

By Bob Aicardi

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Caritas in Braintree wins \$100K grant for housing project

The \$100,000 affordable housing grant Caritas Communities of Braintree won through the TD Charitable Foundation's Housing for Everyone grant competition will be used to convert the vacant former District 6 police station in South Boston into Patriot Homes, a 24-unit development to be built at 244 D St. in partnership with the South Boston Neighborhood Development Corporation.

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The idea is to make affordable apartments available for veterans and veterans with families who have incomes at or below 60 percent of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development median income.

The apartments will have individual kitchens and bathrooms to provide more privacy and independence.

According to Mark Winkeller, executive director of Caritas, the project is anticipated to break ground in June, with 50 percent completion scheduled by next January. Work is expected to finish in July 2014 with all units fully occupied by December of that year.

"The veteran population in South Boston is double the citywide percentage," said Kevin Malone, TD Bank's market president for Metro Boston. "It sounds like this is going to be a great project. This program is a large part of our commitment to the communities we serve and we take this commitment very seriously."

Caritas has 890 units in 29 properties in Boston and 13 surrounding communities.

"We are extremely fortunate and grateful that the TD Charitable Foundation regarded our project as worthy of an exceptionally generous level of financial support," Winkeller said. "The foundation's extensive commitment to affordable housing and Caritas' long history as a skilled non-profit owner/operator of such housing made an excellent match."

The foundation is funded by TD Bank and focuses on affordable housing, financial literacy and education and the environment.

The theme of the seventh annual Housing for Everyone competition was transitional housing and homeless shelters, focusing on projects designed to expand the availability of and access to such housing and shelters, Winkeller said.

The competition invited local non-profit organizations in 13 states from Maine to Florida to submit proposals outlining plans and initiatives to support and provide affordable housing initiatives in their communities.

Organizations were required to have non-profit status and develop or maintain affordable housing or provide housing-related programs and services to very low-, low- and moderate-income individuals or families.

More than 500 proposals were received, and along with Caritas, 24 other organizations, including Chelmsford Housing Opportunities for Intergenerational Community Endeavors and Chelsea Neighborhood Developers in Massachusetts, were awarded grants in December for a total donation of \$2.5 million.

"These organizations strive to end homelessness through innovative affordable housing projects that not only help those in transition, but also provide permanent homes for those in need," stated Elizabeth K. Warn, president of the foundation. "Our goal is to build successful partnerships that benefit people in our communities, and the Housing for Everyone grants will have a significant impact on those affected by homelessness."

During the seven years of the program, the foundation has awarded 297 grants for a total of \$12 million, Malone said.

“We don’t know what the theme will be this year and there may be a different theme, but the application process will begin in July, proposals will be accepted through August and the grants will be awarded by the end of the year,” said TD Bank communications specialist for corporate and public affairs Eric Springer.

Further information about the Housing for Everyone competition is available at tdbank.com by clicking the “Our Community” tab.

<http://braintree.wickedlocal.com/article/20130220/NEWS/302209579>

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