



GLANCING BACK

10 years ago in facts, figures and bright ideas

Where's the Empty Nest?

BY CHARLOTTE UNDERWOOD

As NeighborWorks® organizations strive to maintain affordable housing stock for their clients, another challenge arises – keeping families in their homes. Due to the uncertain economic climate throughout this country, many families must support their children longer than anticipated. Some reasons for this include children remaining in school longer; unsuccessful marriages resulting in financial crisis for one or both partners; or other social issues that force grandparents to care for their grandchildren.

Ten years ago in *bright ideas* (January/February 1994, Vol. 13, No. 1), Janis K. Oppelt, a Maryland-based consultant, wrote “Moving Up, Not Out.” Her article covered NHS of Jamaica (N.Y.) resident Samuel Gardner who chose to expand his home instead of purchasing a larger one.

With loan assistance from NHS of Jamaica, Gardner added an additional floor to his Cape Cod-style home to accommodate his growing family, which included two college-aged children and an adult daughter. “Because of the way things are going these days, the poor economic conditions, the children sometimes have to stay home longer,” Gardner said.

NHS Executive Director Cathy Mickens added, “Several years ago, most of our residents were senior citizens. Their children were going away to school and not returning. But now, we see a lot of the children are coming back home.”

Happy to announce 10 years later, Mickens said, “Mr. Gardner and his family still live in his home! He recently refinanced for a lower interest rate with the assistance of NHS. Even his mom obtained a rehab loan through us for extensive renovations to her home.”

Today, however, many baby boomers attest that not only are their children coming back home, but their parents are too! Due to the rising costs of senior housing and medical care, many seniors have been forced to seek refuge at their children's homes.

Therefore, when NeighborWorks® organizations seek to acquire and maintain affordable housing stock, they must now consider the “extended family” component in the equation as well. ■

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