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Supportive Housing Passive House Project Awarded \$1 Million in NYSERDA's Buildings of Excellence Competition

Rockabill Development and Johnson Park Center partner to bring critically-needed housing to Utica that is both sustainable and climate-resilient



Imagery Credit: SWBR Architecture, Engineering & Landscape Architecture PC

Utica, New York (March 13, 2021)—A joint venture between [Rockabill Development](#) and Johnson Park Center (JPC) today announced \$1 million in funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) for the construction of Johnson Park Green Community Apartments, a first-of-its-kind supportive housing project that seeks to achieve Passive House certification standards and other low carbon and climate resiliency strategies.

“The best way to reduce the near- and long-term impact of severe weather events on low-income renters is to ensure the properties they live in are built to the highest level of energy efficiency and sustainability” said **Niall J. Murray, President of Rockabill**. “We set out with a vision to build supportive housing to the highest standard of building technology that is Passive House, and to inspire others to include resiliency infrastructure in new affordable and supportive housing developments.”

“It is critically necessary to provide supportive housing in a sustainable and climate-resilient manner, benefiting our tenants and upholding our mission for positive change,” said **Rev. Dr. Maria A. Scates, D.D., CEO/Founder of Johnson Park Center**. “We are excited to surpass the LEED Platinum certifications we’ve achieved at our other properties and to build to Passive House standards this time around, with our partners at Rockabill.”

The new residential development consists of three buildings located around the Johnson Park Center Green in Utica, New York and will serve as precedent for developing green, supportive housing for

vulnerable populations in a cost-effective and replicable manner. Utilizing townhome, garden, and corridor-style apartments, the project will provide 62 homes for low-income individuals and families



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earning less than 60 percent of area median income (AMI), including 21 homes set aside for seniors facing homelessness and ten units designated for SMI qualifying individuals.

In addition to aiding in Passive House certification, the \$1 million in funding obtained through NYSERDA's Buildings of Excellence competition will support the implementation of various forms of renewable energy to protect residents during climate emergencies, including a solar photovoltaic system capable of meeting 100 percent of the buildings' energy demand. Taken together, these steps will turn the all-electric development into a net zero energy community. It is anticipated that the project will achieve a minimum of LEED Gold, and is well-positioned to achieve Platinum.

The project will be financed through the use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and capital subsidies from NYS HHAP and NYS HCR. The overall reduction in energy consumption will mitigate future utility price increases, allowing JPC to manage the buildings and their ongoing maintenance needs without sacrificing the properties' affordability or quality.

For over 25 years, Johnson Park Center (JCTOD Outreach, Inc.) has served the residents and promoted the revitalization of the Cornhill-Johnson Park neighborhood of Utica. Johnson Park aims to serve the community through the provision of housing and support services to Utica's low-income community, including services to aid the homeless, the elderly, people with emotional or mental disabilities, and persons in various stages of recovery from substance abuse.

"Johnson Park Center (JPC) has done an outstanding job revitalizing neighborhoods throughout our community. I thank NYSERDA for recognizing JPC's energy efficiency efforts as this \$1 million grant will further assist JPC in fulfilling their important mission in serving our community," said **Utica Mayor Robert M. Pamier**.

Johnson Park Green Community Apartments benefits from an integrated team including SWBR Architecture as design team lead, M/E Engineering as MEP engineer, The Levy Partnership as the project's primary energy consultant, and LeCesse Construction as construction manager.

The Buildings of Excellence Competition, administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), was launched in March 2019 and has awarded over \$31 million to over three dozen exemplary new construction projects. For a complete list of the 42 winning projects statewide, please visit NYSERDA's Buildings of Excellence website at <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/all-programs/programs/multifamily-buildings-of-excellence>.

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