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THE MONTROSE CENTER TO BREAK GROUND ON LGBTQ AFFIRMING SENIOR LIVING CENTER

(HOUSTON, TX, JULY 15, 2019) - The Montrose Center is excited to announce the groundbreaking of its affordable senior independent living center on Tuesday, Aug. 6 at 10:30 a.m. at the event site located at 2222 Cleburne Street. This complex will embrace the LGBTQ and Third Ward communities. The “There’s No Place Like Home” campaign, led by honorary campaign co-chairs, Mayor Annise Parker and State Rep. Garnet Coleman, has hit the final financial milestone in order to break ground.

On June 20, the Montrose Center closed on all of the components necessary to start construction on the senior living center including: the land granted by the Midtown Redevelopment Authority, City of Houston Tax Incremental Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) funding supported by the current Mayor Sylvester Turner and District D Councilmember Dwight Boykins, Low Income Houston Tax Credits (LIHTC) through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, a construction and permanent loan through BBVA, and the National Equity Fund as the investor.

In early September 2018, the Center received a letter of commitment for nine percent LIHTC worth an estimated \$13.8 million in funding. This sum is separate from the more than \$5 million raised from the community, the \$5.1 million of TIRZ funds allocated by the City of Houston through its Housing & Community Development Department, and the land donation valued at more than \$5 million. On June 12, the Houston City Council voted unanimously to allocate \$5.1 million in TIRZ funds. The effort to obtain TIRZ funding began under Mayor Annise Parker with the continued support of Mayor Sylvester Turner who championed the project when he took office in 2016.

The complex, designed by Smith & Company Architects, will feature 112 one- and two-bedroom independent living apartments for low-income seniors ages 62 and older. Eligible seniors will pay no more than 30 percent of their income for rent. Additional features of the property will include: a social services department managed by the Center, geriatric primary care clinic provided by Legacy Community Health, a group dining area, meeting and game rooms, a fitness center, dog park, vegetable garden, and outdoor recreational spaces. The Center is fortunate to have engaged a very experienced senior housing developer, Covenant Community Capital, which shepherded the project through the complex LIHTC process for the Center and has secured Camden as a first rate builder.

The project was first made possible by a land grant for the 2.87 acre lot at 2222 Cleburne Street from the Midtown Redevelopment Authority, initiated by State Representative Garnet Coleman with the support of Midtown staff. This initial investment, held through an option contract, allowed the Montrose Center the time needed to secure the funds for the project. There are limited properties inside the loop of this size available for developing a housing venture of this size, and this location is important because of its proximity to cultural neighborhoods that are experiencing high rates of displacement of their senior populations due to rent and tax increases and gentrification. A grant of the land was essential to making the project affordable.

Housing is one of the greatest financial challenges, and correspondingly, one of the greatest needs for older adults across the nation, especially LGBTQ seniors. The groundbreaking event will also honor and



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thank Mayor Parker and Representative Coleman for their vision and work to launch the senior living center.

The “There’s No Place Like Home” community campaign was launched in 2016 after securing the option contract for the land. The Center has seen tremendous support for the project securing more than \$5 million in gifts and pledges. The Hollyfield Foundation, an LGBTQ community foundation, was the first gift received to the community campaign and the largest gift from the LGBTQ community was from the LTR Lewis Cloverdale Foundation, Inc. The largest private investment to the community campaign is from the Kinder Foundation, which awarded a transformational gift of \$1.5 million. Although the project has seen tremendous success, fundraising continues to raise the remaining \$2.5 million to complete the project.

The Center is elated by the amount of support received from all partners, and could not have pursued this project without the tremendous financial support from the community that allowed the Center to secure the donation of the land and make the project viable. The Center is grateful for the donation of the lot from the Midtown Redevelopment Authority, allowing the Center to build a facility large enough to meet the needs of seniors being priced out of their neighborhoods. Although the Center is celebrating an important milestone and beginning the construction of the senior center, fundraising for the project continues.

This project presents a unique opportunity for the LGBTQ community and its allies to come together to ensure that LGBTQ and Third Ward seniors can age in a safe and affirming environment with dignity, independence, and a sense of community.

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THE MONTROSE CENTER

Established in 1978 as a safe and affirming place for lesbian and gay Houstonians to receive counseling, the Montrose Center has emerged as one of the nation’s leading full-service LGBTQ centers. Although counseling remains at the heart of what we do, services have expanded to meet the changing needs of our diverse community. These services include substance use disorder treatment, support and advocacy for LGBTQ survivors of violent crimes, care and assistance for people living with HIV, free community wellness programs and activities, and programs for our community’s most vulnerable and isolated—youth and seniors. We sit at the center of the LGBTQ community and serve as a gathering place for LGBTQ organizations and groups. The Montrose Center is a United Way Agency.