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Richmond Heights, A "Model" For Neighborhood Economic Empowerment



To passers-by, it's a convenient place on southwest 152nd street and southwest 112th avenue to get some burgers, fill a prescription, and drop off dry cleaning.

But to the people of Richmond Heights, the Promenade Plaza Shopping Center is much more than that. It is a community owned shopping plaza, it's community dollars re-circulating in the community. It is a community taking responsibility for its financial well being.

Richmond Heights United Pastors' Community Development Corporation - a nonprofit organization - controls 51 percent interest in the 19 store shopping center. Redevoco Corporation holds the remaining 49 percent interest.

"It (Promenade Plaza) gives the community a sense of pride and ownership," said Harold T. Smith, Sr., Richmond Heights resident and executive director of the Richmond Heights United Pastors' Community Development Corporation.

RHUPCDC - comprised of nine churches and nine community based organizations was created to facilitate the recovery of Richmond Heights following Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Its primary goal is to create funding for community redevelopment and neighborhood enhancement projects.

Empowering communities to take responsibility for their socio-economic well being is also the mission of the Metro-Miami Action Plan (MMAP) Trust, which orchestrated the 51 percent sale of the Promenade Plaza to RHUPCDC. After the plaza was destroyed by Hurricane Andrew, representatives of MMAP convinced the Redevoco Corporation to enter into a public/private partnership to rebuild the plaza.

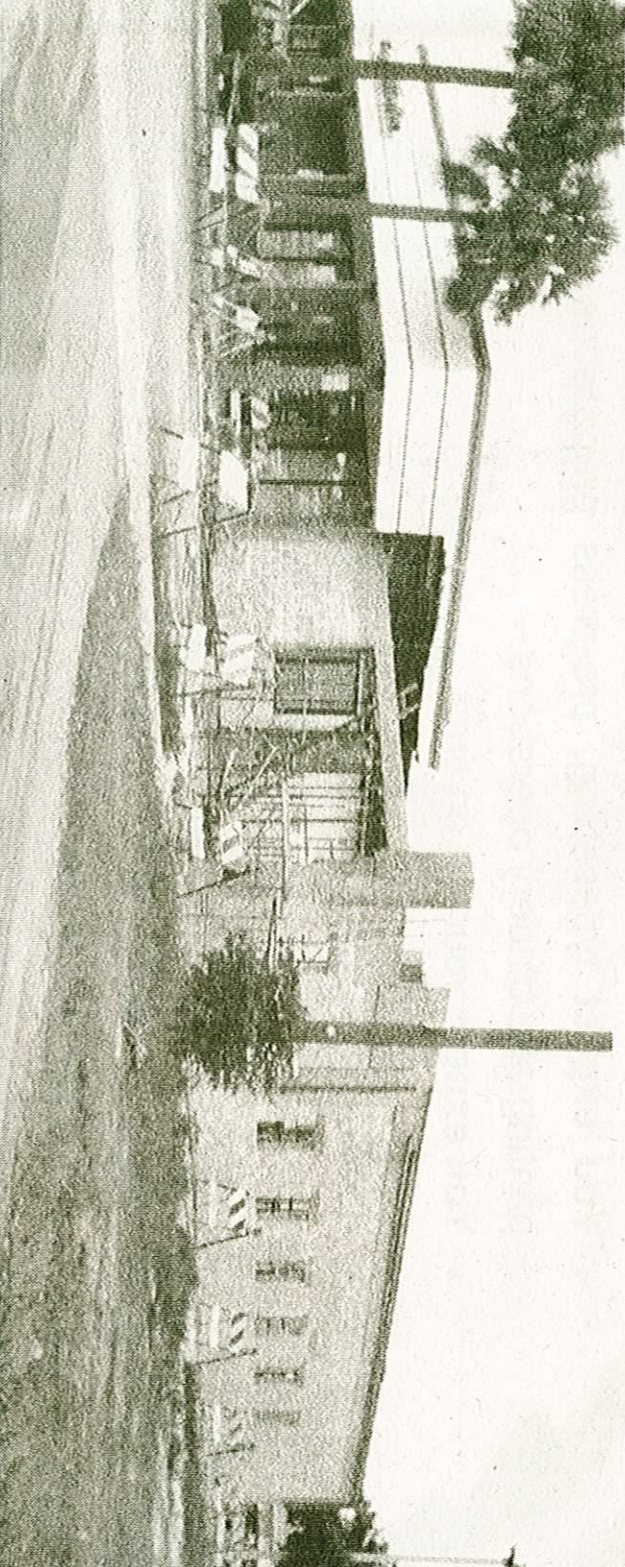
Public/private partnerships is a effective method of revitalizing and spurring economic growth in a community, the community actually has a stake in the success or failure of business ventures, states MMAP President Sherwood DuBoise.

RHUPCDC plans to re-invest income generated from the shopping center back into the Richmond Heights area. The focus of the organization is to create more local jobs, business opportunities, affordable decent housing and increase property values by ridding the area of blight.

RHUPCDC holds a 24 percent interest in the Richmond Pines Apartments which opened in February 1996. The 80-unit building is the only apartment complex in the community. Rent is structured to attract people with low-to-moderate incomes.

Other economic development projects include the purchasing and reselling of abandoned homes in the area and redeveloping a two-block commercial strip that runs along Bethune Drive to Dunbar Drive and Lincoln Boulevard.

For more information about the Richmond Heights United Pastors' Community Development Corporation call (305) 232-66111.



New
CITIBANK
BANKING CENTER
nears completion
at Promenade Plaza
in Richmond Heights.