

# Executive Director Leads Vision for Rebuilding New Orleans Neighborhoods



*Rosalind M. Peychaud  
NDF Executive Director*

A healthy, balanced, well-managed financially sound organization is an essential ingredient to the success of any community development endeavor. Despite the economic challenges, NDF remains focused and committed to increasing housing opportunities for low and moderate-income families by whatever means necessary.

I believe that owning a home is key to building wealth, stabilizing families, revitalizing neighborhoods, reducing crime, improving school performance, and stimulating the economy.

Collaboration and diversity is key. We work with businesses, community groups, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations to improve housing conditions and build assets for hundreds of families. Three programs that provide critical support to many families through the NDF New Home At Last Project are: the City of New Orleans' soft second program; Dallas Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing program; and the IDA Collaborative of Louisiana at Tulane University. Nothing happens without money.

NDF launched a more intense pre-purchase program for first time buyers who are not financially prepared to secure mortgage financing for their first home. The program, called Financial Fitness, focuses on separating needs from wants and budgeting to reduce debt and increase savings. The NDF Financial Fitness component provides a good foundation for first-time buyers with negative credit issues.

The disparities in income and wealth continue to increase as the availability of affordable housing decreases. Our response to this problem was to activate the NDF subsidiary that was established in 1996. Associated Neighborhood Development is created to provide, or arrange for the providing, of decent, affordable housing for low and moderate-income families.

To begin to fulfill this mission, a target neighborhood was identified and named Hoffman Triangle. The area was chosen because it had the elements that I believed are needed to stabilize a neighborhood: Hoffman School; Taylor Park; grocery stores; churches; barber and beauty shops; restaurants; seafood markets; bus lines; and the potential for jobs and economic development. In addition to a neutral ground, there is a great view of the skyline of the city, the arena and the superdome. In just 18 months, Hoffman Triangle is evolving into a new urban neighborhood. If we are to rebuild our neighborhoods, we must have a vision and be able to see beyond the vacant over grown lots, abandoned, blighted, and condemned properties. The Evolution of a Neighborhood requires a concentrated effort rather than a scattered haphazard approach. The Hoffman Triangle Project is a model project that we hope will be replicated throughout the City of New Orleans.

*"NDF clients want the same thing everyone else wants - decent, safe, affordable neighborhoods to raise their families. If they can't find them, we are committed to partnering with others to rebuild them."*

*Rosalind M. Peychaud*

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