

Apartment complex getting makeover

Friday, August 13, 2010



[Christine Dobbyn](#)

More: [Bio](#), [News Team](#)

HOUSTON (KTRK) -- It is known as one of the most dangerous places in Houston, from rundown apartment complexes to high crime.

Related Content

[More: Got a story idea? Let us know!](#)

Many people have fled the area near Desoto and Antoine, tired of the blight; but now, a new initiative fueled by the power of people is working to bring the area back to life.

The sound of construction is something Cynsquinthia Hooks doesn't mind hearing out her apartment door.

"Everybody deserves to live in a safe place," she said.

The lifelong resident of the Antoine Corridor says she has seen the neighborhood go through drastic changes.

"After years have went by and went by, it just deteriorated," Hooks said.

And she says it got worse following Hurricane Katrina when the area was overwhelmed with evacuees.

"I have grandkids that I do not let come outside because of the activity that goes on," Hooks said. Street after street, there are scenes of countless crimes. There's Desoto Street, where apartments look like a war zone, and at Sunforest Drive, the site of the 2008 murder of Houston Police Officer Timothy Abernathy.

But Hollyview, the place Hooks calls home, is being stripped down to sheet rock.

"Crime will absolutely cause a neighborhood to deteriorate," said Tom Miller, the apartment complex's new owner.

Miller says the renovation is part of a community development block grant -- 328 units, \$8 million.

"These buildings have now been shut down, and we are in the process of rebuilding and trying to create a community that was better than before," Miller said.

While one bad building can bring an entire community down, those involved in this project hope the same can be said for something positive; by redoing a dilapidated building, it can create a ripple effect through the entire community.

But it's not just about hammers and nails.

Miller says community building expands beyond the fences of his complex, from employment to redeveloping families.

That's where Willie Fleming with Community of Faith Church says the church comes in.

"We still have a lot of other diseases that we would like to see go away, and we believe the opportunity to do that is through education and enrichment programs," Fleming said.

And schools like Dominion Academy are having a positive impact on young minds like student Darius Musa.

"Mr. Fleming really encouraged me and believed in me that I could do it, and all I needed to do is believe in myself," Musa said.

Hooks says she has noticed more police and church members getting involved and a community sticking together.

"It takes more than one person; we can't do it by ourself," Hooks said.

And as life is turning around here, there may soon come a day it's safe for her grandkids to come outside too.

"Let other apartment complexes see what we are doing in the community over here in Hollyview, and once they see what we are doing here, they can't help but come aboard," Hooks said.

The owner of the Hollyview Apartments expects the renovations to be complete next month. A second complex, Sterling Grove, has also been awarded a grant.

(Copyright ©2010 KTRK-TV/DT. All Rights Reserved.)

<http://abclocal.go.com/ktrk/story?section=news/local&id=7609635>