



PRESS RELEASE

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DCHFA Cuts the Ribbon at The Douglass: A Todd A. Lee Townhome Community in Ward 8

Washington, D.C. – The District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency (DCHFA) and H2 Development have cut the ribbon on eight affordable single-family townhomes in Ward 8’s Anacostia neighborhood. The Douglass: A Todd A. Lee Townhome Community consists of eight modern, affordable homes which were developed under DCHFA’s Housing Investment Platform (HIP). HIP partners with local, emerging developers to create homes priced for workforce incomes, residents earning between 60-120 percent of the area median income (AMI).

During the ceremony on September 24, 2021, DCHFA Executive Director/CEO Christopher E. Donald spoke about how The Douglass is the epitome of what HIP is all about, showcasing three top priorities of the program and of the agency’s greater mission: “Number one: the retention of long-term D.C. residents. Number two: wealth-building through homeownership. And number three: building capacity for emerging developers so that they have access to capital and can grow from where they are to where they need to be.” Members of the Council of the District of Columbia and housing leaders participated in the celebration.

“This is a special opportunity for us to see what our city can be as we move forward. New residents, old residents, long-standing residents, we all want to have a beautiful place to live,” stated Anita Bonds, Councilmember at-Large, Council of the District of Columbia and Chairperson of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration. “And it’s only through the programs that the government is pushing forward that we’re able to do that...It’s very clear that if we’re going to have beautiful places like this, then our tax dollars have to be a part of the equation.”

“It’s important because the definitions of the American Dream and homeownership have been so elusive to so many people in this country for such a long time,” stated Kenyan McDuffie, Ward 5 Councilmember and member of the Committee on Housing and Executive Administration.

DCHFA celebrated cutting the ribbon of the first Todd A. Lee Townhome Community, which honors the agency’s former executive director. Mr. Lee led the agency from 2016-2020, and The Douglass is one of many properties around the city that will honor what the agency refers to as the Lee Legacy.

“I have to say that the relationship with HFA and with Todd Lee was very special to me,” stated Polly Donaldson, Director, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). “Todd taught me a lot, not just about housing and finance, though he was an expert. But a lot about caring, caring for your teams, your staff, caring for the people you’re working with, caring for the community...Folks leave us and it’s our job to keep their light going.” The land where The Douglass now stands was provided by DHCD from its portfolio of vacant properties.

Mr. Lee was a huge proponent for homeownership and the power it gave those to build wealth and stabilize lives. HIP was created under his leadership in 2017, and these projects are the embodiment of his commitment to making homeownership accessible to the missing middle.

“I’ve served this city for 15 years. I’m a sergeant with the Metropolitan Police Department’s Sixth District, and I feel this is the first time that my work has paid off,” said Kori Heyward, a new homeowner at The Douglass. “We don’t take this lightly. I have become and will continue to be an advocate for fair and equal housing opportunity. You’ve given me a gift that keeps on giving.”

The Douglass is the third fully completed project under the HIP program. Previously, the agency has delivered five homes at Elvans Road Townhomes (Ward 8) and 15 units at Cynthia Townhomes (Ward 7). Phase one of the Kuvera Condominiums in Ward 6 was recently completed, and construction on phase two will begin soon. Overall, there are over 100 units in the HIP pipeline, and the agency is committed to continue creating homeownership opportunities for the District’s workforce.

“Being a homeowner is—was my life goal. I was in foster care and just not having my own home, a place to call home, and now—my 35th birthday was on Wednesday—I bought myself a house. I bought my family a house,” said Natasha Dulin, homeowner at The Douglass. “Being able to show your legacy, your children, that anything is possible as long as you put hard work to it.”

The District of Columbia Housing Finance Agency is an S&P A + rated issuer, serving Washington, D.C.’s residents for more than 40 years. The Agency’s mission is to advance the District of Columbia’s housing priorities; the Agency invests in affordable housing and neighborhood development, which provides pathways for D.C. residents to transform their lives. We accomplish our mission by delivering the most efficient and effective sources of capital available in the market to finance rental housing and to create homeownership opportunities.