



NEWS RELEASE

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Volunteer Ministry Center breaks ground on Caswell Manor

Celebration marks construction launch for 48-unit permanent supportive housing development

Volunteer Ministry Center (VMC), along with business and community leaders, officially broke ground Aug. 18 on Caswell Manor, a permanent supportive housing development to be built at the intersection of East Fifth Avenue and Winona Street.

Caswell Manor will be VMC's second supportive housing site, and construction at the East Knoxville location is expected to be completed in fall 2022. Minvilla Manor, a 57-unit permanent supportive housing complex, is located on Broadway in North Knoxville.

"Permanent supportive housing works to solve chronic homelessness," Volunteer Ministry Center CEO Bruce Spangler said at the groundbreaking. "Caswell Manor will build on the success of Minvilla Manor to place more people in permanent, stable housing. VMC and our community partners are prepared to offer all of the necessary services to ensure a positive, lasting and cost-effective outcome."

Stakeholders and supporters joined Spangler at the site for the upcoming development, including Knoxville Mayor Indya Kincannon; Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs; Knoxville Vice Mayor Gwen McKenzie, who represents the Sixth District on City Council; Tennessee Housing Development Agency (THDA) representatives; and Merit Construction, the builder for the development.

"We are all in support of VMC and the crucial work they do in our community, so it was a pleasure to be able to work together on this project," said Ralph Perrey, executive director of THDA. "Caswell Manor will be a true home for those who need it most, and that's an immeasurable impact on Knoxville."

Caswell Manor includes 48 one-bedroom apartments each with a private kitchen and bathroom. Residents also will share a community building, which will house property and case management offices; lounge and dining areas; computer lab; and laundry room. A patio will be constructed at the back of the building to accommodate outdoor seating and activities. The development will be energy efficient and meet THDA's ENERGY STAR design criteria.

Caswell Manor will serve people who are experiencing chronic homelessness, providing stability, support and re-integration into the community. Services will include interpersonal counseling, skills training, workforce re-entry training, education, financial literacy, life enrichment, field trips and more. Property attendants will be on-site around the clock, seven days a week, with weekday professional case managers working in close cooperation with the McNabb Center and Cherokee Health Systems.

Volunteer Ministry Center procured more than \$10 million in state, federal and private financing for investment into the Knoxville community, including a THDA Tennessee Housing Trust Fund grant, and in addition to \$1.4 million of local public funding through the City of Knoxville's Affordable Rental Development Program.

Caswell Manor will be professionally managed by a third-property management firm with experience operating supportive housing within Section 42 and U.S. Housing & Urban Development Department (HUD) requirements.

While funding is in place for construction, individual contributions are needed to transform the building into a home. VMC plans to work with community supporters and businesses to complete the finishing touches.

"We appreciate the vision of our partners and their effort to make Caswell Manor a reality," Spangler said. "Together, we're working toward our ultimate goal to end homelessness in Knox County."

About Volunteer Ministry Center

VMC is an inter-faith, ecumenical, professional social service organization focused on providing housing-first solutions to Knoxville's unhoused neighbors, in cooperation with local partners and non-profit organizations. Since 1987, VMC's programs have expanded to include: The VMC Resource Center, The Bush Family Refuge, Minvilla Manor, Street Outreach, The Foyer and The VMC Dental Clinic. For more information, call 865-524-3926 or visit <https://www.vmcinc.org/>.

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