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Morristown apartment an answer to her prayers

Homeless Solutions cuts ribbon at complex

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MORRISTOWN -- Tracey Downey waited a long time to find a home of her own to share with her two daughters.

Describing the house search as "a second job," she said it was a frustrating, years-long search for a place to live, other than with family.

"New Jersey just doesn't have enough affordable housing," she said.

However, the 42-year-old lifelong Morristown resident said her prayers were answered and, this morning, she and her family will occupy one of the 12 new apartments on Abbett Avenue made possible by Homeless Solutions -- four units each of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.

The agency held its grand opening Friday morning with a ribbon-cutting.

Town Council members Raline Smith-Reid and Michelle Harris-King were on hand, as were county Freeholders John Murphy and James Murray.

The one-, two- and three-bedroom units are affordable-housing units with monthly rents ranging from \$387 to \$1,094, according to communications manager Susan Robinson.

The apartments will "help (low- and moderate-income families) get a hand up," according to Katherine Teti, chairwoman of the Homeless Solutions Inc. board of trustees.

At the ceremony, Downey, who works in customer service at a technology company, said, "I'm just glad God has finally answered our prayers."

Since June, Homeless Solutions received more than 280 applications for housing at the apartments.

The apartments' building materials and appliances are "green," or energy-saving, consisting of Energy Star faucets, shower heads and toilets, as well as recycling facilities. Because of these steps, and others, the apartment project received the New Jersey Future 2008 Smart Growth Award in June.

"I am very proud of this project," Smith-Reid said. "It's a pleasure for the town to have this project."

To date, Smith-Reid said, the Abbett Avenue apartments are the largest affordable-housing project in a single location in Morristown.

Dan McGuire, development division director at Homeless Solutions Inc., said he was grateful to Morristown for its partnership in moving the project along, which was nearly five years in the making.

"There is so much credit to be shared," he said at the ceremony.

Homeless Solutions is currently adding another floor to a house on 34 Abbett Ave.
