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**Serving More People in More Places, the East River Development Alliance Rebrands as Urban Upbound, Expands Mission to Tackle Poverty and Change Lives**

***-- Nonprofit adds locations, increases services--***

**(Queens, N.Y.) –** As it expands beyond its borders, the 10-year-old nonprofit East River Development Alliance has a new name and a new determination: to tackle poverty and change lives. Originally serving four public housing developments in Western Queens, the organization has expanded to Far Rockaway, Flushing, Astoria, and Sunnyside. Further expansion is being planned. The new name - Urban Upbound - better reflects the organization’s expanded footprint and mission.

The organization has always provided residents of public housing neighborhoods with the tools and resources needed to achieve economic mobility and self-sufficiency. Now it’s doing it through increased services, including:

* Two new Workforce 1 expansion centers, run in conjunction with the New York City Department of Small Business Services, in Far Rockaway and Long Island City
* A Jobs-Plus site in Astoria run in conjunction with the City’s Human Resources Administration
* A federal credit union, providing clients with mainstream banking services as an alternative to the costly check cashing centers that proliferate in urban tracks
* A Long Island City Merchants Association which organizes 80 businesses serving neighborhoods surrounding public housing in Western Queens, as part of the City’s Avenue NYC Program

“We outgrew our original name,” said Bishop Mitchell Taylor, Founder and Chief Executive Officer. “We have an integrated model that’s worked very well for residents in Astoria’s public housing and we want to bring more opportunities to more people across the city.”

The organization’s mission is now summed up by a new tagline, “Tackling poverty, changing lives.”

At the core of Urban Upbound’s model is an understanding that to create upward mobility, people need four things: college access, a job, financial planning skills, and traditional banking opportunities. In 2013, the nonprofit served 6,000 individuals through these core services. This year, the organization expects these services to assist 8,000 people, plus an additional 4,000 who will receive free tax prep.

In 2013, Urban Upbound successfully helped residents of public housing developments of Queensbridge, Ravenswood, Woodside and Astoria Houses. The organization helped 393 residents find work, with an average wage of $11.56/hr; its financial counseling services helped individuals reduce their debt by an average of $5,173 and increase savings by an average of $2,746; through its college access program, Urban Upbound helped participants increase SAT scores by an average of 210 points and helped 87% of students and their families meet their college financial aid needs.

Over the last year, Urban Upbound expanded significantly, initially through its free tax prep services and then by opening the Far Rockaway Workforce 1 center. Urban Upbound’s expanded tax prep services were provided to 2,825 individuals who collectively received $3.4 million in refunds.

“The new name is a better reflection of who we are – an organization that works in the most challenging urban neighborhoods, giving people the services they need to tackle poverty and change lives,” Bishop Taylor said. “Nowhere in the city is the tale of two cities more apparent – the median income for our residents is $15,000 a year; 70% live below the federal poverty level; and unemployment is 17%. People in the public housing communities we serve and across public housing developments in the city need the comprehensive tools and resources we provide.”

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