

Success Stories

Affordable housing project taking shape in Martin County

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Jon Shainman - January 25, 2012

Donna Ray and her 9-year-old son Colin Buckman couldn't be happier.

"In the morning time when the sun is coming up it's the most beautiful thing," said Ray. "We were living in a neighborhood that we didn't care for which was going down. Not a good neighborhood, yeah, we weren't feeling safe."

But Ray says they got a Christmas present from Martin County. She was chosen to rent a new townhome, one of four, that makes up Bahama Square in East Stuart.

"The developer lost the property and the bank took it over and it had been sitting in a pre-foreclosure state for years," said Don Cole, the Martin County housing program manager.

It was 2006 when work at the property actually stopped. It was 75-80% complete. But a joint effort between the city, the county, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation managed to get the work done just a few weeks ago.

"From being vacant and an eyesore into nice looking house and people living there, bringing the neighborhood back, part of the neighborhood stabilization," said Cole.

The county, which purchased the property for just 25-percent of the original asking price, isn't a property manager. That task fell to Indiantown Non-Profit Housing Incorporated. It owns and operates 150 units in the county already and has seen the demand for this type of housing grow.

"A lot of them are young families and single moms and it's really satisfying helping them find a safe place to raise their children," said Joanne Black, of Indiantown Non-Profit Housing Incorporated.

Donna and Colin are the first residents of Bahama Square. Other furnished units await new families who will be moving into the area in the coming weeks.

"I like that my school is just down the street," said Colin.

"Being a single mom on one income, there's no way I could have afforded or had such a beautiful home if it wasn't for Martin County. Thanks Martin County," said Donna.

There are income requirements that must be met in order to be eligible to rent. You can call either Indiantown Non-Profit at 772-597-3667 or Martin County Housing at 772-288-5479.

To read the original story, click [here](#).

