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### **JUST A START BREAKS GROUND AT THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY HUB AT RINDGE COMMONS**

*The new, 70,000 square-foot, mixed-use facility will bring all of Just A Start's programs under one roof to comprehensively serve the community*

**Cambridge, MA -- October 21, 2022 --** Just A Start announces the groundbreaking of The Economic Mobility Hub at Rindge Commons, a new, 70,000-square-foot, mixed-use development that will bring together an education and job training center and affordable housing, as well as expand services to families spanning Cambridge and beyond. The hub, located at the intersection of Rindge Avenue and Alewife Brook Parkway in North Cambridge, is adjacent to the 402 Rindge Avenue tower, Just A Start's affordable housing development with 273 apartments.

Over the course of the last 54 years, Just A Start has focused on meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have been systemically denied opportunities to realize their full potential. The site will not only significantly increase the reach of Just A Start's existing programs, but will further enable its mission to promote equity by creating access to stable housing and building pathways to economic opportunity. With the support of partners, donors, and main leadership investors, IQHQ and Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), the once held vision of a fully integrated economic mobility hub is now a reality.

"IQHQ is proud to partner with Just A Start," IQHQ President Tracy Murphy said. "As we advance on our life science district- Alewife Park, we continue to be committed to ensuring that we give back and have a positive impact in Cambridge."

The lower floors will be dedicated to workforce training and early childhood education, including Just A Start's new integrated training facility. The space will be a combination of classrooms, workshop and laboratory uses to accommodate the Biomedical and Information Technology adult career programs and the YouthBuild program, enhancing the quality and scale of services for low-income adults and youth and tripling the number of workforce development graduates served. 90% of Just A Start Biomedical and IT training graduates secure in-sector jobs within one year with an average salary increase of \$29,500. Robust housing resources and financial education and coaching programs will also serve their

participants in this space. Currently, over 500 people benefit from coaching on topics such as savings goals, tax filing and budgeting.

“The life sciences sector can be a driver to bring people back to work and engage those who for too long have been underrepresented in the life sciences and other STEM fields,” said Massachusetts Life Sciences Center President and CEO Kenn Turner. “Just A Start is an essential partner in this endeavor. The individuals supported through Just A Start’s career training are exactly who we need to attract and retain to remain the global leader in the life sciences.”

Approximately 10,000 square feet of commercial space will support preschool classrooms in partnership with the City of Cambridge. They will create 68 new, high-quality preschool slots across four classrooms. The top three floors include 24 affordable apartments funded through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program and with funding from the City of Cambridge, the Mass. Department of Housing and Community Development and MassHousing.

“The Low Income Investment Fund was proud to bring New Markets Tax Credits and additional financing to Just A Start’s transformative, mixed-use development,” said Kirsten Shaw, Vice President, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions. “At LIIF, our mission is to build communities of equity, opportunity and wellbeing. We strategically focus on affordable housing and early care and education because evidence shows that across the country – and particularly in geographies like the Boston metro area – housing and child care are two of the highest cost necessities that families face. And the reality is that these costs are not distributed equitably – communities of color and particularly our Black and Latino neighbors are more likely to face unaffordable and inaccessible housing and child care services. By co-locating preschool classrooms with new affordable housing close to a major transit hub with access to job centers, Just A Start and the City are helping families thrive.”

As families face the dramatic increase of rental costs and a lack of affordable housing, intense competition for quality employment and a struggle to be financially independent, the Economic Mobility Hub will directly address these identified challenges. “We look forward to the immense possibility that this facility represents for our organization, programs, staff participants and supporters. At its core, it also reinforces our fundamental belief in an equitable community where everyone can secure a solid economic foundation,” said Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director, Just A Start.

Slated to open in early 2024, the Economic Mobility Hub at Rindge Commons is designed to the Passive House standard, the highest environmental and energy efficiency standard. A capital campaign is under way and to date, has raised \$3.2M.



**Pictured L to R:** Senator Patricia Jehlen, Representative Steven Owens, Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang, Senator Sal DiDomenico, Just A Start Executive Director Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Vice-Mayor Alanna Mallon, Councillor Marc McGovern, Councillor Quinton Zondervan.

**About Just A Start**

Just A Start believes that access to stable housing and sustainable careers are the essential building blocks of equitable communities. For more than 50 years, we have focused on meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have been systemically denied opportunities to realize their full potential. Our programs include affordable housing, education and job training, and comprehensive support services, spanning Cambridge and beyond. We have developed and currently maintain 600 affordable apartments. To keep community members housed, we also offer financial and technical assistance to prevent evictions, and support low- and moderate-income homeowners. Finally, we prepare individuals of all ages and circumstances with the skills and knowledge they need to secure fulfilling careers, leveraging their talents to achieve economic mobility and strengthen the region’s workforce. For more information, please visit [www.justastart.org](http://www.justastart.org).