

SPHA Moves Residents Into Pinellas Hope II

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ST. PETERSBURG – On Tuesday, February 8, eight residents moved into Pinellas Hope II and began a new chapter of their lives, thanks to the partnership between the St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA) and the Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Each of the eight residents received a project-based housing voucher from SPHA, which subsidizes a portion of the monthly rent for an apartment at Pinellas Hope II based on the tenant's income. SPHA is offering a total of 40 vouchers to eligible residents of the 80-unit transitional housing facility, which is equivalent to approximately \$280,000 per year of on-going funding for Catholic Charities.

Dr. Arnett Smith, SPHA board chairman, said, "We are proud to be community partners in the fight against homelessness, and we remain committed to finding more affordable housing options throughout our jurisdiction to help keep people off of the streets. By providing the funding for these vouchers, SPHA is able to give much needed support to Catholic Charities and those that they serve in a very meaningful and sustainable way."

Shelia Lopez, Catholic Charities chief operating officer, said, "We are proud of our residents that have achieved self-sufficiency and can live in safe and affordable housing."

The housing vouchers are made possible through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Project-Based Voucher program. The goal of the HUD program is to expand the availability of higher quality affordable housing units to the elderly, disabled individuals and homeless military veterans.

Under this program, housing authorities may choose to provide subsidy to selected privately-owned properties through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. SPHA's contract with Catholic Charities for Pinellas Hope II is a direct result of a RFP issued by the housing authority in June 2008 to find interested developers and property owners.