



**HOME CONFERENCE  
DOORKNOCKER AWARDS  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND**

**AWARD CATEGORY:** Special Needs Housing / Reaching Underserved Populations

**COMMUNITY:** Montgomery County, Maryland

**PROJECT/PROGRAM NAME:** Seneca Heights Apartments

**HUD REGION/FIELD OFFICE:** Region III / Washington DC Field Office

**HOME UNITS/TOTAL UNITS:** 11 HOME units/ 58 total units

**HOME FUNDS/TOTAL FUNDS:** \$978,368 HOME funds / \$8,967,426 total funds

**PARTNERS:**

- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services
- Housing Opportunities Commission
- Maryland County Coalition for the Homeless

**FUNDING SOURCES:**

• HOME Funds	\$978,368
• Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund	\$3,506,261
• Maryland State DHCD Partnership for Rental Housing	\$3,727,663
• Maryland State DHCD Transitional Housing Program	\$568,134
• Montgomery County Dept. of Health and Human Services Furnishing and Equipment Grant	\$19,000
• Montgomery County Operating Start-up Grant	\$159,000
• Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville Donation	\$9,000

**BRIEF NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION:**

The Seneca Heights Apartment project is an innovative special needs housing development in Gaithersburg, Maryland that provides 17 units of transitional housing for formerly homeless families, and 40 units of permanent supportive

housing for formerly homeless individuals. Completed in the spring of 2004, the project involved the renovation of a former motel; transforming two motel buildings from a neighborhood eyesore into a vibrant residential community. The transitional housing component allows families to live in apartments designed from adjacent motel rooms. A flexible design allows the bedroom configuration of the apartments to be changed to respond to the needs of different sized families. Permanent housing for formerly homeless individuals is provided in efficiency units. Both buildings share recreational facilities and benefit from front desk and security staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Seneca Heights development is the result of a unique partnership between Montgomery County, the City of Gaithersburg, the Housing Opportunities Commission, and the non-profit Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless. The Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs directed the development team and provided funds for the development. The county Department of Health and Human Services assisted with identifying the target population, the design of the buildings and social services, and funded a portion of the operating expenses. The City of Gaithersburg assisted with site selection and zoning, as well as public outreach. The quasi-public Housing Opportunities Commission served as development consultant, and the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless serves as the project's operator. Thanks, in part, to this broad development partnership, the project benefited from the wide range of financial resources each partner brought to the table. The result was a financial package of federal, state and local government resources, as well as private donations that allows the project to serve very low-income persons; a difficult feat in one of the country's most expensive housing markets.

The success of Seneca Heights is evident in the accomplishments of its residents. Sixty-seven percent of the residents have obtained employment, while 28 percent are continuing their education. Residents are also participating in the resident association, registering to vote, and organizing a childcare cooperative.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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