

# The Columbus Dispatch

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Business

## Blighted Franklinton hotels will become apartments for those transitioning out of foster care

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The Motel 6 and Knights Inn on West Broad Street will be turned into Carol Stewart Village — 100 efficiency apartments for 18-24-year-olds coming out of foster care.

A pair of blighted Columbus motels will be transformed into 100 apartments that will house young adults transitioning out of the foster care system.

The former Motel 6 and Knights Inn complex off West Broad Street in Franklinton will become Carol Stewart Village — 100 efficiency apartments in seven one-story buildings designed for 18-to-24-year-olds coming out of the foster care system.

Each apartment will come with a bathroom, kitchenette and at least one parking spot, said Jeff Mohrman, vice president of real estate development for Finance Fund, a Columbus-based non-profit organization developing the project. Finance Fund acquired the property in November for \$1,835,000.

“The overall theme of these units is a community within a community,” he said at a Wednesday news conference announcing the project.

Also at the news conference was Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, whose parents fostered 47 children while he was growing up. He once went with one of his foster brothers to visit the brother’s father in jail.

“It was this experience for me that had me understand and better appreciate why so many young people struggle to succeed,” he said. “Not every family in every neighborhood had the same resources and support that I had.”

About 1,000 youth transition out of the foster care system in Ohio each year, Ginther said.

“Think about all the times in your late teens and 20s that your parents bailed you out with an unexpected car repair or just a home-cooked meal or a place to wash your clothes because maybe you overspent a little too early in the month,” Ginther said. “So many of our kids coming out of the foster system do not have that. They do not have the safety net of support and resources we all took for granted.”

The apartments will rent for \$650 including all utilities. The City of Columbus invested \$1.6 million into the Carol Stewart Village project, which is designed to provide access to livable wage jobs as well as physical and mental health services.

Star House, a drop-in center for homeless youth in Central Ohio, is a partner on the project. The organization is looking for businesses to help residents get jobs. Resident assistance will be available around the clock at Carol Stewart Village. A property manager has yet to be determined but is expected to be Community Housing Network, according to a fact sheet from Finance Fund.

“We know that housing alone doesn’t solve homelessness,” Ann Bischoff, Star House CEO, said. “Relationships and resources do.”

The project was named after Carol Stewart, a founding member of the Franklinton Area Commission who died in 2012. Some of her family attended Wednesday’s press conference.

Construction will take nine months and is expected to start Friday, according to the fact sheet.

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