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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**Volunteers of America Awarded Grant to Create 122 New Apartment Homes in Baton Rouge**

*Development will serve families and veterans, add to revitalization of historic Spanish Town*

**NEW ORLEANS (June 25, 2018)** – Volunteers of America has been awarded $5.7 million in Community Development Block Grant funds to develop 122 new apartment homes for families and veterans in Baton Rouge’s historically and culturally significant Spanish Town neighborhood. The funding was received from the Louisiana Housing Corporation (LHC) as part of its 2016 flood disaster recovery efforts.

“We are thankful to the LHC for this funding which allows us to continue to provide much needed neighborhood-based housing for working people in Louisiana communities,” says Victor Smeltz, Executive Director of Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation (RNDC), the agency’s subsidiary charged with developing this housing. As its first development in Baton Rouge, RNDC is working collaboratively with Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge to ensure its success.

“The currently underutilized and undeveloped 2.56-acre full city block proposed for this new development fronts onto BREC’s Spanish Town Park and is in an area targeted for revitalization,” said Smeltz. “Returning residential use to this site will directly contribute to ongoing revitalization of the area.”

Spanish Town is Baton Rouge’s oldest neighborhood. It was previously home to single family shotgun and bungalow style houses, many of which have been demolished over the years. Valencia Park, the new multi-family mixed-income housing community, will return much needed residential housing to this now vacant site as infill development. Adjacent to downtown, the site is in close proximity to jobs, hospitals, services and transit.

Once completed, Valencia Park will be comprised of one 3-story apartment building, containing 62 one bedroom/one bath, 54 two bedroom/two bath and 6 three bedroom/two bath apartments, as well as community amenity space available to all residents. Fifty percent of the apartment homes will be targeted to veterans and their families, and rents will be structured so as to be affordable to a broad range of working households. Site amenities will include improved pedestrian walkways with landscaped green space, an outdoor pavilion and on-site parking.

Construction is anticipated to commence early 2019 with completion and leasing expected to begin early 2020. Chenevert Architects of Baton Rouge, working with Humphreys & Partners Architects, L.P., will be project architects and Milton J. Womack Inc. General Contractors of Baton Rouge has been identified as the general contractor of Valencia Park.

***About Volunteers of America:***

*Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit, faith-based organization dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. Since 1896, our ministry of service has supported and empowered America's most vulnerable groups, including at-risk youth, the frail elderly, men returning from prison, people with disabilities, and those recovering from addictions. Our work touches the mind, body, heart-and ultimately the spirit-of those we serve, integrating our deep compassion with highly effective programs and services. For more information on programs, visit* [*www.voasela.org*](http://www.voasela.org)*.*

***About Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation:***

*Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation (RNDC) is a locally managed subsidiary of Volunteers of America. Through the creation and rehabilitation of neighborhood-based multi-family rental housing, RNDC is dedicated to providing affordable and safe housing to the working people of our communities. For more information on RNDC, visit* [*www.rndcnola.org*](http://www.rndcnola.org)*.*

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