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Women's Community Revitalization Project Breaks Ground on 33 Affordable Townhomes & Apartments

Project delivers affordable housing, community space to local families & veterans

PHILADELPHIA – Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) broke ground on 33 new rental homes at Reed and South Capitol streets in Philadelphia's Point Breeze neighborhood. The Mamie Nichols Townhomes, named for the late founder and executive director of the Point Breeze Federation, will replace vacant lots with permanently affordable apartments and townhomes.

WCRP, a woman-led development organization with a 30-year history of serving women and their families, is continuing Mamie Nichols' legacy.

"Mamie Nichols was a pioneering and determined leader dedicated to strengthening her community," said Nora Lichtash, executive director of WCRP. "Like its namesake, the Mamie Nichols Townhomes project puts the needs of the local community first while also serving as an inspiration for the next generation of affordable housing advocates."

The Mamie Nichols Townhomes feature nine wheelchair-accessible units, 22 townhomes for families and 11 one-bedroom or efficiency units for veterans with special needs. The development prioritizes local neighbors' rental applications. The project, which is converting three dozen vacant lots to residential use, is part of the Community Justice Land Trust (CJLT), a model that promotes equitable development through community ownership of the land to allow housing prices to respond to community demands rather than market demands.

"Maintaining the affordability of these townhomes and apartments ensures this project addresses both the wants and the needs of community members," Lichtash said. "The Mamie Nichols Townhomes are helping to realize the community's vision for Point Breeze."

Philadelphia City Councilmember Kenyatta Johnson (Second District), who joined the groundbreaking ceremony and represents the Council district where the Nichols homes are located, commended the project for its commitment to long term affordability.

"The late Mamie Nichols is a legend in South Philadelphia and the Point Breeze section because she fought hard for all of its citizens to have a better life," Johnson said. "She was a mentor to me and these new townhomes and apartments that bear her name are a fitting legacy to an amazing woman. The addition of 33 affordable housing units means the community residents

who have called Point Breeze home for decades can continue to be one of the distinct threads making up the diverse fabric of our neighborhood.”

The groundbreaking ceremony was also attended by Albert Littlepage, president of the Point Breeze Community Development Corporation; Rochelle Nichols-Solomon, daughter of the late Point Breeze community organizer, Mamie Nichols; and Anne Fadullon, director of the City’s Department of Development and Planning.

“These townhomes are a tribute to my mother, who would be thrilled that the work she and other community members did to ensure affordable housing in Point Breeze continues,” said Rochelle Nichols-Solomon.

The groundbreaking of the 33 rental homes comes a year after WCRP commenced construction on five permanent affordable ownership units in Point Breeze that are also named for Mamie Nichols and represent the first CJLT homeownership project where residents were owners from day one. Together, the 38 affordable townhomes and apartments represent the third development project within CJLT, a project led by WCRP that ensures permanent affordability and community control by retaining ownership of the land and using a community-driven decision-making model.

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About WCRP

The Women’s Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) is committed to social and economic equity for low-income women and their families, developing housing; providing supportive services, advocating for policy change and honoring leadership, dignity, and justice in our communities. Learn more at www.wcrpphila.org.

About Community Justice Land Trust

The Community Justice Land Trust (CJLT) was established in 2009 to create permanently affordable housing in rapidly changing neighborhoods and to meet other community needs like supporting or establishing long-term community gardens and locally-owned businesses. The CJLT has developed 36 rental homes in Port Richmond with an additional 35 under construction in Germantown.