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New York City Department of Design and Construction Completes Its First Home Elevation Project in Staten Island As Part of Its Work With Build it Back

(Staten Island, NY – May 23, 2016) On Thursday, May 19, the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC) completed its first home elevation project in Staten Island as part of its work with the City’s Build it Back program, the federally funded program which rebuilds, repairs, and elevates homes affected by Hurricane Sandy. The project completion was marked by a ceremony at the home at 528 Greeley Avenue, where DDC Commissioner Feniosky Pena-Mora and Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery, presented the keys to homeowner Michele Thornton-Mannix and her family.

To date, Build it Back has delivered a check or started construction on 74% of homes, starting 2,876 construction projects and completing 1,906. The partnership between DDC and Build it Back is the result of Mayor de Blasio’s overhaul of the program in 2014. By working with DDC, Build it Back was able to quadruple its design and construction capacity to help homeowners in Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. The initiative is a part of the broader OneNYC plan to create a stronger, more sustainable and equitable city.

Ms. Thornton-Mannix, who moved back home with her 13-year-old son and her 2-year-old daughter, is the principal for District 75, P141K School (Brooklyn) for students with severe disabilities.



Above: Amy Peterson (far left), Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery, and Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora of the NYC Department of Design and Construction present house keys to Michele Thornton-Mannix (center) in honor DDC’s first completed home elevation in Staten Island as part of Mayor de Blasio’s “Build-It-Back” initiative.

“It’s unbelievable to be back in the house,” said **Michele Thornton-Mannix**, a lifelong Staten Islander whose family history in the area stretches back a full century. “Once DDC got involved things really took off. The process was very clear, went smoothly and didn’t take very long at all. Initially I didn’t know how to feel, but now that we’re home it’s a pleasure.”

“DDC is proud to work with the Mayor’s Housing Recovery Office to build New Yorkers resilient homes in flood prone areas,” said **DDC Commissioner Peña-Mora**. “Superstorm Sandy was devastating to many communities and the DDC’s part in the ‘Build-It-Back’ initiative is to strengthen those neighborhoods through sustainable and smart home rehabilitations. We will be completing many more of these projects between now and the end of the year.”

“Celebrating these milestones with homeowners is a special part of the work we do,” said **HRO Director Amy Peterson**. “We’re proud of our partnership with DDC, which quadrupled Build it Back’s design and construction capacity, and look forward to many more homecoming celebrations as we move towards the Mayor’s goal of completing construction by the end of the year.”



Above: Before (left) and after (right) of Thornton-Mannix’s house at 528 Greeley Ave, Staten Island.

Ms. Mannix evacuated during the storm but her home was submerged in 4.5 feet of water during the most extreme periods of flooding. Her basement fixtures, furnishings and boiler were ruined. She ultimately made the decision to leave the house and find refuge with relatives. Under “Build-it-Back,” DDC raised her house nearly six feet above the floodplain through a hydraulic process that involved lifting the home from its original foundation and setting it back on elevated beams. After completing necessary interior renovations and hooking utilities, construction was completed in just 165 days.

Mayor de Blasio’s commitment to the Build-It-Back initiative has been pivotal in renewing community pride in areas affected by flooding and other storm related damage. Since DDC’s involvement in the initiative, 50 new employees have been dedicated to further advance the Build-it-Back division. DDC is scheduled to complete 227 elevations on homes in Staten Island that were affected by Superstorm Sandy. Citywide, DDC will work on 1,781 homes that suffered damage from the Superstorm.

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ABOUT DDC

The Department of Design and Construction is the City's primary capital construction project manager. In supporting Mayor de Blasio's lenses of growth, sustainability, resiliency, equity and healthy living, DDC provides communities with new or renovated public buildings such as firehouses, libraries, police precincts, new or upgraded roadways, sewers, water mains in all five boroughs. To manage this \$10 billion portfolio, DDC partners with other City agencies, architects and consultants, whose experience bring efficient, innovative, and environmentally-conscious design and construction strategies to city projects. For more information, please visit nyc.gov/DDC