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Just-A-Start launches plans for its new project, Rindge Commons

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Cambridge, MA Just-A-Start, a community development corporation that builds the housing security and economic stability of low-to moderate income people in the city and nearby communities, has launched plans for its new project, Rindge Commons. This mixed-use development, situated on Just-A-Start's existing property, will combine a new education and job training center, additional affordable housing, and community resources accessible to the entire neighborhood.

"Rindge Commons represents an exciting opportunity to serve more Cambridge residents through expanded programming," said Carl Nagy-Koechlin, executive director of Just-A-Start. "Cambridge is a flourishing city, but many people still struggle to access opportunities for family-sustaining work and housing within their means. Through Rindge Commons, more individuals and families will have the resources they need to train for rewarding careers, live securely and affordably, and thrive in Cambridge."

The proposed development, adjacent to the Rindge Tower Apartments, will add two smaller buildings to the site. It will be designed to strengthen the neighborhood and create connections with the addition of new education and job training facilities and community spaces, improved pedestrian access, and inviting ground floor services. Located across the street from the Alewife MBTA station, the transit-oriented site will be accessible for existing residents and those from surrounding communities.

To help lead the vision for the training center, Miriam Ortiz has transitioned into Just-A-Start's leadership team as its new director of education & training. "In my new role within the organization, I am committed to strengthening the community impact of our training programs well into the future with Rindge Commons. Our programs currently reach approximately 100 youth and adults each year, and this project will create the much-needed space to expand and extend our programming to more community members," said Ortiz.

Just-A-Start's training programs, including YouthBuild and the Biomedical and Information Technology Careers Programs, link jobseekers to Cambridge's thriving economy by providing quality, tuition-free workforce education. In Rindge Commons' training center, an increased number of youth and adults will have a front door to skilled jobs in Cambridge's rapidly-growing innovation industries, in partnership with area employers.

“Addgene has benefitted enormously from recruiting Just-A-Start program graduates,” said Dr. Joanne Kamens, executive director of Addgene. “Over the years, Addgene has hired 10 graduates in our packing room and lab, and we now have a pipeline of diverse, talented lab technicians. We believe this program is one of the best sources of tech talent in the city.”

The site will also include modern, sustainably constructed affordable apartments. The addition of approximately 100 new units will significantly expand housing opportunities in Cambridge for families with low to moderate incomes.

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