

A Story of Compassion

USDA Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Alaska Community Development

Corporation

Palmer, Alaska

Sheila Mansfield, 62, lives 23 miles North of Kenai with her dog Beau. Her home was filled with rotten and molding insulation. The windows were covered with blankets, cardboard and plastic. There was no siding, just 30 year old plywood with thin plastic hanging over it. The foundation and porch were in disrepair and were structurally unsafe. With a grant from USDA's Rural Development (RD) and funds from Alaska Community Development Corporation's (AKCDC) Weatherization Program, her house was transformed. The crews removed all the old insulation, plastic, cardboard, and blankets. New insulation, vapor barrier, sheetrock, house wrap, siding and new roofing were installed. The foundation was dug up and reinforced and the porch completely re-built.

Elmer (71) and Stella (63) Swartz received a new wheelchair ramp, a garage door opener, an insulation blanket for the garage door, and air conditioning for Stella's bedroom. These were installed by World Changers and funded with a grant from RD. They also received a wheelchair lift (in the garage) funded by AK CDC's Senior Access Program and environmental modifications for the bath and bedroom from the State of Alaska Choice Waiver Program. Stella has been house bound for several years due to the lack of wheelchair access. She will now have two ways to get out of the house. She is now able to get out and enjoy things like baseball games and just going for a ride.

Dale Crouch at 66 has taken her sister and niece in to live with her. The 856 sq. ft., 2-bedroom home was very cramped but cozy for the family. With a grant from RD she hoped to have her rotting deck replaced. She had mentioned that if possible she would like to have her garage door hole enclosed (a tarp hung in place of a door) and a wall put in its place to conserve heat. The garage had a dirt floor and was being used for storage. World Changers rebuilt her porch and not only enclosed her garage door with a wall but also fully converted her garage into a livable heated space now used as a bedroom. A World Changers volunteer donated their personal money to have this project completed. They also painted the exterior of her house. Dale and her family spend every moment they can on their new deck and were excited to get moved into their new room.

Russell Wiseman, 76, lives in a trailer home that had a flat roof covered in rubber pieces and stretched tarps. He was concerned his home could not survive another winter. An RD grant, AK CDC Weatherization funds, and the labor of World Changers provided a new self-supporting roof to keep the weight of the snow off his trailer. He can relax this winter and not worry about the snow load caving his roof in. He received a 504 loan 3 years ago to have a new septic system installed.

Betty Newton, 77, needed exterior repairs to her home. The roof was covered in moss and needed to be replaced, there were a few inefficient windows that let in cold air, and her porch was unstable. In the winter the snow would drift in the



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corner against her doors, prohibiting safe access. A new arctic entry way, 2 new windows, a porch, and a new roof were accomplished with an RD Loan/Grant Combo and the labor of World Changers. Betty will be receiving bathroom modifications from the AK CDC Senior Access Program in the future.

Clayton Whisamore, 46, lives in Kasilof. His 576 sq. ft. home was without running water, a waste water system or even a bathroom. His house was sitting on a deteriorating untreated log piling foundation and he used raw lumber planks over a ditch to get into the house. With an RD loan, AK CDC's Weatherization and Owner Occupied Rehab Program and the Labor of World Changers, Clayton's home was completely refurbished inside and out. A well, septic system, foundation, plumbing, new electric wiring, siding, roofing, flooring, cabinets, countertops, a complete bathroom and a porch were installed.

How the Initiative is Helping

As a part of the President's Faith-Based and Community Initiative, USDA's Rural Development has formed a joint partnership with the Alaska Community Development Corporation and World Changers. It shows what a big difference can be made for individuals when the federal government and nonprofit organizations, both faith-based and community based, work together. Rural Development provided Single Family Housing Section 504 housing repair grants or loans to individuals.

About the Organization

Alaska Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit community based who received a Mutual Self Help Housing Grant of \$483,360 from Rural Development, also provided funds to individuals. World Changers, a nonprofit faith-based organization, provided labor for the housing repairs.

Alaska's Kenai Area Office, USDA Rural Development (RD), partnered with World Changers on seven (7) home improvement projects this summer. Of those seven, five also received funding from Alaska Community Development Corporation (AK CDC). The amount of funds partnered between Rural Development and AK CDC, for all 7 totaled \$103,853.00. Five communities on the Kenai Peninsula were served including Kasilof, Sterling, and Nikiski. World Changers worked on the Kenai Peninsula for 2 weeks this year. During that time they accomplished a lot more than just construction. They changed lives. Each person they helped had an immediate need for assistance. The World Changers crews were housed, fed and transported by the Lighthouse Community Church, Pastor Denver Copeland, and over a hundred church volunteers.

