JUST A START HOSTS TOPPING OFF CEREMONY AT THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY HUB AT RINDGE COMMONS

The final steel beam is put into place marking a major project milestone for the new, 70,000 square-foot, mixed-use facility that will bring affordable housing, workforce training and childcare under one roof to comprehensively serve the community.

Cambridge, MA -- May 19, 2023 -- Just A Start marked a major project milestone at 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.

The event featured a time-honored milestone to mark the placement of the last steel beam on the building and recognition for Just A Start’s most ambitious project in its 55-year history. Over the course of the last 55 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.

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 $25,000. 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. 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.

“We are grateful for every team and individual who has played a part in this journey, including the construction crew, the real estate and financing teams, generous philanthropic supporters and the City of Cambridge,” said Carl Nagy-Koechlin, Executive Director of Just A Start.

A close partnership with the City of Cambridge has proven instrumental in the progress and execution of the project. Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui offered these words during the speaking program, “For over 50 years, Just A Start has been dedicated to meeting the fundamental needs of individuals and families who have systematically been denied opportunities toward success. Rindge Commons is the exciting next step to empower individuals and families with the resources, opportunities, and training they need to thrive in Cambridge.”

In 2021, Just A Start launched a $4.25 million capital campaign to fund the buildout and furnishing of the project, in addition to seeding the program expansion that the project will enable. The campaign is currently 90% towards its goal, $3.8 million, through a combination of individual, foundation, and corporate support. During the speaking program, Lisa Drapkin, Just A Start board member and campaign chair, announced a new, $200,000 challenge grant from an anonymous donor that will match the remaining gifts, dollar-to-dollar, up to $200,000. To learn more visit: https://justastart.org/the-campaign-for-rindge-commons/

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.

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Pictured Above: Attendees sign the beam before it is lifted and put into place.

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.