



Garvin of CDC Long Island discusses first job experience

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Name: Marianne Garvin

Title: President/CEO

Company Name: Community Development Corporation of Long Island, Inc.

Years in Commercial Real Estate: 35

In the last 12 months, which project, transaction, honor or accomplishment are you most proud of and why?

In the last 12 months the mixed-use development, Wincoram Commons, came together, with all the necessary municipal approvals and the financing to build 176 rental homes for families and retail on the ground floor of a newly constructed main street connecting Rt. 112 and Rt. 25 in Coram. Working with the Coram Civic Association and the Town of Brookhaven, as well as private and governmental funders, we began the transformation a long blighted site into a vibrant community center. Making positive change that meets the needs of people and communities by bringing together multiple stakeholders is my greatest professional joy. We are under construction now and in 2015 new families will join the Coram neighborhood.

What was your first job and what did you learn from it?

My first job was executive director of Housing Help, Inc. a small community based non-profit whose mission was to increase the supply of affordable housing in Huntington. My job really was to try to effect social change and open up the zoning code to allow affordable housing to be built anywhere in the town. It was a great first job because I went from the theory of real estate development (as taught in graduate school) to actually doing it. So I went through the steps, but never actually got the housing built. So what I really learned was how important it is to organize and involve all stakeholders in your endeavor to reach the finish line, like I did in Coram, and other communities along the way.

What is your favorite quote?

From Theodore Roosevelt that begins, "It is not the critic who counts..." and goes on to say, "The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena...and if he fails, at least fails while doing greatly..."

The quote speaks to me because the work in real estate is hard, it's risky, and sometimes you fail. But if we are afraid and don't try we will never have great results like Wincoram Commons. We may avoid defeat, but that is not the same thing as achieving success.

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