



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

Tampa Orlando Jacksonville Ocala Fort Myers
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JANUARY 4, 2011
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TRANSFERS SEIZED HOUSE TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY OF TARPON SPRINGS

Tampa, FL - Today the Department of Justice donated a house once used to sell crack cocaine to the Housing Authority of Tarpon Springs (HATS), under Operation Goodwill, a community based program built to strengthen relationships between law enforcement and local communities. The ceremony was hosted by Tarpon Springs Chief of Police Robert Kochen and Pinellas County Sheriff James Coats. City of Tarpon Springs Mayor David Archie and the local Housing Authority Commissioners were also on hand to celebrate this historic occasion. Invited guests included Robert E. O'Neill, United States Attorney; Mark Trouville, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA); Thomas D. Hurlburt, Jr., United States Marshal; Thomas Figmik, Chief Deputy United States Marshal; and Kim Beal, Deputy Assistant Director of the United States Marshals Asset Forfeiture Division. The deed and certificate were handed over to Melissa Baird, Board Chairperson of HATS.

The house is located at 721 North Avenue in the Toby's Acres community of Tarpon Springs. For more than a decade the home was considered an eyesore and the Tarpon Springs Police Department responded to numerous calls for service. The majority of

calls were related to an ongoing crack cocaine operation being run out of the residence.

On May 29, 2008, after a search warrant executed at the house resulted in the seizure of approximately 3 kilograms of cocaine and \$46,387.00 in drug proceeds, a federal grand jury in Tampa indicted the property owner, Charles Burrowes, on cocaine trafficking charges. United States v. Charles Burrowes, Case No. 8:08-CR-245-T-26MAP. On July 18, 2008, the United States filed a Plea Agreement entered into with Burrowes, in which he pled guilty to conspiring possess with the intent to distribute 5 kilograms or more of cocaine. As part of his guilty plea, he agreed to forfeit the house. On October 6, 2008, Burrowes was sentenced to 240 months imprisonment followed by ten years of supervised release. On July 2, 2009, a Final Judgment of Forfeiture was entered, conveying title to the house to the United States. With the help of investigators from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Special Agents from DEA, and Deputy U.S. Marshals, the home was forfeited by the Asset Forfeiture Section of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida. Typically forfeited real estate is sold. However, in this case it was felt that turning the home over to a neighborhood organization such as HATS would have a more positive outcome in the Tarpon Springs community.

The Department of Justice's "Operation Goodwill" program is a sponsored effort to build goodwill between law enforcement and the community. Since its inception in 1997, the U.S. Marshals and U.S. Attorney's office have transferred 47 pieces of real properties through this program.



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