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Philadelphia Gamechangers: ACHIEVEability

By [Cherri Gregg](#) February 11, 2013 at 4:00 am

Filed Under: [ACHIEVEability](#), [black history month](#), [Cobbs Creek](#), [Gamechangers](#), [Gamechangers 2016](#), [Haddington](#), [KYW Newsradio 1060](#), [Marcus Allen](#), [Philadelphia Gamechangers](#), [West Philadelphia](#)



(Marcus Allen, CEO of ACHIEVEability, outside one of the nonprofit group's residence projects. Credit: Cherri Gregg)

CBS Philly celebrates Black History Month with these profiles of notable Philadelphia "gamechangers," people and organizations making a difference in the lives of the city's African-Americans.

By *Cherri Gregg*

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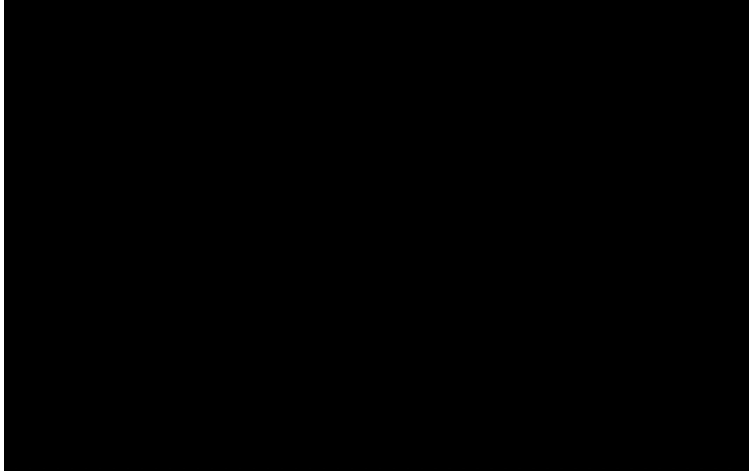


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PHILADELPHIA (CBS) – [ACHIEVEability](#) is changing the game for Philadelphia neighborhoods, one block at a time.

“There were houses that were falling down and we would say let’s strengthen this block, like a dentist – let’s fix that tooth that’s weakened,” recalls Marcus Allen, president and CEO of [AchieveAbility](#).

Allen says AchieveAbility was founded over 30 years ago with a mission of providing housing for single, homeless mothers. The group now provides support to help families permanently break the cycle of poverty through education, parenting classes, financial literacy, and more.

“We’ve had some people become lawyers, we had one woman become a judge, we had a woman that became a doctor, so they are very successful,” says Allen.

To help execute its mission, Allen says AchieveAbility began purchasing and rehabbing vacant properties in the Haddington and Cobbs Creek neighborhoods, near 60th and Market Street. The homes gave the families they support a place to live.

“We thought, in order for a family to be successful they have to live in a community that is strong,” says Allen. “We then began seeing all the community issues popping up, so we began focusing on community development as well.”

Today, the nonprofit owns more than 200 properties, which Allen says has brought \$300 million in property value to the region.

In 2012, AchieveAbility completed a \$7.5-million renovation of the 24-unit Von Louhr apartment building (top photo), using low-income and historic preservation tax credits. Allen says the investment has affected the entire block, and more, for the better.

“There’s a lot of neighborhood pride,” says Allen. “There’s no more trash on the corner, there’s no more graffiti on the side of the wall.”



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Listen to the extended CBS Philly interview with Marcus Allen
(runs 8:27)...

For more info on AchieveAbility, go to achieveability.org.

*Stay tuned to KYW Newsradio 1060 and CBS Philly all month long
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