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## Local Non-Profit Hits Back at Home Foreclosures

*This BWP interview with Pat Hanratty, President of NSP Residential LLC, a Boston Community Capital subsidiary, sheds some light on emerging trends in the local housing market and helps curb foreclosures in the Bay State.*

### **Tell us about your organization?**

In 2010, after two years of research and product development, [Boston Community Capital](#) created the \$50 million Sun Initiative to address the foreclosure crisis in Massachusetts. SUN is designed to stop the displacement of families before evictions occur and to prevent the neighborhood destabilization caused by vacant and abandoned properties. These goals are accomplished by purchasing properties in foreclosure directly from the banks or servicers who own or manage the loans and properties, and then re-conveying them to current occupants with fixed rate mortgages they can afford.

### **What are your objectives and who is your target audience?**

Stabilizing Urban Neighborhoods (SUN) is both our name and our goal. The program is focused on lower income communities with high concentrations of foreclosure in the cities of Boston and Revere. By focusing on occupied properties that are bank owned or eligible for short sale, Sun has developed a unique niche that complements other neighborhood stabilization efforts focused on vacant and abandoned housing stock.

### **How does the Boston Housing market fare against other major cities?**

Boston is the most innovative city on earth, and we have long been the leaders in solving difficult housing problems for the rest of the country. The housing foreclosure problem hasn't hit us as hard as it has hit other cities, but we have been hit hard, and we have been quick to respond. The SUN program works, and is provided by a solid, credible not-for-profit organization with a history of serving the community. We expect the SUN program will be so effective in Massachusetts that it will be replicated nationwide.

**Can you briefly describe some of the emerging housing trends that you have noticed in the Greater Boston area?**

The Warren Group, the professional monitor of housing transactions in Massachusetts, and the publisher of the Banker and Tradesman, the financial services and real estate weekly for Massachusetts, has predicted that 2010 will be the highest year ever for foreclosures in Massachusetts! Now, more than ever, people need reliable assistance in dealing with unreasonable financing that is causing them to stop paying their mortgages. Additionally, there are now many schemes that are preying on those that have had the misfortune to find themselves with mortgages they can't afford. Some groups offer "Credit Repair" for \$2,000, and others offer to "fix" your mortgage problems for \$5,000. These programs are complete rip-offs preying on very vulnerable, desperate people. BCC is a 30 year old non-profit organization with a solid reputation for helping lower income families with their housing concerns. To address the growing rate of foreclosures and the fraudulent scams that are developing, BCC has started SUN to offer help to people living in foreclosed, or soon to be foreclosed, properties.

**What's the best advice you've ever been given?**

Your home is not a piggy bank or an ATM. Don't use it that way. If it is too complicated for you to understand, do not assume it is right. If you are going to sign something make sure you understand it. If you can't be told in a way you understand, you may be being misled.

**What's the one thing that Boston has that you couldn't live without?**

I love the diversity of the neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has its own character. That matters! Good neighborhoods make for a good quality of life. Diversity makes neighborhoods stronger and even more unique. That's great!