

New apartments will help people with developmental disabilities

Georgie Silvarole

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The creation of a new apartment building for people living with developmental disabilities is underway in Pittsford — and it's one that organizers hope will help those individuals learn the skills needed to live independently.

Mary Walsh Boatfield, president and CEO of CP Rochester, shared her excitement about the organization's seven one-bedroom transitional apartments to a small crowd gathered in the building at 77 Pinnacle Road on Tuesday morning.

"As unique as we all are, the commonalities in life we all want include love and friendship, health and wellness, a good job, to learn new things and to live in a comfortable and safe home," Walsh Boatfield said. "The real benefit to the individual is the pride in living in a beautiful home ... and the enhancement of their quality of life."

The ideal candidates for the apartments are people aged 18 to 25 with developmental disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, Down syndrome and other learning and physical disabilities, Walsh Boatfield said. These individuals may be living with family or in a group home, and must be interested in learning the skills necessary for living on their own.

Residents will be taught how to manage their money, care for their apartment, plan their meals and how to use public transportation, among other things, she said. The building will be staffed 24/7, though nurses and care staff will not be living in the building.

CP Rochester expects that tenants will stay in the home for around two years, and the estimated annual cost of living there (about \$36,000) must be covered through a Medicaid waiver, Walsh Boatfield said. The waiting list for the apartments has already reached 20 people.

Walsh Boatfield thanked several organizations for supporting the facility, including the Golisano Foundation. Ann Costello, the foundation's executive director, said transitional facility will be the only one of its kind in Monroe

with brain injuries or intellectual or developmental disabilities.

The Canandaigua transitional apartments opened in 2012, and since then, more than 13 people have already moved in, moved out and moved on to more independent housing, she said.

"We are perceived as one of the best practice models in New York state," Walsh Boatfield said. "Happiness House and CP Rochester have been extremely successful in meeting the residential needs of those of all abilities in our community."

The building has been empty for about seven months, Walsh Boatfield said, and was previously used by the Al Sigl Community of Agencies. It will undergo a \$1 million renovation to improve its electrical and sprinkler systems, roof, windows and doors, Walsh Boatfield said.

The interior will be also renovated to create the seven one-bedroom apartments, each with its own living room, kitchen and bathroom. There will also be a shared community room with a full kitchen as well, she added. The work is expected to be finished by July 2019. New York State Homes and Community Renewal provided \$375,500 for the project through the NYS HOME Local Program Small Rental Development Initiative, Walsh Boatfield said. She also thanked Wegmans, Frank Marianacci Inc. Construction, SWBR Architects, Al Sigl and The Lodestar Foundation for their additional support.

"Each individual will move in with an expectation of moving out into a more independent setting," Walsh Boatfield said. "It's a win-win for the individuals, for New York state and for our organizations."

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County, and just the second in the Finger Lakes Region, Costello said.

“Our young adults don’t necessarily want the traditional model of care, don’t need the traditional model of care, and would like to be more independent,” Costello said. “But they need practice, they need help and they need support.”

The transitional apartments in Pittsford are modeled after a similar facility in Ontario County operated by Happiness House, an affiliate of CP Rochester that Walsh Boatfield is also the president and CEO of. Those apartments, in Canandaigua, are also one-bedrooms with a shared living space for individuals



Several people involved in the creation of the transitional apartments at 77 Pinnacle Road, Pittsford, pose as they officially broke ground on the project on Tuesday. CP Rochester President Mary Walsh Boatfield, fourth from the right, has championed the project. GEORGIE SILVAROLE/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE