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## Merritt Crossing Grand Opening

Posted On: March 16th, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Grand Opening Media Event  
Wednesday, October 3rd  
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.  
Program at 10:00 a.m.  
Tours and interviews available  
609 Oak Street, Oakland, CA

## Award-winning Affordable Green Housing Community Opens in Downtown Oakland

October 3, 2012 ? Oakland, CA. ? Today Affordable Housing Associates and residents of Merritt Crossing welcomed visitors to downtown Oakland's newest green housing development, one whose innovative design has already garnered special recognition from East Bay AIA and is expected to achieve a LEED Platinum rating.

Located at the edge of Oakland's Chinatown neighborhood near the Lake Merritt BART station, Merritt Crossing provides 70 affordable apartments for people 55 and older with low incomes, at least half of whom, at the time of initial occupancy, were either homeless or at high-risk of homelessness, living with HIV/AIDS, or challenged by mental illness. Fifteen of the residents are veterans. The community is a project of Affordable Housing Associates, a Berkeley-based nonprofit with a commitment to providing the highest-quality affordable housing and services.

The first multi-family highrise in California to earn Energy Star Certification, Merritt Crossing has already won widespread recognition within architecture and sustainability circles for its non-institutional design and green features. Located in downtown Oakland, an innovative air filtering system ensures the highest indoor air-quality for residents, while glass walls with high-performance glazing provide both a connection to the street and insulation from noise. The property's 55 one-bedroom, 10 two-bedroom, and 5 studio units are designed to be safe, comfortable and healthy. A beautifully landscaped courtyard connects with a laundry, community room, kitchen and service provider's office. An outstanding example of non-institutional design, with brightly-colored panels and tiles, glass walls, and planted mesh façade screens, the development inspires its residents with pride.

William Jackson grew up in the Bay Area and faced hard times after returning home from military service. Before moving into Merritt Crossing he slept in transitional housing and on sidewalks in Berkeley. He remembers his first morning in his new one-bedroom apartment. "In transitional housing you share a bathroom. I went to shave and I looked in the mirror and stopped and grabbed my cheek ? "Is this real?? I'm so proud of my new place. This is not just me. Everybody in this building has a story to tell."

Susan Friedland, executive director of Affordable Housing Associates, remarks, "Affordable Housing Associates believes high-quality housing transforms lives. Merritt Crossing continues our leadership in building affordable housing centered around residents with programs, architecture and design that make an impact. Our properties are more than places to live ? they are places of support, growth and opportunity."

Designed by Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects, and constructed by Nibbi Brothers, Merritt Crossing is expected to achieve a LEED Platinum rating. It is winner of a 2012 East Bay AIA Honor Award, a current CFMNH Project of the Quarter, and will be a featured property on the upcoming GreenBuild ?Green Buildings Within Reach? Tour. The development has also earned Bay Friendly Landscape certification, and is expected to achieve more than 200 Points in the Greenpoint Rated system.

Merritt Crossing?s green features include rooftop photovoltaic panels that provide energy for lighting and a rooftop solar hot water system, garden containers that double as storm water retention tanks, planted mesh rainscreen facades for energy efficiency and quiet, high slag concrete for lower embodied energy, thermally-broken windows for energy efficiency, and parking lifts to mitigate parking footprint. An innovative continuous filtered ventilation system provides 24-hour fresh air intake and circulates out through bathroom exhaust, keeping airflow in the building regulated and moisture at bay. Colored exterior panels are made of Swiss Pearl, a highly durable material that will ensure the building continues as a bright spot in the downtown Oakland landscape.

The project was funded by the city of Oakland, Alameda County, California HCD Infill Infrastructure Program, California Housing Finance Agency MHSA, Union Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Federal Home Loan Bank, Northern CA Community Loan Fund, Alameda County Waste Management Authority (stopwaste.org), and Oakland Housing Authority.

#### About Affordable Housing Associates

Incorporated in 1993, Affordable Housing Associates (AHA) is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. AHA's mission is "to strengthen the lives of individuals, families, and communities through affordable housing." AHA takes a hands-on approach to developing all of its projects, allowing it to build and maintain strong relationships with tenants and the communities in which they live. AHA meets with neighborhood residents, city commissions, and government agencies as an important part of every development, actively seeking input from the communities in which our projects are located and incorporating suggestions whenever possible. AHA counters urban sprawl by building and renovating housing in existing neighborhoods where public services are already in place and helps revitalize neighborhoods by removing blight. AHA strives to enhance the economic development of the populations we serve and of the larger community in which we operate by hiring locally and using local suppliers. In the 10 years since the organization was incorporated, AHA has developed over 900 housing units in 28 residential communities, with another 300 units in various stages of development.

#### Announcing Satellite Affordable Housing Associates

In July the boards of AHA and Satellite Housing, a 45-year old

affordable housing developer also located in Berkeley, voted to combine to create a new agency, Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (SAHA) in early 2013. Our goal in bringing together two healthy, well-respected organizations with similar missions, cultures, and values, is to be even more effective in delivering high quality, green and deeply affordable housing to the Bay Area's most vulnerable populations.

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