Resident Perspectives:
A firsthand look at RAD in San Francisco

“We’re glad to be home; it’s beautiful.”

Deborah Gibson and Herman Travis have been residents for 13 years at Holly Courts, the first public housing project built in San Francisco. Our team met with them to highlight their experience before, during, and after a Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) conversion of their housing, a program from the Office of Recapitalization. Located in a diverse, single-family neighborhood, Holly Courts sits adjacent to Junipera Serra Elementary School Center and Holly Park.

Before the Transformation

Deborah and Herman were one of the few families who moved into another Holly Courts unit while theirs was being renovated. Most residents have been relocated to other affordable units within the city.

“As residents, we were concerned about what would happen with our furniture, but it was placed in storage for us.”

The anxiety and fears of tenants around the renovation process was eased by using relocation specialists. A relocation specialist met with each family before moving them to minimize the impact of their temporary relocation.

Before Holly Courts went through the RAD program it had drug problems, mold, mildew, and rodent issues.
The Transformation

Residents were updated on the project through biweekly meetings.

“We were initially nervous about the whole project, but after the work was done, we were very happy.”

These same meetings provided the opportunity for developers to get feedback from residents and address issues and concerns before they became problems.

“Before the renovation, we hated to come back to our unit—it was dark. Now it’s light and airy and we love walking into our home.”

It takes about 90 days to renovate a unit.

Project Information

This $23 million transaction included new private financing and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

Renovation of Holly Courts was completed by two nonprofits in the region.

Renovation Details

Some of the greatest changes to come about from the RAD project include the removal of mold and mildew; new floors; new kitchen appliances and cabinets; fresh paint and bathroom upgrades; electrical improvements and increased lighting that has turned the dark units into light and airy spaces; and a new ventilation system.

View the complete story online