

**Lowell Sun**

## **Teamwork builds new home for displaced**

By Dennis Shaughnessey, 11/14/2009



LEFT TO RIGHT:

David Robinson, Program Director, Bridgewell Pathfinder Housing

Ann Cohen, Bridgewell Board of Directors

Robert S. Stearns, Chief Executive Officer, Bridgewell

Edward Chase, MassHousing/Center for Community Recovery Innovations

Bernard Lynch, Lowell City Manager

Bree Horwitz, Project Manager, Community Economic Development Acceptance Corporation (CEDAC)

Thomas Lyons, MassHousing/Center for Community Recovery Innovations

Anne Barton, Director of Planning, Division of Planning and Development, City of Lowell

David Turcotte, Bridgewell Board of Directors (in back)

Elaine White, Director of Housing, Bridgewell

James Jozokos, Project Architect, Paul L. Davies & Associates, Architects (in back.)

Catherine Flood, Bridgewell Board of Directors

Carla Saccone, Bridgewell Board of Directors

Christopher Clarke, President, Picard Construction

Emily Rothschild, Development Consultant

Susan Wing, Area Director, Dept. of Mental Health

LOWELL - A dozen formerly homeless people will now each have a well-equipped large efficiency unit, starting the process of rebuilding their lives.

Bridgewell, a leading provider of services to adults with developmental disabilities, owned the land at 94 and 106 Rock St., and expanded the acquisition of adjoining land on Willie Street in the city's Acre section to complete the \$2 million nontraditional affordable-housing project, that expands housing opportunities for a segment of society that usually cannot benefit from such projects.

"We're all about connecting people with possibilities," said Bridgewell CEO Bob Stearns, explaining that the agency worked collaboratively with numerous officials and agencies at three levels of government. "It was a complicated process that started back in 2002, when the city approached us about developing housing on our land."

Funds were provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the city's Department of Planning and Development, the Community Economic Development Assistance Corp. (CEDAC), the state Department of Community and Housing Development and the Mass. Housing Finance Agency. The collaborative effort extended to people attending a Bridgewell fundraising gala last year.

During a special auction appeal at the gala, money was donated for new appliances, including stoves, refrigerators and microwaves for all new units. Gardner Mattress, Bernie and Phyl's and Butler Woodcrafters Inc. also donated furnishings.

"Bridgewell has a solid track record not only of working with homeless clients and knowing their needs, but also of being able to work with committed people, in Lowell especially, all of which has brought us to where we are today," Stearns said. Residents will begin moving in on Dec. 1.