

Establishing the Edge Estableciendo The Edge

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Establishing the Edge

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There is more room to roam.

Just a few months after Hotel Cliff opened its doors on 181st Street, a ribbon-cutting was held for The Edge Hotel, the area's second hotel.



Located a stone's throw from the subway, and from the facilities at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and Columbia University Medical Center, the 40,000 square-foot hotel boasts 11 floors and 54 guest rooms.

15,000 square feet of the building, which is located near the 1,A and C 168th Street subway lines, will be used for medical offices.

Present at the morning ceremony on Mon., Nov. 16th were developers Oskar Brecher and Ari Sherizen; State Senator Adriano Espaillat; Assemblymember Guillermo Linares; Councilmember Ydanis Rodriguez; members of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ); community leaders and residents.

Rodriguez said the economic incentives should serve as impetus for similar development.



The hotel has 54 guest rooms.

"This creates decent jobs for our working people in the neighborhood," he observed. "As more projects of this kind are developed in the city, we want to bring them to our area."

Espaillat said the establishment of a three-star hotel uptown represented a milestone.

"Many times when urban communities like this –which, throughout the city, are marginalized and plagued by difficult problems – see a hotel like this, [it's a sign] things are improving," he remarked. "This is a good sign that the neighborhood is on the right track and that there are people who want to invest in it."

Developers said that providing accommodations and additional infrastructure uptown had always been the goal. For years, they had sought out space near or north of 125th Street but could not find just the right locale.



"This was meant to be," said developer Oskar Brecher.

"Then, we checked near the medical school and found a vacant space: a parking lot properly zoned for commercial space," exclaimed Brecher. "We bought it right away. We said, 'This was meant to be.'"

The hotel, they added, was always envisioned as a destination for uptown visitors and tourists, and as a means of keeping their dollars within the local economy.

"We wanted to make this hotel serve as an amenity also to the hospital, [but also] the Armory Track and Field Center, Yeshiva University and the entire Washington Heights community," said Sherizen.

The Edge's first five floors will house the Advanced Nursing Practice Clinic of Columbia University's Nursing School.



The fitness room.

The clinic will offer a real-world clinical learning experience for students, and yield access to high quality nurse practitioner care to community residents – at a convenient location close to where they live and work.

“Opening in Washington Heights fulfills our vision of delivering health care that is compassionate, evidence based and culturally competent in the communities in which we operate,” explained Stephen A. Ferrara, Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs at the nursing school.

Indeed, the ceremony was a formality, as the hotel has been open since mid-October.



"I am part of the community too," said General Manager Nelia Rodríguez.

General Manager Nelia Rodríguez, who has over a decade of experience in the hospitality industry, noted that the additional time allowed the hotel's employees to become fully familiarized with and immersed in day-to-day operations.

She said she was proud to be part of a team of over 20 employees, the majority of which hail from the surrounding neighborhood.



UMEZ CEO Kenneth Knuckles.

"I am part of the community too," said Rodríguez, who has been working with developers since March. "When the owners told me that my responsibility was to make this project part of the community, they won me over."

The hotel's upper floors offer 54 guest rooms, which run from approximately \$130 to \$180 a night. They can accommodate single guests and larger groups, including rooms that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The aesthetic is decidedly modern and spare, with amenities that include flat-screen televisions and premium cable options. Colorful artwork from Chris Pieretti and Harold Krisel strike a colorful note. There are expansive views of the northern Manhattan skyline, complimentary Wi-Fi service, Keurig coffee machines, and a key-less security system. There is also a fitness center with treadmills, elliptical machines and free weights, and a conference room.

Housekeeping Supervisor James Ditren had worked before in the hospitality industry – sort of.

For the past eight years, the local resident traveled to the local airports for his shifts as a forklift operator. But he longed for a position closer to home in order to spend more time with his family. In August, he made the leap and started as a houseman at The Edge.



"I could not be more grateful," said Housekeeping Supervisor James Ditren.

Beyond eliminating the onerous commute, Ditren has been thrilled with the acquisition of new skills as part of a larger management team.

His hard work has paid off. In a few short months, he has already been promoted to Housekeeping Supervisor.

"There's more opportunity [here] to grow professionally," he said. "Now, I am in a better economic and personal position where I can take [my children] to school and pick them up every day. I could not be more grateful."

Ditren, said Sherizen, serves as an example of how the hotel's administration seeks to incorporate itself in the community.

"They have exceeded our expectations in their professionalism and enthusiasm," he said of the Edge's staff. "James is a good example of the advancement opportunities that we want to provide for local residents."

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