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State Bond Commission Opens Door for 2 Specialty Housing Complexes for People with Intellectual Disabilities

HARTFORD (Feb. 16, 2018) – Favarh – the Arc of the Farmington Valley and Regan Development are thrilled about the State Bond Commission’s approval today of \$12.9 million in funding for the construction of two innovative specialty housing complexes that will give tenants with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) increased independence and autonomy in a community integrated and safe environment. The funding results from a groundbreaking joint effort from the State’s Departments of Housing and Developmental Services, and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, in partnership with substantial funding from the private sector.

One of the complexes will be in Canton at 300-350 Commerce Drive, while the other will be in Bloomfield at 458 and 470 Cottage Grove Road. The innovative nature of the projects will be the incorporation of a cutting-edge smart-apartment management system to help tenants with IDD safely thrive in a fully integrated community setting.

“These new housing complexes will help adults with IDD thrive, while also providing their families peace of mind,” said Stephen E. Morris, executive director of Favarh, a Canton-headquartered nonprofit that supports people with IDD. “Every parent needs to know that their adult child will have the supports they need to be safe and to flourish after they are gone. These new apartments will provide that assurance.”

Another positive aspect of the two complexes, however, will be the cost savings to the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS) budget. Morris explained that these apartment buildings will not only save taxpayer dollars, they will provide a more socially integrated setting and enable tenants to enjoy a greater degree of autonomy. They will also maintain an equal measure of health and safety for the tenants compared to higher cost and less-integrated group-home settings.

Favarh and Regan Development are the recipients of the \$12.9 million approved by the State Bond Commission; Favarh as the service provider and Regan Development as the developer that will construct and own the affordable housing complexes. Another \$12.9 million for the projects will come from private investors using federal tax credits.

Regan Development is a New York firm with extensive experience developing housing that integrates people with and without disabilities. In New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Connecticut, Regan Development has been a leader in the creation of new models for integrated housing for people with disabilities. Locally, Regan Development built and owns Ojakian Commons in Simsbury, a housing complex with enhanced accessibility features for people with multiple sclerosis. Ojakian Commons has 40 apartments for people with MS, plus seven single-bedroom units that are designated for people with IDD who are supported by Favarh.

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225 Commerce Drive, Canton, CT 06019



"We're committed to developing housing that supports people with disabilities in community settings where they can thrive," said Ken Regan, vice president of Regan Development. "For this reason we've been working with Steve Morris and his team at Favarh for about three years to plan these innovative, supportive housing complexes where tenants with and without disabilities can thrive together."

All the units for people with IDD will have enhanced accessibility features. These include things like roll-in showers, wider doorways throughout, and accessible kitchens. However, the most innovative aspect of the new apartments for people with IDD will be the smart-apartment management system that will allow for centralized and remote monitoring of multiple apartments, video chatting, and a robust alert system. The apartments will be smart technology-ready allowing each unit to be custom-designed for each tenant's particular needs.

Morris explained that each building will have a common space where activities for all tenants, with and without disabilities, will take place. Favarh will have a staff office on the premises and be onsite 24/7. The smart-apartment management system will include a dashboard that will provide information and alerts to keep people safe. For example it will monitor windows and doors, environmental controls, and tenants' whereabouts. Smart televisions will integrate with the system to provide video chatting (think of an intercom on steroids). This system will allow for enhanced tenant independence and efficiency in staffing oversight.

Design for the smart technologies is being accomplished by Casaplex, a Maryland-based electronics systems integration company with an extensive background designing both smart-technology homes and smart-technology corporate offices.

A prerequisite for all tenants in both complexes will be that they meet state income requirements. The two complexes combined will create affordable rentals for 38 people with IDD and 115 others.

The land-use agencies in both Canton and Bloomfield have already approved permits for the construction of the two specialty housing complexes.

Favarh (pronounced "FAY-var") was founded in 1958 by eight local families who all wanted a better life for their children with intellectual disabilities. Today, Favarh is a local chapter of the Arc, the world's largest community-based organization for people with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities. Favarh supports more than 350 children, young adults, adults, seniors and families throughout the Greater Farmington Valley area and beyond.