



Courtesy photo

Above: Sami Jo Difuntorum, executive director of the Siletz Tribal Housing Department (left) and Tribal Chairman Delores Pigsley at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Photos by Andy Taylor

Several different areas of the Nesika Illahee housing development, including a kitchen (top right), living room (right), a lobby area (below right) and outdoor bench with art by Northwest artists, including Lillian Pitt (below).



Housing, continued from page 1

County Commissioners Susheela Jayapal, Sharon Meieran and Jessica Vega Pederson; and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler joined representatives the U.S. Housing and Urban Development, Oregon Housing and Community Services, Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA), Home Forward, and Community Development Partners (CDP) for the ribbon-cutting ceremony of Nesika Illahee, NAYA's most recent affordable housing development in Portland.

Speakers throughout the one-hour program praised the historic partnerships contributing to the development's success.

Community Development Partners CEO Eric Paine stated, "It's been a wonderful voyage to partner with Siletz, the Native American Youth and Family Center and the Native American Rehabilitation Association. It's been a steep learning curve. We've taken multiple complex fund-

ing sources and made them exponentially more complex by putting them together. But that was really the only way we could serve the need of community and reach lower income levels."

Siletz Tribal Chairman Pigsley concurred, "We are so appreciative of all the work that has been done to complete this facility. It's something that the Tribe could not do by itself."

Other speakers noted that Nesika Illahee's partnership and funding model is one that could pave the way for more systems change in Portland and beyond.

"People came together in ways they haven't before," said Michael Bounocore, executive director of Home Forward. "The Native population is overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness. Systems that help people come out from homelessness aren't working for the Native community. If we keep doing things the way we've always done them,

we'll keep failing that community. It is the wisdom and leadership of the Native community that are showing us way to get it right."

Commissioner Jayapal stated, "The model that this creates is for the rest of the country. This development, and the new developments that are coming, are really a bulwark against the displacement that this neighborhood has experienced. This has been ground zero for displacement of communities of color. It is developments like this that will allow us to keep those communities here where they belong."

About NAYA

NAYA provides culturally specific programs and services that guide our people in the direction of personal success and balance through cultural empowerment. Our mission is to enhance the diverse strengths of our youth and fami-

lies in partnership with the community through cultural identity and education.

About NARA

The mission of NARA is to provide education, physical and mental health services and substance abuse treatment that is culturally appropriate to American Indians, Alaska Natives and anyone in need.

About CDP

Founded in 2011, Community Development Partners develops and operates sustainable, life-enhancing affordable housing with a focus on long-term community engagement and innovative design. The company's mission is to repair and strengthen the fabric of cities and towns by meeting the housing needs of local citizens through the thoughtful planning and creative development of sustainable, affordable communities.