

**For Immediate Release**

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PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHIER AMERICA***80% of Future Projects will Promote Healthy Living through Design, Education*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Vitus Group announced that it is one of the first affordable housing developers in the U.S. to collaborate with the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), which works with the private sector and PHA Honorary Chair First Lady Michelle Obama to make healthier choices easier for busy parents and families. The announcement was made at PHA’s Building a Healthier Future Summit in Washington, D.C.

Vitus Group (Vitus), a Seattle-based national developer, specializes in revitalizing aging properties in order to preserve affordable housing in high-cost urban areas. In partnership with PHA and The Center for Active Design, Vitus has committed to building healthier communities across the country by incorporating Active Design elements into at least 80 percent of its future developments.

“We are honored to join PHA because it represents an important expansion for us as an affordable housing developer. We view our buildings as more than safe and stable homes; they also have the potential to be platforms to reach communities in need,” said Stephen Whyte, managing director of Vitus Group. “We hope that providing our residents with access to a healthier lifestyle will positively influence their everyday lives. PHA and the Center for Active Design will help us be more innovative as we deploy upgrades and programs.”

Vitus is recognized as a national leader in renovating and revitalizing affordable housing communities. The company offers resident services and Active Design elements in many of its properties across the country; the PHA commitment takes these practices one step further by providing a roadmap for a systematic strategy. Promotion of physical activity and health education are especially important in lower-income communities, where people are at greatest risk for obesity and obesity-related diseases, according to several national studies.

“We are all designed to move,” said PHA CEO Lawrence A. Soler. “By focusing on integrating strategies that get people moving right from the start, housing developers like Vitus Group are leading their industry in helping us make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

The Vitus commitment to PHA includes incorporating a variety of Active Design elements into its future developments, such as:

- Indoor and outdoor spaces for exercise available year-round for children, adults and seniors
- Inviting, accessible stairwells that encourage stair use
- Long term bicycle storage
- Community gardens and Community Supported Agriculture programs
- Cooking classes, exercise classes and chronic disease management seminars

The Center for Active Design will independently verify the company's progress on its commitment and as part of that process will provide recommendations for additional Active Design elements that are tailored to each community.

### **About Vitus Group**

Vitus Group's mission is to create positive social impact—one community, one family and one life at a time. As an innovative leader in affordable housing across the nation, Vitus specializes in developing healthy, self-sustaining communities through both the acquisition of existing affordable projects and new construction. By transforming legacy affordable housing into unique communities with modern design, energy-efficient features, gardens, gathering places and social services, Vitus helps to preserve develop affordability in markets areas where the need is greatest. Since 1996, Vitus has developed and/or acquired more than 9,000 units of tax-credit-financed affordable housing in over 90 projects, located across 17 states.

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