

## The Bronx Times

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### **Pastor's housing dream comes true**

It all began with the dream of one man, who saw a vision for a brighter Bronx, even as it was burning. On Friday, March 26 the groundbreaking for the Reverend Dr. Fletcher C. Crawford Housing took place, contributing towards the efforts to increase Bronx housing.

Nearly 30 years ago, former Pastor Dr. Fletcher C. Crawford moved the Union Grove Baptist Church to 1488 Hoe Avenue. Crawford understood the needs of the community and saw the potential in the vacant land and rubble that surrounded the church.

Crawford remained in the Bronx as he watched nearly 40 percent of the area's housing destroyed, but he refused to abandon his home and congregation. He began a plan that sought to develop the land around the church, which was formerly owned by the New York City Housing Authority.

Named in his honor, the building will rise eight stories, containing 84 units. Five units will be designed to be fully accessible for persons with mobility impairments and two units will be dedicated to persons with vision impairments. The apartments are just the first phase in a three-phase project.

“This is just the first phase we are celebrating here today,” said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. “This will be a place where people can afford to live and invest in the Bronx. When Union Grove puts their minds and heart into something, it is not just the four walls of their church. They understand they have to go outside those walls to be a good Christian, to help provide services to others, in this case through housing.”

The \$27 million dollar project will include 5,300 square feet of outdoor recreational space, 21 parking spaces on the ground level of the building, and an elevator and community room within the building.

Union Grove Associates, LLC, a joint venture of Union Grove Baptist Church, is leading the project, along with the developer, MacQuesten Development, LLC.

“We were just the catalyst, because if it wasn't for the church and the community and the support, this would not have been possible,” said Rella Fogliano, President, MacQuestern Development, LLC.

The project is being constructed under NYS Housing & Community Renewal's Homes for Working Families Program, with additional support from NYC Housing Development Corporation, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development and Alliant Capital LTD.

A representative of Senator Ruben Diaz, Kennedy Williams-Benjamin, representing Assemblyman

Michael Benjamin, and John Dudley, district manager of Community Board 3, attended the groundbreaking.

“This has been a long time coming. Dr. Crawford had a dream, and he asked for our help. We couldn’t see the vision right away, but he told us to get on board and pay we see the vision. I am so glad the pastor is here today to see this,” said Deacon Bobby Britt, chairperson, Union Grove Community Economic Development Corp. “I grew up in the Bronx. I know the Bronx was beautiful, and I don’t know what happened in those middle years, but I am glad to see it coming back.”

Construction began in January 2010 and is expected to be completed in July 2012.

