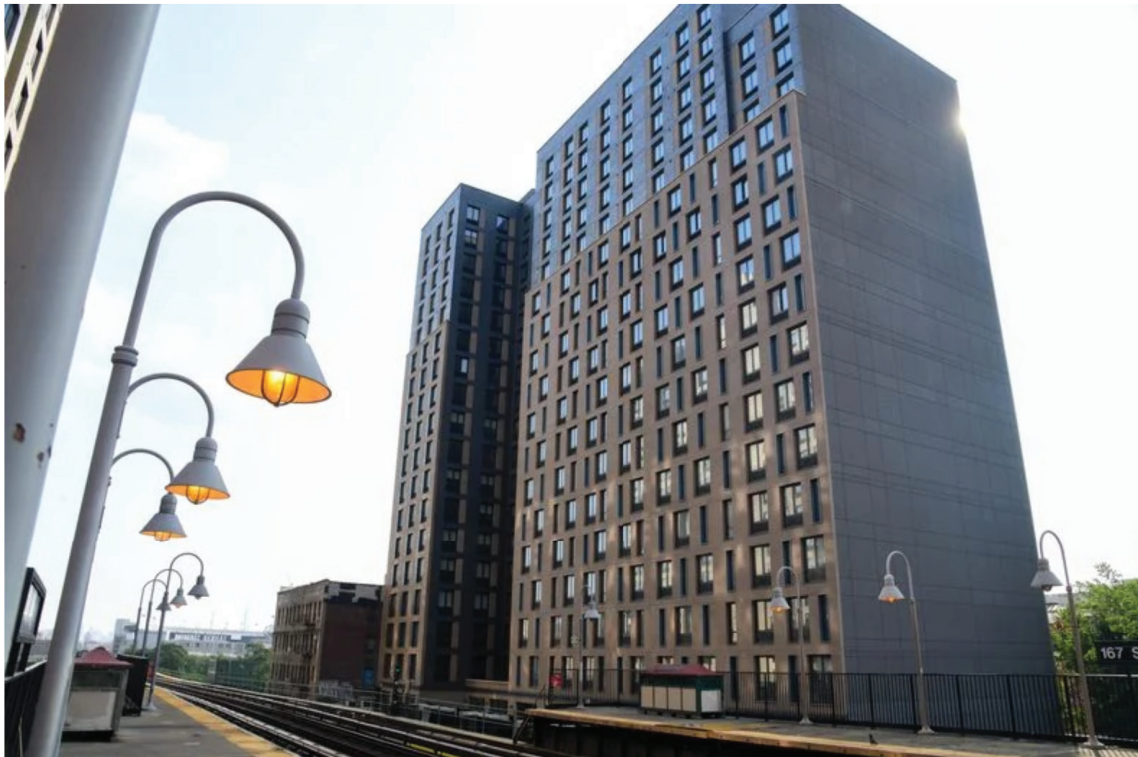


Housing nonprofit opens \$120M Bronx development for people with mental illness



Sean Simes

Housing nonprofit Community Access plans to unveil a 245-unit supportive housing development today at 1169 River Ave. in the South Bronx.

Community Access, a nonprofit that provides housing and social services to New Yorkers, is planning to unveil a 245-unit supportive housing development in the South Bronx today for people experiencing homelessness or severe mental illness.

The \$120 million project, located at 1169 River Avenue, is the largest housing development built by Community Access to date, said Cal Hedigan, the organization's chief executive officer. The units are a mix of supportive and affordable residences and are tailored for single adults and families experiencing mental health conditions or homelessness.

Hedigan said that the project was funded by several state and community entities including the Office of Mental Health, the New York State Housing Finance Agency and the city's Department of Housing and Preservation, among others.

The development has been accepting tenants since November and is scheduled to host an official ribbon cutting today. Roughly 130 apartments are occupied, and Community Access is aiming to fill all of the units by the end of April, Hedigan said.

Supportive housing provides a range of social services to unhoused New Yorkers and people with mental illnesses, including connecting people with medical or mental health services, providing education and job training and helping people form relationships with their neighbors and families.

"Once people have access to housing and support services, they can really move beyond day-to-day survival needs, and have a stable place to think about other aspects of their life," Hedigan said, adding that some individuals set goals to reconnect with their families or enter the workforce.

More than 100 units in the new development are studio apartments for people experiencing mental illness, Hedigan said. The building is also the first one developed by Community Access that is equipped with larger rooms and will include 17 three-bedroom apartments for bigger families experiencing homelessness.

The building has 20,000 square feet of commercial space and is staffed by a team of 11 people providing social services. Staff members include family and youth advocates as well as harm reduction specialists who can connect people to care.

Community Access, based in the Financial District, was founded in 1974. The organization has 20 affordable and supportive housing developments in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan representing \$400 million in real estate investments.