

CREATING HUMANE HABITATS

Name: Seila Mosquera-Bruno

Title: Executive Director, NeighborWorks New Horizons, New Haven

Born: Guayaquil, Ecuador, December 31, 1964

Education: Gateway Community College; BA, Southern Connecticut State University (1994); MA in urban studies, SCSU (1997); completed 18-month fellowship program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government (2007).

Organization: Incorporated in 1992, NWNH, also known as the Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut, is the regional arm of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corp. This federally mandated and funded nonprofit organization helps revitalize neighborhoods by working with local housing nonprofits to support their housing provision efforts. Renovated and developed NWNH sites include 730 George Street in New Haven, where homes for 58 families, including several units for people with disabilities, are provided. In 1995 NWNH's partnership with several Guilford organizations led to acquisition of farm land and establishment of a 13-family home community. Additional units in Guilford eventually were acquired and constructed. In 1999 NWNH acquired debilitated property on Gilbert Avenue in New Haven and turned that into ten family homes for low-income residents. In 2001 NWNH partnered with the Branford Interfaith Housing Coalition to establish 29 units near the town center as an affordable housing facility.

Accomplishments: Mosquera-Bruno began her academic and English-language studies in the U.S. at Gateway Community college, after having come here from her native Ecuador and working in a factory to support herself and to pursue an education. She eventually completed an 18-month fellowship program at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The East Haven resident is a member and/or serves on the board of directors of several housing and health organizations and is the recipient of several awards, including the Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund's 2007 Housing Good Egg Award.

Person(s) Who Most Influenced My Life: "My grandmother. She had a strong will. I grew up with my grandmother. My parents came here when I was ten and I didn't come until I was 20. Immigrants [are] humble people looking for ways to survive. Because of their sacrifices, I was able to come to this country. I worked in a factory for a couple of years while I attended school at night, learned the language, obtained an associate's, a bachelor's, a master's degree and ended up doing a fellowship at Harvard."

Guiding Philosophy: "Basically to be an advocate. My job as I see it is to grow the staff and make sure we have an infrastructure [so that] if I leave tomorrow the organization will keep growing. What I'd like to see is more people join us. We need volunteers in any way shape or form. It's not the sexiest thing to say you work for housing. But what we do is make sure people are in a safe environment and have [their own] place to sleep and eat a good quality meal. If you



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