

First Place Phoenix Opens its Doors

First Place AZ, a Phoenix nonprofit combining apartments, a residential training program and a global leadership institute, is ushering in a new era of housing options for special populations.

The 81,000-square-foot, \$15.4 million First Place—Phoenix, designed for adults with autism and other different abilities, recently held its official opening ceremony with local dignitaries, business leaders and families attending. Residents began moving into the four-story property in July, drawn to First Place for its focus on innovation and community building.

First Place—Phoenix features three main components:

First Place Apartments:

55 studio, one-, two- and four-bedroom units for lease that include a suite of independent living supports, a wide range of property amenities and a robust community life.

First Place Transition Academy:

A two-year, tuition-based residential training program for participants that is focused

on independent living and developing interpersonal skills/career readiness.

First Place Global Leadership Institute:

An international training center for professionals, direct service support providers and medical personnel, and a robust site for research and public-policy advancements.

The state-of-the-art building at Third St. and Catalina Ave. includes special security features, a 24/7 staff, sound barriers blocking out street sounds, nontoxic/low-VOC materials and special lighting to mitigate the sensory issues some people with autism experience. Apartments also include convenient “grab and go” stations where residents can charge their phones and store keys and other important items in an easy-to-remember location.

Hardison/Downey construction of Phoenix was the general contractor and RSP Architects of Tempe was the architect. Financing is being provided by Clearinghouse CDFI, Dudley Ventures, DV Community Investment, First Place Financing Facility and US Bank.

DENISE RESNIK: First Place

