



ABOVE: Putting the finishing touches on one of the Phase 1 Garfield Glen rental houses. Photo by Rick Swartz

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Phase I of Garfield Glen was made possible by an award of federal tax credits from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to the limited partnership in July of 2010. That award enabled the partnership to raise \$10 million from private investors, who became limited partners in the development.

The city's Urban Redevelopment Authority provided a \$1.7 million loan to the project. Garfield Glen Housing LP was then able to start construction on the 45 homes in February of 2012, and is on track to have all site-related work finished this month.

With lots it already owns on Kincaid, Broad and Dearborn Streets, Garfield Glen Housing LP would like to build another 18 to 20 houses as part of a second phase, according to Swartz. The city is also assisting by taking a number of tax-delinquent properties through a system that will ultimately make them available for sale to the BGC.

However, Swartz noted that the process by which the PHFA awards tax credits is a competitive one, and only a handful of projects in Allegheny County receive allocations of tax credits in any given year. He observed that it could be two or three years before a second phase actually broke ground. He also stated that a second phase would probably offer a distinctive change in terms of the design of the homes.

"The Garfield 2030 Plan set a goal of adding as many as 500 new housing units to the neighborhood over a 20-year period," Swartz said. "Some of that number will be for home ownership, and some of it for rental. The community said it wanted to see a balance maintained between the two, and if we can continue to find the funding for both, then the two trains can move down the track together. It'll be a challenge for the city's next mayor to see that neighborhoods like Garfield don't stall out in coming back from decades of decline." ♦

Fundraising for Gun Buyback Proceeds

By Carolyn Ristau

Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

East End – In May, the fundraising campaign for the Gun Buyback Initiative kicked off its second phase—grassroots fundraising.

In the first phase, the fundraising committee sent donation request letters to a targeted list of primary funders. As of press time, the Mayor's Office and Highmark had verbally committed to donating to the program, but were still determining how much to give. The Pittsburgh Foundation is taking the donation request to its board, which meets again in July. Several of the other targeted funders are also reviewing the request. The initiative has received a donation from State Sen. Jim Ferlo.

The grassroots effort is reaching out to the community through various media, including Facebook, Twitter, *The Bulletin* and word of mouth. Anyone interested can donate by credit card on www.razoo.com/story/gun-buyback-initiative or by check made payable to "BGC-Gun Buyback" and sent to the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's (BGC) main office, 5149 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224. There is also a PayPal donation button on the BGC's website on the Public Safety page (<http://bloomfield-garfield.org/public-safety/gun-buyback>)

The organizers anticipate collecting 1,200 weapons, said Aggie Brose, deputy director of the BGC, and will pay \$100 for handguns and rifles and \$250 for assault weapons. This requires raising \$150,000 to cover the compensation. However, based on experiences in other cities, that may be insufficient to meet the demand. Several gun buybacks have reported running out of funds to compensate the number of weapons brought in.

Once \$50,000 has been raised, the date and location for the buyback will be scheduled. Sites currently under consideration are the BGC's Community Activity Center and the David L. Lawrence Convention Center downtown.

The fundraising committee is comprised of representatives from the BGC and Lawrenceville United and the offices of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, City Councilman Patrick Dowd and State Rep. Edward Gainey.

"Please support our Gun Buyback Initiative by donating any amount you are able," Brose said. "If we get 500 donations of at least \$10 each, we will have a buyback." ♦

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