



For Immediate Release

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Iowa's First Hotel Conversion Project into Permanent Supportive Housing – The Monarch Apartments Breaks Ground

Des Moines, IA— A groundbreaking ceremony for the Monarch Apartments is planned for Tuesday, September 19th. The Monarch Apartments is Anawim Housing's conversion project of a previous Days Inn hotel on Merle Hay Road in Des Moines into 40 units of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for those currently experiencing homelessness. The project will include 24-hour onsite supportive services and staff. Anawim Housing is developing the Monarch Apartments, which is the first hotel conversion into PSH project in the state of Iowa. Director Debi Durham of the Iowa Finance Authority and Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly plan to attend and give remarks at the groundbreaking.

The Monarch Apartments will house individuals experiencing homelessness who are referred to Anawim Housing by Centralized Intake at Primary Healthcare. The project is designed to serve those experiencing homelessness through Permanent Supportive Housing which pairs housing with supportive services to ensure people remain housed. Because the project is state and privately funded, the Monarch will also be able to fill gaps in housing by serving individuals who do not meet qualifications for HUD federally funded PSH programs. Construction of the Monarch Apartments will involve the conversion of 72 hotel rooms into 40 one bedroom and efficiency units, which will include kitchenettes in each unit, a shared main floor laundry facility, multiple community spaces, and staff and supportive services offices. The Monarch will serve individuals and couples. Most of the individuals served will have a qualifying disability. Staff will provide evidence based services including trauma informed care, motivational interviewing and client-centered case management.

“Housing is foundational to the health and well-being of all people. Creating housing for people who are experiencing homelessness ensures we are meeting the needs of the community through offering a critical housing intervention best suited to support the needs of the individual that is trauma informed and stable. Anawim has been committed to serving the communities we work in for over 35 years and will continue for years to come.”- **Cynthia Latcham, President of Anawim Housing.**



The Monarch Apartments has received wide-spread community and state support for its innovative approach to providing new units of critically needed Permanent Supportive Housing in Polk County. Financial support for the project was provided by: The Iowa Finance Authority, Polk County Housing Trust Fund, The City of Des Moines, Polk County Supervisors, and Prairie Meadows.

"The transformation of this underutilized hotel into permanent supportive housing and essential services provides a fresh start for the building and plentiful opportunities for its future residents," **said Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Finance Authority.** "I commend Anawim Housing's pioneering approach to advancing housing opportunities through this first of its kind project in Iowa and look forward to hearing the success stories of Iowans who've conquered barriers and achieved success in their new homes."

"Affordable housing has been a priority for our region for many years and Anawim has been a reliable and effective partner by providing access to affordable housing and pairing it with high quality case management that helps move individuals closer to self-sufficiency. Polk County is proud to support this project and the continuing work of Anawim." – **Angela Connolly, Polk County Supervisor.**

Anawim Housing PSH programs, which will include the Monarch Apartments, operate under the Housing First model. This model centers on moving people experiencing homelessness into housing as quickly as possible and offering tailored supportive services. Utilizing the Housing First model, Anawim will work individually with residents on housing stability and their personal health and life goals. According to the Unsheltered Des Moines Study* – an in-depth research study which was conducted by Drake University in partnership with Homeward and published in January of this year - 149 of 151 individuals living unsheltered in Des Moines who were surveyed responded that they want a permanent home such as an apartment or house. Only 2 out of 151 responded that they wanted to continue living outside. We know that Permanent Supportive is the proven best method for serving individuals who have lived unsheltered and the Monarch Apartments will help meet this critical need in our community. The project will provide onsite peer support services and 24-hour staff. Services will include mental health counseling, substance use/addiction counseling, job training, peer-to-peer support groups, etc.

Construction is scheduled to begin this fall, with doors opening to residents by fall 2024.

Groundbreaking Details:

When: Tuesday, September 19th

Time: 11:30am – 12:30pm. Ceremony will start promptly at 11:45am



Where: 4845 Merle Hay Road. Des Moines, IA 50322

Parking: Onsite parking

Attachments:

- Photo of the future site of the Monarch Apartments: The_Monarch_exterior.jpg
- Floorplan image showing the first and second floor design and an efficiency room layout: Monarch-floorplans.jpg

* Information on the Unsheltered Des Moines Study can be found at:

https://www.homewardiowa.org/files/ugd/253e08_34d8e496c0aa4c59af39ee587d5aab75.pdf

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About Anawim Housing:

Founded in 1987, Anawim Housing is the largest provider of permanent supportive housing in the state of Iowa and is currently serving over 390 individuals who previously experienced long-term homelessness. Anawim Housing provides permanent supportive housing programs that assist individuals and families who have experienced a housing crisis and live with a mental illness, a substance use disorder, a physical disability, or a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. Anawim program staff meet regularly with participants, helping them to achieve housing stability and providing them the resources necessary to meet their individual goals.

For over 35 years, Anawim Housing has been a leader of providing affordable housing in Des Moines, and their mission is to develop stable homes and strengthen people and communities. Today, Allterra Property Solutions, Anawim Housing's third-party management company, manages Anawim Housing's properties. All revenue from Allterra goes back into Anawim Housing to directly support the programs and services Anawim provides. Allterra's portfolio consists of townhomes, single-family homes, duplexes and multi-family living - totaling over 1000 units under management.

Website: www.anawimhousing.org