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CHA closes doors at two Cabrini mid-rises; only one occupied building remains

All families received relocation assistance that included counseling and moving services; families can have an option to return once property is redeveloped

CHICAGO (Sept. 29, 2010) – Drawing closer to the end of an era, the Chicago Housing Authority announced that it has closed the last of the two Cabrini mid-rises, known as the Cabrini Extensions. This leaves only one building – a high rise – standing.

The occupancy of the two Cabrini Extensions buildings dropped dramatically in recent weeks, posing a safety risk for the remaining residents. With a capacity of 64 families apiece, the occupancy in each of the buildings plummeted to as few as four families.

On Monday, CHA moved out the final two families, leaving one occupied Cabrini building – 1230 Burling. Residents there have also received notices of CHA’s intention to soon close the high-rise as the end of the notorious Cabrini development draws closer.

There are only 39 families remaining at 1230 Burling, which, at its peak, held 134 families. For similar safety reasons that closed the extensions, 1230 Burling is scheduled to close no later January 15, 2011.

Meanwhile, the Cabrini Homes Extensions - built in 1958 and known for their trademark red-colored brick – at one time was made up of as many as 15 buildings with more than 1,900 units. These buildings were added to the CHA portfolio to provide housing on the North side of Chicago.

But the Extensions began falling into disrepair in the 1970s, about the time the Cabrini development became enveloped by crime and drugs. Today, the structures are a shell of what they were 30 years ago. The low occupancy issues and operational concerns have made the danger level increase.

As part of its “Plan for Transformation” – the largest redevelopment/rehabilitation of public housing in the history of the United States - CHA has worked to steadily relocate families from the older, dilapidated Cabrini buildings into suitable, newly-rehabbed properties.

Lease compliant families have the option of moving to a public housing unit in a new mixed income or rehabilitated public housing community; or accepting a Housing Choice Voucher, which would allow them to move into an apartment that is managed by a private landlord. All families received relocation assistance that included housing counseling and moving services and all families can elect to have an option to return to the Cabrini area once the property is redeveloped.

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