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COMMON GROUND, ROBERT A.M. STERN AND CONNECTICUT OFFICIALS CELEBRATE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT CEDARWOODS IN WILLIMANTIC

CONNCTICUT – Today, Common Ground was joined by Governor Dannel Malloy, Robert A.M. Stern Architects, Connecticut Department of Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority Executive Director Eric Chatman, Town of Windham Mayor Ernie Eldridge, United Services President Diane Manning and other partners at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Cedarwoods, a new 60-unit, LEED certified building for low-income residents and veterans in Willimantic, Conn.

Common Ground is the largest supportive housing developer and manager in New York City. Cedarwoods is Common Ground’s second project in Connecticut and it is the first LEED certified affordable housing development in eastern Connecticut. The $14 million building was designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects with Hartford-based firm Crosskey Architects.

“At Common Ground, our work mainly focuses on New York City, but we were thrilled to expand our efforts in Connecticut when officials approached us with a need for greater affordable housing resources within the state. We are delighted to bring this sustainable and attractive building to the Willimantic community,” said Brenda Rosen, Executive Director of Common Ground.

"The Town of Windham is pleased to have such a quality facility that houses low-income residents and Veterans. Cedarwoods, a state of the art facility, is a welcome addition to our community — it is not just a place to stay, but a true home," said Mayor Ernie Eldridge.

"Investments in housing are investments in Connecticut’s future,” said Connecticut Department of Housing Commissioner Evonne Klein. “The development of attractive, efficient, and affordable housing like Cedarwoods supports a stable and more productive workforce and improves the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in the community.”

“Cedarwoods fills an important need for low-income housing for families in Willimantic, as well as offering the supportive services that can be life-changing for veterans and people who might otherwise be homeless,” said Eric Chatman, President & Executive Director of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority.

“At National Equity Fund, we believe extraordinary things happen when you have great partners and we are pleased to have worked with Common Ground on this exciting development,” commented Joe Hagan, NEF’s president and CEO. “Cedarwoods is a wonderful example of detailed-designed affordable housing for individuals and families with a supportive environment.”
“Safe, affordable housing is the foundation for recovery. The partnership between Common Ground and United Services assures that additional supports are available to assist residents who request help in reaching their goals,” said Diane Manning, President and CEO of United Services.

Cedarwoods, located on Cameo Drive two miles outside of downtown Willimantic, has 60 one-bedroom units for low-income working adults, veterans and households at risk of homelessness. The units are approximately 700 square feet and rents are affordable for individuals with incomes ranging from 25% to 60% of the Area Median Income.

As with all Common Ground buildings, Cedarwoods demonstrates a strong commitment to exceptional design and environmental sustainability. Cedarwoods is the first LEED certified affordable housing development in eastern Connecticut and it brought green construction jobs to an area in need of new industry. To promote energy efficiency, Cedarwoods has an ultra-insulated building envelope, high-performance boilers, efficient light and plumbing fixtures and Energy Star appliances in all units.

Cedarwoods sits on a 19-acre wooded site overlooking 10 acres of wetlands that have been protected in perpetuity as part of this project. To blend in with its natural surroundings, the Cedarwoods plantings are native to the area’s environment. The landscaping also includes drought-resistant plants, walking trails through the wetlands and a parking lot with green features, such as bioswales, to capture rainwater.

The building features support services from United Services and amenities, including a fitness room, multipurpose room, laundry room, 24-hour security, bike storage, on-site parking and a computer lab. The general contractor for Cedarwoods was the Larosa Building Group.

Financing for the project was provided by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, the Connecticut Department of Housing, Common Ground and the National Equity Fund. Cedarwoods broke ground in December 2010 and was completed in 2012. The project has been made possible with additional financing and subsidies, including an allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, funds through the Tax Credits Assistance Program (part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) and the Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program. Additional equity investments were made by Connecticut Light & Power.

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**About Common Ground**

Common Ground is a nationally respected leader in efforts to end homelessness and one of the largest developers and managers of supportive housing in the nation. It also operates vital outreach programs to assist people living on the streets in New York City. For additional information, visit [www.commonground.org](http://www.commonground.org).