

Ballinger Homes look like a million bucks

Public housing receives external improvements for \$3.6 million

By Brooke Fisher
Enterprise editor

SHORELINE — Ballinger Homes is still public housing — although its true identity is now somewhat disguised.

People who do not qualify for low-income housing are known to stop by the 110-unit development to ask if rooms are for rent.

"Everyone thinks it is an apartment complex, although it is for low-income," said 10-year resident Tanya Wendeln. "It makes a big difference."

Located at 2200 NE, 201st Place, Ballinger Homes recently underwent \$3.6 million worth of renovations, beginning in October 2002.

The improvements were largely external and include new siding, roofing, windows, sidewalks, improved surface water drainage, 20 new parking spaces and a renovated community building.

The center is primarily occupied by immigrant families with 413 total residents, 200 of whom are children. The development is somewhat unique in that larger families can request apartments with as many as five bedrooms.

At a Dec. 20 open house, Stephen Norman, executive director of the King County Housing Authority, said the

improvements to the development took three years to complete. The impetus to improve the housing, he said, was that during the rainy season there was a surface water management problem at the development.

"In rainy seasons, people needed hip waders," Norman said. "We have created a surface water management program and people here no longer feel like they are living in a bog."

Rhonda Rosenberg, director of communications for the King County Housing Authority, which funded the remodeling project, said the average income at the facility is \$16,100 per family. She said Ballinger Homes residents take great pride in the renovated development.

"Before it looked like public housing," Rosenberg said. "But now it looks as good or better as rental housing along Ballinger Way."

Shoreline Mayor Ron Hansen emphasized the partnership aspect of the improvements, and said the project was a combined effort between the Shoreline Parks and Recreation Program, Shoreline Community College, public schools and the League of Women Voters.

"This center was five years in the making," Hansen said.



Contributed photo

Above: One of the Ballinger Homes units after receiving external improvements such as new siding, paint, windows and sidewalks. Right: A family unit before the 110-unit development received \$3.6 million from the King County Housing Authority for renovation.



"What a grand asset we have in Shoreline."

The Ballinger Homes Fam-

ily Support Center is also located on-site to meet a variety of needs, including ESL

classes, clothing, food services, tutoring, a computer lab and job training.