



Monsignor Linder Receives Lifetime Achievement Award From State Housing Agency

New Community Founder Monsignor William J. Linder was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award during the 15th Annual Governor's Housing Conference in Atlantic City for "his strong vision and leadership in providing affordable housing and improving the quality of lives for New Jersey residents."

Presented by Marge DellaVecchia, executive director of the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency (NJHMFA), the award was the first ever given by the state agency. Monsignor was chosen, agency officials said, because of his "lifelong commitment to community development and affordable housing."

"In 2009, Monsignor Linder is still creating opportunities for the people of Newark and revitalizing a community that was left for dead by others," DellaVecchia said. "This award might be more appropriately titled the 'Mid Life' Achievement Award because Monsignor Linder has not stopped. He is still working to address today's challenges and to create new opportunities for the poor and elderly in our society."

Monsignor Linder, a board member of NJHMFA for 34 years, expressed his appreciation to NJHMFA officials, who have been supportive of New Community's efforts from the very beginning.

"I would like to thank Marge and the NJHMA for recognizing the work that New Community has done throughout its 41-year-history to help improve the quality of life for city residents," he said. "It hasn't always been easy, but when you can see the difference you are making in people's lives, it makes all the challenges worthwhile."

In her remarks before an audience gathered at a reception in the Atlantic City Convention Center, where the convention was held on Sept. 22 and 23, DellaVecchia commended Monsignor Linder for seizing an opportunity after the Newark riots—against overwhelming odds-- to help rebuild a city in shambles.

"The aftermath of this history-altering event caused the media and political leaders to write Newark off as one of the nation's most hopeless cities," she said before presenting the award. "But Monsignor Linder saw the city very differently. In January 1968, New Community was born out of the disorder, poverty and despair with the hope of revitalizing the community."

Today, New Community owns and manages close to 2,000 units of housing in Newark, Orange and Jersey City. Its programs and services touch the lives of more than 50,000 residents of Essex and Hudson counties every day.

DellaVecchia noted how New Community started out with the goal of developing safe, decent and affordable housing within Newark's Central Ward and then used it to spur economic revitalization. New Community's first real estate project, New Community Homes, opened in 1975. It was followed by a series of other residences for families and seniors throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Along the way, there were other economic development projects, including the renovation of St. Joseph Church on West Market Street, which became NCC headquarters and a restaurant and jazz Club called The Priory. In addition, New Community also opened a 180-bed nursing home, called the Extended Care Facility, and a transitional housing facility for homeless families, Harmony House. This was followed by a Pathmark Shopping Center, the first of its kind in Newark.

New Community has also provided the opportunity for home ownership through its Community Hills townhouse development on the site of the former Hayes Homes public housing project.

Roseville Commons, New Community's latest housing development, is set to open in the fall of 2010, providing 50 units of affordable housing to low income residents, including special populations like homeless veterans.