

# PROJECT PROFILE & ABSTRACT

**PROJECT PROFILE**

Project Name Maya Angelou Community Initiative Location Boise Neighborhood, Portland,

Owner Housing Our Families Oregon

Project Use(s) Community revitalization and affordable rental housing

Project Size 42 units on one city block Total Development Cost \$1,508,592

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) (of apartments only) \$209,026

Date Initiated August 4, 1993 Percent Completed, December 2, 1994 100%

Projected Completion Date (if appropriate) completed

(Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates)

Application submitted by:

Name Gretchen Dursch

Title Executive Director

Organization Housing Our Families

Address 5315 N. Vancouver Ave., Portland, Oregon 97217

Telephone ( 503 ) 335-0947

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Person	Telephone
■ Public Agencies <u>City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury</u>	<u>Erik Sten</u>	<u>(503) 823-3028</u>
<u>Portland Development Commission</u>	<u>Neyle Hunter</u>	<u>823-3272</u>
■ Developer <u>Housing Our Families</u>	<u>Gretchen Dursch</u>	<u>335-0947</u>
■ Professional consultants:		
Architect <u>Andrews Architect</u>	<u>Martha Andrews</u>	<u>239-4387</u>
Landscape architect <u>Same</u>		
Urban designer <u>N/A</u>		
<u>Financial packager</u>	<u>Thomasina Gabriele</u>	<u>227-4968</u>
<u>Planner- Gabriele Development</u>	<u>Ward Greene</u>	<u>295-2668</u>
Lawyer <u>Greene &amp; Markley</u>	<u>Will White</u>	<u>335-3668</u>
Other <u>Construction Manager-Housing Development Center</u>	<u>Corlin Beum</u>	<u>335-8343</u>
■ Community group(s) <u>Maya Angelou tenants</u>	<u>Kris Smock</u>	<u>335-0947</u>
<u>Maya Angelou Project Coordinating Committee</u>	<u>Soyna Tucker</u>	<u>225-5386</u>
<u>Boise Neighborhood Improvement Association</u>		
■ Sponsor <u>Housing Our Families</u>		

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award in Urban Excellence.

[ ] mailing [ ] media [ ] previous RBA entrant [ X ] other **Public agency**

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Signature Gretchen M Dursch

Project Name MAYA ANGELOU PROJECT

Location Boise Neighborhood in inner North/Northeast Portland, Oregon

1. Describe briefly the project's design and implementation.

The Maya Angelou project is a comprehensive strategy for urban renewal that used the renovation of a key apartment complex to leverage broad community revitalization in the surrounding neighborhood. It's success was the result of a unique partnership between community residents, public agencies and Housing Our Families (HOF) that operated throughout the design and implementation of the project. As a result, an apartment complex known as a center of drug and gang activity in Portland became the focal point for the transformation of an entire neighborhood. Some keys to our success are:

- \* input from over 130 neighbors, tenants, churches and community organizations into the architectural design and property management plan of the property; and
- \* over 200 community participants developed the Maya Angelou Community Action Initiative through a process of identifying neighborhood needs, prioritizing them, and developing projects to meet those needs. This was done in a series of individual meetings, community forums, and committee meetings facilitated by HOF's VISTA volunteers. The result has been an tremendous amount of activity planned and carried out by neighborhood residents, including paint-a-thons, home repair, clean ups, block watches, neighborhood parties, etc.

2. What local urban issues did this project address? What were its goals? Were there issues that, in your judgement, might have been addressed but were not?

The project addressed two needs: the need for affordable rental housing for families in a predominately minority, low income neighborhood and a need for broad community revitalization in a neighborhood torn apart by drugs and violence.

Both these goals were integrally linked because HOF utilized the creation of the affordable housing and the renovation of the property to ignite the belief in the neighborhood that things could change in their community. This new hope empowered them to develop and implement projects that have stopped the swell of crime, drugs and physical deterioration that had taken over their homes and neighborhood.

When tenants and neighbors came together to discuss their concerns about the neighborhood and prioritize problems, they selected crime, youth, physical revitalization and people getting to know and trust each other again as their four priorities. Undoubtly, they could have picked more. However, the process HOF led them through helped them select those that were most fundamental to their quality of life.

3. Describe the financing of the project. Do you think it could be replicated?

The funding of the acquisition and rehab of the property had two key elements that made it successful: coordination and risk taking. Because of the property's history, it was initially viewed as too risky by private lenders. In addition, HOF needed cash to take advantage of the sheriff's auction. As a result, the City provided 100% of the property's financing up front. The City also began to focus other public dollars in this neighborhood, including building code enforcement and community policing, to support their investment in the Maya Angelou project. This project became a model for what the City now calls their "targeting" approach to coordinating their efforts in an area. After the completion of major renovations, a consortium of private lenders stepped in to refinance half of the City's original loan. This process provides an excellent model for the use of public dollars. Public housing dollars can be used to take the initial risk on a critical project, and other public agencies can work together to support that investment. Later, when the project is a success, private lenders will step in and the returned public funds will fund another project. In this manner, a revolving loan fund of public monies can be created to be used to take advantage of real estate opportunities that have high risk but also immense potential to transform a distressed neighborhood.

4. Why does the project merit the Ruby Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment?

- \* The project is a model of a community being transformed and crime and physical decay being halted through the effective use of the rehabilitation of an apartment complex as the catalyst for comprehensive community revitalization.
- \* The whole community -- tenants, neighbors, community groups, churches, businesses -- were involved in the entire project.
- \* The community process utilized HOF's unique consensus and partnership building model. This model allowed a diverse group of participants to develop their own voice and leadership skills.
- \* This project was a major undertaking for a young organization with limited experience. HOF was able to take this bold step by clearly articulating its vision, goals and processes.
- \* The project's architectural design successfully increased security and a sense of community. It radically changed the perception of this property from a haven for drug and gang activity to the neighborhood's focal point of positive change.
- \* The project was extremely cost effective. The total acquisition & renovation of the property was \$30,000 per unit. Community organizing was done with small grants and hundreds of volunteers.

## PERSPECTIVE SHEETS

- \* Developer -- Housing Our Families
- \* Public Agency -- City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury
- \* Public Agency -- Portland Development Commission
- \* Community Representative -- Project Coordinating Team
- \* Community Representative -- Boise Neighborhood Improvement Association
  - \* Other -- Maya Angelou Tenants
- \* Consultant -- Housing Development Center
  - \* Consultant -- Gabriele Development

## DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Gretchen M. Dursch

Title Executive Director

Organization Housing Our Families

Telephone( 503 ) 335-0947

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

Our primary role in this project was to clearly establish the goals of the project and the processes that would be used to reach those goals. As a young organization, we had limited experience. We knew that we needed to reach outside our organization to hire consultants and to work closely with public agencies. In forming those partnerships, it was essential that we firmly established and articulated our goals for the project. Those goals were based upon the mission of our organization and they were to keep the rents of the project affordable, build a safe and liveable apartment complex that anyone would be proud to live in (not just low income families), to create a sense of ownership among residents and tenants by involving them throughout, and to use this project as a spring board for neighborhood transformation.

Our second role was as community organizer. We saw this project as a wonderful opportunity to use our unique model of leadership development and empowerment with the entire neighborhood. We reached out to involve tenants, community residents, emerging businesses, churches, and other organizations in a holistic community transformation. We provided the process that made this happen, but the community controlled the outcome.

Our third role is that of owner of the Maya Angelou Apartments. As owner, we have a strong responsibility to residents of both the apartments and the neighborhood to manage the apartments well and to maintain their affordability.

2. What, if any, modifications were made to the original proposal as the project was developed? What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

Before we purchased the property, the court-appointed receiver did not allow us to see each apartment or talk to the tenants. In addition, we needed to submit a loan application quickly to Portland Development Commission, so that they could disperse funds in time for the sheriff's sale. As a result, we made our initial renovation plans without full knowledge of the needs of the property and its residents. Many changes were made to our renovation plans after we started managing the property ourselves and after the VISTA volunteers gathered community input. Modifications included adding a community room for resident meetings and activities, a Head Start facility, the conversion of eight one bedroom units to four four bedroom apartments to provide for larger families who were overcrowding existing units, and a stronger focus on landscaping. The trade-off was that this resulted in delays in starting construction. In addition, these changes were unsettling to our lender, who was used to viewing original loan applications as final plans for a project. However, with persistence on our part, they were able to understand that these changes reflected the needs of the community and residents and that they would result in a better project for everyone involved. The few months delay that this caused to the project were minor in comparison to the increased overall quality of the project and the trust it built within the community because their input was really included.

3. What, if any, innovative means of financing the project were used?

A project of this magnitude had never been financed completely by public funds in Portland. The City understood the need to act quickly so that the property could be purchased for less at the auction and to prevent its further deterioration. They knew a private lender would not assume the risks involved with such a project early on. In addition, it was the first time the City had approved a loan of this magnitude to such a young organization. The City had tried to work with several different developers in earlier attempts to rehab this property. In the last attempt, they never released funds to the developer because work performed was not up to code. As a result, they understood the need for a new approach to the project and were willing to take a substantial risk with a newer organization who had demonstrated the capacity to make such a bold leap.

After the renovations were complete and the apartments were fully occupied, Network for Affordable Housing (a consortium of Oregon banks) refinanced a half of the City's original loan. Now the City can re-use that money for other projects.

4. How did the financial benefits and economic impacts of this project differ from other projects? How does the project's quality
- The project impacted the whole community, not just the 42 families living in the complex. In this way it is different from other housing projects. Our holistic approach meant neighbors, residents, emerging businesses, and other organizations, all benefitted economically from the project. For example, neighbors saw the value of their own homes increase. Other organizations who partnered with us developed a greater capacity to address neighborhood issues. Emerging businesses were employed during the renovations at a rate three times the average. The City piggy-backed on this effort and began to target other City programs, such as building code enforcement and home-ownership repair loans, in the neighborhood.

The quality of the project was directly affected by our financial goal. Our financial goal was to have a viable, stable project over the long term. To do that, we needed to have good tenants want to live there. That in turn meant we had to change the look and feel of the complex and the neighborhood. We did this in symbolic ways, like changing the name. But more importantly, we did it through our landscaping design, which increased security and built a sense of community among tenants, and drastically changed the exterior of the complex. We also did it by approaching the project in a holistic manner, integrating it with a community process to renew the entire neighborhood. The neighborhood had to be healthy for the apartment complex to be financially strong.

In addition, as a result of our wise use of resources and volunteers, we were able to keep the costs of the project down. The property acquisition and rehab totalled \$30,000 per unit, while the community revitalization effort was staffed by VISTA volunteers and funded with small local contributions.

5. What was the most difficult task in the development of this project? What was the least successful aspect? With hindsight, would you do anything differently?

Gaining people's initial trust was difficult for two reasons: 1) we were a young group with limited experience, and 2) the neighborhood had been made bold promises before by many others who had not kept them. As a result, people were skeptical of our ability to handle this project. Some of our initial contacts with people and organizations, especially already well-established groups in the neighborhood, were rocky. With hindsight, we believe our inexperience was actually an advantage to us. We never felt we had all the answers. This made it easier for us to stay true to our commitment to incorporate community input. Next time, we will know that people's initial skepticism or doubts are normal, and be more patient with ourselves and them.

6. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

First, we would encourage the use of a targeted physical revitalization project to catalyze broad community transformation. A dramatic positive change in a key property can make people feel hope again. In turn, that new hope provides a golden opportunity for community organizing that can lead to a comprehensive, resident lead neighborhood renewal.

Secondly, we would advise them that they need to set high goals and standards for the project and that they need to clearly articulate them to everyone involved. Only a community responsive developer can see the whole picture. No one else on the team will, no matter how good their intentions are.

Thirdly, we would say that a holistic approach makes for a good project in the long term, even if it takes more time up-front. Our complex will be easier to manage because of a more stable, safer neighborhood, innovative landscaping design, services on-site for tenants (like Head Start and Narcotics Anonymous), and a strong sense of ownership by the residents, made possible by a tenant council.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

For all the residents and neighbors: that families of all types can live safely in this complex and neighborhood; that it is still a community of hope where people have the opportunity to stabilize their lives and move forward; and that residents and neighbors still feel that the property and neighborhood belong to them, not to forces outside of their control.

For participants of the process: that the many new community leaders that emerged in this process will tackle new problems as they arise, before they affect the quality of life of residents; and that the partnerships formed in this project have strengthened and new projects have emerged.

For Housing Our Families: that we have replicated this model in other parts of our target area by having used the renovation of other apartment complexes to catalyze the renewal of other neighborhoods in inner N/NE Portland.

For Maya Angelou Apartments: that the complex is financially stable; that tenants have a strong resident council; and that the site is the center of community activity, events and services.

## PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Gretchen Kafoury Title City Commissioner  
Organization City of Portland Telephone (503) 823-4151  
Address 1220 S.W. Fifth Avenue, Room 211 Portland, Oregon 97204

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1. What role did your organization play in the development of this project?

The City of Portland was a primary funder of the Maya Angelou acquisition/rehabilitation and a partner in funding the community initiatives in the surrounding area. Through the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the City provided funding to allow Housing Our Families to purchase this blighted property from a foreclosure auction. The PDC processed the application in record time, and provided the funds in the form of cashiers checks to meet the requirements of the auction. Using HOME funds, the City made a commitment for permanent financing and allowed HOF to seek other financing later--the State Housing Trust Fund, State Loan-to-Lender Tax Credits, corporate contributions and volunteer labor.

The City, through the Bureau of Housing and Community Development also provided funding through our Community Initiative Program to support the community organizing and revitalization projects which have made this project so successful. This in combination with VISTA support provided the core funding for these efforts.

2. Describe what requirements were made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

The HOME funding requires a commitment to long term affordability, maintaining housing quality and sound property management. The project will be monitored by the Portland Development Commission for HOME requirements for a period of ten years. Because of their organizational mission, Housing Our Families has made affordability commitments well beyond the HOME minimum requirements.

The Community Initiative Grant funding was provided as a result of a competitive application scored by citizen volunteers. The contracts for funding provided specific performance and reporting requirements. In performing under these grants, Housing Our Families has met or exceeded all requirements including numbers of beneficiaries, community outreach efforts, and matching funds.

3. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment? Describe how, if at all, these intentions changed over the course of the project. What trade-offs and compromises were required? How did you participate in making them? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

The City's initial focus for the project was the re-development of a long blighted residential property. This property had changed ownership multiple times in the past ten years and had not been fully occupied or well managed during that period. In the late eighties, the City was forced to close the property down because of illegal activity and code violations. When the property became available at Sheriff Auction, the City saw it as an opportunity to bring the apartments back into useful life.

Housing Our Families was the first to see the need to address the issues of the surrounding community in order to make the project successful. As the work of the VISTA organizers began to jell, it became clear to the City that the project could provide the catalyst to revitalize the surrounding neighborhood. The City has now identified the Unthank Park/Maya Angelou area as one of eight concentrated target areas for Community Development Block Grant assistance. We have focused housing rehabilitation, new homebuyer and code enforcement programs in this area. We have also directed public service contractors to conduct outreach and marketing efforts in this area.

This project provided the City with a lesson in leveraging key investments or opportunities as a criteria for resource targeting decisions. In addition, it demonstrated the importance of community-based problem identification and solutions. These have now become key criterion for the designation of future focus areas.

4. Describe any data you have that document the impact that this project has had on its surroundings and the people in the project area. Attach supplementary materials as appropriate. What have you observed of the project's impact?

The City has seen a dramatic difference in the Maya Angelou property and surrounding community. The Maya Angelou itself no longer has code violations, is fully occupied with legal tenants, and has been re-designed to improve security on the property. Police calls for service both on the property and in the surrounding neighborhood have been reduced, litter and nuisance violations have been reduced through neighborhood clean-ups, nearby properties have been improved through paint-a-thons and private investment, and children have been re-directed into esteem-building activities. Most importantly, neighbors who were afraid to come to a night meeting and certainly wouldn't share phone numbers two years ago now volunteer to tutor children, protest drug trafficking or arrange holiday celebrations to reclaim the streets and park.

5. What about this project would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

This project provided several key lessons for the City. First, the project demonstrates how a housing project can be leveraged into a broader revitalization effort. Secondly, the project shows how critical the community-based approach is to successful revitalization. Finally, since the project represented a significant leap in scale for Housing Our Families, the City gained skill in judging the capacity of a growing organization.

While the project began as a funding commitment for affordable housing, Housing Our Families recognized that the success of the housing project was inextricably linked to the health of the neighborhood. They knew that the tenants needed to feel a sense of ownership of the property and the "us versus them" attitude of the neighbors needed to be dispelled. Without these changes, the rehabilitation of the property would be as short-lived as a paint job and the task of property management over time would be impossible. Responding to this community insight, the City has targeted the area for concentrated community development efforts to great success.

While Housing Our Families did not have a substantial track record of development, the group had gone through a systematic and thoughtful process to develop a mission, train the board, recruit staff and develop organizational systems. This focused "capacity building" reassured the City that the group was prepared to take on a project which increased its housing portfolio tenfold.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

The minimal criterion to judge success of this project will be that the Maya Angelou apartments are in good condition with effective property management. We will find an attractive, stable complex operating in the black. But if this alone is accomplished, the City will be disappointed.

At the heart of the Maya Angelou Community Initiative effort we will look for a sustained level of community activism and capacity to respond to emerging community needs. We expect that the resident council and neighborhood association will continue to be active. We expect that a number of community projects will become annual events, that on-site services will become institutionalized (e.g. Headstart and AA/NA), and that when issues arise the community will organize and respond.

With level or diminishing community development resources, cities are often daunted about their ability to change the fundamental economic or social issues affecting low income neighborhoods. But the lives of individuals and the livability of neighborhoods can change dramatically by the efforts and sense of ownership of the residents. With the Maya Angelou Community Initiative we have seen community residents move from apathy to activism. We believe that this project demonstrates that community-based efforts and City partnership can bring about this change and that this must be the core of the broader societal changes which are needed.



# PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Neyle Hunter Title Director of Housing

Organization Portland Development Commission Telephone (503) 823-3272

Address 1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100, Portland, Oregon 97204-1968

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Signature 

**1. What role did your organization play in the development of this project?**

The Portland Development Commission is the duly authorized redevelopment agency for the City of Portland. The roles played in the development of the Maya Angelou included:

- *Public Lender* PDC provided financing for the predevelopment, construction financing and permanent financing of the Maya Angelou Apartments. Financing was provided using HOME Investment Partnership program funds; Housing Our Families is a city-certified Community-Based Housing Development Organization (CHDO) and is eligible for funding from HOME. To the extent that public funds were needed for the permanent financing of the project after private lender funds were provided to the project, PDC provided the means for retaining funds through loan modification.
- *Inspection and Grant Requirement Functions* PDC provided initial site inspection, provided certification for cost reasonableness and managed the disbursement of financing for the project during the course of construction. Other functions related to environmental review, relocation (URA compliance), historic review and federal regulatory compliance (Davis-Bacon compliance) were provided by PDC.
- *Public/Private Financing Coordination* PDC was active in its efforts to obtain the property, with Housing Our Families, from the bankruptcy court and Sheriffs sale. PDC provided the cash for Housing Our Families the cash to bid at the Sheriffs sale. We also provided support in efforts to clear title and resolve claims against the property at the time of acquisition. PDC was also involved in project conception with the City and Housing Our Families.

Housing Our Families was a relatively new non-profit organization that had significant interest in pursuing the development of both projects for families and the neighborhood surrounding them. Their statement of values and interests were matched by their actions: in this project, they started by involving surrounding neighbors; by considering carefully the costs and benefits of the project; and assured that the project had the components that fulfilled the desires and needs of the neighborhood they had uncovered in the initial stages of the community involvement process.

**2. Describe what requirements were made of this project by your agency (e.g. zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements)**

PDC was required by the funding source (HOME) to gain assurance of an affordability period, to assure that environmental review, historic review, Davis-Bacon, and other related requirements were met. In addition to federal requirements, PDC is required to seek significant Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Women Business Enterprise (WBE) and Emerging Small Business Enterprise (ESB) goals are met.

PDC is also required to assure that costs of construction are reasonable and that the loan secured by the real property was handled effectively and accurately.

**3. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment? Describe how, if at all, these intentions changed over the course of the project. What trade offs and compromises were required. How did you participate in making them? With hindsight, what would you do differently?**

The project assumed control of a series of structures that had deteriorated and had become a significant, blighting influence on the surrounding neighborhood. With the bankruptcy, the last of several attempts to rehabilitate the property had failed. The last attempt to rehabilitate the property was poorly executed, and many of the property's units could not be legally occupied. If rehabilitated, the

property was of a scale and density to accommodate 40 or more households in an environment compatible architecturally and socially with the surrounding neighborhood.

The project was managed successfully because of the flexibility of Housing Our Families and all who were involved with the project. Originally, 48 units were to be developed. With the need for larger family units, 8 units were eventually combined to result in 4 larger units (lowering the total number of units to 44). A community room and Head-Start facility were needed and included in the design, causing PDC to re-evaluate the funding required and remove HOME and substitute CDBG funds. Construction was delayed on part of the project because of these re-designed elements; PDC was assured of the integrity of the proposal and began the project in two phases. Housing Our Families, the eventual private lender, PDC, the State housing finance agency, the contractor, the architect, and the community concerned were all in close communication during the course of construction and made changes to accommodate the project.

Under normal circumstances, this project would not have been an appropriate endeavor to approach with Housing Our Families. The group was relatively new, and the number (and size) of projects already completed were small. The Maya Angelou involved a significant real estate investment and a significant commitment by all who would be eventually involved. However, Housing Our Families approached the project understanding that there was a need for partnerships with many others -- the surrounding neighborhood, the tenants, the contractors, the architect, the financial community, and within the Housing Our Families organization. They recognized that with these partnerships, a project just above their current reach could be completed -- and it could become an enduring asset.

If things were to be done differently, they would only concern the original design and construction planning that were eventually changed to increase the size of units and reduce the overall number of units available in the project. Many of the communication issues related to the completion of the loan for construction arose from the strain of changing the direction of the project, and its funding, just before construction was to begin. The proformas changed; the construction bids were to be modified. A second issue is the long-term nature of PDC financing, which would likely have been shortened to encourage earlier private lender involvement. The latter issue (shortening the term) however, is not as significant an issue with this project because Housing Our Families managed the project's financing with integrity.

**4. Describe any data you have that documents the impact that this project has had on its surroundings and the people in the project area.**

Our empirical evidence of impact exists in tenant surveys which illustrate that moves between buildings during the rehabilitation of the project went well and no claims have been filed. In addition, a high percentage of emerging small businesses and minority-owned businesses were able to contribute to the project and be benefitted by the employment the project offered.

Other evidence of the success of the project exists in the low cost of construction, and the amount of significant volunteer components of the project. In addition, the project has been able to obtain positive community relations through the press and from community members.

PDC and the City took a substantial risk with Housing Our Families to provide financing for the purchase of the property at the sheriff's sale. The extent of the rehabilitation needed for the project was known, but the requirements on both Housing Our Families and their eventual partners were not solidly outlined. The opportunity to obtain the property and fashion it into an enduring home for families was the vision to which Housing Our Families had proven its dedication. That vision was the most significant reason for the risk that was taken.

**5. What about this project would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?**

- The project's initial financing and purchase funds were provided in a manner that would allow Housing Our Families to successfully bid for the project at auction.
- The project's permanent financing is structured to provide Housing Our Families with an income stream that is sufficient but complies with HOME rules and regulations. The structure of the financing is meant to encourage private lender involvement and maintain a significant subsidy to assure low rents.

**6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?**

*Continued Affordability* Does the project continue to provide units to households at a rent level that is affordable (e.g. less than 40% of household income at 65% of median)?

*Strong Management* Does the project physically appear to be well maintained and a positive influence on the surrounding neighborhood?

*Positive Cash Flow* Is the project, without further subsidy, able to sufficiently meet its cash flow obligations, provide replacement and maintenance reserves, and continue to assure a low number of vacant units?

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Stacy Cooper Title Neighbor of Maya Angelou  
Organization Project Coordinating Team Telephone (503) 335-8366  
Address 4105 N Borthwick Portland OR 97227

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Signature Stacy Cooper

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part?

The Project Coordinating Team is a group of residents who live in the neighborhood surrounding the Maya Angelou Apartments. We first got involved in this project through a series of neighborhood forums organized by Housing Our Families in the fall and winter of 1993. At these meetings HOF asked the community for our input, ideas, and visions for the Maya Angelou Apartments. After the first forum, where we talked about our concerns and hopes for the management of the complex, we began talking about what we could do to revitalize the community. A core group of us has continued to meet for the past year, working with HOF's assistance to develop neighborhood clean-ups, residential lighting programs, block watches, paint-a-thons, an afterschool tutoring program, and much more. Over 100 residents have been involved in planning, organizing, or volunteering for these projects. We are the steering committee for the projects, and there are four other planning committees that focus on youth, safety, physical revitalization, and social events. Our work last year resulted in the Maya Angelou Community Action Plan, which outlined 14 projects to be completed over the year. We are now in the process of planning projects for 1995.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Crime and violence were the two most important issues that we hoped this project would address. Our neighborhood had become known for its drug trafficking, gang activity, and crime, and the Maya Angelou Apartments were for many years one of the worst spots in the neighborhood. Another aspect of the neighborhood which concerned us was the general decay of many of the houses. Our community is filled with boarded up homes and vacant lots as well as many houses which are falling apart. As homeowners, we feared that the violence and decay of our neighborhood would lead to a decline in property values.

Our reasons for getting involved in this project are diverse. One of our members was wary about moving into our neighborhood because of its reputation for violence; when she saw the improvements that HOF was making at the Maya Angelou, she ended up buying a house directly across the street. Several of us were frustrated with the inactivity of the existing organizations in our area and were hoping for an opportunity to work with a group that was getting things done. Other members needed help rehabilitating their houses and saw our projects as a way to do that. Many of us wanted to help improve the neighborhood to protect the investments we had made in our own houses.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

Housing Our Families' commitment to involving the entire community in this project and treating everyone's input as equal has resulted in many compromises. Our community is very diverse, both racially and economically, and in terms of our values and needs. We have had to try to overcome our differences and focus on the common good of the neighborhood. This is not always easy, especially when all of our decisions are made using HOF's consensus model. But, it has been rewarding to see barriers of mistrust break down between neighbors. This process has strengthened our sense of community and has helped many residents find their voice and become active members of the community.

There have also been some trade-offs between the quality of our projects and the number which we take on. Over the past year one of our main objectives has been to get more residents involved in our work by showing that we are action oriented. We have been successful in doing this, and many people have become involved as a result. We have tended to take on a large number of projects requiring considerable time and energy. As a result, we have not been able to devote as much time as we would have liked to planning some of the projects. Some of our members have felt overcommitted and burnt out at times. But, when we see the results of our work we feel encouraged and re-energized.

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this Award? Please be as specific as possible.

Housing Our Families' renovations of the Maya Angelou Apartments have made a significant impact on our neighborhood. They took a dilapidated apartment complex and made it a beautiful one. As a result of the physical improvements, the tenants at the complex became more willing to protect it and keep it safe and liveable. What happened with the creation of enclosed gardens was fantastic. The tenants have a sense of ownership, they feel like it's theirs.

The transformation of the Maya Angelou, along with the work we have been doing in the neighborhood, has affected the entire community. Streets and alleyways have been cleaned up. Our Senior Citizens feel more secure. Streets have been brightened with freshly painted homes. A sense of community has developed amongst the neighbors who are involved with this project. It brought people out of their houses and gave them a chance to meet their neighbors. As one of our members stated, "It's given me a group of people to call when I need help." Our projects have also given residents a sense of personal power and a feeling of real accomplishment.

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

- We would caution other groups not to expect an easy improvement, and not to expect it to be exceptionally fast.
- It's hard work but it's worth it.
- We would suggest they hire a coordinator like the one we have worked with. If they were unable to hire a coordinator, we would suggest that they take on smaller projects so that they can accomplish them and have a sense of success.
- We would encourage them to do as much outreach as possible prior to holding neighborhood-wide meetings and to find out what people want before starting any project. An effort like ours should truly represent the needs and visions of the entire community.
- The combination of the rehabilitation of the Maya Angelou with the neighborhood projects is what made this project work. It would have been hard to build trust and get people excited and hopeful about change if they hadn't been able to see all the changes taking place at the apartments.

6. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

If this project was still successful in five years, the neighborhood would look even better than it does now. Our streets would be clean. We would have a drug free zone in our neighborhood and decreased crime. People would feel more comfortable and relaxed in their own community. Our community would be free of hate. The Maya Angelou would look very much as she does now, except that the recently planted rhododendrons and azaleas would be bigger. The tenants would be proud to live there and would feel a sense of ownership. We would have fewer boarded up buildings because non-profit organizations like Housing Our Families would own many of those that currently fill our neighborhood.

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Sonya Tucker Title Secretary

Organization Boise Neighborhood Association Telephone (503) 288-0876

Address PO Box 9013; Portland, OR 97207-9013

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Signature Sonya Tucker

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? For example, was there a public review process in which you took part?

The Boise Neighborhood Improvement Association is a group of neighborhood residents who meet once a month to establish policies and programs regarding the livability of the neighborhood. Housing Our Families made a presentation at a BNIA meeting in September 1993 to solicit input on the renovations and management of the Maya Angelou Apartments and participation by neighborhood residents in their work.

They kept us informed of their goals and plans throughout the project by attending our monthly meetings, and encouraged members of BNIA to share their ideas for the project. HOF also made efforts to have individual meetings with BNIA members to get additional ideas.

BNIA and HOF joined in partnership in several community projects. We received a joint grant to fund the Boise Community Revitalization, Employment, and Training Effort (CREATE) which involved local youth in a job training program where they painted the homes of 5 low-income residents for free. We have also partnered on neighborhood cleanups and other ongoing activities.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

- The rehabilitation of the building to provide attractive, affordable rental properties for low income families.
- Worked to improve the appearance, image and livability of the building and neighborhood..
- Supported BNIA in our efforts to combat crime, deter drug trafficking, and restore safety in the community.
- Improved lighting at the Maya Angelou and in the neighborhood.
- Provided for the neighborhood's need to have a more responsible landlord that screens its tenants.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them? With hindsight, what, if anything, would you do differently?

There were no compromises. This project fit in perfectly with the community's (BNIA) neighborhood plan. The plan was created in 1993 by the Portland Bureau of Planning and a BNIA planning committee to guide the work BNIA does in the neighborhood. Some of the plan's goals which were a part of this project were increasing public safety, providing low income housing, restoration of housing in the neighborhood, and programs for youth.

In retrospect, now that I know how seriously HOF took neighborhood input, I would have encouraged more members of the BNIA to meet with the Community Outreach Coordinator to share their concerns and a commitment to get involved.

4. How has this project made the community a better place to live? Why should it win this Award? Please be as specific as possible.

This project has:

- Increased the supply and provided good quality housing in Boise at affordable rents through the new construction and rehabilitation of the Maya Angelou Apartments.
- Eliminated/deterred drug trafficking.
- Provided a full time tenant coordinator Vista volunteer to work with tenants to ensure that concerns and needs are met and rental properties are maintained, as well as providing activities for the children who reside there.
- Encouraged better communication between neighbors, for the neighborhood as a whole to come together for one purpose.

The project should win the Bruner Award to enable HOF to continue the duplication of the Maya Angelou project model to provide all of the above and more. It appears that this organization assists in rebuilding lives and equipping individuals to be productive and take part in the community and that's exciting!

5. If a community group came to you for advice in carrying out a similar project, what would you tell them?

The Maya Angelou project is a great model to learn from and simulate. It deals with the holistic aspect of rehabilitation, i.e., homes, lives, activities, community involvement, etc. It also creates partnerships between neighborhood organizations that enable all of the partners to be stronger and more effective.

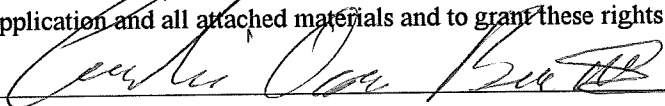
6. If, five years from now, you were to judge this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

The physical appearance of the apartments; the absence of drug dealings; continued tenant communication and participation in activities involving the community; continued partnerships between residents and neighborhood organizations, continued communication amongst neighborhood residents; continued activities by residents working together to cleanup their neighborhood; partnerships, like the one between HOF and BNIA, are still going strong and resulting in continued neighborhood improvements.

## OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Name Corlin Beum Title Tenant at Maya Angelou  
Organization Maya Angelou Tenant Council Telephone (503) 335-8343  
Address 4061 N. Borthwick, Portland, Oregon 97227

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1. What role did you play in the development of the project?

As tenants we had input into some of the physical design of the remodeling. Housing Our Families had a tenant outreach coordinator (VISTA volunteer) that worked with us to make this possible. She held resident meetings, as well as spoke with us individually. It was a direct result of the tenants' input that Housing Our Families enlisted new funds for the four bedroom conversions. We tried to be an advocate for all the tenants to make sure that the tenants that were here didn't get promises that weren't kept. It turns out that they were all kept, but we didn't know that at the beginning. We were all very skeptical. Our experiences in other housing situations were that landlords lead us to be wary of promises.

2. From your perspective, how was this project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Its intentions were many. To provide low cost, safe housing that didn't exist; not just to support housing that already existed. Before the renovations this housing wasn't safe, low-cost or anywhere anyone wanted to live. It was falling apart. This project intended to build a sense of community. To provide low income housing without all the bureaucratic red tape and interference of institutionalized housing projects, like HUD. In those projects you're not treated like a human, you're treated like a statistic that needs housing. The fact that we can call HOF and get an immediate response, be treated with equality and respect, is very different.

3. Describe the impact that this project has actually had on its surroundings and on the people in the project area. Include any data or supplementary materials that support your conclusions.

The most important is that the amount of gunfire we hear in neighborhood decreased by 80 or 90 percent since this happened. The surrounding community has gotten calmer, safer, and more stable. The Maya Angelou was the focus of the problems in the area, and when this was no longer a problem, the other problems got taken care of. It definitely helps having someone like HOF's resident manager who's visible, active, and confronts people walking through. We rarely see vagrants walking through the complex anymore. It's obvious that the word's out that this complex is not conducive to renters who want to do drugs. We're taking away their incentive to be here -- there's no profit here anymore. The residents we have now are by and large those who don't care to involve themselves in drugs and prostitution. Everyone takes pride and likes the place. It's a way for them to survive with less stress financially and less worry for their kids.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

(a) We had to decide how much of a emotional investment we going to put into the tenant council and the renovations before we knew if it was going to be worth it. That was difficult for us because past experiences taught us it probably wouldn't be worth it.  
(b) HOF had X amount of dollars to spend and choices to make between what renovations were really necessary, what were functional, and what were cosmetic. They spent their money really well. There was a meeting where tenants were up in arms because the tenants didn't care about the outside of the apartments because we didn't understand the impact it could have on our lives. They thought that HOF was too interested in cosmetic improvements, since HOF wanted to do landscaping. HOF stuck to their guns to make a play ground lot, front yards, etc. -- and it did work. It had a big impact on how people relate to each other and their apartments. We had no privacy before and now we do. Kids have safe places to play, too. (c) Some of the tenants did not want to move during the renovations. Some of us had to move twice. It was an inconvenience, but it was unavoidable. The tenants who were here from the beginning came out way ahead: rents lowered and a much better place to live.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

(a) HOF's consensus model is really good. But it was foreign to us and we needed more orientation to it. As a result, it took us a long time to understand HOF didn't have a pre-cut pattern that they wanted to impose. (b) The expectations of HOF at the beginning of getting involvement and community support were a bit unrealistic. By the end they realized it was going to take longer than just six months to get a tenant council going. (c) HOF's non-hierarchical model and values clashed with the traditional model general contractors utilize with their subcontractors. Many of the subcontractors had never done a job this big. Funding sources, like the City, should provide organizations like HOF who are trying to create opportunities for neighborhood businesses with assistance for creating new models of working with the subcontractors. HOF could then do more team building and problem solving with contractors.

6. What can others learn from this project?

\* The most important thing is that you do not need to be a big organization to make big changes. Small, independent non-profits can really make a big difference. The other thing organizations can learn would be that you absolutely, positively will make lots of mistakes and that's okay. HOF wasn't ever afraid of screwing up, and we admired that. Everyone learned from their mistakes and never made them twice.

\* We would tell other tenants that their involvement can make a difference in their lives. We would advise them to try to be involved from the very beginning, because even small architectural decisions can change tenants' quality of life. For example, moving the laundry room from the basement to street level has had a big positive impact on our lives. And our sense of ownership of our apartments has increased dramatically because of the picket fences, individual patios, and each courtyard having a different use & theme.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge this project still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?

\*That the community was more empowered, had more available to themselves and were feeling that they really had an investment here. That they were participating and the place was providing for their needs.

\*That it's still safe and secure.

\* That the process used to develop this project was transformed to other organizations. HOF could have daughter organizations rather than developing into a massive organization that would have trouble solving problems because of its mere size.

\* The other thing is that in five years the tenants who are living here are still excited about living here. That they're proud to say "I live at the Maya Angelou."

NOTE: the information in this perspective sheet was gathered during a discussion with several tenants. It was then put into written form by HOF's staff. A tenant representative then reviewed it to assure it was authentic and signed it.



## PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

If possible, answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name	Will White	Title	Construction Specialist
Organization	Housing Development Center	Telephone	( 503 ) 335-3668
Address	2000 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97212		

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### 1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

The Housing Development Center acted as construction manager for the owner, Housing Our Families. In this role, we assisted in contractor selection, recruitment of subcontractors, design development, oversight of actual construction work, advising on change orders and payment requests, and helping to create a spirit of teamwork among all parties to the project.

Because Housing Our Families had never undertaken such a large project, professional help on construction management was crucial. As the owner and developer, however, Housing Our Families remained in control of the decision making, and made sure their values and the needs of the community remained high priorities.

### 2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The Maya Angelou apartment complex, originally known as "Colonial Park Apartments," is a 42-unit structure which occupies a full city block in North Portland. Originally build just after World War II, by the 1980's it had become a run-down and poorly-managed complex rife with drug trafficking. The first outbreak of gang violence in Portland occurred at this location.

The purchase and rehabilitation of this complex by Housing Our Families was intended to reverse the deterioration of this area, and to initiate the revitalization of the entire neighborhood. Drug dealers would be kicked out, and in their place, single mothers and their families would be offered safe, affordable housing. Basements, hidden alleyways, and other screened areas which invited gang members or drug dealers to congregate out of sight would be redesigned or eliminated. A clean, modern, well-lighted laundry facility would replace the rusting machines located in a dark basement room. A much-needed community meeting room and a Head Start facility would be added to the apartment complex, serving tenants and the surrounding neighborhood.

The net effect would be to improve the living conditions of the residents and to provide a boost to the economy, spirit, and cohesion of the entire neighborhood.

### 3. Describe the project's impact on its surroundings and on the people in the area. Do you have data that documents these effects? Attach supplementary material as appropriate.

Aside from the impact described above, this project had a very positive economic effect on the community. Housing Our Families, as owner/developer, set a goal of providing as many jobs as possible to members of the surrounding community through its construction activities. I was asked to assemble a list of community-based contractors, especially firms headed by minorities and women. Staff of Housing Our Families collected names of individual tenants and neighborhood residents with construction skills, so that newly-hired workers would come from the community.

As potential general contractors were interviewed for the job, a strong emphasis was placed on their willingness to work with these emerging small businesses and to hire tenants and neighbors. The result was a work force comprised of nearly 60% minority, women-owned, and neighborhood-based firms. Half of all money spent on

construction activities flowed back into the community, thanks to this priority established at the outset by Housing Our Families.

Minority business participation was an especially important goal, as the surrounding community is predominantly African-American. Despite strong efforts to include minority-owned businesses in previous publicly-funded projects in Portland, this project more than doubled the highest minority participation in such efforts. As a result, nearly \$300,000 was pumped into the economy of the community<sup>1</sup>, and many small community-based firms have increased their capacity to the extent that they are now able to bid on larger construction jobs throughout the city.

**4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?**

Trade-offs are a fact of life in housing rehabilitation projects working with very limited budgets. My organization advised Housing Our Families on a continuing menu of choices in allocating the construction and development budget. Their criteria were always clear: put the emphasis on those steps which will do the most to improve the living environment of the residents and surrounding neighbors.

One specific trade-off was the decision to remodel eight one-bedroom units into four four-bedroom apartments. This choice reduced the rental income stream returning to Housing Our Families, but responded to a community priority of creating much-needed housing for large families.

**5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?**

A great effort was made to have small, community-based contractors selected for the construction work at the Maya Angelou. Many of these firms had the required work skills to do the needed construction work, but they often lacked the management skills needed to effectively coordinate the work and keep it flowing smoothly. This sometimes delayed progress on the work site.

As a result of lessons learned on this project, a new City-wide program is now being formulated to provide effective professional assistance and mentoring to small construction firms anxious to grow in size and competence. This proposal has been well-received, especially by minority contractors, and will become a further positive legacy of the Maya Angelou project.

**6. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?**

Housing Our Families has demonstrated to the City's builders, architects, and funders that large, complex projects can make use of small, community-based construction firms for their workforce, thus creating opportunities for these enterprises to grow and keeping the payroll in the local community.

In addition, this project demonstrated that high-quality rehabilitation projects can be done for as little \$30,000 per unit, or \$44 per square foot - - including acquisition as well as construction costs.

**7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact?**

I would return to the Maya Angelou apartments to see that the residents are living in a clean, safe, and cohesive community. I would also look for spin-offs in the surrounding neighborhood: nearby homes refurbished as a result of the momentum and rising property values this project has created, strengthened neighborhood organizations using the Maya Angelou community facility for their meetings and activities, and children preparing for a brighter future through their participation in the Maya Angelou Head Start center. Finally, I would follow up on the small contractors who got their first big break on this project, and see if they had gone on to establish themselves as prosperous companies providing jobs for others in the neighborhood.

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<sup>1</sup> See accompanying table.

**PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE**

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If possible answers should be typed directly on this form or a photocopy. If the form is not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds. Please limit answers to the area provided.

Name Thomasina Gabriele Title Owner

Organization Gabriele Development Services Telephone (503) 227-4968

Address 3334 NW Vaughn, Portland, Oregon 97201

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

Housing Our Families(HOF) contracted with my company to provide financial packaging services. My role was to help HOF obtain financing that allowed them to implement their ideas and values. I assisted them in negotiation the terms and conditions of this financing so that the project reflected the the goals of HOF and the needs of the tenants while meeting the underwriting criteria of the lenders.

The financing package included 100% financing up front by Portland Development Commission, a public agency, when the project presented too great a risk for a private lender. Now that the project rehabilitation is complete, a portion of this loan will be refinanced using Oregon Lender's Tax Credits to keep rental rate affordable. During the project, additional funding was obtained to add project elements that tenants and neighbors identified as critical. These elements included a community room and Head Start facility as well as converting some smaller units into large four bedroom units.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

Prior to HOF purchase, the property was poorly managed and maintained. It was a full block site for drug use and sales, an escape route for those being pursued by police, and an unsafe place for both its residents and the surrounding neighbors.

The project demonstrates how a combination of federal dollars, grants, tax credits and conventional financing can be assembled to get basically sound, well located housing stock back to a safe and sanitary condition. Much more important that the physical repairs, however, is that access to these funds allowed a community based non profit to use rehabilitation as an opportunity for residents and the neighborhood to get involved in providing affordable housing, safe outdoor space and support services for themselves.

3. Describe the project's impact on its surroundings and on the people in the area. Do you have data that document these effects?

The outdoor landscaped yards surrounded by white picket fences, the front doors painted blue, the playground equipment and the community meeting room all say that this is a place people call home. These visual effects are documented in the photographs.

The most powerful impacts I have experienced are anecdotal. Walking to the opening celebration and seeing the neighbors across the street from the project coming out their front doors wearing their HOF tee shirts. While on site during construction with the lender, having a resident stop to chat and share her excitement that a four-bedroom unit would soon be ready for her, her husband and three teen age boys to move in. Seeing the survey from current residents and neighbors listing the services they need; then attaching letters of commitment from providers of these services to financial applications.

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Due to their partnership approach, HOF was sometimes faced with conflicting ideas. My job was to help them think through the financial implications of different choices and provide them with clear information. They made the choices.

HOF staff is skilled in using group consensus techniques to make choices and operates from the value that everyone involved in the organization has a chance to be heard. The staff is supported by a strong Board made up of a wide variety of women, with a wide variety of experiences. Having this skilled staff and strong board helped them make the choices they had to.

5. What was the least successful aspect of the project? With hindsight, what would you now do differently?

Because the loan amount for both the purchase and rehabilitation had to be set before HOF could purchase the project at a Sheriff's sale, design changes were still being made when construction was underway. These changes were made in direct response to tenant and neighborhood needs that could not be solicited until HOF had ownership of the property. These changes did sometimes delay the construction schedule. However, upon completion, everyone, even the contractor and the lender, agrees that these changes led to some of the most exciting aspects of the project and will help with the successful long term management of the project.

6. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

The success of this projects rests on the ability of the board to understand their neighborhood, their mission, and to be able to make decisions that involve risk. The board needs to be backed by a capable executive director and staff who align with the mission, can act decisively and ask questions until they get answers. Most importantly, the organization needs to stand behind its values and be clear in its objectives, as HOF was throughout this project.

What I would say to others in my profession is that community based non profits have access to enough financial resources to make urban affordable housing work and often have the organizational capacity to be an effective developer.

7. If, five years from now, you were to judge that this project was still successful, what characteristics would convince you of that fact.

Some of the results I would look for include the following.

- The apartments are 97% occupied.
- More than half the private yard space is being used by tenants for family activities, like barbecues and gardens.
- The tenant council is regularly organizing projects that benefit residents and/or neighbors.
- The community meeting room is frequently used by tenants and neighbors for meetings.