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FORMERLY HOMELESS GET KEYS TO NEW HOMES Expanded On-Site Services a First in LA

LOS ANGELES – Over 100 chronically homeless men and women are getting keys to their own, new apartments in the Abbey Apartments in LA's Skid Row (<http://skidrow.org/media.html>). To celebrate the opening of the 113 efficiency apartments, Skid Row Housing Trust, developers and managers of the Abbey, is holding a grand opening event at 10 AM, at 625 South San Pedro Street, Thursday, April 16. Scheduled guests include US Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark-Ridley Thomas, LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, LA City Councilwoman Jan Perry and downtown developer Sonny Astoni.

The Abbey is the 21st developed and managed by the Skid Row Housing Trust and the first affordable housing in Los Angeles to provide such a large range of on-site services.

Los Angeles County is providing the funding for the supportive services at the Abbey. "It is unconscionable that we have nearly 75,000 people living homeless on our streets," Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky says. "Creating more permanent supportive housing offers a more humane, successful and cost-effective solution than the vicious cycle that keeps them spinning hopelessly between the street, hospital, court and jail."

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Los Angeles City Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose 9th Council District includes Skid Row, has worked with the Trust to enable development of permanent supportive housing. "The opening of the Abbey is another significant step forward for Los Angeles to embrace permanent supportive housing," she says. "Permanent supportive housing has helped other cities, from Seattle to New York, reduce their homelessness. We can do that too."

The Skid Row Trust is recognized as a national leader in developing affordable permanent supportive housing. "We have always operated on the idea that permanent supportive housing is the most effective way to reduce homelessness and give the formerly homeless men and women their lives back," says Mike Alvidrez, Executive Director of the Trust. "Permanent supportive housing succeeds because it stabilizes residents so that treatment works.

"We've expanded the range of service in our new building because, after 20 years in this business, each new building helps us learn what more we can do for our residents," he says. "What we've learned has informed the design of the Abbey."

The Abbey, designed by the award winning Koning-Eizenberg Architecture firm of Santa Monica, like other Trust developments, sets a standard for affordable housing design. The Trust places a strong emphasis on good design in order to improve the community and give residents pride in their new home. A leader in the US for its standards, Trust buildings are also designed to enhance a rapidly changing downtown Los Angeles.

Funded with city, county, state and federal money, the Abbey provides subsidized rents and medical, mental health and social services. Many of the formerly homeless are addicts, have mental and physical disabilities and suffer from illness. At the Abbey, they will be an elevator ride away from treatment that meets these challenges.

MORE

ABBAY APARTMENTS OPEN, MARCH, 2009
PAGE 3

Medical, mental health and substance abuse treatment services are handled by JWCH Institute, a provider of healthcare for the homeless in LA County, and Behavioral Health Services, local experts in substance abuse treatment. Every day, Abbey residents will have ready access to these services. Additional funders for this innovative program include the Low Income Investment Fund, the Los Angeles city Housing Department, the California Department of Housing and Community Development, Los Angeles County Housing Authority, Citibank and Enterprise Community Investment, Inc.