



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Collaboration Leads to New Summit Lake Family Opportunity Center

September 26, 2012 (Akron, Ohio) – Today, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority Executive Director Tony O’Leary, Superintendent of the Akron Public Schools David James, Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic, and distinguished guests celebrated the start of construction of the Summit Lake Family Opportunity Center with a launching ceremony at the Summit Lake City of Akron Recreation Center.

The new Summit Lake Family Opportunity Center is the result of a \$4.25 million grant awarded to AMHA from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) through their *Capital Fund Education and Training Community Facilities (CFCE)* program. The first round of grants, announced in May, 2011 included ten grants

totaling nearly \$34 million. AMHA was the only recipient of this funding in Ohio and received the 4th largest award in the country. The CFCF grant is being used to fund the capital improvements and equipment to construct the early childhood, adult learning and job training center at Summit Lake.

The Summit Lake Family Opportunity Center is being built adjacent to the City of Akron Recreation Center, and will house four Head Start Classrooms, two Akron Public School kindergarten classrooms, a kitchen, two computer labs, two adult learning classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and several client meeting rooms. AMHA residents will be able to access services via the Towpath Trail. Services are available to all residents of the Summit Lake neighborhood and are not exclusive to AMHA residents.

AMHA Executive Director Tony O'Leary credits the collaborative efforts of valued partners to AMHA's success in securing this important funding.

"The City of Akron and the Akron Public Schools serve as lead partners in this exciting effort," said O'Leary. "Akron is providing a 99 year ground lease to AMHA for the land adjacent to their recreation center and the Akron Public Schools will operate the two kindergarten classrooms."

"The only way to properly address the needs of our community is through collaboration," said Akron Mayor Don Plusquellic. "No one organization on their own has the resources to fulfill all the needs of our community. Only by sharing resources and cooperating to bring each of our strengths to address problems, can we help the citizens who most need our help. That is why it is so important that we work together on projects such as this -- that we pool all of our agencies and resources -- so that, in this

case, our residents have a multi-purpose facility with comprehensive services to meet their needs.”

Early Childhood programs and services to be offered include: Akron Summit Community Action, who will provide Head Start classes (two Head Start and two Early Head Start). Akron-Summit County Public Library will provide story times. Greenleaf Family Center will offer SPARK Ohio, a program to support low-income families in preparing their 3 and 4 year-olds for kindergarten, and a Teen Parenting Program. Child Guidance and Family Solutions will offer its Incredible Years Program (a program geared towards reducing various behavioral problems through positive parenting strategies for children from birth to age 6). Finally, AMHA’s own Early Childhood Initiative will provide Parents as Teachers™ home visitation services and offer early childhood family outreach events.

It is a known fact that the transition to kindergarten is often a difficult one for both children and their parents. “By establishing relationships with families when their children are infants, and being able to be part of their transition to school, we will contribute to kindergarten readiness and success in school, and in life” said David James, Superintendent of Akron Public Schools.

Adult Learning and Job Readiness programs include: Through Project Learn, adults will be able to acquire a GED and improve their chances of obtaining post-secondary education. In addition, the Akron-Summit County Public Library will offer computer training classes. Goodwill Industries of Akron will offer its two-hour “Know Your Skills” course, which assists with resume writing, interviewing and networking.

Greenleaf Family Center has offered to provide adult education classes, such as Financial Literacy and Credit Repair.

Summit County Executive Russ Pry has also committed to providing an onsite Case Manager from the Department of Job & Family Services to create a “one stop” atmosphere for those AMHA residents who are also DJFS clients.

AMHA and all of its partners are grateful to the GAR Foundation for the generous capacity-building grant awarded to AMHA last year. The grant provides for consultant Brenda Westbrook to serve as a facilitator in bringing the partners together to develop a plan for the new building. Using a “collective impact” approach, partners have been meeting since February to develop a strategic plan, identify priorities, set goals and establish outcomes and how those outcomes will be measured.

The construction manager for the project is H.R. Gray. Cavanaugh Building Corporation & Four Points Architectural Services, Inc. will serve as the Design-Build Team. Hasenstab Architects, Inc. rounds out the team as the Concept Design Architect.

End.