

HOLDING ON TO THE DREAM

Helping people realize the American dream of owning a good home is the essence of public service, but so is helping them hold on to that dream when time inevitably erodes the condition and value of their homes.



Boys, Girls, Adults Community Development Center began housing development for the first time in 1992 when it built the 39 apartments of BGACDC Manor at Marvell and followed that four years later with its first three Home Investment Partnership homes, which it sold to low-income families. Next, to stabilize a 12-block neighborhood, it tore down dilapidated units and bought rent houses and redeveloped them for first-time homeowners.

For the past 15 months, BGACDC has collaborated with the Arkansas Development Finance Authority (ADFA) on a new project, to help homeowners in Phillips County rehabilitate their homes to address health and safety issues or else rebuild them. It has helped eight families and has been taking applications from other families who need help. Two houses in Marvell are being rebuilt, one has been reconstructed, two have been rehabilitated and three more are in the process.

"Homeownership is an investment," said Beatrice Shelby, executive director of BGACDC. "Sometimes it is difficult for homeowners to reinvest in their homes and keep them in good repair. We see it as a way to create wealth by reinvesting in housing and as a way to create a healthy living environment for children and families."

ADFA supports the program with funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. BGACDC is submitting an application to ADFA next month to help 10 more homeowners in Phillips County.



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