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The Community Economic Development Assistance Corp. celebrates opening of the 25-unit Blanchard School Apartments in Uxbridge, MA

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Uxbridge, MA The Community Economic Development Assistance Corp. (CEDAC) joined Virginia Blanchard Memorial Housing Association (VBMH) and Jon Juhl of JNJUHL and Associates to celebrate the grand opening and ribbon cutting for Blanchard School Apartments at the Uxbridge Progressive Club. Built in 1873 as an elementary school and vacant since 2002, the property is named for the beloved local educator Virginia Blanchard, who served as a teacher and principal at the school for 45 years. VBMH and JNJUHL have redeveloped the historic building and added an adjacent annex to create 25 units of affordable rental housing.

Ribbon cutting for Blanchard School
Apartments in Uxbridge, MA

Blanchard School Apartments contains a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments. All units will be reserved for households with incomes below 60% of area median, and the property will be managed by The Community Builders (TCB). With an initial loan in 2013, CEDAC provided more than \$300,000 in pre-development financing, as well as valuable technical assistance, to support this project. Major sources of funding include: Massachusetts Housing Investment Corp. (\$6.2 million in federal low-income and historic tax credit financing); The Life Initiative (\$6 million construction loan); the state Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) (\$1.8 million); MHP (\$250,000 permanent loan), and state low-income and historic tax credits (\$1.7 million purchased by Unibank).

Additionally, the project received \$367,000 through the Community Based Housing (CBH) program to include two units that provide enhanced accessibility features for households with a member at risk of institutionalization or homelessness as a result of their disability. The development also has a preference for military veterans. CEDAC works with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to manage several supportive housing programs, including CBH.

Nunes Trabucco Architects and general contractor Sugrue & Associates, were part of the development team.

Finally, acquisition proceeds from the project to the town have capitalized a scholarship fund to be

awarded annually in memory of Virginia Blanchard, to a graduating student who plans to pursue a career in education.

“Congratulations to VBMH and Jon Juhl on the completion of the Blanchard School Apartments,” said CEDAC’s executive director Roger Herzog. “CEDAC is pleased to support this project, which will provide 25 high-quality affordable homes for families in Uxbridge, including units for veterans and people living with disabilities. The deep commitment of VBMH and the Town of Uxbridge to preserving the historic Virginia Blanchard School for affordable housing will benefit residents for many years to come.”

“We are thrilled to celebrate the successful transformation of a historic school building into a unique and affordable apartment complex,” said Harry Romasco, board president of VBMH. “We are proud to provide safe, secure and affordable rental housing options to families, veterans, elderly households, and people with disabilities in the Uxbridge area.”

The development team of the Blanchard School Apartments received an Excellence in Affordable Housing award at the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation’s (MHIC) annual meeting and awards ceremony. The award was given for the team’s “perseverance and innovation in executing the community’s vision to preserve the rich history of the Virginia Blanchard School.”

When presenting the award, MHIC president Joe Flatley, said, “We are more than pleased to have this opportunity to publicly recognize the development team of the Blanchard School Apartments. Clearly, VBMH and Jon Juhl were tenacious and focused and in the end not only created new affordable housing, but they also helped to preserve the rich history of Uxbridge.”

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