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## Grand Opening Follows Historic Renovation

Written by: *Christine Talcott Roberts*

Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) recently celebrated the opening of their 68th property in Maine, the historic renovation of Elm Terrace in walkable downtown Portland. Elm Terrace is home to 38 units of affordable workforce and family housing. Rents are set so that they will be affordable to people in the local workforce in many sectors including retail and sales, social services, nursing and healthcare, education, public services such as police, fire, and public works and a wide variety of other occupations.



Embedded within the housing is a social service program with wrap-around, in-house, services for 15 very vulnerable people (and their families) in recovery from significant substance abuse patterns. Those patterns left residents homeless, isolated and often with children in state custody. Participants enter the program directly from these conditions and commit to sobriety in exchange for fully furnished apartments, and the array of supports. Along with support comes accountability, and the combination has led consistently to stability in housing, reunification with children, ongoing sobriety, development of healthy self-esteem and a rapidly growing permanent support network.

Elm Terrace was originally built in 1801 as a mansion, and an el was built in 1909 to create Children's Hospital. The el was later converted into the University of Maine's law school and then various University programs occupied the site. In 1960 the original mansion was demolished leaving the el that was restored through this project. As completed in 2013, a new structure took the place of the original mansion and the Children's Hospital was historically preserved as this entire site was converted to housing. CHOM's rehabilitation and construction work at Elm Terrace created 399 well-paying jobs in industries hard hit during the recent recession. In addition, the development has been certified by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) at the Platinum LEED level, the highest level of achievement. Elm Terrace is the first affordable multifamily historic preservation project in Maine to attain LEED Platinum.

Elm Terrace leveraged HUD **HOME Investment Partnership Program** funds from the city of Portland with **Low Income Housing Tax Credits**, Federal and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and city of Portland HOME funds to complete the \$10.5 million dollar project on-time and on-budget.



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### Categories

- #Housing101 (3)
- A Day in the Life (3)
- Affordable Housing (50)
- Budget (2)
- Center for Faith Based & Neighborhood Partnerships (3)
- Community Planning & Development (69)
- Daily Housing News Round-Up (246)
- Disaster Recovery (11)
- Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity (73)
- Federal Housing Administration (26)
- Foreclosure (5)
- From the Field (16)
- Healthy Homes (26)
- Homelessness (87)
- Housing (114)
- Housing Counseling (8)
- Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (8)
- HUD Remembers (2)
- Hurricane Sandy (19)
- Hurricane Sandy Redevelopment (10)



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- [I Believe in HUD](#) (3)
- [Inside HUD](#) (2)
- [LGBT](#) (18)
- [National Mortgage Settlement](#) (8)
- [Native American Programs](#) (9)
- [Office of Sustainable Housing & Communities](#) (31)
- [Office of the Chief Information Officer](#) (8)
- [Open Government & Innovation](#) (7)
- [Policy Development & Research](#) (16)
- [Project Rebuild](#) (11)
- [Public and Indian Housing](#) (41)
- [Public Housing](#) (23)
- [Recovery Act](#) (11)
- [Refinance](#) (23)
- [Secretary Donovan](#) (78)
- [Sustainability](#) (34)
- [Technology](#) (16)
- [veterans](#) (16)
- [Web Content](#) (27)
- [Weekly Housing News Round-up](#) (1)
- [Weekly Online Resources Round-up](#) (15)

### Archives

- [December 2013](#) (5)
- [November 2013](#) (5)
- [October 2013](#) (3)
- [September 2013](#) (6)
- [August 2013](#) (5)
- [July 2013](#) (9)
- [June 2013](#) (11)
- [May 2013](#) (7)
- [April 2013](#) (20)
- [March 2013](#) (25)
- [February 2013](#) (21)
- [January 2013](#) (23)
- [December 2012](#) (30)
- [November 2012](#) (28)
- [October 2012](#) (25)
- [September 2012](#) (19)
- [August 2012](#) (20)
- [July 2012](#) (36)
- [June 2012](#) (36)
- [May 2012](#) (41)
- [April 2012](#) (41)
- [March 2012](#) (43)
- [February 2012](#) (41)
- [January 2012](#) (42)
- [December 2011](#) (38)
- [November 2011](#) (42)
- [October 2011](#) (38)
- [September 2011](#) (43)
- [August 2011](#) (39)
- [July 2011](#) (34)
- [June 2011](#) (45)
- [May 2011](#) (41)
- [April 2011](#) (19)
- [March 2011](#) (26)
- [February 2011](#) (22)
- [January 2011](#) (17)
- [December 2010](#) (7)