

ST. JOSEPH'S/CANDLER, Savannah, GA, and Mercy Housing East (MHE), Atlanta, collaborate on housing projects in southeast Georgia. St. Joseph's/Candler sponsors MHE's satellite office in Savannah, providing office space and in-kind support services.

St. Joseph's/Candler was formed in 1997 as the result of a joint operating agreement between two Savannah facilities, 305-bed St. Joseph's Hospital and 331-bed Candler Hospital. The system has nearly 4,000 employees, whose mission is "to treat illness and promote wellness for all people."

MHE, established in the same year as an expansion of Mercy Housing (see Sr. Lillian Murphy, RSM, "Allying Health Care and Housing," p. 17) into the eastern United States, is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of North Carolina, Belmont, NC, and the Sisters of Mercy of Baltimore. MHE is developing housing in Connecticut, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. It has a satellite office in Hartford, CT, as well as in Savannah.

CUYLER BROWNVILLE

Adequate housing is vital to people's well-being and health. Indeed, before a person can contemplate disease prevention or fitness, he or she must first take care of such basic needs as food, clothing, and shelter. This is especially true of populations that include many elderly and low-income people. St. Joseph's/Candler's leaders believe that when such populations have convenient access to health services, their health improves. Fortunately, in a relatively small community like Savannah, the Catholic ministry thrives on tightly knit relationships such as that existing between St. Joseph's/Candler and MHE. Each of the partnership's leaders has dedicated resources to furthering the goal of affordable, safe housing. MHE and St. Joseph's/Candler have, for example, worked with Savannah's city government to restore and support the Cuyler Brownville community.

Savannah has a scarcity of safe, affordable housing. Especially in the historic, predominantly African-American Cuyler Brownville neighborhood, senior citizens and families face a disproportionate number of financial obstacles to good health. In the 1920s and '30s, Cuyler Brownville was a prominent African-American community, many of whose residents were professionals. In

Health and Housing in Savannah

A Catholic Health Care System Partners with Mercy Housing to Improve Life in Southeast Georgia

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Heritage Place is an example of the successful collaboration between St. Joseph's/Candler and Mercy Housing East.

the 1960s, the neighborhood was known for its grassroots civil rights leaders. But, in the 1990s, it became evident that Cuyler Brownville needed more support from the larger community.

Heritage Place in Cuyler Brownville is an example of the successful collaboration between St. Joseph's/Candler and MHE. The partnership transformed two neighborhood landmarks, Charity Hospital and the Florance Street School, into an 88 apartment-unit housing development. The project revitalized these historic but neglected structures, returning them to their original grandeur. Today Heritage Place offers safe, affordable housing to working people in need of assistance.

Having secured the necessary financing, MHE soon will begin construction on an additional 70 units in Cuyler Brownville. These units—to be called Heritage Corner & Heritage Row—will provide affordable housing to families whose incomes range from 30 percent to 60 percent of the median area income. MHE will own and operate both Heritage Place and Heritage Corner & Heritage Row, thereby ensuring long-term affordability and the maintenance of resident services.

The Heritage Place apartments were a natural

fit for St. Joseph's/Candler because the hospital already had extended its health ministry into the neighborhood through St. Mary's Community Center. At St. Mary's, Cuyler Brownville residents have access to such St. Joseph's/Candler health services as health screenings, blood pressure testing, and weight-loss clinics. In partnership with Savannah Technical College, St. Mary's also offers Cuyler Brownville residents workforce training, including entry into a St. Joseph's/Candler's program that trains people to transport patients in the hospital.

McFADDEN PLACE

In 2004, MHE opened McFadden Place in Pembroke, GA, a town 35 miles west of Savannah. McFadden Place is an independent-living apartment development that provides 30 units of affordable housing for seniors. The two-story building, which includes a community room and a kitchenette for resident use, is surrounded by gardens and walking paths. Residents pay no more than 30 percent of their income for rent and supportive services. To create McFadden Place, MHE (with support from St. Joseph's/Candler) received funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 program.

As with St. Mary's Community Center in Cuyler Brownville, St. Joseph's/Candler has a physical presence in Pembroke. In 2004, the system opened a \$1.3 million health care facility intended to help the community's residents invest in healthy lifestyles as well as to provide primary and immediate health care services.

St. Joseph's/Candler is proud of its relationship with MHE and its other partners in bringing both affordable housing and health care to south-east Georgia. ■

SUMMARY

St. Joseph's/Candler, a two-hospital system in Savannah, GA, and Mercy Housing East (MHE), Atlanta, a regional subsidiary of the Denver organization, collaborate on housing projects in southeastern Georgia. In Savannah, the partners transformed two local landmarks, a former hospital and a former school, into an 88-apartment development for low-income, predominantly African-American residents.

St. Joseph's/Candler also provides health services to the

community. As a result of their work, MHE and St. Joseph's/Candler have helped restore a historic city neighborhood.

In Pembroke, GA, MHE (with support from St. Joseph's/Candler) has constructed a two-story, 30-unit, independent-living apartment development for senior citizens. Last year, St. Joseph's/Candler opened a health care facility in Pembroke.

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