

DAILY NEWS



Families eager to move into new green, dream Habitats

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SEVEN STRUGGLING families have brand-new affordable homes in the South Bronx.

They just need the keys to 715 Fox St.

During a dedication ceremony on Saturday, recipients of new apartments — in a building named in honor of former Secretary of State Colin Powell — will take one step closer to homeownership when they are given their keys.

“I’m so excited,” said Cruzmaria Renvill, who is moving into a two-bedroom apartment with her 11-year-old daughter, Gabriella, next month. It cost her \$129,000.

“This is the climax after all the waiting,” she said.

In order to be eligible for the apartment, Renvill had to put in 150 hours of “sweat equity” — painting, putting up drywall and helping

to install a green roof on the building located in Longwood.

Renvill and her daughter have shared a one-bedroom apartment near Fordham Road for the past eight years. She said she is more than ready for a spacious 900-square-foot apartment — with parking.

“To be honest, I’m most excited about parking,” the single mom said. “That takes the cake.”

The seven families will be introduced on Saturday at St. Margaret’s Church on E. 156th St., and from there they will lead a procession to their new LEED Platinum-certified building for “home blessings.”

“They have a home dedication ceremony where they say a prayer together and sort of break that bottle of champagne on the home — figuratively,” said Josh Lockwood, Habitat’s executive director.

The 50-unit co-op is the first of its kind de-

veloped in a partnership between the City of New York, Habitat for Humanity and Blue Sea Development.

The greenest affordable housing in the state, the rooftop terrace and green roof are two firsts for Habitat for Humanity, said Lockwood.

The seven-story building includes five studios, 10 one-bedroom units, 29 two-bedroom units and six three-bedroom units.

About 12 of those units are designated for families of four earning less than \$60,000.

Powell, a retired four-star general who grew up on nearby Kelly St., christened the building in September.

“We need to keep creating new generations of youngsters who believe in themselves,” Powell said at the time, addressing hundreds of community members and leaders. “It’s so wonderful to see my name on a building like this — this is going to be on it forever.”