New residential program for adults with autism

By Mary Ann Bashaw | June 20, 2014

Valley families of children with autism and related disorders have benefited since 1997 from the services and support of the Southwest Autism Research and Resource Center (SARRC) in Phoenix. SARRC’s clinical, educational and life skills/vocational programs address the needs of children, teens and adults.

Parents work tirelessly to meet their children’s special needs. But what happens when autistic children grow up to be autistic adults? What happens next? Without the necessary community services, including employment and safe housing, the hopes and dreams of an independent life elude them.

After four years of collaboration, SARRC, the Foundation for Senior Living and First Place AZ have taken significant steps to make those dreams come true.
Together with Dohrmann Architects, Inc. and DECCA Multi-Family Builders, the team of organizations designed and built 29 Palms Apartments in Phoenix, an affordable housing project that joins 15 units for senior citizens—live-in “grandparents”—with six two-bedroom units for adults with autism.

At a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, members of the community were introduced to the facility with tours of the apartments and encouraging words from the organizations that came together to make the 29 Palms vision a reality.

According to DRA Strategic Communications, owned by SARRC co-founder Denise Resnik, the pilot project 29 Palms breaks new ground as “a new residential model that maximizes independence, community integration, personal enrichment and quality of life. Within walking distance of public transit, residents will be connected to the community at large, offering opportunities for lifelong growth.”

The 29 Palms apartment project offers parents hope that their children with autism can grow up to be productive, contributing members of their communities.