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Home First's Access Peoria Development Celebrates Grand Opening
Nonprofit IFF Joins with Partners to Bring Housing to Persons with Disabilities

Peoria, IL—In partnership with the City of Peoria, East Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (EBNHS) and Greater Peoria LISC, Midwest nonprofit IFF celebrates the grand opening of a \$4 million affordable housing project for persons with disabilities. The event will be held in Peoria, IL, at 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 15, at 1514 N. New York Ave., the location of one of the new duplexes.

The project, called Access Peoria, consists of 8 duplexes, which provide 16 rental units consisting of one and two bedrooms. All duplexes are wheelchair accessible with green design features and are available to persons with different types of disabilities. This project is part of IFF's Home First initiative, whose mission is to give individuals with disabilities community-based housing options. Through Home First, IFF acquires, develops and owns integrated homes that remain permanently affordable to low-income people with disabilities, with a focus on expanding the availability of accessible housing. To date, IFF has secured over \$50 million in financing to develop 266 units in Illinois for residents.

"Home First is some of the most critical work we do," IFF CEO Joe Neri said. "We're helping individuals with disabilities leave behind institutional facilities and find a home where they can lead happy, healthy lives. At the same time, this particular project is part of local efforts to revitalize the East Bluff neighborhood in the City of Peoria."

The Access Peoria project is part of a larger neighborhood revitalization initiative funded by a \$3 million grant awarded to Greater Peoria LISC from the Illinois Attorney General. In addition, other development financing sources include the Illinois Housing Development Authority's (IHDA) Community Development Block Grant, City of Peoria HOME funds and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Construction development team members included Worn Jerabek Architects and P.C., Morrissey Construction Company. EBNHS, the property manager, will continue to partner with IFF, IHDA and the City regarding tenant occupancy, ongoing affordability and overall maintenance of the properties.

"This development is just one of the many efforts funded with the Attorney General grant — other activities include homeownership, new home construction, demolition, financial education, improved public infrastructure and targeted economic development strategies," Third District Councilman Tim Riggerbach said. "Through these activities, the committed partners are working together to improve the East Bluff neighborhood."

“Helping community partners improve Peoria’s neighborhoods is one of our top priorities,” said Mike Higgins, executive director of Greater Peoria LISC. “We will continue to focus on establishing and maintaining quality, collaborative relationships with local and regional partners to invest in the people and places of the East Bluff. Improving housing will play a key role in everything we do.”

The East Bluff neighborhood has been a focus area by residents, local organizations and city officials since 2008, with the development of the Glen Oak School Neighborhood Impact Zone that evolved into the East Village Growth Cell tax increment financing district. The TIF district was enhanced by the LISC Community Core Initiative in 2015 and further supported by the EBNHS, which administers no interest loans for East Bluff homeowners and has increased its capacity as a resource center for area residents.

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About City of Peoria

The oldest community in Illinois with a population of 112,936, Peoria is equal distance from Chicago and St. Louis. Residents enjoy big-city amenities with a small-town feel. A first glimpse of the city includes a scenic skyline that follows the banks of the Illinois River. This vibrant riverfront showcases a multitude of festivals and celebrations, including the extraordinary Fourth of July Sky concert ... a fireworks show that draws well over 100,000 annually. Naturally, the City is proud to be the site of the world headquarters of Caterpillar, Inc., but it has many global businesses that allow Peoria to play all over the World through their products and services. Peoria has begun to diversify its economy with infotech industries as well. Thus the business community attracts some of the brightest graduates throughout the nation.

Peoria is a three-time All American City and offers its residents and visitors an enviable standard of living, exciting venues within a 15-20 minute drive from home, safe streets, quality and quantity shopping, its own symphony and ballet, Broadway Theater League, museums, art guilds, first-class medical facilities that are a regional draw, the Nation’s oldest community theater and the Nation’s oldest Santa Claus parade.

About IFF

[IFF](#) is a mission-driven lender, real estate consultant and developer that helps communities thrive by creating opportunities for low-income populations and individuals with disabilities. From child care to senior housing, IFF works closely with clients from every sector, offering affordable, flexible financing; full-scale real estate consulting; and community development services. Since 1988, we have made over \$597 million in loans, leveraged \$1.9 billion in community investments and grown our total managed assets to \$461 million.

About East Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services

Established in 1986, the East Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service strives to continue to improve the East Bluff Neighborhood by providing resident support services through innovative programs. These programs promote safety, security, upkeep, maintenance, rehabilitation, restoration and revitalization



to increase the quality of life and the economic health and value of the East Bluff Neighborhood in Peoria.

Greater Peoria LISC

LISC equips struggling communities with the capital, program strategy and know-how to become places where people can thrive. It combines corporate, government and philanthropic resources to achieve sustainable change the communities it serves. Since 1980, LISC has invested \$16 billion across the country to build or rehab 350,000 affordable homes and apartments and develop 55 million square feet of retail, community and educational space. For more, visit www.lisc.org.