

## Liberty Square Resident Council approves Related Urban redevelopment plans

Brothers 2 Brothers partner with Related Urban for Community Day in Liberty Square

Janey Tate | 5/4/2016, 2 p.m.



Liberty Square Resident Council honors seniors and mothers at a prayer breakfast Tuesday and also endorsed Related Urban Development Group's plans to rebuild the housing projects. PHOTO COURTESY OF WOODY LESESNE

Related Urban Development Group, the recommended developer to rebuild Liberty Square, got thumbs up from the housing projects' Resident Council Tuesday morning at a prayer breakfast for seniors in the community. The resident council told the crowd gathered at the breakfast of their approval of the developer's plans to rehab the dilapidated buildings.

"We had a vote among the board and the majority of the council voted yes," said Vice President of the Liberty Square Resident Council, Crystal Corner. "The plans are good for the residents. We're excited about jobs and to redevelop a better, safe neighborhood."

Corner said the council is waiting on the May 12 Miami-Dade County Commission meeting at which commissioners will vote on whether to move forward with the developer's plans.

"We're ready to move forward with the project. Everybody is ready for a better place, for better living," said Corner.

Principal and Vice President of Related Urban, Albert Milo, was happy to have the support of the resident council.

"Today was a big day. They've endorsed our redevelopment plan. They want the commission to move this plan forward and that's a great step; however, it's just the first step," said Milo. "Community engagement is going to continue. The community is going to participate in the designs of what's going to get built."

The community engagement, including the Tuesday morning prayer breakfast, also honored seniors

who have been living in the housing projects for decades and celebrated moms for Mother's Day, which is May 8. The event brought out dozens, including community activist Tangela Sears, former city of Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones and community organizer, Henry Crespo. Attendees gathered to pray for community members, who many times are hurting from tragic lives lost due to violent crime.

“The event was for all mothers. We wanted to do something for the mothers as an early Mother’s Day gift,” said Corner of the breakfast.

Milo said his company has a committed effort to engage the community even after the redevelopment of Liberty Square.

“Today was an opportunity to honor the seniors of this community. We know that the seniors have been through the highs and the lows of the community so we wanted to take the opportunity to honor them and educate them on what’s coming for the community,” said Milo. “This has been a lengthy process to get to this point, so we wanted to also bring the clergy as part of this redevelopment effort because we know we all need to work together as one community to create one vision to move this project forward.”

Related Urban also co-sponsored a community day event on Saturday, April 30th hosted by outreach group, Brothers 2 Brothers. The group has been working in Liberty Square since last year, going door to door speaking with residents about their concerns, praying for them and even praying for drug dealers — asking them to stop the violence.

“We wanted to do something about young men dying,” said President of Brothers 2 Brothers, Gerry Johnson. “We want to show them how to get jobs and how to keep them.”

Milo said his company is fully committed to support outreach groups such as Brothers 2 Brothers.

“It is a multiple strategy approach and some of these events and meetings are an example of that, of how we continue to work and educate the community and support the community in some of the initiatives that they would like to see in the neighborhood,” said Milo.

The event featured health screenings from Jessie Trice Community Health Center, a job fair powered by CareerSource South Florida, free food and musical entertainment played by a DJ.

"We're letting them know we are here for them and we want to help. When we are out we always ask how we can help them. People always ask about jobs," said Pastor Olden Reese, of The Family of the Living God Bound for Eternal Life Ministry Inc. and a member of Brothers 2 Brothers.

The group hopes to have this as an annual event. Vice President of Brothers 2 Brothers, Derrick Peters, said it's time for people to act and not be scared to do work in the housing projects.

Brothers 2 Brothers outreach group supports Related Urban and its redevelopment plans.

"People always have to expect to grow and I welcome it. I will say this, don't let nobody in here who's going to bring things down," said Johnson. "You have to do everything you can to make sure you're not bringing the drug dealers back in and not letting the people who are connected to the drug dealers back in and people in these gangs -- we need to cut them out. They need to be rehabilitated."

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