

Reading Housing Authority breaks ground on the Oakbrook Center for Community Services

Residents of Oakbrook Homes to gain access to food, childcare, employment and education

Reading, PA – July 5, 2023

On **Wednesday, July 19 at 1pm**, Reading Housing Authority (RHA) will celebrate the groundbreaking of the Oakbrook Homes Center for Community Services, which will address a nearly 20-year goal of increasing access for residents and neighbors of Oakbrook Homes to services that support self-sufficiency.



RHA will repurpose two existing buildings to create a **Neighborhood Resource Center** (left) and a **Family Services Complex** (far right). Visitors to the Neighborhood Resource Center will derive much-needed benefit from a food pantry, small grocery store, two large common spaces intended for educational & vocational programs and a senior center, kitchen, business center, and shared office space for human service agencies. The Family Services Complex, to be named for longtime Board Chairman Steven Belinski, will provide property management offices that emphasize resident self-sufficiency and promote life *beyond* public housing, the likelihood of which will be amplified by the complex's flagship offering – an on-site childcare and early learning center.

Many years in the making, the realization of this dream would have been impossible were it not for the many partners who have laid groundwork and committed to deliver services when we open the doors in 2025, said Stacey Keppen, Executive Director. While far from exhaustive, the list includes the Oakbrook Resident Council, the United Way of Berks County, Opportunity House, Centro Hispano, Berks Community Health Center and Helping Harvest. The project also represents the most elaborate gathering of funds by RHA to date, without whose support the project would never have materialized, including the Administration and Council of the City of Reading, the County of Berks, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Of special note are those legislators who championed the Oakbrook Center for Community Services on behalf of some of the City's most vulnerable residents: U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan, State Senator Judy Schwank, and State Representative Manny Guzman.



Through the organization's Public Housing, Affordable Rentals and various Voucher Programs, RHA ensures that more than 2,600 households have access to safe, quality, service-enriched housing, regardless of their economic means. The mission of Reading Housing Authority is to *provide the foundation for people to find a home of hope and achieve their aspirations.*