



May/June/July

2008

Issue #14

# Homeward Bound

City of Miami Department of Community Development Newsletter

## CITY OF MIAMI

### Department of Community Development



**Director:**  
George Mensah

**Deputy Director:**  
Alfredo Duran

**Assistant  
Directors:**  
Pedro Mirones  
Roberto Tazoe

### In this issue:

Villa Patricia	1
New Director	1
Foreclosure Clinic	2
Success Story	2
Fair Housing	3
Dis. 3 Downpayment Assistance Program	3
Odds and Ends	4

## Groundbreaking at Villa Patricia

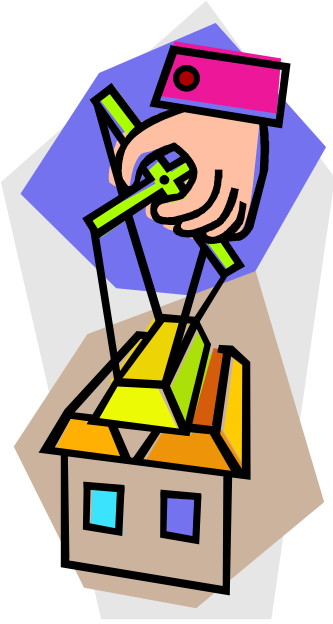
City officials gathered in Little Haiti to mark construction of the Villa Patricia rental development along Northwest 79<sup>th</sup> Street in District 5. The project features three separate buildings with a combined total of 339 units for low-income families and seniors. It received funding from the State of Florida, City of Miami (HOME Funding), and Miami-Dade County. City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones, District 5, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, and former U.S. Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, were part of the groundbreaking ceremony. Villa Patricia is being developed by Carlisle Development Group in association with the Biscayne Housing Group.



Left to right: City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, former Congresswoman Carrie P. Meek, Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones, Michael Cox, Partner, Biscayne Housing Group, and Lloyd Boggio of Carlisle Development Group helped commemorate Villa Patricia's groundbreaking.

## A New Director of Community Development

This April, City Manager Pedro G. Hernandez announced the selection of George Mensah as the new Director of the Department of Community Development. Mr. Mensah has been with the Department in numerous capacities since January 2004, most recently as Assistant Director of the Housing Unit, where he was responsible for overseeing all housing-related efforts including HOME Investment Partnerships Program Grants, the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) and Section 8 programs, State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) grants, Inspections and overall customer satisfaction. Mr. Mensah has also worked for the Florida Housing Finance Corporation's Homeownership Program in Tallahassee and for Neighborhood Housing Services of New York City, a non-profit organization that manages housing assistance programs for low- and moderate-income persons for the City of New York. Mr. Mensah has a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering and a Master's in Business Administration.



## Department Participates in Foreclosure Clinic

Community Development staff recently participated in a free Foreclosure Prevention Clinic open to the general public that brought together several community entities to help residents facing potential foreclosure proceedings. Held at Miami-Dade Community College's North Campus, the clinic covered topics including default counseling, delinquency procedure, and more. The informational event was hosted by U.S. Congressman Kendrick Meek. Community Development is currently developing a foreclosure prevention program to assist low-income persons/families in the City with staying in and preserving their home. The program guidelines shall be made available sometime this September, along with details on how to apply for assistance.

## Rehabilitation Project Under Way in Little Haiti

City of Miami officials recently gathered to commemorate Haitian Heritage Month (May), touring several City-funded projects recently completed or currently in progress in the Little Haiti neighborhood. One of those efforts is the **Little Haiti Commercial Rehabilitation Project**, along NW 58<sup>th</sup> Street in District 5. The Department of Community Development awarded Rafael Hernandez Housing & Economic Development Corporation, Inc. \$225,315 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the rehabilitation of several businesses along the busy commercial corridor. Completion of the façade work which is to include exterior painting, resurfacing, new signage and more, is scheduled for completion later this year.

Right: A look at one of several adjacent buildings that comprise the Little Haiti Commercial Rehabilitation project.



Consuella James (left) and Johnnie Mae Barber (right) of the City's Section 8 program.

## A Community Development Success Story

National Homeownership Month was celebrated this June, recognizing the efforts of Americans who have worked hard to become responsible homeowners. One such success story in the City of Miami is Consuella James. Ms. James is a working mother of two who has been a client of the City's Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation program for several years. Last year, Ms. James learned Habitat for Humanity was developing scattered home sites in the District 5 area and decided to apply and see if she would qualify. She was later approved as a homebuyer and her family will be moving into their new home this fall. As part of the program, Ms. James spends several hours a week helping with the actual build out of her home. We congratulate Ms. James on being a first-time homeowner in the City of Miami!

## Fair Housing Workshop held this Summer

This July, the Department of Community Development hosted an informational workshop for landlords who participate in the City of Miami's rental assistance programs, commonly referred to as Housing Assistance Plan (HAP) programs. Local experts from the Housing Opportunities Project for Excellence, Inc. (H.O.P.E., Inc.), a private fair housing, not-for-profit, 501(c)3 corporation established in 1988 to fight housing discrimination and promote fair housing, reviewed important local and federal fair housing laws for landlords, while addressing reasonable accommodations and modifications for disabled tenants. Meanwhile, City staff members addressed the landlords' questions on topics including Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspections, common payment issues, Fair Market Rents (FMR)/Rent Reasonableness, and more. If you are interested in additional information about fair housing, visit [www.hopefhc.com](http://www.hopefhc.com) or [www.hud.gov/fairhousing](http://www.hud.gov/fairhousing). If you'd like more information about the City's HAP program, or how you can become a participating landlord, please visit our web site at [www.miamigov.com/communitydevelopment/pages/housing/s8main.asp](http://www.miamigov.com/communitydevelopment/pages/housing/s8main.asp).



## District 3 Downpayment Assistance Program Open

The City of Miami presently has funds available for a special downpayment assistance program for first-time homebuyers who qualify as low-income (80% Average Median Income (AMI) income or below), as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (\*see chart at right) and are seeking to buy a home *within the boundaries of District 3* of the City of Miami. Eligible persons/families can qualify for assistance of up to \$40,000 towards the purchase of a condominium or single-family home that does not exceed \$236,000 in sales price.

Monies for this special program are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, while funding exists. The applicant is responsible for locating a property within District 3 and seeking a mortgage commitment from a bank/lender. The lender and applicant should then apply for City funding. The exact boundaries for District 3 can be found on the web at <http://www.miamigov.com/Planning/pages/services/Maps.asp> (see Commission Districts link). Persons interested in more information about this program can contact 305-416-2080.

2008 Income Limits - 80% AMI	
Household Size	Maximum Household Income
1	\$ 33,800
2	\$ 38,600
3	\$ 43,450
4	\$ 48,250
5	\$ 52,100
6	\$ 55,950
7	\$ 59,850
8	\$ 63,700

## CDBG/HOPWA Funding for 2008-2009

The funding recommendations for the most recent Request for Proposals (RFP) cycle for Fiscal Year 2008-2009, including Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG), and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funding, were presented to City Commission on June 5, 2008. The categories in this RFP cycle include: Public Service, Economic Development, Micro-Enterprise Grants (Districts 2 and 5), and HOPWA Housing Specialist Services and Project Based Rental Subsidy/Operating Support. A full listing of what persons and/or agencies received funding is available on Legistar, the City's legislative information center, accessible via web at [www.miamigov.com](http://www.miamigov.com) (look for the Legislative Hub Link).



**City of Miami  
Department of  
Community  
Development**

444 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.  
Second Floor  
Miami, FL 33130

PHONE:  
305-416-2080

FAX:  
305-416-2090

WEB PAGE:  
[http://www.miamigov.com/  
communitydevelopment](http://www.miamigov.com/communitydevelopment)



## Odds and Ends

- The Department recently joined other Departments from the City of Miami at a Relay for Life event held in Shenandoah Park this May. The Department helped raise over \$1,000 towards the American Cancer Society.
- The Department is presently in the planning stages for the next Consolidated Plan, for 2009-2013. The Consolidated Plan is a document that must be filed with the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development by entitlement communities. It incorporates public comments and input and consolidates these into a single submission for the planning and application aspects of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, the Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Program, and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. If you are interested in attending public meetings related to the next Consolidated Plan and would like to be added to our mailing list for these meetings, please send your e-mail address to [cbermudez@miamigov.com](mailto:cbermudez@miamigov.com).
- Several Community Development staff members volunteered their time to assist in the U.S. Conference of Mayors Annual Meeting held in Miami this June. The employees, including Michelle Bramwell, Diana Lopez, Patricia Rueda, and Lori Soto, were recognized during the first July City Commission meeting for their efforts, along with volunteers from other City departments.

**Are you interested in having information about your particular program highlighted in this newsletter? Please send any information and photos to Christine Bermudez Sola, Public Information Officer and Editor. Email: [cbermudez@miamigov.com](mailto:cbermudez@miamigov.com), Ph: 305-416-2096.**

**CITY OF MIAMI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**  
444 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Second Floor  
Miami, FL 33130