



City, nonprofit band together

Sunrise effort aims to revitalize neighborhoods

By **Christiana Lilly**
STAFF WRITER

The Sunrise City Commission has chosen to work with the nonprofit Broward Alliance for Neighborhood Development to administer federal funds to revitalize neighborhoods.

The federal government gave \$581 million to the state through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program, \$3.5 million of which went to Sunrise.

"We're real excited to have Sunrise. We think we work well with them and their staff," said Pat Stephenson, executive director of BAND.

BAND is an umbrella organization of nonprofits and works to fix up foreclosed homes for resale.

A team recently had a first walkthrough of the city's target neighborhoods with hopes for offers shortly after. The group looks for diversity in the types of homes it fixes up to provide for a diversity of homebuyers.

BAND plans on fixing up nine or 10 homes that meet the affordability guidelines set by the nonprofit, which is to be less than 120 percent of the area median income.

"The NSP has given the community some real opportunities to go out and do something about the large number of fore-

closures," Stephenson said.

For the last year, Sunrise has also been working with another nonprofit, Habitat for Humanity of Broward County, which has plans to start six projects this spring, according to the group's website.

Carl Freeman, the city's redevelopment and grants manager, said the two nonprofits can "reach a diverse population with different incomes that can afford different kinds of homes."

With the current economy, finding affordable housing is an even bigger issue than ever, said Jason Crush, executive director of Habitat Broward.

"Our mission has always

been to help low-income families, many of whom spend most of their income on shelter, to obtain safe, decent, affordable housing," Crush said.

Sunrise Mayor Roger Wishner said that with these two groups working in his city, people who didn't quite meet the qualifications before can now get relief and attain the American dream "to own a home."

BAND also works to educate new homeowners on the responsibilities of home ownership. The first step for homebuyers, Stephenson said, is to attend a Neighborhood Stabilization Program workshop.

"I think that's a critical piece of this because we don't want to develop the houses and get new buyers and then in five

years be right back where we are with foreclosures again," she said.

So far, BAND has finished two homes in Plantation and is completing six more in Oakland Park, Lauderdale Lakes, West Park and Dania Beach. Throughout the county, there are about 20 others in some stage of bidding.

"We think we can make an impact there," Stephenson said. "We've been talking with Sunrise for a while, so we're real happy that this came about."

For more information, call the Broward Alliance for Neighborhood Development at 954-524-9844.

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