

Super Nova Star of Energy Efficiency Award Nomination – Community Housing Innovations

For its commitment to energy efficient affordable housing, Community Housing Innovations, Inc. (CHI), an 18-year old nonprofit organization based in White Plains, NY, would like to be considered for a Super Nova Star of Energy Efficiency Award. Community Housing Innovations has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to energy efficiency with Minerva Place Condominiums, an affordable housing development billed as the most energy efficient residence in the City of White Plains, New York and is the first low-rise new construction project in Westchester County to meet all of the requirements of the New York Energy Smart Multifamily Performance Program[®]. The development features the city's first geexchange system for heating and cooling. Engineers estimate it will achieve energy savings of about 30% compared to a typical new development. The project, currently under construction, will open in July 2009. Targeted for the city's municipal, police and volunteer workforce, Minerva Place is developed, constructed and marketed by Community Housing Innovations, in partnership with White Plains.

On Tuesday, August 19, 2008, Community Housing Innovations, along with White Plains Mayor Joseph Delfino, hosted a groundbreaking for Minerva Place Condominiums, which includes 14 for-sale units. During the groundbreaking, drilling began on the first of the eight wells for the geexchange system, each 350 feet deep. In addition to geothermal heat pumps that use the constant temperature of the earth to heat and cool the building, Minerva Place Condominiums features energy-efficient construction techniques, air-sealing, higher insulation, plumbing, Energy Star[®] appliances and lighting upgrades.

The units are affordable to families with incomes between 80% and 100% of Westchester County's Area Median Income, which is between \$73,000 and \$91,000 for a family of three. For families who qualify, CHI may provide up to \$30,000 in down payment assistance from the New York State Housing Trust Fund. With a goal of enabling local workers to afford to live in the community in which they work, the City of White Plains Department of Planning will utilize a preference system for local police, firefighters, teachers and other municipal employees who wish to move into the community.

Minerva Place Condominiums has been serving as a catalyst for future change in four primary ways. First, by successfully integrating geothermal heat pump technology into an affordable residence, Minerva Place stands as an example for future developments that energy efficiency can be affordable. Second, Minerva Place has successfully blended local and state funding opportunities. White Plains donated land and about \$75,000 per unit in subsidy from its Affordable Housing Fund, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority provided about \$55,000 to subsidize the energy-saving improvements. Third, Minerva Place has already become a symbol in the community for the local movement to create Green Jobs. On September 27th, 2008, local low-income workers joined New York State Senator Suzi Openheimer at Minerva Place for a Green Jobs Now Rally calling for Westchester County to create more Green Jobs. Finally, Minerva Place has garnered tremendous press attention, promoting the importance of energy efficient affordable housing through stories in *New York Times*, the front page of *The Journal News*, the *Westchester County Business Journal*, the *White Plains Times*, *Westchester.com*, *White Plains CitizeNet Reporter*, the *Westchester Times Tribune*, *Suburban Street*, *White Plains.com*, *MultiFamilyBiz.com*, the *New York League of Conservation Voters*, *Multi-Housing News*, and a cover story in the *New York Real Estate Journal*. It was featured in a newscast on News 12 Westchester (Cablevision).

Westchester County is a leader in the development of energy efficient buildings, and Community Housing Innovations in leading the way – bringing local politicians, community members, low-income workers, green jobs practitioners and the media together in an important dialog on the importance of blending energy efficient construction with affordable housing. Minerva Place is the most energy efficient residence in White Plains, and it is an innovative project that leads the way for the future development of others.