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**Boulder Housing Partners Celebrates 50 Years  
*Housing as a Platform to Create Opportunity***

Boulder, CO—In a celebration on Friday, [Boulder Housing Partners](http://www.boulderhousing.org) (BHP) will honor the people and programs that are the foundation for its first 50 years as the city's housing authority. The event will also showcase a national model program resulting in 93 percent high school graduation rates.

In 1965, the Boulder League of Women Voters brought a petition to City Council suggesting that the lack of safe, quality, affordable housing in Boulder was an urgent community problem. The Council created the Housing Authority of the City of Boulder in June 1966. In 1969, the authority began offering housing assistance to 37 households through a leased housing program. BHP's first apartments were constructed in 1970. Today BHP provides housing services to nearly 2300 households. The original public housing properties, built in the early 1970s, were all renovated and refinanced in 2016, and the anniversary celebration will also recognize that renewal.

"For many years, our focus was the provision of housing for very low-income families in our community," said Betsey Martens, executive director of BHP. "Two things have changed significantly in fifty years. First, the diversity of households who struggle to find housing is vastly different today. Our traditional focus on families living in poverty will always remain, but we've stretched our resources to include households with stable moderate income."

BHP has also been challenged to rethink its mission, said Martens. "When I started here, I thought housing was the goal. Now I understand that success for us is defined by the way we use housing as the platform to create opportunity for our residents and our community. Housing is the beginning, not the end."

To that point, BHP's 50<sup>th</sup> celebration will also feature its groundbreaking program called Bringing School Home.

In a 20-year partnership with the "[I Have a Dream](http://www.ihaveadream.org)" Foundation of Boulder County, several of BHP's public housing communities have been transformed into campuses of learners. The results have been so compelling—93 percent graduation rates, 92 percent college enrollment—that plans are underway to expand the opportunity to every young child in BHP's housing every year.

"By the time they're 18, children spend only 9 percent of their time in school," Marten said. "The other 91 percent is home-centric. Housing quality, location, stability, and affordability have enormous impact on school performance." Housing authorities can be the nexus for a comprehensive education model that brings all the disparate pieces of child and family support together, said Martens.

“Helping a child succeed academically extends beyond the school walls,” said Lori Canova, President and Chief Executive Officer, “I Have a Dream” Foundation of Boulder County. “As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child, and that’s what we do: we create an entourage for each child, including program director, mentors, teachers, parents and more.”

Friday’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event location was chosen very intentionally, said Martens. “The Diagonal Court public housing community symbolizes the best of what we can do as a community, and as a nation, to transform the physical asset, the neighborhood and the whole family. We are excited to celebrate our past and imaging the future with the Boulder community.”

A new class of school-age “Dreamers” will be welcomed at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary event on September 9, and alumni will share how the program changed their lives. A program will start at 4 p.m. at the [Diagonal Court](#) community center, [3265 30<sup>th</sup> Street](#).

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