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#### *A homeownership initiative to help the Little Earth community*

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Already, the Little Earth of United Tribes Homeownership Initiative is turning around part of Minneapolis's East Phillips neighborhood.

As its name suggests, the initiative helps members of the [Little Earth](#) community get to the point of homeownership.

Only a handful of years ago, the American Indian-targeted affordable housing Little Earth was considered dangerous and undesirable, says City Council member Gary Schiff.

Today, Little Earth has a waiting list of 100 people. "It's a significant sign of success for the organization," he says.

In some ways, this relates to the homeownership initiative, which got its start a few years ago, he says.

At the time, Little Earth began working with the city to reduce crime in the area.

Little Earth took a zero-tolerance attitude towards crime, evicting problem tenants. Then it partnered with the city to buy up the nearby rental housing on what's referred to as the E.M. Stately blocks, where drug-dealing and gang activity were still an issue. That's where the homeownership initiative, which involves rehabbing or constructing seven new single-family homes, comes into play.

The housing is like an extension of Little Earth, while providing for the possibility of homeownership--the first initiative like this in the city to target American Indians. "It's an economic development and anti-crime strategy," he says, adding that crime is way down.

The program, which includes everything from the new homes to job assistance, creates an economic ladder for those who want to live in the area, but who don't qualify for low-income housing at Little Earth, he says.

One of the homes is being rehabbed right now, while another four are under construction. The houses are planned to be ready by wintertime.

"The number of residents paying market-rate rents is really fascinating," he says, adding, "People want to live there and be a part of the Native American community."

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Schiff is finding that word is spreading. People at Little Earth are taking classes to become homeowners and establish a good credit record. "It's gotten people excited at Little Earth to realize it's building an economically diverse community," he says.

The [City of Lakes Community Land Trust \(CLCLT\)](#), [Minnesota Housing Partnership \(MHP\)](#), [Woodlands Bank](#), the city, and the [Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation \(GMHC\)](#) collaborated to acquire the lots.

"It's one of several housing projects that reflect a renaissance for East Phillips and the American Indian community," he says, adding that the community continues to grow for the second decade in a row.

Source: Gary Schiff, Minneapolis City Council member

Writer: Anna Pratt

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