

THE GREENVILLE NEWS EDITORIAL

Partnerships can erase blight

The latest Homes of Hope project that has transformed a once crime-ridden West Greenville neighborhood into a hopeful sanctuary within the city offers a good example of what can result from a partnership between a nonprofit organization and city planners.

Homes of Hope has recently finished Kings View Pointe, a development of 20 Charleston-style duplexes and seven new single-family homes in a neighborhood that had once attracted drug dealers and gangs, according to a recent *Greenville News* report.

Residents were eager to be rid of run-down duplexes in the former Queens Court and to eliminate areas that sheltered criminal activity. The West Greenville Neighborhood Association and the city of Greenville developed a plan that would replace the duplex-

es with the new homes, eliminate cul de sacs where crime tended to occur and build new streets and tree-lined sidewalks.

Homes of Hope then stepped in and helped make the vision a reality. The total cost over five years of work was more than \$3 million, more than double what Homes of Hope spends on a typical project, according to the newspaper report.

Homes of Hope executive director Don Oglesby said in a recent *Greenville News* report that the city and residents were vital to this effort.

The result is a 180-degree shift from what this neighborhood used to be.

Ginny Stroud, the community development administrator for the city called the new neighborhood a "real gateway into the community."

"It's a great example of

bringing together good quality rental with homeownership opportunities, which was what the community really wanted to see," Stroud told *The News*.

Just as importantly, Homes of Hope provides an opportunity for men recovering from addictions to learn a skill and it does so while creating homes for people who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

The newspaper interviewed one struggling family that was having difficulty finding a home because of multiple challenges but now resides in a new duplex at Kings View Pointe.

Marilyn Stephens said in the newspaper report, "Sometimes I sit outside and you don't see any cars, and you don't hear any people and you look at the stars. It's amazing."

Homes of Hope is a

faith-based program that provides affordable rental housing and homeownership opportunities to low-income residents.

It also provides job training to men in the Greenville Rescue Mission's Overcomers program or other, similar addiction-recovery programs. The training is provided in three phases that can ultimately turn into jobs for the men as Homes for Hope contractors.

Certainly Homes for Hope isn't the only organization that's working hard to turn around some of the roughest neighborhoods in Greenville. However, its latest successful project offers a striking example of what's possible when residents, the city and nonprofits join forces to make life better for residents of Greenville's most challenged communities.