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SOLAR SYSTEM



Photo by Allison Grande

AS A TELEVISION REPORTER (left) looks on, Keith Fairey (right), of Enterprise Community Partners, surveys the state-of-the-art solar panel system that will help energize and sustain Jacob's Place, an affordable housing development on Webster Avenue. See page 14.

Hopes for Armory Include Push for Living Wage

By ANNIE SHREFFLER

The mall and re-creation complex coming to the Kingsbridge Armory will undoubtedly host well-known retail stores and provide more goods to local shoppers, but it is unclear if this kind of new business will provide good jobs for Bronx workers.

To see the Armory's vast commercial potential, look no further than River Plaza in Kingsbridge, which opened in 2004. The Plaza, anchored by a Target store, is swamped with customers at all times of the day and night.

Activists like Desiree Pilgrim-Hunter of the Kingsbridge Armory Redevelopment Alliance (KARA) think being allowed to build in the

EDC-formed Armory task force comprised of residents and community leaders, is not completely happy with the proposals they have seen. "Based on no changes in the living wage language, we cannot recommend either group," she said.

Spokespersons from the two developers, The Related Companies and Atlantic Development Group, both said an earlier agreement made with the EDC prevents them from offering any comment about living wages right now.

Armory task force members are confident of achieving their goals, despite the discouraging recent history of big Bronx projects (see Croton Water Filtration Plant and Yankee Stadium) that have failed to deliver many local jobs.

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Affordable and 'Green' Building Honors Activist

By ALLISON GRANDE

On Monday, family, friends, political leaders, and members of Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation and the Enterprise Foundation gathered at 2348 Webster Ave. to recognize the late Astin Jacobo by unveiling Jacob's Place, an affordable, energy-efficient apartment building in his honor.

All in attendance, including his longtime pastor Father John C. Flynn - who was "angry at him for dying because he's not replaceable" - praised the man known to most as "Jacob" for his work with youth and his community building efforts in the Crotona neighborhood.

"I am sure that Astin Jacobo, who was a source of inspiration to many in the Bronx community, including myself, would be happy to know that this affordable development will provide healthy, environmentally friendly, energy efficient housing for the residents of our community," said John Reilly, the executive director of the Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation, the project's developer.

As reported in the April 5 edition of the Norwood News, Jacob's Place is a 63-

unit housing development in the north-west Bronx that features six early education classrooms for 120 students as well as a playscape for both the children of the center and tenants.

Features of this housing development include elevators that use nearly a third of the energy of regular elevators, a playground floor made of recycled tires, a mural of Jacobo's life and work on the wall in the community room, and large insulated windows that allow more natural light to flow into the building, which received financing help from Enterprise, the city's Department of

Housing Preservation and Development, Borough President Adolfo Carrion, and JPMorganChase.

In order to live in these apartments, tenants must earn between 30 and 60 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI), or about \$21,000 to \$42,000.

What makes this project particularly "green" or environmentally friendly is the solar energy system on the roof. Under the Southern California-based BP Solar Neighbors Program, the brainchild of actor Edward Norton, every time a celebrity buys a solar energy system for their home, another system is

donated to a low-income family. The Jacob's Place donation was made possible by actor Owen Wilson. It marks the program's first solar panel system outside of California and the first to be put in a multi-family housing unit.

"Thirty years ago, Howard Cosell told the world that the Bronx was burning," Reilly said. "Today, we recognize all those people who stayed and fought. We showed the world that the Bronx is a place where people care about each other, even, and especially, when times and circumstances are difficult."



Photo by Allison Grande

NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING development Jacob's Place is named for Bronx activist Astin Jacobo who championed youth and community building efforts in Crotona.

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