

# NEWS RELEASE

**King County Housing Authority**  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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June 2, 2014

### **KCHA CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF VANTAGE POINT APARTMENTS IN RENTON**

*Sen. Karen Keiser, Rep. Tina Orwall, King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove, Renton Mayor Denis Law, and other community partners unveiled the new 77-unit affordable housing development for low-income seniors and people with disabilities*

**When:** Friday, June 3 at 11:30 a.m.  
**Where:** 17901 105th Pl. SE, in Renton.

**Renton – If you’re an older adult living on a low fixed income, it’s hard to find an affordable apartment in King County.**

**Just ask Chuck Abney.**

**Forced by debilitating health issues into premature retirement in 2011, Chuck couldn’t find an apartment he could afford on his Social Security disability income and the waiting list for subsidized housing was years long. His only option was to rent a room in someone else’s apartment. Unfortunately, his new roommates maltreated him. After reporting his abuse to the police, Chuck’s roommates fled. While this freed Chuck from his tormentors, it also left him to shoulder alone the rent on the now too-expensive three-bedroom apartment. Chuck had to leave. But with no family, poor health, and limited means, he had nowhere to go.**

**In late 2015, Chuck’s impending homelessness was averted by a phone call from the King County Housing Authority: construction of the Vantage Point Apartments was complete and a unit was available. After four years on KCHA’s public housing waiting list, Chuck finally got a home of his own.**

**Vantage Point is part of KCHA’s long-term goal to expand the supply of high-quality housing affordable to the region’s growing population of low-income seniors, people like Chuck. On Friday, June 3, residents, community leaders, and partners, will gather to celebrate the grand opening of Vantage Point, a 77-unit apartment community for low-income seniors, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony.**

“Unfortunately, older adults in situations as heartbreaking as Chuck’s abound – but seldom with the happy ending,” said Stephen Norman, executive director of the King County Housing Authority. “There are far more seniors living at the poverty level in King County than there are housing units they can afford. Increasingly we see them on the streets and in homeless shelters. Projects like Vantage Point provide dignity and quality of life for the most vulnerable members of our community.”

Vantage Point opened its doors on Nov. 1, 2015 and was completely occupied by Thanksgiving, testimony to the critical need for this housing.

Sited adjacent to the North Benson Shopping Center, Vantage Point residents are directly across the street from a Fred Meyer and other retail shopping. A fire station and medical clinic are located within two blocks and Valley Medical Center is less than a mile away. King County Metro serves the area with two bus routes. The community also borders a senior community of 164 single-family homes managed by KCHA on a land trust model. When aging homeowners need to transition to apartment living, Vantage Point will be available, enabling them to stay in the community.

Residents of Vantage Point come from KCHA’s wait list, which includes more than 3,100 seniors – many of whom are frail and have been waiting an average of five to six years for subsidized housing. Annual incomes for senior households on KCHA’s wait list average approximately \$950 per month. In contrast to the average rent of \$1,174 for a one-bedroom apartment in Renton, rents at Vantage Point average \$229 per month.

### **Vantage Point senior housing responds to growing need in King County**

As the baby boomer generation ages, demand for senior housing continues to escalate. By 2025, one in four King County residents will be age 65 or older and the number of low-income senior households will have grown to approximately 54,000. A study completed several years ago projects that over 10,000 additional units of affordable

housing designed to meet the needs of low-income seniors will be needed by then. Currently, there are over 9,400 low-income seniors on the waiting list for the region's housing authorities and more than 2,174 homeless seniors (age 55+) living in shelters or on the street. The Vantage Point Senior Apartments represents one step forward as our region's population of low-income seniors grows."

"The need for quality affordable housing for seniors has never been greater," said state Senator Karen Keiser, who represents legislative district 33, where Vantage Point is located, and serves on the state's legislative committee on aging and disability. "As our population ages, we are seeing more parents and grandparents being priced out of the communities they've spent their lives in. I'm proud to support this beautiful project, which will improve the quality of life for older adults for years to come."

"The generation that made King County a vibrant, prosperous place to live deserves a safe, affordable place to call home as they get older," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "The public-private partnership we've created is making it possible for more seniors and people with disabilities to live independently and with dignity."

Designed by Tonkin Architects, the \$18 million community is comprised of two four-story wood frame wings connected by a central common space. The development includes gathering spaces, outdoor activity spaces, gently graded walking paths, and raised-bed community garden plots.

The project has multiple features to support energy efficiency, a healthy living environment and simplified maintenance requirements. In addition, the building is situated to take advantage of territorial views and maximize natural daylight and passive solar heating.

Funding for Vantage Point came from a variety of public and private sources. RBC and Nationwide Insurance provided significant equity by purchasing federal low-income housing tax credits awarded to the project. Nationwide also made a generous donation to support activities for seniors on site. King County's housing finance program and the state legislature each provided \$2 million. KCHA contributed about \$5 million to the project. Long-term affordability is provided through federal rent subsidies from the

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The city of Renton has been a supportive partner throughout the planning and permitting process.

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Photo credit: William Wright Photography

**List of confirmed speakers at the groundbreaking event:**

State Senator Karen Keiser  
State Representative Tina Orwall  
King County Councilmember Dave Upthegrove  
Paul Edwards, Washington State Housing Finance Commission Deputy Director  
Nataly Morales, King County Director for U.S. Senator Patty Murray  
Dayna Lurie, King County Outreach Director, U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell  
Walt Bowen, Washington State Senior Citizen Lobby, President  
Chuck Abney, Vantage Point resident  
Stephen Norman, King County Housing Authority Executive Director

**About KCHA**

KCHA, an independent municipal corporation established under state law, assists more than 18,000 households in the Seattle metropolitan region on a daily basis. The Authority administers rental housing assistance, develops and manages affordable housing and works closely with community stakeholders to address local priorities such as ending homelessness, improving educational outcomes for the region's low-income youth and assuring that disabled and elderly households can live with dignity.

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