

*For inclusion in your neighborhood or community newsletter*

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## The Changing Face of Public Housing

The St. Petersburg Housing Authority (SPHA) is a proud community partner, committed to removing blight from neighborhoods in the city of St. Petersburg and providing citizens with affordable, rental housing in its place. SPHA has a 70-year history of developing and administering affordable housing programs in the city and currently serves more than 3,400 families.

Nationally recognized as a leader and innovator in the field of affordable housing, SPHA is proud to be rated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a "High Performing" agency and to be a recipient of HUD's "Best Practices" awards. Also, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) recognized the SPHA with several national agency awards of merit.

Like other housing authorities nationally, the SPHA has moved away from building large complexes in favor of smaller affordable housing properties, which better integrate low-income residents with other renters and property owners. SPHA wants to take the stigma away from "public housing," instead making sure that authority properties add value to their communities. The agency's goal is to increase the value of homeownership for single or multi-family units in surrounding neighborhoods that still are suffering from the plunge in home values since 2006.

To that end, the SPHA Board of Commissioners has authorized the acquisition of small developments in non-traditional public housing areas in order to avoid concentrated poverty in specific areas of the city. SPHA has been involved in acquisition, sale and redevelopment of several properties during the past 24-months:

- **Gateway Place Apartments** (9101 Dr. MLK Jr. Street North) was acquired in 2007 for SPHA's public housing program, and renovations were completed on the 20-unit property in 2009.
- Purchased in 2008, **Saratoga Apartments** (3475 32nd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713 and 3480 33rd Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713) is a 34-unit affordable rental development, featuring handicap-accessible apartments and energy efficiency upgrades.
- Currently, SPHA is applying for approximately \$17 million in federal stimulus grants to revitalize the **Graham Park/Rogall Congregate** site in downtown St. Petersburg.

In a time when available federal funds are being reduced annually and operating costs continue to rise, SPHA is looking to creative measures to fund programs and services, such as community partnerships and efficiency strategies. This resourceful approach is a fundamental part of SPHA's strategy to bring more affordable housing to St. Petersburg and to add value to neighborhoods throughout the city.

For more information about SPHA, please visit our Web site at [www.stpeteha.org](http://www.stpeteha.org) or call us at 727-323-3171.