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Roxbury Community Safety Partners Win National Award
MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award Honors Madison Park Development Corporation, Boston Police Department, and Orchard Gardens/Commons Public Safety Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boston, MA (October 15, 2008)– Madison Park Development Corporation (MPDC), the Orchard Gardens Public Safety Committee, and the Boston Police Department will be honored Thursday, October 16th by MetLife Foundation for their accomplishments in reducing crime and improving quality of life in the Orchard Gardens/Orchard Commons developments in Roxbury, MA. Mayor Thomas Menino, Police Commissioner Edward Davis and April Hawkins, Director of MetLife Foundation’s Civic Affairs Program, will join MPDC CEO Jeanne Pinado and Orchard Resident Association President Edna Bynoe at the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award ceremony Thursday at 10:00 AM at the Orchard Gardens Community Center at 2 Dearborn Street, Roxbury.

The Awards, sponsored by MetLife Foundation and administered by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), recognize partnerships between community development groups and police departments that have reduced crime and spurred housing development, economic activity and improved community services in low and moderate-income communities. A \$10,000 Neighborhood Revitalization Award will be presented to the partnership. MPDC, Orchard Gardens/Commons Public Safety Committee, and Boston Police Department were selected from more than 500 applicants nationwide for the Award.

“Community groups and police departments share a common goal: creating safe, livable communities,” said Sibyl Jacobson, president of MetLife Foundation. “Madison Park Development Corporation and the Boston Police Department provide an exemplary model of partnership, and we are pleased to join LISC in recognizing their results and sharing their best practices with others groups across the country.”

MPDC, Boston Police Department, and the Public Safety Committee worked with many partners including the Orchard Gardens Residents Association, residents of the adjoining Orchard Commons, neighborhood community centers and Boston Housing Authority to achieve a dramatic transformation of Orchard Gardens/Commons.

“Madison Park is not only proud of the physical transformation of Orchard, but also, the strong sense of community and our ability to form strategic partnerships to accomplish our revitalization goals,” said Pinado.

In the late 1990s, a \$60 million HOPE IV renovation had transformed Orchard Gardens, once a dangerous haven for drug dealing. By 2003, crime was rising again, as drug dealing and prostitution in surrounding neighborhoods filtered into the development. In response, the Orchard Gardens Resident Association started the Orchard Gardens/Commons Public Safety Committee as a highly networked crime watch. The Public Safety Committee’s strategy was to collaborate with police and city agencies to bring about changes in crime

enforcement and the physical environment while providing families with needed social services, thereby encouraging broader economic redevelopment. MPDC community organizer, Luz Colon, provides support to the Public Safety Committee, which has a core group of more than 25 local residents. MPDC and its partner, Trinity Financial, own the Orchard Gardens development and are active developers in the area.

Through ongoing interaction to strategize about preventing and reducing crime, police officers have established stronger relationships with residents. Increased trust and open communication has helped reduce drug-related criminal activity at Orchard Gardens. The partners also have reduced opportunities for undetected criminal activity by cutting down weeds in a vacant lot and installing fencing and lighting. Successful lobbying of the City of Boston has led to other safety and quality of life improvements in the area. City and state departments of public health have provided family support and ongoing funding of crime prevention strategies.

The combined efforts of all members of the partnership have resulted in the transformation of the neighborhood surrounding Orchard Gardens. Madison Park Development Corporation has acquired vacant land on which it is building 20 new homes for moderate-income, first-time homebuyers, with preference to go to Orchard Gardens/Commons residents and other public housing residents.

“Every day, the Boston Police Department draws on partnerships with community development corporations, residents and businesses to resolve crime problems,” said Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis. “The efforts being recognized by LISC and MetLife Foundation are a great example of how we can make neighborhoods safer, better places to live by collaborating.”

Bob Van Meter, Executive Director of Boston LISC, said, “The Orchard Gardens project is an excellent example of how public safety and economic development go hand-in-hand. LISC is honored to join MetLife Foundation in recognizing the great accomplishments of these partners.”

LISC is the nation’s leading community development support organization. Since 1980, LISC has marshaled more than \$8.6 billion from 3,100 investors, lenders and donors to foster the revitalization of more than 300 urban neighborhoods and rural communities. LISC established the Community Safety Initiative in 1994 to help build formal, long-term partnerships between law enforcement and community developers in troubled neighborhoods to reduce persistent crime, disorder and fear. In Boston, the Community Safety Initiative is part of LISC’s broader portfolio of investment that includes grants, loans and equity financing to support the development of over 7,860 homes and apartments and 1.4 million square feet of commercial and facilities space. More information about Boston LISC and CSI can be found at www.lisc.org.

MetLife Foundation, established by MetLife in 1976, is a long-time supporter of LISC’s community revitalization programs. In 1994, the Foundation made a \$1 million leadership grant to pilot the CSI. MetLife and the Foundation have also made below-market rate loans and grants of almost \$77 million to the organization. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

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Event Information

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Orchard Gardens Community Center, 2 Dearborn Street, Roxbury, MA