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**Media Contact:**

Jamie Frumusa

585-683-5439

[Jamie@tippingpointcomm.com](mailto:Jamie@tippingpointcomm.com)



**RHA EXPANDS “CHANGING THE FACE OF PUBLIC HOUSING” INITIATIVE**

*Ribbon Cutting of Remodeled Community Site Continues Long-term Capital Project Plan*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y., February 15, 2018** – Today the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) unveiled and celebrated the opening of its first *RCafe* community center. Mayor Lovely Warren, Commissioner of Neighborhood and Urban Development Baye Muhammad, and City Council Members Adam McFadden, Michael Patterson and Mitch Gruber were also in attendance for the ribbon cutting.

The center, located inside Danforth Tower East, a public housing site in downtown Rochester, was created as a gathering place for residents of both Danforth Tower East and West. This modernization project is part of the organizations continued efforts to “change the face of public housing,” by creating quality places for people to live and thrive. RHA plans to construct an *RCafe* community center at each of its public housing towers by the end of 2020.

This modernization and expansion project was a \$150,000 investment and included major updates to the interior of the current resident lounge area, using a portion of accumulated operating surplus dollars that have been held in reserve. Updates to the area included: more appropriate supportive furniture, fixtures, and amenities to accommodate the nearly 100 elderly and disabled residents between Towers East and West. Previously, the community room had a maximum capacity of 40 people.

“Creating these gathering spaces where residents can enjoy each other’s company, share stories, stay engaged, and create unique business opportunities for resident entrepreneurs – was an important goal for us in 2018,” said Paul Foti, Chief Operations Officer at Rochester Housing Authority and lead on the *RCafe* modernization project. “It’s proven that spaces like this help build a sense of community, ownership and pride, and we want people that live in our public housing residences to feel they have that with us.”

The Board’s vision that “public housing doesn’t need to look like public housing, to be public housing,” coincides with the organization’s strategic planning goals for developing quality and affordable public housing options.

“I want to congratulate the Rochester Housing Authority for opening its first *RCafe* in Danforth Towers and for beginning the process to construct new, beautiful and comfortable gathering places in all of its public housing towers,” said Mayor Lovely A. Warren. “By making these investments and raising the quality of affordable housing in our city, the Rochester Housing Authority is putting our citizens on a path to reach their full potential, which helps us create more jobs, safer more vibrant neighborhoods and better educational opportunities for all of our citizens.”

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"Providing quality housing, a great sense of community and caring neighbors are things that are needed and optimal in our city," said Senator Joe Robach. "The new RCafe community center will go a long way to enhancing Danforth Towers for all its residents."

**About Rochester Housing Authority**

Established in 1955 as an independent public corporation by New York State Public Housing Law, the Rochester Housing Authority (RHA) serves more than 22,000 lower-income families, seniors and disabled residents in the five-county Greater Rochester area. Approximately 20% of those reside in the 2,400+ RHA public housing units, while others served receive assistance in the form of voucher or certificate programs that help them afford eligible, private housing.

Rochester Housing Authority does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, family status or disability in leasing, rental, occupancy, use or other disposition of housing or related facilities.

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