

House now a home for ex-renters

By Alan Johnson
Dispatch Urban Affairs Reporter

Lacy Pauley rented a house on Hamlet Street for 20 years until he saw rehabilitation work begin on the house next door.

Pauley, 52, was so impressed with what he saw that he bought the house at 1214 Hamlet St. on the Near North Side

He and his wife, Ruby Mae, and their three children moved into the 3-bedroom house in April. The house was rehabilitated by Columbus Housing Partnership, a non-profit group funded by the city and the private sector.

"They did all the work, and they did a beautiful job," said Pauley, a former construction worker who retired after suffering a heart attack and undergoing bypass surgery. "You'd have to have seen it before to know what I mean."

Pauley, a first-time home buyer, paid \$25,000 for the house. His payments are \$300 a month, about the same as his rent.

"I could never have gotten a house like this," Pauley said. "I could never have afforded it. I had given up on buying a house. But this was a real bargain."

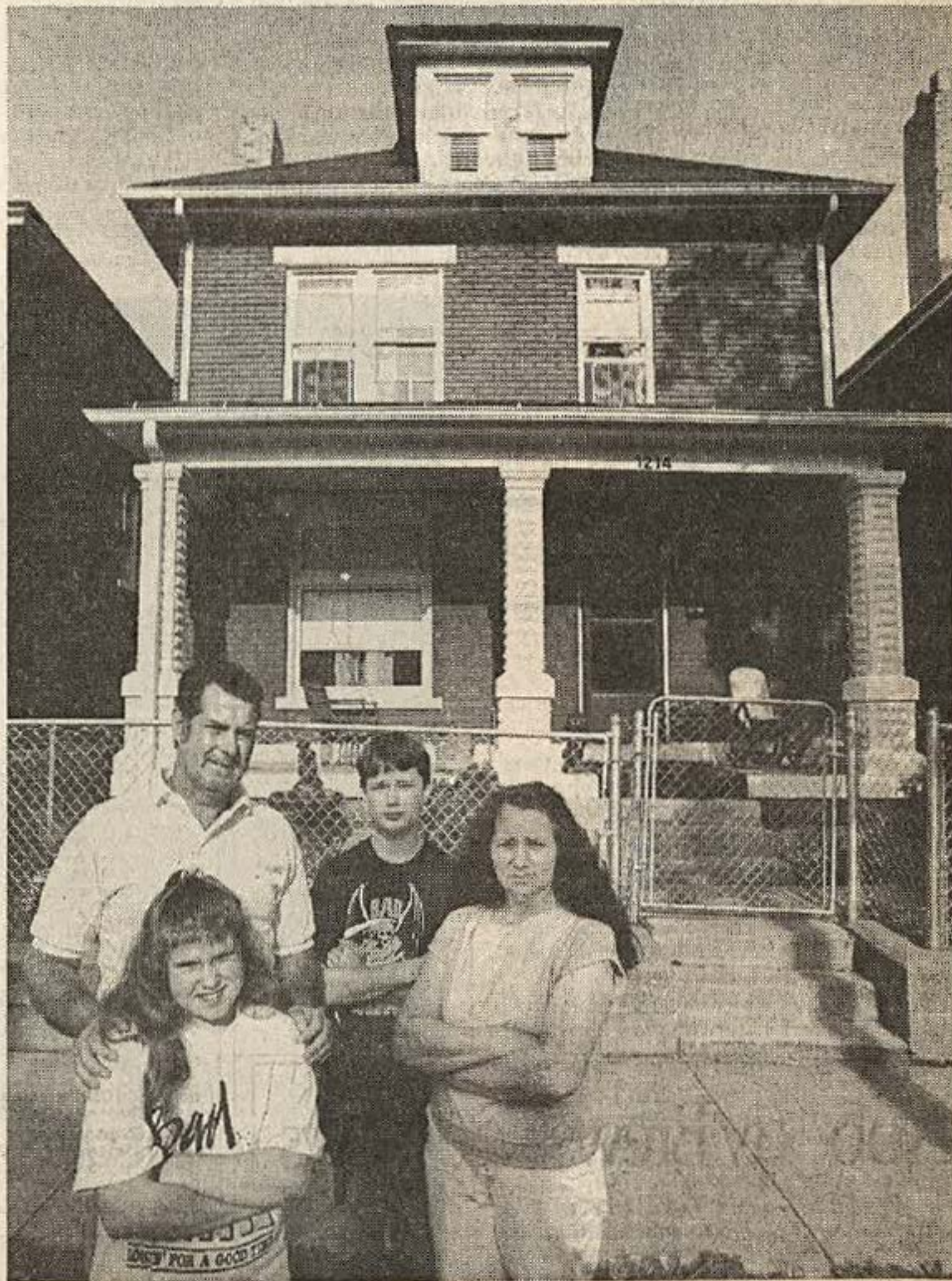
Pauley's house is one of about 90 units that Columbus Housing Partnership has rehabilitated in two years, said executive director Beth Hughes.

The partnership has purchased 130 units for rehabilitation and hopes to begin work soon on the first of 20 new-construction units now on the drawing board.

Hughes said the goal is to put 200 affordable housing units, new or rehabilitated, on the market in Columbus each year.

Hughes said she understands that the city wants to use housing money, in part, as a redevelopment tool in target neighborhoods. But she hopes that the needy are not forgotten in the process.

"When there's such a desperate need to fix up housing for the poor people, you have to be careful when you start using housing as a development tool," she said.



Lacy Pauley, top left, his wife, Ruby Mae, bottom right, and their children

Michelle, 12, and Shawn, 13, in front of Hamlet Street home.

Dispatch photo by Tom Dodge