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## Apartment complex for autistic adults opens in Phoenix



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PHOENIX -- A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place Wednesday at a newly-refurbished apartment complex where young adults with autism will have a chance for more independence.

The 29 Palms apartments near 48th Street and McDowell Road were built in 1963. They were refurbished in a year-long project involving the Foundation for Senior Living, First Place AZ and the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center.

"This property that is opening (Wednesday) is co-locating 15 apartments for seniors and six two-bedroom apartments with young adults with autism," said Denise Resnik, co-founder of SARRC.

The apartments will be completely furnished by Del Sol Furniture. The Foundation for Senior Living will provide each unit with specially-designed technology and communications equipment that will help the patients keep in touch with their families.

The six young autistic adults will be part of the First Place Academy's Independent Living Program, which is run by First Place AZ and SARRC. Their rent will be paid through their tuition. The program is patterned after the Taft College Transition Program in California. The founder and creator of that program, Jeff Ross, recently retired, but has relocated to Phoenix to become First Place AZ's executive director.

Resnik said it has been a 20-year dream to open a place like 29 Palms. She said they have been looking far and wide for a suitable location.

"This is a result of evaluating 100 properties across the country, and building toward a bigger plan and a greater vision for families in terms of where their adults can live."

A larger property that will house an academy for students, supported housing and apartments for residents, and a 10,000-square-foot leadership institute is in the planning stages.