Alternatives For Girls breaks ground on new affordable housing development

- *Dr. Maya Angelou Village will offer a safe place for those facing housing instability, will be a place 'where lives are changed.'*
- *In addition to permanent supportive housing, new center will offer deeply affordable housing for those at 30%-50% AMI.*

DETROIT – Mayor Mike Duggan and City Council President Pro Tem James Tate joined Alternatives For Girls (AFG) today to break ground on a new supportive housing facility located in Northwest Detroit's Miller Grove neighborhood in District 1.

AFG – a Detroit-based nonprofit dedicated to helping vulnerable, at-risk girls and young women avoid violence and exploitation and teen pregnancy – is building the center in collaboration with nonprofit developer Full Circle Communities. Scheduled to open in early 2024, the three-story, $17.3 million Dr. Maya Angelou Village will be located at 16711 Burt Road, near Grand River and McNichols avenues. It will feature 45 units of affordable and permanent supportive housing for those earning between 30% and 50% of the area median income (AMI). It is designed to address the needs of young adults and families who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. The project will provide much-needed, high-quality, safe and affordable housing, but it will also include indoor and outdoor community amenity spaces and case management offices to get residents the services they need to achieve the healthiest outcomes. The development will also build density in the community by replacing land that has been vacant for a decade.

AFG named the development after Dr. Maya Angelou with full support of the author, poet and civil rights activist's family.

"Her memory and words will serve as an inspiration for the residents of the neighborhood and all of Detroit for generations to come through this new development," added Amy Good, AFG's Chief Executive Officer. Much of Angelou's work seeks to tell her own story of overcoming trauma as a girl and young woman whose experiences are mirrored by the underserved, marginalized girls and young women served by AFG.

"This new center is the best next step in advancing our mission to meet the needs of more Detroiters," said Celia Thomas, chief operating officer of AFG. "We are grateful for so many partners coming together who have helped us to add housing of this caliber for the community."

The project is also in line with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan's commitment to the city's most vulnerable residents and to creating safe spaces where everyone is welcome.

"All over this city, we are helping to create both affordable and permanent supportive housing with wraparound services that do so much more than just provide a roof over Detroiters' heads," Mayor Mike Duggan said. "Developments like the new Alternatives For Girls center in District 1 will help give Detroiters the support they need to achieve the best possible outcomes for them and their families."

Added Good: "Though affordable housing is an imperative in Detroit, we didn't want to provide a place only to sleep and eat. We wanted to create a space that serves the whole individual. This center advances AFG's mission to meet housing and supportive services needs of young people across Detroit and will be a place where lives are changed."

The analysis, planning and design for the project has taken place in partnership with Full Circle Communities, a nonprofit developer and supportive housing provider, which will invest 75 percent of its revenue from the project toward providing tenant services. AFG will provide a comprehensive array of services that are person-centered and trauma-informed, and use a whole-family approach to promote long-term safety and stability for families living at the center. Supportive services will include assessment and referrals for health care, counselling, and referrals to job training and employment.

"We are honored to work alongside AFG as a dynamic and thoughtful partner in our continuing effort to address youth homelessness in Detroit," said Joshua Wilmoth, president and CEO of Full Circle Communities. "The on-site supportive services provided by AFG will help residents access vocational training and secure employment, and provide consistent, individualized support toward success."

The project was selected for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's 2020 funding round. The City of Detroit's Housing & Revitalization Department (HRD) put $1.8 million in Community Development Block Grants-CARES Act funds (CDBG-CV) into the project, plus an additional $950,000 in American Rescue Plan Act dollars (ARPA). HRD also identified the vacant City-owned parcel as a strategic potential site for affordable housing. The project is part of the City's Strategic Neighborhood Fund (SNF) efforts in the Northwest/Grand River area.

"The City of Detroit and staff of HRD are proud to have helped Alternatives For Girls and Full Circle Communities bring this vitally important project to Miller Grove and District 1," said Julie Schneider, director of HRD. "HRD shares these organizations' mission of providing safe, quality housing and services to those in our community who are most at risk, and to creating a Detroit where all can thrive and live healthy and successful lives."

Among the center's 45 units, 10 will be offered at 30 percent AMI, and 12 at 50 percent. The remaining 23 units will receive rental assistance from MSHDA's supportive housing program. In those units, residents will pay no more than 30 percent of their income. The other 22 units will offer rents as low as $450 for a one-bedroom, $540 for a two-bedroom, and $624 for a three-bedroom apartment.

In working alongside Full Circle Communities and Alternatives For Girls, the National Equity Fund (NEF) and Capital One further supported the development through investing in LIHTC equity, as well as providing construction financing.

"At Capital One, we recognize there's an urgent need to close the affordable housing gap, especially for our most vulnerable citizens," said Thomas Houlihan, capital officer with Capital One's Community Finance group. "As part of our commitment to create greater equity and socioeconomic mobility, we worked alongside AFG and Full Circle Communities to secure essential financing to help bring this development to life."



Alternatives For Girls and Full Circle Communities will build this development in the Miller Grove neighborhood in District 1. It will be 100 percent affordable housing and serve individuals and families.



Ten of the center's units will be offered at 30 percent AMI, and 12 at 50 percent. These 22 units will offer rents as low as $450 for a one-bedroom, $540 for a two-bedroom, and $624 for a three-bedroom apartment. The remaining 23 units will receive rental assistance from MSHDA's supportive housing program paying no more than 30 percent of their income.

"It has been an honor working with our partners at Alternatives For Girls and Full Circle Communities on this incredible development that will empower and uplift the Miller Grove neighborhood," said Kristen Senff, vice president at National Equity Fund. "At NEF, we believe that all individuals and families should have access to safe, stable and affordable homes that help them reach their full potential. This project will bring that vision to life as a supportive haven for young adults, providing them with the tailored services and the success tools they need to grow and thrive in their community."

Founded in 1987, Alternatives For Girls empowers at-risk girls and young women to thrive after experiencing trauma from homelessness, violence and exploitation. To date, it has served more than 30,000 young Detroiters and their children. Full Circle Communities, was founded in 1999, and to date has created or preserved over 1,500 units of affordable and supportive housing.