

MOTHER OF EIGHT BUILDS HER OWN ALASKA DREAM HOME WITH USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING SUPPORT



Achieving the dream of homeownership: USDA Rural Development Alaska Housing Specialist Catherine Milazzo (Left) stands with three members of the Beall family (Right to Left, front row, Mary, Sarah and Shannon). The Beall family built their own home near Wasilla through USDA Rural Development's "Self Help" program, under the direction of the Alaska Community Development Corporation. Also shown (back row) is Bobbie Moline Jackson of Oklahoma. She and her 15 year old daughter traveled to Alaska with the faith-based group "Worldchangers" and worked on the Beall home and seven other self help homes for a week during the summer of 2008.

OUTLINE OF NEED:

Mary Beall, a single mother of eight needed a new home. She and two daughters were living above a store in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, sharing one bedroom. The four bedroom home that Ms. Beall is completing not only will allow her daughters to have their own rooms for the first time, it will allow her 15 year old son to move into his own room in the new dwelling as well.

HOW RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELPED:

By providing a grant to the non-profit Alaska Community Development Corporation, USDA Rural Development supported the construction of eight quality homes in the Settlers Bay subdivision near Wasilla, Alaska. The eight Alaska families worked together to build their homes at the same time, a process that took over a year. "I have put in over 1,000 hours," said Mary Beall, who holds a full time "day" job. "I knew what I was getting into. This is a process, a commitment I had to make. I hated renting."

Working under a contractor hired by the Alaska Community Development Corporation, Beall and her neighbors built energy efficient homes in an attractive subdivision. "I would recommend this program to other people," said Beall, "In fact I do it all the time." Holding a full time job and putting in 30 hours a week at the site was draining, but Beall is excited about moving into her new home. "We're just doing finishing work now. Mine is almost done on the inside." Sarah, a student at Wasilla Middle School is proud of her mother and what's been accomplished. She's also proud of her new bedroom, which has a view of trees and mountains, and a big closet. "I'm going to paint it green," she said.

Additional self help construction projects are planned in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. For more information call 907-761-7705.