

GOVERNMENT

Bergen approves grants for senior, special needs housing

BY TODD SOUTH

Staff Writer

HACKENSACK – Bergen County Freeholders on May 25 approved \$1.25 million in federal grant money that will add 30 affordable-housing units for seniors and people with special needs in the county, continuing more than a decade's worth of work by two local agencies.

Bergen County United Way and Madeline Corp., a non-profit affordable-housing developer based in Palisades Park, are partners in creating and maintaining the housing units. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development money is allotted for projects in Mahwah (\$500,000), Glen Rock (\$150,000), Wyckoff (\$200,000) and Montvale (\$400,000).

"We know the need for senior housing and special-needs housing exists, and is in fact increasing, in every community here in Bergen County," Freeholder Tracy Zur said in a news release. She said partnerships with organization such as United Way and

Madeline Corp. help "seniors and special-needs residents live independently and fully integrated into our communities."

The Montvale project will contain a group home with four one-bedroom apartments for residents with autism who require more constant care. It will be on the grounds of the old schoolhouse on East Grand Avenue. The adjacent schoolhouse was the object of funding by the freeholders in January to be converted into senior housing.

"As a resident of Montvale, I'm glad to see us put the old schoolhouse property to even greater use as it serves our seniors and residents with disabilities," Freeholder Tom Sullivan said in a release.

The four projects add to work by the United Way and Madeline Corp. begun in 2004 that has seen the completion of 17 projects with 228 units in North Jersey, bringing \$30 million in funding, according to information provided by the United

Way.

Gina Plotino, local United Way vice president of Programs and Operations, said that all four projects funded this week should be open by early 2017.

Plotino said that each of the projects also receives funding from the United Way and some also get funding from municipal affordable-housing trust funds.

She did not have figures immediately available for other funding sources for the projects announced this week.

Madeline Corp. builds or renovates the projects. The company then maintains them, collecting rent determined by needs-based assessments and income limits set by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Plotino said.

The corporation, founded in 1995, opened its first building, containing eight affordable-housing units, in Cliffside Park in 2001.

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