

## ARC sells; headed for Hawthorne

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Preparing for a winter move into new headquarters being built in Hawthorne, Westchester ARC has contracted to sell its 48,000-square-foot center in White Plains to a local real estate company with a strong tie to the nonprofit agency that serves about 1,600 Westchester County residents with developmental disabilities.

Mitchell Benerofe, principal in Benerofe Properties Inc., a family-owned real estate investment and management partnership in Harrison, confirmed his company's pending purchase of the ARC's Herbert Katzenberg Center at 121 Westmoreland Ave. He declined to disclose the sale price.

Benerofe said the buyer is considering "two approaches" to use of the brick building, a former



World War II-era munitions plant that ARC has occupied for about 45 years. He declined to describe those options.

Benerofe serves as volunteer co-chair of the steering committee directing ARC's first capital campaign, "Envision Possibilities." The campaign fundraising goal of \$7.5 million includes \$5.5 million for the \$14 million Hawthorne center project and \$2 million for a fund to sustain agency programs that are underfunded by govern-



Rendering of the new ARC headquarters in Hawthorne.

ment sources.

As of early last week, the campaign had collected \$6,280,000, said Cathy Bahan, ARC director of marketing and public affairs. Westchester ARC's board of directors has approved up to \$15.5 million for the project, including purchase of the land at 265 Saw Mill River Road. A \$12 million bond from the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York has provided interim tax-exempt financing while the agency conducts its campaign and obtains funds from the sale of its building at 121 Westmoreland Ave. ARC officials said a portion of the bond may remain as a long-term mortgage after the capital campaign is complete.

Bahan said the sale of 121 Westmoreland Ave. drew interest from bidders "throughout the country." Benerofe said he submitted an initial written offer, followed by a final best offer at the broker's request. The sale will be completed when ARC moves to Hawthorne.

"We expect to be in the building in January or February," Bahan said. "It's going along very well."

"The fundraising is going very, very well," she said. "We're still approaching major donors and starting to reach out to the greater community." She said the agency this fall will do a direct-mail campaign aimed at the general community. Bahan said the White Plains office,

located in a commercial area of light industry in the shadows of downtown White Plains, came to seem isolated as ARC shifted from centralized services to community-based work with clients. "It was a great location years ago," she said, when more programs were offered in "a workshop sheltered environment, a contained environment."

Called "Gateway to the Community" by ARC officials, the new center "will be a welcoming space that makes the people we serve feel that they're part of the larger community."

Designed by a Hawthorne firm, Warshauer Mellusi Warshauer Architects P.C., "It's going to be a really beautiful space in a very lovely setting," Bahan said. Artwork and performances by disabled persons will be showcased there. "The real importance of this building is that this is really a place where people can come in and plan how they're going to put together a menu of services that really meets their particular needs," Bahan said. It will be, she said, "a place where people with disabilities and their families can network, consult social service professionals and have access to other resources enabling them to make decisions concerning their futures."

Westchester ARC officials last week hosted a walk-through of the center, which is scheduled to be completed late this year.