

# Home for 55 Brings Tears of Joy At Opening on West 35th Street

Three adjacent tenements on West 35th Street opened their doors last week to 55 formerly homeless adults – some elderly, some with chronic mental problems, and four former residents of the building.

The formerly derelict building complex at 454 W. 35th St. was rehabilitated over the past 16 months by the community-based Clinton Housing Development Corp. (CHDC) in partnership with the city housing department and the Enterprise Foundation, a private investment group. The partnership also includes Self Help, a service organization for low-income elderly citizens, and Fountain House, which serves people with chronic mental illness.

## 'My Impossible Dream'

"This is my impossible dream," said Rita Ross at the rededication on May 17 of the building where she lived for 50 years. Ross and three other former residents of the tenement complex moved back home last week from temporary city-owned locations where they were staying during the \$5 million renovation.

Dozens of public officials, community board members, housing advocates and neighbors paid tribute to CHDC and its director, Joe Restuccia, for bringing the elements of the project together.



*Resident Rita Ross*

John Whittaker

City Councilmember Tom Duane and Community Board 4 chair Ross Graham recalled the planning stages four years ago and praised the persistence that saw the project through.

Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Assistant Commissioner Steven Symowitz declared, "This is what partnership is all about." HPD's Single-Room-Occupancy Loan Program, which has funded more than 3,800 apartments for low-income residents, provided \$3.2 million for

the 35th Street project project.

The rest of the \$1.8 million came from the Enterprise Foundation, a national not-for-profit group that arranges financing for low-income housing by selling tax credits to corporate investors. In New York City the foundation has helped develop over 5,000 apartments for low-income residents. The foundation was established in 1982 by developer Jim Rouse and his wife, Patty.

## Restored Old Furniture

Neighbors of the 35th Street building, many of them members of the Hell's Kitchen Neighborhood Association, took part in the Furniture Project, a collective effort that found and restored old furniture for the complex's suites of double and triple rooms. Many of those same neighbors took part the previous week in the dedication of Bob's Park, adjacent to the 35th Street project, in memory of a late neighbor, Bob Kennedy.

The complex will be managed by CHDC, while Self Help will provide social services for the elderly residents and Fountain House will provide services for residents with mental problems.

— Al Amateau