



Summary

Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods (TBN) is a working project partnership between Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity, the City of Des Moines, two neighborhood associations and other partners that from July 1, 2008 to date has resulted in:

- 36 new or rehabilitated single family units
- over 250 single family minor repairs and/or exterior enhancements
- 6 foreclosed properties acquired for future housing
- 350 households connected to housing services

The TBN project has been a catalyst for partnership and neighborhood change in a low-income area containing a high rate of vacant properties and a high rate of homeowner occupied units in poor condition. This fresh and innovative approach, where partnership and collaboration are a project priority, has helped create a leverage of more than 10:1 on the \$1 million TBN investment.

One of the innovative project aspects funded by TBN is the Housing Outreach Coordinator position with Habitat for Humanity. The Housing Outreach Coordinator focused on the target area builds trust, works one-on-one with neighborhood residents, and has significantly increased the number of residents being connected to housing services and loan programs.

Project Description

In late 2008 after lengthy planning, the Des Moines TBN coalition received its first project funding and became one of only two select communities across the country awarded the opportunity to participate in the Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods initiative. The initiative's target area is the King Irving and Mondamin Presidential neighborhoods. The two neighborhood associations along with twenty-four other partners joined together to form the TBN coalition.

In the planning phase, a Neighborhood Action Plan developed with the neighborhoods, Habitat for Humanity, City of Des Moines and Thrivent identified housing as a key priority area in a holistic approach to improve the quality of life in the target area. Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods is an innovative housing initiative in that it employs a holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization with a focus on five key priority areas including housing. This initiative has gone beyond the "bricks and mortar" to encompass the wide range of issues that neighborhood residents face. It allows neighborhood stakeholders to determine what issues most affect them and what solutions make the most sense for their particular neighborhood.

One of the issues identified immediately was improved housing, in the form of new housing construction, major renovation of owner occupied houses, and connection to housing services. The need for housing units and improvements on existing housing units in King Irving and Mondamin Presidential neighborhoods is clear as 27% of their structures were cited as very poor, poor, or below normal. The citywide average is 11%.

Thrivent Builds Neighborhoods project partners including Home Inc., NFC, Rebuilding Together, City of Des Moines and Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity have made a significant coordinated effort since July 2008 to tackle these housing issues and benefit the residents of King Irving and Mondamin Presidential neighborhoods. The resulting effort has seen 36 new and rehabbed single family housing units and housing improvements for 350 households.

Some major rehabilitation has taken the form of foreclosed properties purchased through the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. There were 25 homes foreclosed upon in 2009 in King Irving and Mondamin Presidential neighborhoods. The properties, once acquired, are either rehabilitated or torn down and reconstructed removing blight on neighborhoods. Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity in partnership with the City of Des Moines and TBN has acquired 20% of the aforementioned homes to rehabilitate or reconstruct.

Another benefit to residents has been minor repairs during the Rock the Block and Rebuilding Together Days. Rebuilding Together impacted 25 homes with projects, including; retaining walls, painting, ceiling work, vinyl flooring, and disability modifications. Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity has held a total of six Rock the Block events since September 2008. The focus for these days has been on both individual residences and also community spaces.

As part of Rock the Block an estimated 400-500 volunteers and residents have cleaned up yards, cleaned gutters, made landscaping improvements, planted vegetable gardens, upgraded a concrete median, assisted residents with junk and debris removal, cleaned the vineyards and planted flowers at King School improved the grounds at Edna Griffen Park, and completed minor home repair projects. Approximately 250 homes have been impacted through the Rock the Block days.

Another innovative aspect to the TBN initiative is the position of Housing Outreach Coordinator. A Housing Outreach Coordinator housed at Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity assists neighborhood residents by connecting them to housing services, helping with applications, and offering one-on-one meetings. The Outreach Coordinator has made over 350 contacts with neighborhood residents seeking housing services. Because of the Coordinator's efforts 24 Home Repair Loans through the City of Des Moines have been administered, 17 homes have been rehabilitated through the Jumpstart Housing Assistance Program. The Jumpstart Program was established to help flood victims that received damage to their home during the heavy rains and flooding of 2008, and 19 homes have been improved through the Polk County Weatherization Program.

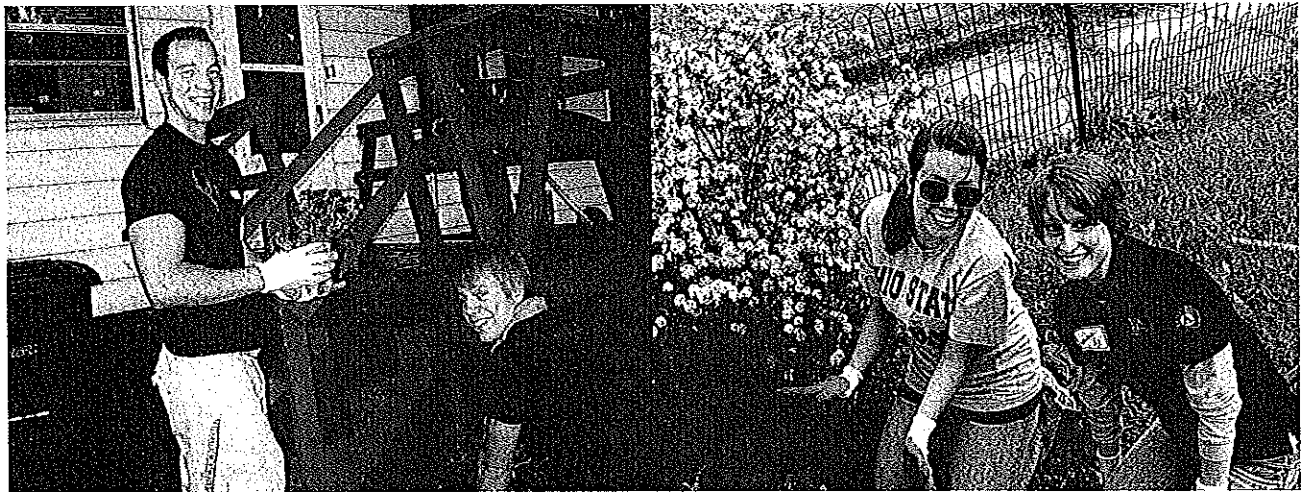
The TBN model has also been proven as replicable as it is being used in other neighborhoods and will continue to be used. One example of the replication will be in the Historic East Village Neighborhood, the site of the Habitat 20/10 Build. During Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity's 20 day, 10 home blitz build there will be a "Rock the Block". Habitat will partner with other community organizations, including Rebuilding Together, to make a greater impact on the neighborhood by assisting an additional 30 families with minor home repair and beautification.

Finally, in addition to the measureable results of households receiving services a measurement tool called Success Measures is being utilized to measure the overall neighborhood objective of change and transformation. The leading indicator for the neighborhood's housing is tracking the overall housing condition through defined surveys in conjunction with Grand View College.

Thrivent® Builds



Rock the Block



Thrivent® Builds



New Construction





Major Rehabilitation of Single Family Homes

