

News from

Our Neighborhoods



Olneyville Edition *City of Providence*

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Foreclosed & Abandoned Homes Reclaimed for Neighborhood Families

The Olneyville neighborhood was hit hard by the foreclosure crisis and OHC and its partners have made progress in the past year in strategically addressing this crisis. Through the planning process, the area around the D'Abate School and Joslin Recreation Center, were identified as key areas for this stabilizing strategy.

OHC, with the support of RI Housing, LISC and the City of Providence have worked together to acquire and renovate foreclosed and abandoned properties. Already families are living in 12 new homes and construction will start on an additional 48 units later this year.

Through these efforts, the neighborhood is taking these key properties back and developing them as rental and ownership opportunities for neighborhood families.

Our Neighborhoods Platform Attracts Additional Investments

The strong relationships built through the Our Neighborhoods process has continued to attract new investments that will build on successes in Olneyville.

Meeting Street will bring its long history of early childhood development expertise to provide children and families with a wide range of supports and services through its recently announced pilot Early Childhood Initiative. Meeting Street will create an early childhood pipeline of services to ensure that children enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

Olneyville was chosen by Meeting Street as the neighborhood to pilot this initiative based on the strong

neighborhood collaborations that were built through the Our Neighborhoods process and earlier efforts.

Olneyville was also recently chosen by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as one of only 17 neighborhoods nationwide to receive funding through the Choice Neighborhoods initiative. Through Choice Neighborhoods, Olneyville Housing Corporation and the Providence Housing Authority will create a plan for improvements to the Manton Heights housing development and the surrounding area, linking families in the area with job, educational and recreational opportunities.

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William D'Abate and their PTA go beyond ordinary school involvement

Through the Our Neighborhoods planning process, the development of a vital parent teacher organization was identified as a key goal by Principal Brent Kermen. In less than a year, the Principal and PTA President Virginia Morgan have developed a vehicle for parents to be involved

in activities at the school and to help link the school community with all the other activities in the neighborhood. The development of Joslin Park is one key example of how this collaborative approach will work for the school community and entire neighborhood.

Relocation of Manton Avenue Community Garden is Phase One of Revitalizing Joslin Park

Olneyville Collaborative members started The Manton Avenue Community Garden in 2005 to provide growing space for urban gardeners in the neighborhood. For five years it has temporarily occupied a large vacant lot on the corner of Manton Avenue and Pope Street that was slated for future development. This year, with the support of a Rhode Island KeepSpace implementation grant and LISC, the neighborhood is coming together to relocate and upgrade the garden to make room for the St. Teresa's Food Pantry and 12 affordable homes as part of the Olney Village project. Joslin Park, located directly behind the William D'Abate Elementary School and the Joslin Recreation Center, was



selected as the new site and we hope that the garden build will be part one of a two-phase redevelopment of the park. In the end, the entire space will become revitalized with positive activities for school children and neighbors.

St. Teresa's Food Pantry finds a NEW home in Olney Village

When Lorraine Burns started distributing food out of the basement of St. Teresa's Church 14 years ago, she never imagined she and her crew of 24 volunteers would need to provide more than 7,000 Olneyville residents each month with fresh produce, bread, canned goods and non-perishable food. Over the last year the food pantry has seen the number of people it serves increase dramatically as hard times have hit many. Lorraine says with great pride, "it's very rewarding to see people go home and be able to cook for their families."

With the Church's closure in 2008, residents feared this valuable resource would lose its home. OHC, Blessed Sacrament Church, Joslin CDC, City of Providence,



LISC and Rhode Island Housing have worked together to provide a temporary home and construction will begin on a permanent new home this summer.