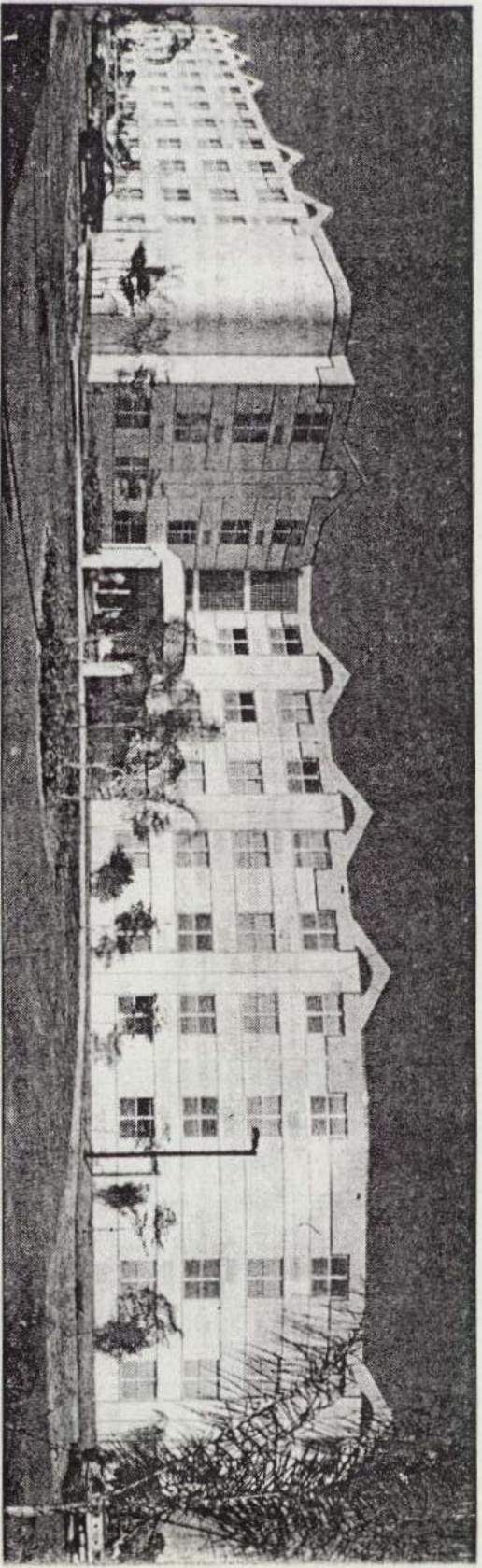


THE NEIGHBORS

NEWS FROM NEARBY COMMUNITIES



Residents of Hellmont Gardens, 2001 NW Ninth Ave., receive federal assistance in paying their rent and utility bills. The complex opened last week. Staff photo/HENRY FICHTE.

Apartments give elderly poor new lease on life

By RANDY HODER

Staff Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE — Josephine Beldin, 76, lived in a trailer for 12 1/2 years.

She paid \$170 a month, plus utilities, where she was afraid to go out at night and where the kitchen and bathroom were so small she could barely turn around.

Two-and-a-half years ago her daughter-in-law put her name on a waiting list to live at Hellmont Gardens, a new 124-unit housing complex on Northwest Ninth Avenue for low-income elderly and the physically handicapped. Now, her long-awaited dream has come true.

"I think I was the first one to move in," Beldin said. "I sold my trailer and used the money to buy all new furniture, new dishes, new pots and pans, new silverware, new everything. I would never want to go back to that old place. It was just rundown."

Now she pays \$57 a month for her new one-bedroom apartment with plenty of kitchen space, a big bathroom, big closets and plenty of room for pictures of her 17 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Beldin also receives \$50 every month toward her electric bill.

The new complex is sponsored by the Area Agency on Aging of Broward County and is part of a U.S. Department of Housing and Ur-



Photo/RANDY HODER

Josephine Beldin sold her trailer and bought furnishings when she moved in. ban Development program which grants long-term, low-interest loans to non-profit organizations to provide housing for elderly poor.

The four-story complex was dedicated last week.

"This is a remarkable structure," U.S. Rep. E. Clay Shaw, R-Fort Lauderdale, told a crowd of about 150. "We have taken public

To qualify for the one-bedroom and studio apartments, a single tenant cannot have an income exceeding \$11,200 per year. Income for couples cannot exceed \$12,800. About 10 percent of the apartments are for the physically handicapped.

The tenant must be at least 62 years old or physically handicapped, and must be able to take care of himself or herself and the apartment.

Tenants are required to put 30 percent of their income toward rent. Anything above that amount is paid by a federal subsidy program.

Lederberg said that priority is given to people not yet in subsidized housing.

All the apartments, except for four units for the handicapped, are rented and there is a waiting list with about 25 names.

"Since the dedication I've received about 15 calls a day from people who want to get an apartment," said Beverly Reynolds, who manages the building with her husband, Don. "People are disappointed that they are full, but we tell them to send an application and we'll put them on the waiting list."

In addition to apartments, Hellmont Gardens has a community room with a large kitchen, four lounges, two game rooms, laundry facilities, shuffleboard and a canal where residents can fish.

Plans are being made to organize entertainment, parties and other social events.