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. Citi Community Capital will act as the Letter of Credit provider on this development.

“We forget that just a few years ago, during the height of the financial crisis, investors and lenders weren’t jumping at opportunities, especially if they are out of the box, leading-edge and innovative in the way that Barrier Free Living Apartments is,” said **Bill Traylor, President, Richman Housing Resources**. “Citi Community Capital has never been an ordinary investor/lender; Citi knows how to gauge real risk and to identify real business opportunity. Citi is an investor/lender with the right business acumen as well as a heart. Richman Housing is proud to partner with Citi and with Alembic and BFL in this project, and I look forward to returning for the grand opening.”

“At Citi, we recognize that communities benefit when those most in need are able to find stable, permanent housing,” said **William Yates, Director, Citi Community Capital**.

“Barrier Free Living Apartments, once complete, will house individuals and families who are among our community’s most vulnerable citizens, at a time when affordable housing continues to be one of our city’s most pressing needs.”

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About the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD):

HPD is the nation’s largest municipal housing preservation and development agency. Its mission is to promote quality housing and viable neighborhoods for New Yorkers through education, outreach, loan and development programs and enforcement of housing quality standards. It is responsible for implementing Mayor Bloomberg’s New Housing Marketplace Plan to finance the construction or preservation of 165,000 units of affordable housing by 2014. Since the plan’s inception, more than 147,800 affordable homes have been created or preserved. For regular updates on news and services, connect with us via www.facebook.com/nychpd and www.twitter.com/nychousing. For more information, visit our website at www.nyc.gov/hpd

About Barrier Free Living

Founded in 1981, Barrier Free Living (BFL) is a mission-driven service organization focused on empowering individuals with disabilities to live independent, dignified lives free of abuse. BFL works to help people with disabilities move from abusive situations to more supportive physical environments free of any internal barriers preventing them for reaching their fullest potential. These services include Freedom House, BFL’s fully accessible emergency shelter for people with disabilities fleeing abuse, to a variety of counseling and transitional housing programs. More information is available at www.bflnyc.org.

About Alembic Community Development:

Alembic Community Development makes long-term commitments to partnerships and investments in underserved neighborhoods through real estate development, organizational capacity building and community-based planning initiatives. A combination of two community development practices that shared a common commitment to collaborative efforts to build stronger communities, Alembic Community Development offers a full continuum of planning and development services to nonprofit organizations, neighborhoods and cities. Since inception, Alembic has, with its partners, developed 300 units of affordable and supportive housing in New York City, with an additional 260 units in construction, and more than 330 units in predevelopment. More information is available at www.alembiccommunity.com.