

NAHMANews™

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPERTY MANAGERS AND OWNERS

NAHMA Salutes Developers and Managers at the Forefront of Affordable Housing

Alexandria, Va., Sept. 14, 2021 — The National Affordable Housing Management Association (NAHMA) announces the winners of its annual Affordable Housing [Vanguard Awards](#). These awards recognize newly developed or significantly rehabbed affordable multifamily housing communities that showcase high-quality design and resourceful financing.

The excellence exhibited throughout these multifamily developments belies the notion that affordable housing cannot be assets to their communities. Vanguard Award winners deliver powerful proof that affordable housing done well can transform neighborhoods as well as the lives of individual residents.

Winners of the Affordable Housing Vanguard Awards will be recognized at an awards ceremony at the NAHMA Biannual Top Issues in Affordable Housing 2021 Fall Conference in October in Washington, D.C.

The 2021 winners are:

Vanguard Award for New Construction

Small Property (less than 100 units)

Harmon Apartments, Dorchester, Mass; Management Company: Peabody Properties Inc.; Owner: The Boston Home, Boston, Mass.

Large Property (more than 100 units)

Boston Heights Apartment Homes, Benbrook, Texas; Management Company: Asset Living; Owner: BB Villas at Boston Heights Housing LP, Dallas, Texas.

Vanguard Award for Major Rehabilitation of an Existing Rental Housing Community

LaBelle Towers Co-op, Highland Park, Mich.; Management Company: CSI Support & Development Services Inc.; Owner: LaBelle Towers Limited Dividend Housing Association LP, Warren, Mich.

The Vanguard Awards:

- Demonstrate that exceptional new affordable housing is available across the country;
- Demonstrate that the affordable multifamily industry is and must be creative and innovative if such exceptional properties are to be built given the financial and other challenges to development;
- Highlight results of the private/public partnerships required to develop today's affordable housing; and
- Share ideas for unique design and financing mechanisms with industry practitioners to further stimulate creative development in the affordable multifamily industry.

The judges of this year's Vanguard Awards were distinguished NAHMA members from across the country: Noel Gill, NAHP-e, SHCM, CPO, executive vice president of Northwest Real Estate Capital Corp.; Michael Johnson, SHCM, NAHP-e, executive vice president of Alco Management Inc.; Jim McGrath,

SHCM, NAHP-e, chairman of the board of PRD Management Inc.; and Gianna Solari Richards, SHCM, NAHP-e, president of Solari Enterprises Inc.

About the winners:

Harmon Apartments was inspired by Cordelia Harmon, who founded The Boston Home (TBH) in 1881, a one-of-a-kind community serving adults with advanced multiple sclerosis and similar progressive neurological diseases. In 2013, knowing that a need existed for supportive affordable housing for people with progressive diseases and mobility impairments, TBH initiated the effort to build Harmon Apartments, an affordable and fully accessible apartment building for adults with disabilities in Dorchester, Mass. Teaming up with experienced development partner, Affirmative Investments, TBH found support from its many stakeholders, including disability advocates, neighbors and neighborhood associations, and most importantly, civic leaders at the city of Boston and the commonwealth of Massachusetts. In May 2019, Harmon Apartments opened its doors with 36 apartments. Located on The Boston Home campus, the innovative community expands the programs developed by The Boston Home, supplying integrated technology and supportive services to residents.

Providing a range of on-site programs and services, including services sponsored by The Greater New England Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Harmon Apartments boasts open-concept living with accessible design features. The apartments exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and include contemporary kitchens with Energy Star appliances, modern fixtures, spacious floor plans, and beautiful finishes.

The \$18.13 million development utilized state and federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity. The project was completed on time and within budget.

As with all of developer OM Housing's multifamily housing projects, the vision for **Boston Heights** was that of satisfying a community need for affordable apartment homes that surpasses industry standards for comfort, aesthetics, resource management, and top-notch amenities.

Boston Heights is located on a 10.5-acre site that faced significant challenges before its inception. The site was previously home to myriad undesirable activities such as prostitution, drug use, and unsheltered encampments erected by homeless individuals. Though it may seem counterintuitive, these circumstances further crystallized the overriding goal in creating Boston Heights: pushing back against—and hopefully negating—the “Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY)” concept by establishing apartments that improve and enrich their surrounding community.

Safety and security were top priorities. Boston Heights' site design was shared with the local police department to clean up design-based security problems. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design concepts, along with perimeter fencing with controlled access gates and 30-plus HD cameras, were provided campuswide to ensure resident safety.

This project boasts a plethora of amenities and residential services, including an extra-large clubhouse with a community center, kitchen, and audio-visual equipment for social events, along with separate spaces for business, fitness, and children's activities. There is also a pool with a water feature, barbecue grills, playscapes, and lush landscaping. The 144 apartments include energy-efficient appliances, low emissivity windows, spacious kitchens with deep counters, constant fresh airflow from energy recovery ventilation systems, and healthy construction materials.

CSI Support & Development Services Inc. first developed **LaBelle Towers Co-op** in 1973, using the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Section 236 program. The property has since been cooperatively managed by the residents with professional support from CSI. LaBelle Towers is in Highland Park, Mich., a city surrounded by the city of Detroit. This service-rich neighborhood is excellent for seniors: full-service shopping, including grocery and pharmacy, and public transportation are within walking distance.

Starting in 2016, CSI's development and management team began working toward the collective goals of completing a large-scale renovation project to meet the property's long-term needs and to ensure the project is physically and financially viable for the foreseeable future. Additionally, CSI's management team met with the resident/members of LaBelle to hear their concerns for their home and their suggestions for reinvestment. In developing the project scope, careful attention was paid to capital projects that enhance residents' comfort and safety and reduce future maintenance and energy costs.

To achieve this goal, the rehab included redesigning the HVAC system to provide individual unit controls; installing new unit kitchens and baths; improving building accessibility and safety; and reconfiguring all interior and exterior common area spaces to allow for effective social service delivery and to create more and better-functioning building spaces.

For additional details on the NAHMA Vanguard Award winners and program, visit <https://www.nahma.org/awards-contests/vanguard-awards/>.

NAHMA is the leading voice for affordable housing management, advocating on behalf of multifamily property managers and owners whose mission is to provide quality affordable housing. NAHMA supports legislative and regulatory policy that promotes the development and preservation of decent and safe affordable housing, is a vital resource for technical education and information and fosters strategic relations between government and industry. NAHMA's membership represents 75% of the affordable housing industry, and includes its most distinguished multifamily owners and management companies. Visit www.nahma.org for more information.

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