

## The Commons at Madaline Park

Testa Companies

Akron, Ohio

The Commons at Madeline Park involved a \$10.7 million construction of 60 one-bedroom accessible units designed to house individuals who are homeless, have special needs, or are veterans. Half of the units are reserved for people deemed to be chronically homeless; those who have spent time in and out of local shelters and qualify for the federal Shelter Plus Care program. The remaining units are reserved for those with chronic mental illness or other multiple co-occurring disabilities and low income homeless veterans in Summit County. The local Continuum of Care identified an unmet need for 317 permanent supportive housing (PSH) beds in Akron, for hard to house homeless. Consistent housing is often unobtainable for this population due to past history, which often includes evictions, mental illness, addictions and behavioral problems.

The Commons was developed using a combination of low-income housing tax credits and an Ohio Housing Trust Fund loan, administered through the Ohio Housing Finance Agency, a construction loan through First Merit Bank, and the Supportive Housing Program grant through H.U.D. The City of Akron supported this project by providing \$350,000 in H.O.M.E. funding for this new construction. Equity investment was provided by the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing. Akron worked with the developer; Testa Companies, to identify a viable location for this much needed project.

Located near the OhioNeedsJobs- Summit County and on a major bus line, the Commons residents participate in the greater north hill Akron community. Community Support Services provides high quality on-site mental health assistance to eligible residents. National Church Residences (NCR) is the managing partner and project based rental subsidies are administered by the Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority. The facility features on-site 24 hour staff, two story great room, community kitchen/dining room, security cameras, laundry and storage facilities, case management and interview rooms, a medical exam room and an on-site convenience store. The Commons also features outdoor sitting areas and a Butterfly Healing Garden.

The project was a passion for developer Joel Testa , chief operating officer of Testa Companies. It was a personal experience with homelessness that drove Mr. Testa to complete the project; He was inspired by the biological father of his son, a talented filmmaker who battled homelessness. It took Mr. Testa five years to find a site and earn approval for the project. The project was completed fall 2014.

A second building called Commons at Madaline Park II, will include 60 units of Permanent Supportive Housing. The 4 story new construction will be built on a 4 acre parcel adjacent to Phase I. All units are fully accessible and will incorporate the principles of universal design. The Commons at Madaline Park II is currently scheduled to open in 2016. This facility will also feature a greenhouse. The facility is named for the late wife, Madaline George, of the original land owner. Mr. George shared that his wife cared greatly about people in need. It was only fitting that the building honors her memory.

## Madaline Park

