

Neighborhood gets another home

■ Ten new homes have been installed through a collaborative effort between the mayor's office and other groups.

By Jennifer Kovalich

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BROCKTON — Some city neighborhoods off North Main Street are getting a makeover, one house at a time.

Today a new modular single-family home will be installed at Main and Arch streets, the latest home to go up seemingly overnight.

During the past year, ten homes have been installed through a collaborative effort between the mayor's office, Brockton Housing Authority, Old Colony YMCA YouthBuild, BTA Development of Abington, and Westchester Modular Homes of Wingdale, N.Y.

"The major reason for going modular is modular is becoming a very standard construction option for many developers, and while we have built modular on our own, we have never built modular through the YouthBuild program," said Brockton Housing Authority Executive Director Richard Sergi.

By building a modular home, Sergi said YouthBuild students will learn the skills needed for that type of construction.

"Our goal is to finish by Christmas," said John Bengel, director of YouthBuild Brockton, a program through the Old Colony YMCA.

The YouthBuild program gives young adults a chance to earn their G.E.D. while learning the building trade. There are 38 students in this year's program.

Bengel said the homes are a "point of pride" for the students.

"They learn they can do things that affect their community. They learn that the community can be

changed," Bengel said.

The housing project on Arch Street is expected to cost about \$175,000, Sergi said.

During the installation ceremony, contractors and project business partners will be individually thanked for their contributions to the modular home program.

Individuals who are taking part in the Brockton Housing Authority Family Self Sufficiency Program will be eligible to become homeowners.

"These are people who have signed a contract with us to improve their lot in life," Sergi said.

The city sold the Arch Street property to the housing authority for \$10,000 on the condition it would construct a YouthBuild home there.

During the past eight years, the housing authority has undertaken programs to turn several neighborhoods around including in the Pleasant and Prospect street neighborhoods.

By building modular homes, the collaborative is able to speed up construction of the homes.

Before partnering with Westchester Modular Homes, the collaborative was building one or two homes a year.

In the Walnut and Turner streets neighborhoods, off North Main Street, the homes have also spurred private development.

The housing authority estimates that between 20 and 30 privately built homes have been built, a domino effect of the BHA's initial investment.

About 10 days ago, South Shore Habitat for Humanity held a dedication ceremony for two homes on Walnut and Wyman streets.

The Walnut Street home was built by women for women as a part of Habitat for Humanity International's womenBUILD initiative.

The Wyman Street home was built in partnership with YouthBuild USA and the Old Colony YMCA.

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