

A solution for common occurrence: Facility planned for seniors raising kids

BY CLARE TRAPASSO
DAILY NEWS WRITER

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Bates for News

Ruth Alleyne and her grandchildren and foster children pose for a photo in their home. From left: Jynell, Rynell, Khalid, Ruth Alleyne, Korey, Regina and LaQuasjai (back row)

[Ruth Alleyne](#) never thought she'd spend her golden years raising nine children.

But Alleyne, 60, of [Jamaica](#), agreed to care for her six grandchildren while her now-deceased daughter battled a drug addiction that took her in and out of jail. She also took in three foster children.

The [Calvary Baptist Church](#) in Jamaica wants to help people like Alleyne by building a 67-unit apartment complex for low-income seniors raising their grandchildren.

If the \$15 million project at 112th Road and Guy Brewer Blvd. receives city approval, it will be the second such facility in the city. The project developer is hoping to open it in 2012. A similar facility opened in the [Bronx](#) in 2005.

"Sometimes it gets to be overwhelming," Alleyne said of raising kids again. "We have grandparents all over that are fighting for their grandchildren that don't have space."

Seniors raising their grandchildren is a common scenario - especially in low-income neighborhoods, church officials said.

"Many of the [grandparents'] children are deceased," said [Mary Covington](#), who runs a grandparents support group at Calvary Baptist, where she is spearheading the senior housing project.

"Some are strung out on controlled substances, others have abandoned their parental roles and they don't want the responsibility of being a parent any longer," she said.

The project went before [Borough President Helen Marshall](#) during a land use hearing last week, and she will likely throw her support behind it, said spokesman [Dan Andrews](#). It also received unanimous support from Community Board 12 late last month.

"It's great, because there's a need for a housing complex for grandparents that have their grandchildren," said [District Manager Yvonne Reddick](#). "It's a good project."

The plan still has to go before the city Board of Standards and Appeals. The church donated a vacant lot for the project, where officials hope to build a combination of one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments. Counseling services would be available on-site.

The developer is seeking a variance because the land is zoned for a maximum of three stories, while the senior housing would be six.

Seniors earning up to 60% of the area's median income would be eligible to apply for an apartment, said project developer [Peter Florey](#). That's a threshold of about \$40,000 a year for a family of four. Preference would be given to Community Board 12 residents.

"Grandparents who have their grandchildren with them have very limited housing options," said Florey, a partner with D & F Development Group. "They can't get into normal senior affordable housing."

Alleyne said she would consider moving into the complex if it is built.

"This will be something that will benefit the neighborhood and the grandparents," she said.

Read more: http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2009/11/11/2009-11-11_facility_planned_for_seniors_raising_kids.html#ixzz0XQWRImNt