

Another Success Story: Becky Thorne

One of the important partnerships the Community Development Corporation of Utah (CDC) has is with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). We have an excellent working relationship with Kristine Dahlberg and Dave Brown of the USDA Rural Development Office in Utah.

Working in cooperation with them, this past September we were awarded an important USDA Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) for \$50,000. It has allowed CDC to provide assistance for low income homeowners (below 80% of the area median income) who are rural residents of Tooele County, by providing them with emergency repairs and housing rehabilitation. The program's goal is to help low-income homeowners preserve their homes by making emergency repairs they would not be able to afford on their own. Upon completion of this grant, CDC will have provided emergency repairs to six eligible homeowners in Tooele County.

One of these homeowners is Becky Thorne. She is a single grandmother, who works for H&R Block and also provides child care for some neighborhood children, but still struggles to make ends meet.



Becky has lived in this house in Grantsville for 24 years, but her life hasn't turned out quite like she expected it to. She also cares full-time for her granddaughter, Zennica Przybyla, who lives with her and who is afflicted with a degenerative disease – cystic fibrosis. On meeting Zennica, you think that she is like any energetic, very active 3 year old. But, she has been in the hospital a lot, takes many medications, and has a daily

regime of respiratory and physical therapy, including wearing a pulsating vest hooked up by tubes to a \$16,000 machine. It used to be that victims of this disease typically only lived to about the age Zennica is now. When she was born “*we almost lost her*”. Now with advances in health care and the care of her grandmother, her life expectancy is well into adulthood.

The house where they live, however, was in some disrepair. The old windows (some were cracked) did not keep out the wind – indeed, Becky had stuffed rags around the window in Zennica's room to keep out the blowing dust, and in windstorms it piled up on the window sill in the front room. Of course, for someone with cystic fibrosis, air quality is a critical health factor.

And, that is where CDC and the USDA grant come in.

Becky tried to apply for some assistance with weatherization from the HEAT program, but their waiting list was 12 months long, so they referred her to CDC. She called CDC's Isabel Jackson, filled out the application form from CDC's website, and faxed it in. After her income eligibility was determined, she was selected as a recipient. ***The process was not difficult.***

Once she had been selected, Jeff Hayden, CDC's Construction Manager, and J.R. Riddle, the contractor who completed the work for this job, came to the home to assess what needed to be done. ***They just pulled out their measuring tapes, started measuring everything and writing it all down.***

They just took care of everything. Within a short period of time, all twelve of the windows had been replaced with new energy-efficient and sealed thermopane windows. The glass by the front door was fixed. The furnace and air ducts were all cleaned out. The sliding glass door in back, which also leaked, was replaced. A back door and one in the basement were also replaced.

The guys were wonderful! Quick, efficient, experienced. They knew what they were doing.

Was there a noticeable improvement in the air quality of the house? ***Oh yes, and Zennica's condition seems to be lots better.***



What a wonderful program. I am so grateful!