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LIHI apartments win tax credit award

By [JOURNAL STAFF](#)

The Tony Lee apartments in Seattle's Lake City neighborhood received a 2020 Charles L. Edson Tax Credit Excellence Award, which recognizes affordable housing developments and organizations that have demonstrated especially impactful use of the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

The Affordable Housing Tax Credit Coalition honored the project in the large metropolitan category. The annual awards recognize housing credit developments that strengthen communities, improve residents' opportunity and boost economies in urban, suburban and rural areas in the United States.

The Seattle-based nonprofit Low Income Housing Institute developed and owns The Tony Lee, which opened in October 2018 at 2820 N.E. 127th St.

The six-story structure was designed by Runberg Architecture Group and built by Walsh Construction Co. on the old Fire Station 39 site, which the city of Seattle transferred to LIHI at no cost, LIHI said in press materials.

The project has 70 apartments for people making 30 to 60 percent of the area median income, as well as a subsidized preschool operated by the Refugee Women's Alliance and a rooftop deck, solar array and gardens for residents. A mural titled "Bending into the Sweet Deep Blue" on the north wall celebrates salmon and the beauty of the Puget Sound. It is by Esteban Camacho Steffensen.

The Tony Lee is one block from Lake City Way, with access to public transit, grocery stores and restaurants. To finance the property, Boston Capital provided more than \$6 million in equity through the 4 percent Housing Credit, and loans were from Umpqua Bank.

The building is named for Tony Lee, a civil rights advocate and champion for low-income families, people of color, refugees and immigrants. He was a founding member of the Asian-Pacific Islander Coalition of Washington and the Equity in Education Coalition. He was an attorney at Evergreen Legal Services and advocated for the Washington Association of Churches, the Catholic Archdiocese and Solid Ground.

The project team included PanGEO, geotechnical engineer; KPFF Consulting Engineers, civil; Quantum Consulting Engineers, structural; G-Logics, environmental engineer; Rushing, MEP engineer; JRS Engineering, envelope; and Karen Kiest Landscape Architects, along with Cerna Landscape, United Systems Mechanical, Merit Electric of Spokane and Sunrise Plumbing.

In a press release, LIHI Executive Director Sharon Lee said the award is validation of community-centric mixed-use projects that provide affordable housing and crucial services to neighborhoods



Photo by Michael Walmsley [\[enlarge\]](#)

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that need them.

The AHTCC is a trade organization of housing professionals who advocate for affordable rental housing financed using the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. Its president,

Michael Gaber, said the Edson awardees highlight creative and innovative solutions that combat the nation's lack of affordable housing.

“As the impact of COVID-19 continues to create hardships for a growing number of families and working people across the country, now more than ever we need effective tools like the housing credit to provide stable, affordable homes,” Gaber said.

Since 1986, the housing credit has financed more than 3 million homes for low-income households, including veterans, senior citizens, people with disabilities, essential workers and families with children.

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