

## Way to go!

**T**hanks to the tireless work of a remarkable citizens group, almost 2,100 houses, condos and rental apartments will rise up at Spring Creek, a former Brooklyn landfill reputedly once used as an unofficial dumping ground for mob victims.

East Brooklyn Congregations, led by the Rev. Johnny Ray Youngblood and Mike Gecan, has been building Nehemiah homes in the East New York area for 20 years. And now with a smart boost from Mayor Bloomberg and Housing Commissioner Shaun Donovan, they have outdone themselves.

The centerpiece of the development will be single-family homes, selling for an affordable \$158,000, thanks to subsidies from the city, with purchases limited to first-time homebuyers. More than 100 units will be set aside for senior citizens, and the area also will get a shopping center, four parks and a new school.

We at the Daily News have long supported the Nehemiah concept. And we are further proud to say that its economic concept was born right here on these pages when civic leader and columnist I.D. Robbins declared that he could build private homes at affordable prices, provided that the city made large tracts of land available.

There were many disbelievers, and many a politician fought the Nehemiah forces, who tend to bring an independent, if not ornery, streak to their advocacy. They get results by refusing to bow to the powerful.

Youngblood's group reports that people who became property owners through Nehemiah have seen the value of their houses increase by an average of \$150,000. The organization proudly describes this as "equity in the pockets of bus drivers, bank clerks, cops, probation officers, nurses," and "one of the greatest increases in real wealth in black and Hispanic communities in the nation."

That's good news any way you look at it. Kudos all around to the government and community leaders who are helping thousands of New Yorkers reach the American Dream of homeownership.

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# DAILY NEWS



Weather: Warm and humid, 85/70

RACING ★ FINAL

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