

LIFTING UP THE COMMUNITY



The Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral is seen on the left. The new 26-story residential tower is on the right. In the middle was built a three-story office building, which includes a community center and a childcare facility.



+ WHEN:

Fall of 2015 marked the completion of a new community center and childcare facility by the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral.

+ WHO:

The Very Rev. Judith Sullivan came back to the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral six years ago, having served there previously. She is one of several leaders who have spearheaded revitalization of the cathedral and the neighborhood. The cathedral's development partner is Radnor Property Group.

+ WHERE:

University City in West Philadelphia. The cathedral is in a formerly affluent residential neighborhood. It went into decline in the 1960s as transportation patterns changed and the city evolved. Many of the cathedral's neighbors now live in extreme poverty.

+ WHAT:

The Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral gained members and a new energy when it redeveloped land adjacent to its impressive cathedral building. It constructed a 26-story residential tower. It also built a three-story office building, which includes a community center, and a childcare facility housed under the cathedral—both constructed with financial assistance in the form of New Markets Tax Credits provided by Commonwealth Cornerstone Group. CCG is a community development entity of PHFA.



The new office building is connected to the cathedral. New Markets Tax Credits provided by Commonwealth Cornerstone Group helped make the project possible. As a result, the cathedral has been able to expand its outreach through an active community food program and a childcare center—both making a positive difference in that area of Philadelphia. The Very Rev. Judith Sullivan (in blue) is shown helping to distribute food.

+ OUTCOME:

The completed residential tower will generate income for the cathedral. In a separate project, the office building (including the community center) and the childcare center already provide income, plus they enable the congregation to better serve the community.

Sullivan explains, “We have a community food program. We are feeding hundreds of people every month and providing 20,000-to-30,000 pounds of food that is bagged and they are able to take home. We also serve hot meals, and we will be expanding that program this fall because we have a kitchen in the community center which we did not have previously.

“There is childcare for 100 children under the cathedral. We have children from the communities’ families that take part.

“This fall, as we’d hoped, we are bringing in nutrition counseling, medical counseling, and advocacy for people who need help with prescriptions and for making phone calls to follow up on healthcare issues. And we’re exploring ways we could provide employment services.”

This much-needed help to the local community was made possible, in part, by the financial assistance provided by CCG.

“We had our land. We had our air rights. We were able to raise some money, and we borrowed some money,” Sullivan shares. “But the New Markets Tax Credits were a great boon to us and made the project possible. They have made the difference for us.”



“IT’S A VERY LIFE-GIVING PROJECT. IT’S MAKING A DIFFERENCE, I THINK, IN THE LIVES OF A LOT OF PEOPLE. WE ARE GRATEFUL.”

—The Very Rev. Judith Sullivan, dean at the Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral