

**HOUSING**

Project aims to reverse blight in Olneyville

Forty affordable rental homes will be created as part of \$10.8-million Olney Village Project  
By CHRISTINE DUNN JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

PROVIDENCE — The William D’Abate Elementary School at 60 Kossuth St. is at the center of a nonprofit housing developer’s plan to reverse blight in Olneyville, one of the city neighborhoods most affected by sub-prime lending and the foreclosure crisis.

Forty new affordable rental homes will be created as part of Olneyville Housing Corporation’s \$10.8-million Olney Village Project. The project includes both new construction at a large vacant lot and the rehabilitation of 12 foreclosed buildings.

Director Frank Shea said the Olney Village Project, currently under construction, will also provide space for a neighborhood food bank in a new building at the corner of Manton Avenue and Pope Street and a new clubhouse for an afterschool theater arts program for Olneyville students, the Manton Avenue Project, at 51 Putnam St.

Gates Leigh-ton Landscape Architecture donated its services to redesign the front entrance area of the D’Abate School, and members of the Steel Yard’s job-training program have made unique new fencing for the school property. Trees that once obscured the front of the school have been trimmed by city workers.

Last year, Shea said, more than 150 people worked to build a new site for the Manton Avenue Community Garden behind the D’Abate School. It was part of an effort to improve Joslin Park, which abuts the school property, and make it a safer place for students and other children in the neighborhood.

“By attacking derelict properties along walking routes to school, particularly at corners and other high-impact locations, this initiative will have a tremendous impact in stabilizing the neighborhood and supporting the work of the D’Abate School,” Olneyville Housing explained in its project summary statement.

Olneyville Housing also has rehabilitated 14 other foreclosed houses near the school for resale to new homeowners.

Last month, an open house was held for a four-bedroom house directly across the street from the D’Abate School at 43 Hyat St., now on the market for \$109,000. A three-bedroom house at 51 Hyat is on the market for \$95,000. Youth-build Providence participated in the construction on both buildings.

“Because it is focused, the overall impact will be pretty strong,” Shea said.

The Olney Village Apartments will include 3 one-bedroom, 16 two-bedroom, 15 three-bedroom, and 6 four-bedroom homes.

Rents will start at \$540 for the one-bedroom apartments and \$653 for two-bedroom units, and will go up to \$766 to \$829 for three-bedroom apartments and \$836 to \$838 for the four-bedroom homes.

The bulk of the financing for the Olney Village Apartments came from federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (\$8.98 million). Other financing came from Building Homes Rhode Island

bond funds, Rhode Island Housing HOME funds, a City of Providence Community Development Block Grant, and a grant from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program.  
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The house at 67 Julian St., in Olneyville, is wrapped and ready to be re-sided.



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Workers remove the roof at 23 Bowdoin St., part of a \$10.8-million project to reduce blight and create affordable housing in Olneyville. The project includes both new construction at a large vacant lot and the rehabilitation of 12 foreclosed buildings.



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